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What Kind of a Problem is the Problem of Time?

Harrington, James (2005) *What Kind of a Problem is the Problem of Time?* [Preprint]

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Abstract

Aristotle begins his famous discussion of time in Book Δ of The Physics by asking whether time belongs to " the things that exist." In this paper I argue that Aristotle's apparently ambiguous answer to this question holds one of the keys to clarifying contemporary philosophy of time. First, I argue that the metaphysical and meta-philosophical presuppositions underlying most philosophy of time are deeply flawed. Second, that Aristotle provides us with a much more plausible alternative set of presuppositions about the nature of time. The Aristotelian conception of time as part of the subject matter of physics or " the philosophy of nature" is particularly illuminating. Finally, I examine several issues about the nature and reality of time often raised in the context of contemporary physics and show how the Aristotelian perspective can resolve those puzzles.

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