



Issues and Approaches in Contemporary Theological Thought about Evil

Bogdan V. Faul*

Can God Promise Us a New Past? A Response to Lebens and Goldschmidt

<https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2020-0014>

Received October 30, 2019; accepted February 05, 2020

Abstract: Samuel Lebens and Tyron Goldschmidt provided original theodicies, which suggest that at one time God will change the past, either by erasing/substituting the sins of humans or erasing the whole entirety of evils. Both theodicies imply the idea that God can completely change the past without leaving any traces. In this paper, I argue that Lebens' and Goldschmidt's preferred model, which they call the scene-changing theory, is problematic. First, its complex metaphysical foundation could be replaced with presentism (roughly, the view in the ontology of time that only present things exist) without losing any substantial heuristics. Second, their theory either implies a controversial theory of truthmaking under presentistic and hyper-presentistic ontology or implies controversial views on the counting of events under presentistic and hyper-presentistic ontology. Thirdly, I will argue that any theory of elimination/substitution of evils of the past implies that there are unnecessary evils, which is inconsistent with God's goodness.

Keywords: the problem of evil, God, necessary evil, eternalism, presentism, moving spotlight theory, philosophy of time, hypertime

1 Introduction

Philosophy of time is a fast-growing branch of contemporary metaphysics, which affects many philosophical fields, and the philosophy of religion is not an exclusion. Recently, Samuel Lebens and Tyron Goldschmidt provided two original theodicies, which are based on the developments of contemporary metaphysics of time. In a nutshell, their basic idea is that at one time God will change the past either by erasing/substituting the sins of humans or erasing the whole entirety of evils.¹ Both theodicies imply that God can completely change the past without leaving any traces. This possibility of those theodicies is justified under two metaphysical models, which they develop. In this paper, I argue that Lebens' and Goldschmidt's preferred model, which they call the scene-changing theory,² is problematic. Firstly, its complex metaphysical foundation could be replaced with presentism (roughly, the view in the ontology of time, that only present things exist³) without losing any substantial heuristics. Second, their theory implies either a controversial theory of truthmaking under presentistic and hyper-presentistic ontology or controversial views on the counting of events under presentistic and hyper-presentistic ontology. Thirdly, I will argue that any theory of elimination/substitution of evils of the past implies that there are unnecessary evils, which is inconsistent with God's goodness.

1 Lebens and Goldschmidt, "The Promise of a New Past", 1–25.

2 Ibid., 9.

3 Sider, "Presentism and Ontological Commitment", 325–347.

*Corresponding author: Bogdan V. Faul, Saint-Petersburg State University, Saint-Petersburg, Russian Federation; E-mail: faulbogdan@gmail.com

In the first part, I will present two theodicies, the metaphysical possibility of which Lebens and Goldschmidt want to justify. In the second part, I will explicate the metaphysical structure of the scene-changing theory. In the third part, I will demonstrate how the scene-changing theory is supposed to justify the theodicies in question. Then, I will lay down the criticism of the scene-changing theory. In the last part, I will argue that any theodicy which implies that evils will be eliminated in a complete way is inconsistent with God's goodness.

2 The Two Theodicies

Samuel Lebens and Tyron Goldschmidt address the problem of evil in the line of two Jewish traditions. They introduce two theodicies from these traditions and justify their metaphysical possibility based on contemporary developments in the metaphysics of time. The first theodicy is represented by Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen. Lebens and Goldschmidt interpret it in the following way: one day God will erase all human sins or substitute them with something that is not sinful. They call this theodicy the *Ultimate Forgiveness*.⁴ The second theodicy is represented by Rabbi Mordechai Yosef Leiner, and it is called *No More Evil*.⁵ According to *No More Evil*, one day God will eliminate all evils from the past, both moral and natural.

Even though *Ultimate Forgiveness* and *No More Evil* differ in details, there is an important commonality between them: they imply that God can change the past without leaving any traces. Lebens and Goldschmidt justify the metaphysical possibility for God to change the past without leaving any traces (and, thus, the metaphysical possibility of *Ultimate Forgiveness* and *No More Evil*) by introducing two metaphysical models. The first model is called the *supertask model*. The second model is called the *scene-changing theory*. Lebens and Goldschmidt explicitly prefer *the scene-changing theory*, the analysis of which is the primal aim of this paper. To understand how exactly the scene-changing theory works, let us firstly explicate its metaphysical assumptions.

3 Underlying Metaphysics

The dominant understanding of omnipotence in theology is that God can do only what is logically possible. So, is it logically possible for God to completely change the past, specifically, to make it the case that sin did not occur, or that evils did not occur? Tyron and Goldschmidt introduce the "scene-changing theory", which, as they believe, suffices for such possibilities.⁶ Let us first concentrate on the metaphysical foundations of the scene-changing theory.

This theory has two basic metaphysical assumptions:

1. The moving spotlight theory is true.
2. Hyper-presentism is true.⁷

According to the moving spotlight theory, past, present and future events exist in a robust sense. The universe is a four-dimensional manifold, which contains all events that happen, happened or will happen. Thus, the propositions about the past, present, and future do not float ungrounded, they are made true by the real state of affairs, which exists simpliciter. For example, the proposition that the Second World War started in 1939 is made true by the fact, that there exists an event "the beginning of the Second World War", which is located in 1939. In this respect, "the beginning of the Second World War" exists in the same way as

⁴ Lebens and Goldschmidt, "The Promise of a New Past", 1.

⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁶ I believe, that the "supertask model" (which is the first model they introduce) is more convincing in this respect. However, I will not focus on it here.

⁷ For simplicity of the narrative, I put the hyper-presentism into the structure of the scene-changing theory. Lebens and Goldschmidt, however, discuss hyper-presentism as something additional to the scene-changing theory. This difference is not substantial and all the points of this paper might be reformulated in original terminology, which, however, will make this paper heavier and less comprehensible.

tables and chairs, as some philosophers prefer to put it. The spotlight theory also suggests that the present is ontologically different from the past and future. Its differentiating feature is that present has the property of “being the present”, rather than “being the past” or “being the future”.⁸ Thus, the moving spotlight theory is something between eternalism, which accepts the existence of space-time manifold, but denies the change in this manifold;⁹ and presentism, which accepts change, but denies the existence of space-time manifold, as, according to presentism, only present things exist.¹⁰ In the moving-spotlight theory, the whole four-dimensional manifold changes its properties “over time”, as different parts of it gain and lose the property of being the present.¹¹

To explain a change in the space-time manifold, some philosophers postulate the existence of hypertime. Hypertime is an additional time dimension, “where” the change of the whole space-time manifold occurs. To illustrate it, imagine that there is a hyper-temporal creature that observes the space-time manifold “from the outside”, and this creature can identify the property of “being the present”. What it sees is that this property is moving from past events to future events, where every single moment a new part of the manifold acquires a property of “being the present”, while the previous parts of the manifold acquire a property of “being the past”. Thus, the space-time manifold is presented to this creature as an object which changes as time goes by, as regular changing objects are presented to us. However, for this creature change occurs not in a time where the space-time manifoldians live in, as they live in the manifold itself. The “place” where this creature observes the change in the manifold is located in the second time-dimension, which is sometimes called a hyper-temporal dimension.

As with the first time-dimension, we can raise the question about the nature of the second time-dimension, and there are also lots of possibilities there: it may be true that this second time-dimension is also a space-time manifold without any change in it, or the spotlight theory might be true about this second time dimension, etc. The second assumption of the scene-changing theory is that presentism is true about hypertime. In other words, in hypertime only hyper-present things and events exist,¹² where hyper-past and hyper-future things and events do not exist. This is called hyper-presentism, and it raises the same problems as “regular” presentism does. One of the main problems is the truth-maker problem, which is the question about the facts, which make the propositions about the hyper-past or hyper-future true. Lebens and Goldschmidt adopt the theory which is mainly defended by Dean Zimmerman.¹³ According to Zimmerman, given the truth of the regular presentism, what makes the propositions about the past and the future true is that the present, which exists, instantiate backward and forward-looking properties, which make it true that something was or will be the case. This suffices for what might be called the “minimal grounding principle”, which says that any proposition with truth-value must be grounded in something that exists, either abstract or concrete. Lebens and Goldschmidt accept Zimmerman’s theory for hyper-presentism. Thus, the facts about hyper-past and hyper-future are grounded in hyper-present, which instantiate hyper-backward and hyper-forward-looking properties.

4 Details of the Scene-Changing Theory

It is now clear what is the metaphysical structure of reality, which is accepted by Lebens and Goldschmidt to argue for the possibility of the “scene-changing theory” to be true. They accept the spotlight-theory for the first time-dimension, presentism for the second time-dimension, and adopt the minimal grounding

⁸ There is a problem of specification what is the nature of the differentiating feature of the present, but I am not going to discuss it in this paper.

⁹ Defenders of eternalism include Smart, “Philosophy and Scientific Realism”; Mellor, “Real Time II”; Sider, “Four-Dimensionalism: An Ontology of Persistence and Time”.

¹⁰ Defenders of presentism include Prior, “Changes in events and changes in things”; Bigelow, “Presentism and properties”; Zimmerman, “The Privileged Present: Defending an ‘A-Theory’ of Time”.

¹¹ Defenders of the moving spotlight theory include Sullivan, “The minimal A-theory”; Deasy, “The Moving Spotlight Theory”.

¹² There is a controversy on how to formulate presentism. For a very useful discussion see Deasey, “What is presentism?”.

¹³ Zimmerman, “The Privileged Present: Defending an ‘A-Theory’ of Time”, 211–225.

principle by accepting that hyper-temporal present instantiate hyper-backward and hyper-forward-looking properties, which make the propositions about the past and the future true or false. Let us now concentrate on how exactly God can change the past in such a world from Lebens' and Goldschmidt's perspective.

Obviously, God can change the past in the "first time-dimensional" space-time manifold. Imagine that at ht_1 (hypertime 1) the space-time manifold contains evils. At ht_2 , God makes it the case that some or all evils are not contained in the space-time manifold. So, if there were a hyper-temporal creature, it would observe that at ht_2 the evil parts of the space-time manifold were cut off or replaced with good facts. Now, it seems that there is nothing which makes it true that the world contained evil, as in the spotlight theory the nature of time is such that the propositions about the past are made true by the existing events, which do not exist anymore at ht_2 . It is easy to illustrate this point with an example: Imagine that a pencil at t_1 has two parts, the left part is red, and the right part is green, and that presentism is true about the time where we live in. At t_1 a pencil has both parts, but at t_2 the red part is cut off. It is correct to say that at t_2 the pencil has only green parts, it is made true by the structure of the pencil at t_2 .

Thus, we can see how the scene-changing theory makes, according to Lebens and Goldschmidt, *Ultimate Forgiveness* and *No More Evil* metaphysically possible. Consider *Ultimate Forgiveness*. God changes the past in the first time-dimension (for which the spotlight theory is true) and either erases all human sins from the entire history of the world or substitutes them with something non-sinful. In both cases, God has to make the history causally coherent and to preserve human freedom. The second time-dimension, for which presentism is true, remains untouched.

The same works for the *No More Evil*. In this case, God changes the past by erasing all evils from the first time-dimension, while the second time-dimension also remains untouched. In both cases, after erasing/substituting human sins or eliminating all evils, the structure of the first time-dimension is such that there are no relevant evils anymore (either moral or both moral and natural evils), as there are no red parts of the pencil. In the next section, I am going to provide a deeper analysis of the scene-changing theory.

5 Objections to the Metaphysical Theory

Returning to an example with the pencil, it is correct to say that even though the pencil does not have a red part at t_2 , it *had* a red part. In this case, the red part was not eliminated from history without any traces. To make it the case that pencil has never had red parts, it is necessary to alter the reality in such a way as to make the proposition "the pencil had red parts" false.

The basic problem of which Lebens and Goldschmidt are aware is the same. It seems that "eliminated" evils seem to exist in the hyper-past. If it is the case, then the proposition that evil events hyper-existed is true, and this is not a genuine elimination of evil. And here is the crucial point that Lebens and Goldschmidt make: the propositions about hyper-past are true only de-dicto, they are not true de-re, which makes the elimination of evils a genuine elimination.¹⁴

The problem with this idea is that it is not completely clear what Lebens and Goldschmidt mean when they say that it is de-dicto true that the evil hyper-existed, as this was not sufficiently discussed by them. Are not we interested in whether it is plainly true or false that evils hyper-existed after God eliminates them? I believe that our basic concern is whether it is metaphysically true or false that evil hyper-existed after God eliminates it, and, as far as I understand, Lebens and Goldschmidt are also primarily interested in it. Further, I will illustrate that any interpretation of what happens in reality after God eliminates evil is problematic for the metaphysical foundation of the scene-changing theory.

There are three possible truth values which the proposition that evil hyper-existed can have: true, false or undefined (I am not going to discuss the last possibility because there are no sufficient correlations with the Lebens' and Goldschmidt's text, and most of what I will discuss is also applicable to an "undefined" possibility). Now and further I will concentrate specifically on the complete elimination of evils made by God (in other words, I will focus on *No More Evil*). However, what I discuss in this chapter is also applicable

¹⁴ Lebens and Goldschmidt, "The Promise of a New Past", 10.

(with necessary alterations) to any theory which shares the metaphysical foundation of the scene-changing theory, and presupposes that it is possible to change the past (not necessarily involving God's acts), including *Ultimate Forgiveness*.

If the proposition that evils hyper-existed is true, then evil hyper-took place and there is no genuine elimination of evils. If we accept the minimal grounding principle (that there must exist something in the world which makes all propositions with truth values true or false), then there exists something in the world which makes it true that evil hyper-existed. Even if the nature of the thing which makes the propositions about hyper-past events true or false is different from what makes the propositions about existing objects true or false, it still suffices. Thus, it is the case that evil hyper-existed, which is not a genuine elimination of evil. So, if after the Eschaton the proposition “there hyper-was evil” is true, then there simply hyper-was evil, and it is not an act of genuine elimination of evils. In this case, it is as hard to argue that the world as a whole does not contain evil, as it is true that evil hyper-existed, which means that hyper-past evils are in the history of our world.

Consider the second option, that “evil hyper-existed” is false. It is possible to affirm that the world contains the hyper-backward-looking property that evil existed, and yet, there is nothing evil in this hyper-backward-looking property in itself, which means that evil was truly eliminated.¹⁵ In this case, the fact that evil hyper-existed is not sufficient for the world to contain evil. For the sake of the argument, let us suppose that it is the case. The most noticeable thing is that the hyper-forward and hyper-backward-looking properties are not functioning as truthmakers in this case, which makes the postulation of these properties redundant. If they are, nevertheless, functioning as truthmakers, then it is plainly true that evil hyper-existed and we return to the “first option”, which I discussed in the previous paragraph. But there are further problems as well. In the model provided by Lebens and Goldschmidt, God eliminates evil from the first time-dimension, without eliminating evil from the hypertime. Call the act of eliminating evil the “evil eliminating act”. Thus, in Lebens' and Goldschmidt's model the evil eliminating act is done only in the first-time dimension (for which the spotlight theory is true), while the second time-dimension (hyper-presentistic dimension) remains untouched. Hypertime deals with evil with its own resources. If this is true about hypertime, I will argue, it would mean that regular presentism (first time-dimension-presentism) would suffice for eliminating evils without any special evil eliminating act.

Imagine that presentism about the first time-dimension is true, and there is no any hyper-temporal dimension. Imagine that after the Eschaton, there will be no concrete instantiations of evil in the present. If presentism is true and the backward-looking property of the world “evil took place” is not functioning as truthmaker, then after the Eschaton there will be no evil, and no special evil eliminating act by God is required. Thus, in this case, 1) the postulation of hyper-backward and hyper-forward-looking properties is redundant; 2) regular presentism is as sufficient for *Ultimate Forgiveness* and *No More Evil*, as the metaphysical basis of the scene-changing theory; 3) given that regular presentism is true, no evil eliminating act is required after the Eschaton.

The next option is that after the evil eliminating act, it is true that evils hyper-existed, but this is somehow not sufficient for the world in general to contain evils. The only possible explanation of this is that when we count evils in our world, we do not count evils that hyper-was or hyper-will be the case. This is problematic because when we count evils under regularly presentistic ontology, we count not only present evils but also evils that were or will be the case. If the regular presentism were true and we asked God after the Eschaton whether our world is an evil-containing world, He would have answered: “Of course, there were many evils”. If He answered: “No, presentism is true and now there are no evils present, even though there were many evils. Remember, past evils do not count”, it would mean that there is something wrong with our basic idea of counting of events, including evils.

I believe that this interpretation of the counting of evils seems to be problematic when transposed into regular presentistic ontology. Call it the unintuitive evil quantification (UEQ): “all evils” is interpreted as “present evils”. Under this interpretation of counting it is not very hard to eliminate all evils, as changing of the past is not necessary for it. Thus, we can see that under the truth of UEQ, the regular presentism would suffice and no evil eliminating act by God is needed after the Eschaton.

¹⁵ Ibid., 10–11.

But what about hyper-presentism? It is possible to argue that somehow UEQ is false for regular presentism but true for the hyper-presentism. It would mean that when we count evils in the regular presentism, we interpret the quantifier “all” in “all evils” as counting past, present and future evils. However, in the hyper-presentism, the quantifier “all” in “all evils” counts only hyper-present evils. If this is the case, then hyper-presentism would be sufficient for eliminating evils with its own resources after the Eschaton and the evil eliminating act in the first time-dimension.

However, what is the substantial difference between presentism and the hyper-presentism, which justifies these different standards of quantification? It seems that such a distinction might not be motivated independently from defending the scene-changing theory. If such an exclusive status of hyper-presentism is not justified, then Lebens and Goldschmidt face the problem of defending a counterintuitive theory of counting of evils both in regular presentism and in the hyper-presentism. If Lebens and Goldschmidt would justify UEQ without justifying the exclusive status of hypertime with respect to it, then the regular presentism is a better metaphysics: under the truth of the regular presentism, after the Eschaton the evil events of the past would not count, and no evil eliminating act is required.

Let us summarize the problems of this interpretation: 1) the procedure of counting evil events in hyper-presentistic time-dimension is peculiar and requires additional defense; 2) under this theory of counting of events, the regular presentism (which is simpler) is as sufficient for *Ultimate Forgiveness* and *No More Evil* as the scene-changing theory; 3) given this theory of counting of events, under the truth of regular presentism no special evil-eliminating act is required by God after the Eschaton.

Another way to affirm that evil never hyper-existed after the Eschaton is to argue that God can eliminate the hyper-backward-looking property that the world hyper-contained evil. Under the truth of the scene changing theory, it involves two evil eliminating acts: 1) Erasing the concrete evils from the first time-dimension; 2) Erasing the evil hyper-backward-looking properties of the world.

First, in this case, regular presentism would suffice. If God can erase the hyper-backward-looking property of the world, He can erase the evil-backward-looking properties in the regularly presentistic world. Thus, if God can erase backward-looking properties in general, then, *ceteris paribus*, presentism is a better option than the metaphysical basis of the scene changing theory, which is the combination of spotlight theory and hyper-presentism. Second, for hyper-backward-looking properties to be truthmakers, they must have a necessary connection of some sort with what has actually hyper-happened. If God erases those properties, then it has never hyper-happened that evil occurred. However, if evil occurs right now, then some further time (or hypertime, etc.) will necessarily instantiate backward (or hyper-backward, etc.)-looking property that evil existed (or hyper-existed, etc.). This option is not coherent to accept in the first place if we believe that there are evils right now. Thus, this strategy implies two consequences: 1) It is not possible to erase backward-looking properties in presentism (or hyper-presentism) without denying that the connection between events that had happened and the backward-looking properties of the present is necessary (it raises many difficulties on how exactly to formulate this connection, but it is not an aim of this paper); 2) Even if it would be possible to erase those properties, or this connection turns out to be not necessary, or it is impossible to coherently formulate it, regular presentism would suffice as much as the metaphysical foundation of the scene-changing theory, moreover, it would require only one evil eliminating act, instead of two.

At this point, we can see that if the proposition that the world contained (or hyper-contained, etc.) evil is true after the evil eliminating act, then it is a failed evil eliminating act. If it is false, then the regular presentism is as sufficient, as the metaphysical basis of the scene changing theory, and under the truth of the regular presentism, no evil eliminating act is needed. Moreover, in this case, hyper-backward and hyper-forward-looking properties of the hyper-present are redundant. Another possibility is that there hyper-was evils (after the Eschaton and the evil eliminating act), but those evils do not count as evils and they do not “leave traces”. This implies an unintuitive idea of counting of evils in hypertime, which requires an additional defense. Moreover, given that this idea of counting is justified in general, presentism is as sufficient, as the metaphysical basis of the scene-changing theory, while not requiring any evil eliminating act. The last option requires the evil eliminating act to be performed both in the first and in the second time-dimensions. This strategy implies that the connection between past events and what makes it true

that they happened is not necessary, which is a serious claim, requiring an additional defense. Even if this connection is not necessary or cannot be coherently formulated, then regular presentism is as sufficient as a metaphysical basis of the scene-changing theory. We can see that all interpretations imply difficulties for the scene-changing theory. Either evil eliminating act is a failed evil eliminating act, or regular presentism is a better option as it is metaphysically simpler and does not involve evil eliminating act. However, in this case, the theory faces either problematic metaphysical assumptions on truthmaking in presentism (or, hyper-presentism) or problematic theory of counting of evils.

6 Necessary Evils

All previous objections might be reformulated and applied to any theory which presupposes the metaphysical basis of the scene-changing theory, and presupposes that the past can be changed without leaving any traces. I am going to make a further objection to any theory which presupposes that God specifically can eliminate evils from the past no matter the underlying metaphysical foundations. This objection is related to notions of necessary evils and God's goodness, and I am going to argue that if God can erase/substitute evils from the past, preserving all good consequences of evils, then the evils of the world are not justified and, thus, God is not fully good. To put it differently, successful *Ultimate Forgiveness* or *No More Evil* is not compatible with God's goodness.

Consider the claim "The fact that evil E happened is a necessary condition for some further good G to happen". If E is a necessary condition for G to happen, then it is impossible for G to happen without E having happened. If we believe that the omnipotent being can do only what is logically possible, then it is impossible for an omnipotent being to make G happen, without E having happened, given that E is a necessary condition for G to happen. Imagine that after the Eschaton God somehow erases all evils without leaving any traces. After the Eschaton, it is true that evil never occurred in our world. Consider two worlds W1 and W2. In W1, evil has happened and God completely eliminated it after the Eschaton. In W2, God created the world which is the same as W1 after the Eschaton, but without the evil eliminating act. As we can see, the fact that evil never occurred is true in both worlds. So, there is no real difference between those worlds with respect to evils. The difference is that in W1 the evil eliminating act took place, and in W2 it did not. Imagine that God will eliminate all evils someday, and we experience evils now. In this case, it would be simultaneously true that there is no difference with respect to evils in W1 and W2, and yet, the difference is that we experience evils in W1, and not experience it in W2. This seeming incoherence is another way to put one of the latest objections from the previous part of this paper, but for the sake of the argument, imagine that it is not incoherent to believe it. It would mean that God can achieve the same consequences (Eschaton, in our example) without us experiencing any evils in this world. Thus, all the evils of the world are not necessary evils. But God's goodness requires Him to avoid the occurrence of not necessary evils, and He can do so, as He is omnipotent. If it is so, and God does not avoid the occurrence of unnecessary evils (and all evils are unnecessary), then He is not fully good (and if God's goodness is essential to Him, then God does not exist).

Let us concentrate on *No More Evil*. We can see, that the evil eliminating act requires all evils not to be necessary for Eschaton, and it is hard to see how God could be justified in permitting those evils in the first place. If some evils are necessary for the whole state of affairs after the Eschaton, then it is impossible to make it the case that those evils did not exist. It means that even if there exists one evil, which is necessary for the state of affairs after the Eschaton, then the evil eliminating act will never occur, as it requires all evils to be eliminated. Thus, if some evils are necessary for the state of affairs after the Eschaton, then the complete evil eliminating act is impossible. If there are no evils, which are necessary for the state of affairs after the Eschaton, then all of the evils are not justified, which contradicts the goodness of God. The same works for the *Ultimate Forgiveness*. If all moral evils could be eliminated or substituted after the Eschaton, then those moral evils are not necessary for the Eschaton. It means that there are unnecessary evils, which contradicts the goodness of God, as He could have created the world after the Eschaton without them.

7 Conclusion

In this paper, I argued that even if Lebens' and Goldschmidt's metaphysics, which underlie the scene changing theory is sufficient for genuine evil eliminating/substituting act (and for any change of the past), it could be replaced with regular presentism without losing any substantial heuristics. However, both presentism and the metaphysical basis of the scene-changing theory is problematic in this respect. Under one of the interpretations, their theory implies that backward and hyper-backward-looking properties are not functioning as truthmakers. The second possible interpretation implies a very controversial and counterintuitive theory of counting of events under presentism or hyper-presentism. In the last section of the paper, I argued that any successful theory of evil elimination/substitution made by God faces the problem that there are evils in the world that are not necessary, which contradicts to the goodness of God, as He could have created the world "after the Eschaton" without them. Thus, *No More Evil* and *Ultimate Forgiveness* seem to be problematic in the first place, given that God is fully good.¹⁶

References

- Bigelow, John. "Presentism and properties." In *Philosophical Perspectives 10: Metaphysics*, edited by James Tomberlin, 35-52. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996.
- Deasy, Daniel. "The Moving Spotlight Theory." *Philosophical Studies*, 172:8 (2015), 2073-2089.
- Deasy, Daniel. "What is presentism?" *Noûs*, 51:2 (2017), 378-397.
- Lebens, Samuel, and Goldschmidt, Tyron. "The Promise of a New Past." *Philosopher's Imprint* 17:18 (2017), 1–25.
- Mellor, Hugh. *Real Time II*. Routledge, 1998.
- Prior, Arthur. "Changes in events and changes in things." In *Papers on Time and Tense: Second Edition*, by Arthur Prior, 7-19. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1968 [2003].
- Sider, Theodore. "Presentism and Ontological Commitment." *Journal of Philosophy*, 96, (1999), 325-347.
- Sider, Theodore. *Four-Dimensionalism: An Ontology of Persistence and Time*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Sullivan, Meghan. "The minimal A-theory." *Philosophical Studies*, 158, (2012), 149-174.
- Smart, John. *Philosophy and Scientific Realism*. Routledge, 1963.
- Zimmerman, Dean. "The Privileged Present: Defending an 'A-Theory' of Time." In *Contemporary Debates in Metaphysics*, edited by Theodore Sider, John Hawthorne, and Dean Zimmerman, 211–225. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008.

¹⁶ The reported study was founded by RSCF according to the research project №19-18-00441 «The phenomenon of evil: from metaphysics to moral theories». I would like to address special thanks to my supervisor Danil Razeev, and to Sergey Levin, Pavel Butakov and the anonymous reviewers, for providing useful comments.