

PHENOMENOLOGY OF TIME

by JOHN MICALLEF

(Note: In this exposition of the *Phenomenology of Time*, I use some of the material presented in my book *Philosophy of Existence* published by Philosophical Library in 1969, but I add the comparison of my views with those of other existentialist writers in *Philosophy and Literature*).

1. TIME AS SEQUENCE

The existent as an individual specimen of matter-in-extension goes through a process in a space-time context, manifesting itself in space through its extension, and in time through its duration. Such duration through process manifests itself as a sequence of events in such a way that the interval between events can be observed and measured.

Duration, however, should not be understood as extension in time, nor as a series of events followed by time intervals, each interval lasting a certain number of units of duration, or as a succession of fragments which shatter time into as many bits as there are seconds or fractions of a second, for such an explanation reduces time to a multitude of separate discrete fragments.

Time as such is, therefore, not the total aggregate of all the fragments of time to which we refer, however long they might be; it is not even the totality of past, as the time that no longer exists, the future as the time that does not yet exist, and the present as the only time that exists. Time does not consist in these three segments which succeed each other, in such a way that the present seems to become past, and the future becomes present.

Matter-in-process manifests itself through a series of events in such a way that it does not come about totally or all at once at any one given moment, but through the sequence of events itself. The individual which goes through the process is never fully the existent that it is going to be, but is becoming that existent because it never stops becoming whatever it is becoming. As the process unfolds through the continuity of development, the existent makes

itself present in time through the sequence. The sequence is not a series of moments that follow each other, for the sequence is not manifested in the moments as moments, but insofar as they are in series, or as they follow each other.

Kierkegaard explains that we see time as a succession of distinct and discrete 'nows', 'because we *spatialize* a moment, but thereby the infinite succession is brought to a standstill, and that is because one introduces a visual representation, visualizing time instead of thinking it.'¹

Sartre too rejects the explanation of time as a collection of 'nows': 'Temporality is obviously an organized structure, and these three so-called elements of time: past, present, future, must not be envisaged as a collection of 'data' to be added together – for instance, as an infinite series of 'nows' some of which are not yet, some of which are no more – but as the structured moments of an original synthesis. Otherwise we shall immediately meet with this paradox: the past is no longer, the future is not yet, as for the instantaneous present, everyone knows that it is not at all; it is the limit of infinite division, like the dimensionless point.'²

Commenting on this mistaken view of time, Schrag writes: 'By defining time as a general process or continuing infinite succession, we already separate time into discrete units of past, present and future. These discrete units are then understood as constituting an infinite succession of 'nows' which succeed each other in a definite order of coming to be and passing away ... 'Nows' become transformed into things. Those that have gone by we call the past. Those which are coming we call the future. And then there is always the present 'now' which is forever slipping into the past. ... 'Nows' are viewed as things which in their order of succession constitute an unending flowing stream.'³

I become aware that I do not exist totally at any one time, but rather I go through the process as I persist in my existence. Such a process is manifest to my self-awareness as sequence. Luijpen re-

¹Kierkegaard: *Concept of Dread*, 2d ed. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1957. – p.77.

²Sartre: *Being and Nothingness*, Philosophical Library, N.Y., 1956. – p.150.

³Schrag: *Existence and Freedom, Towards an Ontology of Human Finitude*, Northwestern University Press, 1961, p.124-5.

fers to the sequence through the image of the stream and stresses the underlying unity: 'Temporality is the never-completed unfolding of my subjectivity-in-the-world, the stream of my present. ... In this one-streaming phenomenon, my actual presence lets itself be discovered as the present, and my past and future as *absent* presences. Temporality, then, is not a simple being no longer and a simple being not yet, but a coming within my reach of nearby meanings and escaping my grasp as faraway meanings.'⁴

Sequence as sequence can only exist in my self-awareness, for sequence is the manifestation of process as a series of events. Sequence is not the finished result of such a process, but the awareness of the unfolding of the process which brings about the finished result through a series of stages within that event. I experience sequence as my life unfolds in me and within my environment; so it manifests itself as a process when I view it in its continuous development.

Time is, therefore, constituted as a sequence in my self-awareness, for as an observer, I look at the movement of the sequence converging from the future on to the present as the point of observation, and flowing away from it as past. The past and the future, however, share in the feature of time as sequence, for I do not consider them disjointed from each other and from my vantage point as the observer in the present. In fact, neither the past nor the future exist as such apart from my self-awareness of the sequence.

Barrett illustrates the mutual interaction of past, present and future: ... The *future* reveals itself as that toward which existence is projected; the past as that which our experience perpetually transcends – i.e. goes beyond, or rises above – and toward which also we may turn back in choosing to affirm this or that part of the past; the *present* is that in which we make-present, realize, a future in this transcending of the past. Future, past and present are thus given to us together as defining an inescapably temporal existence ... Future, present, past are three aspects into which our existence is horizontally displaced, and here again man's existence appears essentially incomplete, perpetually displaced or spread out into these three phases.⁵

⁴ Luijpen: *Existential Phenomenology*, Duquesne University Press, Rev. Ed., 1969, p. 242.

⁵ Barrett: *What is Existentialism*, Grove Press, 1964, p. 69.

Erich Frank is equally insistent on the interdependence of the three dimensions of time: 'Our subjective existence is essentially that process through which the memory of the past and the anticipation of the future are fused into the sense of the present.'⁶

Eliot is equally aware of the three 'dimensions' of time:

'Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.
What might have been is an abstraction
Remaining a perpetual possibility
Only in a world of speculation.
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.'⁷

In my awareness of the sequence, however, I can distinguish the before and after in relation to my point of observation, in such a way that the *before* relates to the past, and the *after* to the future; but I can see a *before* and an *after* in any section of time, whenever I choose a vantage point for my observation. In such a situation any section of time on which I choose to focus my self-awareness represents not just a section of time but a sequence. In fact, within any section of time, however small, I see the future moving on into the present and out into the past as the sequence anticipated, and foreseen, and to that extent planned and constructed in and through my self-awareness.

Merleau-Ponty follows Husserl in establishing the relation of the past and the future: 'Husserl uses the terms protensions and retentions for the intentionalities which anchor me to an environment. They do not run from a central I, but from my perpetual field itself, so to speak, which draws along in its wake its own horizon of retentions, and bites into the future with its potentions.'⁸

As Luijpen explains: 'In every presence there lies a retention,

⁶ Frank Erich: *Philosophical Understanding and Religious Truth*, London, Oxford University Press, 1945, p. 66.

⁷ T.S. Eliot: *Four Quartets*, Burnt Norton I, 1-8.

⁸ Merleau-Ponty: *Phenomenology of Perception*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962, p. 416.

'now,' present, of a former presence and a 'protention', 'now' present, of a future presence ...

'... My *existence* at this moment is not *real* without a reference to a future but neither without holding fast to a past.'⁹

Sequence, however, is sequence only if I can see it as a totality in my self-awareness, that is, if I do not see just a section of time within the sequence, but the totality of time, insofar as I become aware of matter-in-extension unfolding itself as a process through sequence. So I can see both the beginning and the end of the sequence, even though the beginning was in the past and the end is yet to come. Thus, my relation to the past is through my awareness of time as a lived sequence in my experience; my relation to the future is through my projection of time as a planned sequence of experience.

Kierkegaard, on the other hand, relates the past to necessity and the future to possibility. Schrag in his analysis of 'Time and History' summarizes Kierkegaard's thought: '... The self as consciousness permeated with passion is understood by Kierkegaard as a structural synthesis of possibility and necessity which is rooted respectively in the temporal moments of future and past. The self is concerned about that which it has been (necessity) and that which is yet to become (possibility). Consciousness of being a self involves arriving from a past and moving into a future.'¹⁰

Heidegger sees the movement of time from the future to the past: 'Temporalization is not a succession of ecstases. The future is not posterior to the past, or the past anterior to the present. Temporality temporalizes as future-which-lapses-into-the-past-by-coming-into-the-present.'¹¹

Such time is the 'time of human concern'. Schrag explains the implications of 'concern' in Heidegger's thought. 'Concern is constituted by the three structural moments of existentiality, facticity, and fallenness. Existentiality defines *Dasein* as protentional, or as existing in advance of himself in his future possibilities. Facticity characterizes *Dasein* as already abandoned in a situation, and thus indicates the temporal mode of the past. Fallenness is the

determinant of *Dasein* made possible through existence as presence. Temporality is thus disclosed as the ontological meaning of the structure of human concern.'¹²

Merleau-Ponty too focuses the course of the future and the past through the present: 'But for there to be an analogy between presents that have elapsed and the actual present, the latter must be given not only as present, it must already announce itself as what will soon be past, we must feel the pressure upon it of a future intent on dispossessing it; in short the course of time must be primarily not only the passing of present to past, but also that of the future to the present.'¹³

Time is, therefore, the mode of existence of a self through the awareness of process as sequence. As I become aware that the existent structures itself as a process, I constitute the sequence. Thus, time is constituted insofar as I see it as a process through sequence moving out of the past into the future as it passes through and is observed from my vantage point of my self-awareness in the present.

Thus, the self in constituting time through self-awareness of the sequence places itself out of the sequence, as Merleau-Ponty points out: 'Time is thought of by us before it parts, and temporal relations make possible the events in time. Correspondingly it is necessary for the subject not to be himself situated in it, in order to be able to be present in intention to the past as to the future. Let us no longer say that time is a 'datum of consciousness'; let us be more precise and say that consciousness unfolds or constitutes time. Through the ideal nature of time, it ceases to be imprisoned in the present.'¹⁴

2. DIALECTIC OF TIME AND THE TIMELESS

As I view time from the vantage point of my self-awareness, I take the present as the 'point' of distinction that 'separates' the flow of time from the future into the past. If this point of separation referred to as the present were even the smallest section of time, it would still be a time sequence; but the present as the point of observation of the sequence in my self-awareness is timeless, be-

⁹Luijpen: *Existential Phenomenology*, p. 241-242.

¹⁰Schrag: *Existence and Freedom*, p. 122.

¹¹Heidegger: *Being and Time*, N.Y. Harper & Row, 1962, p. 350.

¹²Schrag: *Existence and Freedom*, p. 122.

¹³Merleau-Ponty: *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 414.

¹⁴Merleau-Ponty: *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 414.

cause it participates of the timeless feature of self-awareness.

The moment of time I refer to as the present, is ever 'present' to me, for my awareness of the present confronts my awareness of time as a sequence. In fact, as long as I am aware, I follow the sequence of time from the vantage point of the present; so, as long as I am aware I am always in the present, and the present is 'present' because I am aware of it. Thus, while I am aware of time as a sequence, my self-awareness is not in sequence.

Since Merleau-Ponty admits that consciousness constitutes time, he concludes that subjectivity is out of time: 'We may say that ultimate consciousness is "timeless" (*zeitlose*) in the sense that it is not intra-temporal. "In" my present, if I grasp it while it is still living and with all that it implies, there is an ek-stase towards the future and towards the past which reveals the dimensions of time not as conflicting, but as inseparable: to be at present is to be always and for ever. Subjectivity is not in time because it takes up or lives through time, and merges with the cohesion of a life.'¹⁵

Friedrich Kummel stresses the fact that the two aspects of time, namely succession and duration, as he calls them, are both incompatible and inseparable, but he attempts to explain them through their correlation: 'Duration arises only from the stream of time and, conversely, only within the background of duration is the emergence and our awareness of succession possible.'¹⁶ To overcome this conflict, therefore, time must be explained through their dialectic: 'Time must, therefore, be understood as correlation of succession and of the co-existence of the "three times" which is the basis of vital duration. This cor-relation will allow of no other description than as a continual opposition or conflict between its elements...'¹⁷

Kummel's use of the term 'duration' is equivalent, I believe, to my explanation of the present as the timeless: 'Vital duration is always concrete, fulfilled duration, so that time from this aspect is always immanent to life ... Vital duration, then, is experienced as an "always" and as an eternal present.'¹⁸

¹⁵ Merleau-Ponty: *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 422.

¹⁶ Kummel: *Time as Succession and the Problem of Duration* — in *The Voices of Time. A Cooperative Survey of Man's Views of Time as Expressed by the Sciences and by the Humanities*. N.Y. Braziller, 1966, p. 35.

¹⁷ Kummel: *Time as Succession and the Problem of Duration*, p. 37.

¹⁸ Kummel: *Time as Succession and the Problem of Duration*, p. 38.

The use of the term 'eternal' should not mislead us into thinking that the experience of duration as he explains it is outside the experience of this life: 'We have, therefore, spoken of duration not as an exceptional experience "beyond" time but rather as a *sustaining* element of time and as wholly "given" in temporal existence, although in its *pure* state it does not appear to be experienced as time at all but rather as eternity.'¹⁹ Unfortunately, since Kummel does not introduce the notion of the timeless in his article, he does not specify that the experience of duration is given *in* temporal experience, but is not *a* temporal experience.

In his own concise way, Wittgenstein accepts the present as timeless: 'If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present.'²⁰

I feel that Eliot in *Burnt Norton* was experiencing the present as timeless when he refers to 'the still point':

'As the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshness;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is.
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor
towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.
I can only say, *there* we have been: but I cannot say where.
And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.'²¹

Even more powerfully, Eliot expresses his awareness of the timeless present through the image of 'pointed light':

'There are hours when there seems to be no past or future,
Only a present moment of pointed light ...'²²
and the point of light recalls the 'still point':

'... the light is still
At the still point of the turning world.'²³

¹⁹ Kummel: *Time as Succession and the Problem of Duration*, p. 38.

²⁰ Wittgenstein: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, N.Y., The Humanities Press, 1922 (1961) — Proposition 6.4311.

²¹ T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets, Burnt Norton*, II 16-23.

²² T.S. Eliot: *The Family Reunion*.

So, as the sequence of time passes through the timeless present, the present becomes:

'The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, ...'²⁴

Jorge Guillén is even more persistent in stressing this shrinking of time into the present which he sees as an 'eternal now' as he says in one of his poems:

'!Oh presente sin fin, ahora eterno ...!
O present without end, eternal now!²⁵

It is to be expected, perhaps, that people who live close to the theatre should experience this awareness of the 'now': R.E. Jones 'This is drama; this is theatre – *to be aware of the Now.*'²⁶ Similarly, Thornton Wilder writes: 'The action on the stage takes place in a perpetual present time.'²⁷

Thus, I am aware of being in time insofar as I am a specimen of matter-in-process; but insofar as I am aware of myself as a self, I face the sequence of time from the vantage point of the present. Insofar as I am self-aware, therefore, I exist outside the process understood as a sequence in time; but I do not cease to be aware of the process that my body is going through. Thus, I am aware of myself both as a self in the timeless present and as a body in process through the sequence of time. Consequently, I am both in and outside time, as I exist both in and out of process. For I exist through my experience of going through the sequence in time, as I am aware of the process which takes place in and through my body. But as I contemplate the process which I am going through and observe it from the vantage point of the present, I am aware of myself as a self out of time. Thus, when I contemplate the past as lived, while I foresee the future as planned, I see myself through the sequence of time, without ceasing to contemplate my permanent self in the

²³ T.S. Eliot: *Four Quartets*, *Burnt Norton*, IV 9-10.

²⁴ T.S. Eliot: *Four Quartets*, *The Dry Salvages*, V 18-19.

²⁵ Jorge Guillén: Quoted by Erich Kahler: *The Tower and the Abyss of the Transformation of Man*, Cape, London, 1958, p. 134.

²⁶ R.E. Jones: *The Dramatic Imagination: Reflections and Speculations on the Art of the Theatre*, N.Y. Duell Sloan & Pearce, 1941, p. 40.

²⁷ Thornton Wilder: *The Intent of the Artist*, edited by A. Centeno, Princeton University Press, 1941, p. 97.

timeless present; yet insofar as I live in the present, I live not in a series of 'nows' but in a continuous endless now, in such a way that the now extends and merges into the endless forever.²⁸

Eliot is aware of the simultaneous existence in and out of time, and experience to time:

'Time past and time future
Allow but a little consciousness.
To be conscious is not to be in time
But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
The moment in the draughty church at smoke-fall
Be remembered; involved with past and future.
Only through time time is conquered.'²⁹

Again, Eliot feels the conflict of time and the timeless in the act of love, both limitless and limited:

'Desire itself is a movement
Not in itself desirable;
Love in itself unmoving,
Only the cause and end of movement,
Timeless, and undesiring
Except in the aspect of time
Caught in the form of limitation
Between un-being and being.'³⁰

I feel Paul Klee in his painting entitled *FISH MAGIC* tries to show that man lives both in the dimension of time and of the timeless. Canaday describes the painting: 'Clock: suspended in the centre of the picture within lines which suggest at once a tower and a trap. The sun and moon, which circle in time, are represented nearby, while around and about is a luminous pattern of flowers – symbol of transience – and fish – symbol of time backward into primeval

²⁸ Susanne Langer sees the action in the play both in the 'now' and against the perspective of the sequence moving towards the future: 'It has been said repeatedly that the theater creates a perpetual present moment; but it is only a present filled with its own future that is really dramatic.' *Feeling and Form. A Theory of Art*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1953, p. 307.

²⁹ T.S. Eliot: *Four Quartets*, *Burnt Norton*, II 37-44.

³⁰ T.S. Eliot: *Four Quartets*, *Burnt Norton*, V 25-32.

darkness and, by extension of early Christian iconography, of time forward into eternity. In the lower right a bouquet has been placed in a goblet of water, but the futility of this effort to modify time is apparent when we notice that the very goblet takes on the shape of an hour-glass. Near the goblet stands a little figure whose face exists doubly. Of his two mouths, one is shaped like a heart, symbol of man's emotional and intuitive nature; the other is an arithmetical symbol. These antitheses coexist in man, and man exists in time, which exists doubly as the moment and as eternity, which are indivisible.³¹

It is true that Canaday in his explanation refers to time and eternity, but since the pertinent symbols are represented as existing simultaneously in man, I feel that eternity should be understood to refer to this world – not to an afterlife – and in this sense it would imply the timeless as the present coexistent with time.

This affirmation, however, that my awareness of the self is timeless seems to be contradicted by two facts:

1. the modification of my own self as my identity unveils itself to myself;
2. the process of memory which presents my self through the sequence of time as a self modified by the process I am going through.

When my identity unveils itself to my self-awareness, and I interpret it both to myself and to others, what is modified is not my awareness of myself as a self, but the way my self relates to others as a self. Thus, I distinguish between my awareness of myself as a self, and my experience of my self insofar as it relates to the other and thus constitute myself as a person through the dialogue with the other.

My self-awareness of my self as a self is also modified through the process of memory, insofar as my memory presents my past as a history; but what is modified is the self of which I am aware, not the awareness which makes me aware of the self. My self-awareness of my self is permanent, because I affirm myself as self-aware, for primarily I know my self as my self, not as this or that self, or as a self with a history. My awareness of myself as a self, however,

³¹ Canaday: Seminar in Art: Portfolio L. Actaeon and the Atom, p.25.

includes also my awareness of my self as a self in history, which I establish through my memory.

So time does not converge from the future through the present into the past; for if the future converged into the present, and the present diverged into the past, the present would be reduced to an instant in time joining the future and the past as two segments of the sequence, but it would not be 'present' to my awareness, since I would not confront the sequence in time from my vantage point outside time.

Such an explanation would in fact reduce the present to a moment of awareness in time as a sequence outside time, rather than to a timeless awareness of a sequence in time. Time as a sequence is constituted by my self-awareness as the observer from the vantage point of the timeless present, for through my self-awareness outside time, I contemplate the sequence in time.

3. TIME AS HISTORY

The past and the future are significant in relation to the present, as the point of separation between them, for the past and the future are not two permanent chunks of time. The past and the future are constructs with reference to a moment of time within the sequence in a life or history, constituted through the choice of a certain event as a 'landmark' in that life or in history.

As I am aware of time through and in my awareness of the sequence, I am both in time through my contemplation of the process as sequence, and out of time through my awareness of the present. As I am out of time, I can make history, which is the control of time manifested in human action; but since I am in time, I am part of the process brought about through my action as a maker of time. Thus, through my self-awareness I make time as I interpret the past and plan my future. Through such an interpretation I can change the meaning of the past, that is, I can re-write my history; while through my planning I can make my future, for I can remake both myself and my world, that is, I can make history.

I can make myself insofar as I see myself out of time controlling myself in time; so as a man who has self-awareness, I am both a maker of history, and that which is made into history by other history-makers, or by myself, as a history-maker. As Heidegger writes: 'The analysis of the historicity of *Dasein* attempts to show that this being is not "temporal" because "he stands in history",

but rather that he exists historically because he is temporal in the ground of his Being.³²

This interpretation of the past as history 'lived and understood', and of the future as history 'to be foreseen' before it is lived, expresses itself as care for the world of things and men who are to some extent made or marred through this control of time.

Through his care man manifests his temporality, for care is the structure of *Dasein*, as Vycinas explains in his interpretation of Heidegger: 'The future as revealing the past and disclosing the situation in the present is, according to Heidegger, a unique phenomenon, temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*). The structure of care represents the temporality of *Dasein*. Care is the being-ahead of oneself (future) as being-already-in-the-world (past) and as being with the within-the-world-beings (present).'³³

This self-awareness of the past and the future is never separate from the sequence as I see the past shaping the future, and the future interpreting the past, for I make the sequence follow my plan not insofar as I foresee how the process as sequence is going to unfold, but insofar as I direct it while it is unfolding, and gradually keep it under control.

Time establishes the direction of the sequence which the self goes through and imposes on other existents to make the world as he chooses to make it. As a man, I show concern for the world of things and men, for I do not let the world drift without a plan to be unfolded as a process; for I bring my concern to act upon my plan through my foresight, and improve it through my skill because I feel responsible.

Bultmann relates historicity to responsibility: 'Historicity now gains the meaning of responsibility over against the future, which is at the same time the responsibility over against the heritage of the past in the face of the future. Historicity is the nature of man, who can never possess his genuine life in any present moment but is always on the way and yet is not at the mercy of a course of history independent of himself. Every moment is the *now* of responsibility, of decision.'³⁴

³²Heidegger: *Being and Time*, p. 376.

³³Vycinas: *Earth and Gods. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Martin Heidegger*, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1961, p. 63.

³⁴Bultmann: *The Presence of Eternity*, N.Y., Harper, 1957, p. 143.

If man makes time through history, Eliot's interpretation of history seems to contradict my explanation, as he writes:

'A people without history
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern
Of timeless moments.'³⁵

As Grover Smith, Jr. explains: 'The lines say that a people with history is redeemed from time, but likewise that in order to be so redeemed a people must live by the detachment beginning in attachment – not by indifference to that from which they sprang.'³⁶ I think that Eliot is implying that a people must be concerned with its existence and sense of achievement before it undertakes to free itself from time, and in this sense he agrees with Bultmann, for if 'every moment is the *now* of responsibility, of decision', then since history is the choice of destiny, history makes a people face its now, and thus redeems it from time.

This interpretation seems to be confirmed in the line: 'History is now and England'³⁷ and even more emphatically in:

'Here, the intersection of the timeless moment
Is England and nowhere. Never and always.'³⁸

This insistence on the 'timeless moment' is taken up again in his statement in *The Sacred Wood* where he refers to the expression in art: 'The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living.'³⁹

I think Eliot is here referring not to a past which is remembered, or even retained, but to a past which goes on existing as a 'present moment'. Georges Poulet in his analysis of time in Eliot's works seems to be in agreement: 'Each moment is in relation with all

³⁵T.S. Eliot: *Four Quartets*, Little Gidding, V 20-22.

³⁶Grover Smith, Jr.: *T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays. A Study in Sources and Meaning*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1956, p. 291.

³⁷T.S. Eliot: *Four Quartets*, Little Gidding, I 24.

³⁸T.S. Eliot: *Four Quartets*, Little Gidding, I 53-54.

³⁹T.S. Eliot: *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism*, London, Methuen, 1920 (7th. Ed. 1950), p. 59.

the others, because, contrary to what they are, it itself is fixed and eternal ... Each moment is, therefore, in time, and yet outside of time, animated as it is by a non-temporal power. Horizontally, so to speak, it receives from the past an impulsion which it will transmit to the future; but vertically, shall we say, it still receives its own peculiar efficacy.⁴⁰

This apparent conflict between time and the timeless is resolved by Eliot in his interpretation of the historical sense: '... the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence ... This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional.'⁴¹

It seems likely, however, that in Eliot's thought this 'present moment' embraces the totality of the existence both of man and of mankind, as he seems to be saying in *East Coker*:

'Not the intense moment
Isolated, with no before and after,
But a lifetime burning in every moment
And not the lifetime of one man only
But of old stones that cannot be deciphered.'⁴²

If such a 'present moment' holds the totality of time, then truly,

'In my beginning is my end' and
'In my end is my beginning.'⁴³

Both these lines seem to suggest that in the 'present moment' not only the beginning and the end co-exist, but they are identified as one. Eliot I feel confirms this interpretation:

'We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.'⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Poulet: *Studies in Human Time*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1956, p. 357-8.

⁴¹ T.S. Eliot: *The Sacred Wood*, p. 49.

⁴² T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, *East Coker*, V 21-24.

⁴³ T.S. Eliot: *Four Quartets*, *East Coker*, I 1 and V 37.

⁴⁴ T.S. Eliot: *Four Quartets*, *Little Gidding*, V 26-29.

Although Poulet seems to refer the beginning to the past and the end to the future, yet his image of circular motion suggests to me the totality of time in the present: 'From the beginning to the end of time, our actions depend one upon another. They adhere to each other, and so very closely that between the beginning and the end of the series which they constitute, there is no break and, it would seem, very little difference ... When we accept the burden of our past, we also accept our future. They have the same face, the same being, the same time. This time is absolute responsibility, like that of radical irresponsibility, is circular.

'In neither case can one escape the motion of the wheel. There is not a moment of our existence, nor of the history of the world, which does not turn with all the other moments around the same pivot.'⁴⁵

As the world of men and of things is in process, I can direct and move forward this process; so time becomes the direction of the new identity which I want to give to the world as history. When I control time, I make the destiny of all that exists, insofar as they are open to my self-awareness as the beholder, and subject to my control of time through action. I see the world of things and of men in process and direct it towards the path I have chosen. Through my control over it, I begin to bring about the destiny of the world, when through time I turn myself into a 'maker', for as a man, I make time both for me and for the world.

Schrag relates *destiny* to the determinants in the structure of concern as directions of historicity: 'Facticity is historically understood as destiny, and existentially discloses man's historical freedom which calls him to decision. This decision takes place in the moment, the third structural determinant of concern. History is thus understood by Heidegger, as by Kierkegaard, as an arriving from an existential past in which one is already confronted with an existential future, which makes possible man's self-actualization through choice.'⁴⁶

So, since history is the making of time, history begins with the control of time; in fact, it is only recently through the technological organisation of the world that man can control time almost as

⁴⁵ Poulet: *Studies in Human Time*, p. 357.

⁴⁶ Schrag: *Existence and Freedom*, p. 148.

he chooses; so it is only recently that true history begins to be made. This control of time is always and only forward, since it follows the direction of time. Time as the awareness of process as sequence is grounded in a series of structurizations which result in an achievement. Such an achievement is manifested as a completed structure, even if from the point of view of what was expected, such a structure may seem incomplete or deficient.

Thus, the world is in time only to the extent that the world as matter-in-process is seen to develop through the sequence from the vantage point of the observer. Apart from the self-awareness of time the world, even if it persisted in process, would not be in time. Consequently, before man became self-aware of the process as sequence, and even after he was so aware, to the extent that he did not take over the control of time to constitute it as history, neither man nor the world was in time, but only in process.

'In every time, man was and is and will be because time temporizes itself only as long as man is. There is no time in which man is not there. This does not mean that man exists from eternity to eternity, but only means that time is not eternity, and that time only temporizes with human historical *Dasein*.'⁴⁷

⁴⁷Heidegger: An Introduction to Metaphysics, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1959, p. 64.

Note: The Poetry and Plays of T.S. Eliot are quoted from: The Complete Poems and Plays, New York, Harcourt, Brace, 1952.

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