

A New Realist Philosophy of Time and its Augustinian or Post-Phenomenological Critique

In recent years, certain philosophical circles have come to revolve around a shared interest in reviving the project of something like realism, materialism, or ontology. This movement is no monolith. Conversations have grown up around the actor-network theory of Bruno Latour, the Badiou-inflected materialism of Quentin Meillassoux, and the Heidegger-influenced ontology of objects put forth by Graham Harman. What ties these disparate threads of thought together is the goal of somehow moving past a state of intellectual gridlock, which has supposedly stalled the momentum of movements that trace their roots back to German Idealism and phenomenology. The way to do this, according to many, is to remove the privilege accorded to the human subject in order to treat all ‘things’ as ontologically equal.

One of the liveliest voices in the field belongs to Tristan Garcia, a young French novelist and philosopher whose substantial work *Form and Object: a Treatise on Things* has just been translated into English.¹ Garcia’s take on things has, even more recently, turned towards time as a suitable topic for post-idealist or post-phenomenological speculation. In his article “Another Order of Time: Towards a Variable Intensity of the Now.”² Garcia offers up a new theory of temporality that, in his estimation, will allow us to move beyond the inadequate theories once offered up by idealism, phenomenology, and even Anglo-American ‘analytics.’

Throughout the article, Augustine of Hippo appears as a foil. In the account of temporality given in Book XI of Augustine’s *Confessions*, Garcia finds a precursor to the

¹ Tristan Garcia, *Form and Object: a Treatise on Things*, trans. Jon Cogburn & Mark Allan Ohm (Edinburgh UP, 2014). This work, henceforth cited as *FO*, was originally published as *Forme et Objet: un Traité des Choses* (PUF, 2011). Garcia is at one and the same time part of the Badiou-Meillassoux lineage and a student of Sandra Laugier. The Badiou-Meillassoux angle likely accounts for the unique appropriation of set theory that lies behind his logic of containing and being-contained. The Laugier connection, meanwhile, might explain the degree to which Garcia seems to be conversant with the history of twentieth-century Anglo-American philosophy, from the British Idealists through to contemporary analytic philosophy of time. Perhaps he has learned from the works of Jocelyn Benoist, as well.

² *Parrhesia* 14 (2014), 1-13; trans. Kris Pender.

phenomenology of time as inaugurated by Edmund Husserl. And yet, while Garcia's approach to time comes off as fresh and thought-provoking, it's not entirely clear that he's adequately dealt with the questions posed by both Augustine and the phenomenological tradition. Most specifically, he fails to appreciate the degree to which certain thinkers—Augustine not least among them—were willing to dethrone the 'present' from its privileged position at the center of temporality. This paper, then, aims both to sketch out Garcia's doctrine of time and to push back against it from the perspective of an Augustinian or perhaps even post-phenomenological critique of the present. It might turn out that the question of the now has less to do with intensity or intension than with what Augustine called 'distension.'

Speculative Realism

Before moving on to Garcia's explication of time, it might be helpful to say a bit more about the broader orientation of his thought. In general, 'speculative realism' is an umbrella term that tries, imperfectly, to group together diverse philosophical approaches, all of which try to make up for the supposed flaws of idealism, correlationism, or any other kind of -ism founded on the experience of a sentient subject. Garcia tends not to make explicit use of terms like Speculative Realism to describe his own work, instead preferring to declare his interest in "a thought about things rather than a thought about our thought about things."³ Still, his approach is usually classified as closest to the Object-Oriented Ontology of Graham Harman, whose own anti-idealism comes out of his reading of the phenomenological tradition.⁴

³ *FO*, 2.

⁴ More specifically, Harman takes Heidegger's tool- and thing-interpretations to be 'realist' attacks on Husserl's eidetic brand of transcendental idealism. See his *Tool-Being: Heidegger & the Metaphysics of Objects* (Open Court, 2002) and *The Quadruple Object* (Zero, 2011). In a review essay on *Form and Object*, Harman lays out the differences between his own project and Garcia's as he sees them. See "Tristan Garcia and the Thing-in-Itself," *Parrhesia* 16 (2013), 26-34, esp. 27, where Harman acknowledges this gap between his phenomenological background and Garcia's odd analytic-dialectical hybrid, while also pointing out that the two authors have a shared rootedness in debates which arose already with the Austrian School—with Brentano, Twardowski, and especially Meinong. As for similarities, see p. 29, where Harman points to the interests he and Garcia share: a "flat ontology"

Like Harman and others, Garcia is concerned that many of our traditional ways of conceiving objects amount to not much more than reductionism. At times, we reduce the being of a thing to the multiplicity of its constituent parts; at other times, we reduce a thing to the role it plays in a larger relational scheme; at still other times, we posit a substance-in-itself that would underlie the temporal existence of the thing. But while Harman, for example, does indeed seem to be interested in resuscitating some kind of neo-Aristotelian substance ontology, Garcia refuses to take that path. Instead, his argument for the reality of things is rooted in his definition of a thing as “the difference between *that which is in this thing* and *that in which this thing is*.”⁵ In other words, rather than positing a substance ‘in between’ the parts of a thing and a larger structure which includes that same thing, Garcia wants to let the thing simply be the difference between these two sides. To use his language of ‘comprehension:’ a thing is neither the things it comprehends (or, we might say, ‘contains’) nor some other thing that comprehends it. Instead, it is the relational distinction between these two movements of comprehension.⁶

for all things (not just natural kinds); the de-centering of the human subject; and a rejection of certain brands of relational ontology that would efface the integrity of the thing. (Although he ultimately accuses Garcia of falling back into a relationalism that amounts to much the same position.)

⁵ *FO*, 13. Earlier, he puts things a slightly different way: “A thing is nothing other than the difference between being-inside [*l’être entré*] and being-outside [*l’être sorti*].” (11) ‘Being-going-in’ and ‘being-going-out’ might be a better translation here than the translators’ ‘being-inside’ and ‘being-outside.’

⁶ In his introduction to *FO*, Garcia also explains this in terms of alternate channels of being—namely, the substantial and the vectorial. But what he’s after are “things which neither solidify into substances nor vanish into pure potentiality.” (7) And so he proposes a third, ‘just-right’ channel of being: the thingly channel. In the substantial channel, the being of the thing begins in itself and flows into itself; accidents or predicates merely accrue upon it. In the vectorial channel, external forces happen to come into play with one another, inadvertently bringing a temporary and contingent thing into being, which is really nothing more than an epiphenomenon. But the thingly channel is supposed to allow for the thing to both contain the being of its constituent parts and in turn contribute to the being of a larger thing of which it is a part. Thus it is the relational difference between these two being-relations, as above. The supposed virtue of Garcia’s own position is that it avoids the extremes of either the substantial or the vectorial definitions of thinghood: “The first produces a thing which is too much of a thing, which is ‘compact,’ while the second generates a thing which is not enough of a thing, which is only a construction or ephemeral projection. Our aim is the following: to conceive of a model that is neither too strong nor too weak, and to represent things that are really in the world without being in themselves.” (11)

Old Orders of Time

After laying out his formal notion of what a thing is, Garcia next moves on to a more encyclopedic exploration of how particular objects function within different relational frameworks. It is here, in the second book of *Form and Object*, that he spends more time laying out his concept of ‘intensity,’ by which he aims to make sense of the objective temporality of things in his overall system.⁷ Some readers have found that the relationship between intensity and time presented in book two is not as clearly drawn out as it could’ve been, and so perhaps it’s best to read Garcia’s later essay as an attempt to clarify his own position on temporality.⁸

In general, Garcia’s approach is guided by the analytic maxim that any definition of time must include all of the parts of time. To Garcia, this means taking account of the past, present, and future without violating the integrity of each of these modalities.⁹ Though he doesn’t pause to argue for how we might come to know that these tense terms apply to the objective reality of time, he is perhaps not to be singled out for this, since it seems fairly common in contemporary analytic philosophy of time to at least frame one’s approach to temporality in terms of the tenses.

Before laying out his own order of time, Garcia lists a number of previous approaches to the subject, all of which he considers to be carrying out Augustine’s mandate to question time.

Broadly speaking:

⁷ See, e.g., the section in *FO* entitled “Time,” 177-188.

⁸ See Harman, 33: “Another crucial aspect of Garcia’s philosophy is his conception of intensity, which feeds directly into his concept of time. But since this is the aspect of philosophy that I understand the least, and since I do not yet see how something can be more or less itself in a philosophy where all adumbrations are created equal, I will leave this theme for another day.” One of the main issues where Harman distances himself from Garcia has to do with the identity of things in time. For Harman, an object must in some sense remain the same object in time, despite its shifting manifestations before multiple observers. A tree seen in the summer is identical with the same tree as seen in the winter. Garcia, however, wants to retain the possibility that, for example, a tree at T_1 is as different from the apparently same tree at T_2 as it is from a unicorn. This reliance on a punctual logic of time ($T_1, T_2 \dots T_n$) is symptomatic of Garcia’s broader reliance on the notion of self-contained instants or moments.

⁹ Garcia, “Another Order of Time,” 1: “Considering that to understand time is to conserve the concept of it, we propose rather to maintain both the idea of time and all the modalities which it can have—notably, the future, the present and the past.” See also p. 3, where he defines time as “the connection of the present with a future and a past.” And, later on, see p. 8: “Whoever tries to think time must meet the challenge of differentiating and ordering past, present, and future, in order to maintain the existence and reality of these three concepts.”

Three traditions will assume the heritage of this Augustinian interrogation of the relations between the present and the other modalities of time. The first—faithful to the Augustinian reduction of the past or future to a “present of the past” or a “present of the future”, which then reduces this present to an activity of the mind—dedicates itself to a series of phenomenological questions on the time of consciousness. The second— dialectic—will find the key to becoming and its process in the contradictions secreted by the different parts of time: the synthesis of being and of non-being. The third—analytic—will, on the contrary, seek to resolve these contradictions by the adoption of temporal models that redistribute being between the future, present, past, and eternity.¹⁰

In judging between these three trends, Garcia resorts to something like a Goldilocks argument.

As he puts it, with reference to John McTaggart’s 1908 article “The Unreality of Time:”

It is the third tradition in the reinterpretation of the Augustinian problem, less well-known in France, which we will confront here. Being analytic, it is clearly opposed to the dialectical tradition that John McTaggart both introduced and buried in the Anglo-Saxon world. This tradition does not seek to conceive of time as a movement whose engine would be contradiction, but to deactivate the contradictions that threaten any representation of time. On the other hand, unlike the phenomenological tradition, it will purport to think objective time and not simply the manner in which the activity of an intentional consciousness can structure temporality.¹¹

¹⁰ “Another Order,” 2.

¹¹ “Another Order,” 2. Cf. J.M.E. McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time,” *Mind* 17, no. 68 (1908), 457-474. McTaggart’s treatment of time is rooted in his own brand of British idealism, but it lent its vocabulary of A-series (past, present, future) and B-series (before-after) to later work coming out of the philosophy of mind and language.

In other words: the phenomenological tradition, too subjective, merely reduces temporality to a facet of consciousness; the dialectical tradition, too contradictory, falters on the rocky shores of time's paradoxes; but the analytical tradition comes closest to getting it just right.

The Intensive Order of Time

And yet even the analytics must have recourse to another Goldilocks argument. Their conversation is for the most part split between two extreme camps: the presentists, for whom the present alone 'is,' and the eternalists, for whom all of time—past, present, and future—is' equally. The problem with presentism is that it robs not just the future but also the past of any being whatsoever, leaving us with a free floating instant. The problem with eternalism, meanwhile, is that it fails to preserve the exceptional status of the present in the flow of time, thereby collapsing the tense-categories into one another.

Due to the apparent inadequacy of both positions, a third has emerged: Growing Block Universe Theory, or (to resort to its grotesque acronym) GBUT.¹² Drawing on developments in the philosophies of both time and physics, GBUT holds that the present 'now' is indeed exceptional, insofar as it is the temporal site of the 'increase' of the overall presence of the universe. Garcia is taken with much of what GBUT has to offer, but he thinks it falls short of serving as a new theory of time. His main criticism is that, while GBUT preserves the privilege of the now, it doesn't give us a clear way of describing what makes this present now different from all of the previous nows that came before.¹³

¹² Recent proponents of GBUT include Peter Forrest and Michael Tooley, while it has also served as a topic in the work of Trenton Merricks. Garcia connects this current incarnation—conceptually, at least—back to the 1920s output of Charles Dunbar Broad, who was reacting to McTaggart, as the presentists and eternalists would also come to do. See "Another Order," 4-5.

¹³ After the failure of even GBUT, this is where we stand (according to "Another Order," 6): "The time of phenomenology is too narrow: it finds itself reduced to the time of consciousness; the time of the dialectical tradition, notably the Hegelian, is too broad: it is understood by and dissolved in the future. If one wants to think time, neither more nor less, it is necessary to engage with the analytic tradition; but this tradition breaks time to pieces and systematically plays some of its parts against the others, so that one has a lot of time, but never time

In order to give some order or rank to this proliferation of nows, Garcia next introduces his own account of time, which is built up around the concept of ‘intensity.’ What differentiates this present now from any other now-moment in history is that the level of presence is now more ‘intense’ than it ever has been. This can be seen in Garcia’s definitions of both the present and time itself. Of the present, he writes: “the present is that which is more present: the maximum of possible presence, and not an absolute presence (in which case only the present would be present, which is the position of the presentist).”¹⁴ And of time, he adds: “Time must be conceived as the objective condition of possibility due to the fact that events can be ordered by a subjectivity according to their relative presence. The existence of time is the sign that there is a more and more important presence in the universe and that this presence is ordered.”¹⁵ All of these definitions, meanwhile, continue to be undergirded by the notion of a now, a moment, an instant: “The ‘now’ of now is simply the one that is the most intense possible; the ‘now’ of yesterday is a past now because there are objectively more intense ‘nows,’ more present than it.”¹⁶ By a strange logic of progressive or increasing intensity, then, each new now is somehow ‘more present’ than the last. This is what accounts for our experience of the present as a privileged site of being. And yet Garcia wants this to apply beyond our experience, too. He wants time itself to proceed according to these degrees of intensity.

Aside from preserving the privilege of the present, the intensive order of time would have the added benefit of lending some relative degree of presence to the past, while leaving the future

entirely. Why? Because it divides time into extensions, considering past, present and future as parts of a whole—some real, others illusory. If this conception can only arrive at dead ends it is because it is necessary to cease thinking these modalities as extensive parts, and perhaps envisage them as variations of intensity.”

¹⁴ “Another Order,” 7.

¹⁵ “Another Order,” 8.

¹⁶ “Another Order,” 12.

to play the role of the truly absent.¹⁷ The hierarchy Garcia envisions is this: the present, in its intense presence, comes first; the past, in its dwindling intensity, comes next; and the future, the absence of any intensity, comes last.¹⁸ It is somehow the ground out of which these tiers of intensity emerge and fade away.

Critiquing the Intensive Now

Garcia's approach thus aims to account for the whole of time as it is, but in doing so it allows the narrow and potentially unfounded notion of a 'present instant' to determine the whole conversation about temporal presence. The unfortunate result is that this leaves his analysis open to a critique of the integrity of the present moment itself. If we have no defensible concept of the present, then the tense logic of past, present, and future is torn apart from within. So where should we look to find out about such a critique of the present? Two traditions come to mind, both of which are mentioned by Garcia in his own essay. The first is the Augustinian interrogation of time; the second is the Husserlian phenomenology of time and its critique.

Here we can only point out these two possible avenues for a critique of Garcia's intensive instant. If we look first to Book XI of Augustine's *Confessions*, we can recover an approach to time that is governed not by intensity or intension, nor even by extension, but by a dis-tension that disrupts the present from within. It's crucial to read Augustine on time not because he invented the field—we can always look elsewhere for that—but because his response to the

¹⁷ On the future, see "Another Order," 9: "The future, contrary to the past, is not an ordered process. The future is a fixed point of reference—without extension and in minimal intensity—which progressively detaches itself from the present, which is an irrevocable increase in the determinations of the universe." And on the past, see the same page: "All that passes is, however, less and less present, as there is more and more presence in the universe. Time is nothing other than this phenomenon: accumulation objectifies presence. This accumulation holds not only, as the supporters of GBUT believe, to the fact that the new present comes to be added to the past which continues to exist. Not only the past continues to be (even if its presence diminishes), but the present instant is more and more present. The now is not a fixed beam which brings events into the field of presence, it is a growing intensity, like a buzzing which would perpetually and without limit augment the volume of the universe."

¹⁸ "Another Order," 11: "Our intensive order is entirely different: the present is first, as maximal intensity of presence; the past, which is a second order in the very interior of the order of time, is the classification of events by the relative weakening of their presence; the future, finally, which is the ground rather than the horizon of time, corresponds to the greatest possible absence."

inconceivability of present extension was to replace it with the notion of distension, the absence of an identifiable present. The nature of time is for him *distentio animi*: not as the subjective activity of the soul, but as the objective force (*vis*) that rips the soul apart.¹⁹ If every supposedly present instant is infinitely divisible into smaller and smaller pasts and futures, then it might be the case that time itself does not produce for us a category of presence. As Augustine writes:

If we conceive of something temporal which could no longer be divided into any tiny little parts of movements—that alone is what could be called ‘present.’ And yet it flies immediately from future to past, so that it is stretched out by not even the smallest pause. For if it is stretched out, it is divided between past and future.

But the present has no span.²⁰

Such a destruction of the instant suggests that our incomplete concept of the present might just be a symptom of our unwarranted projection of tense logic (again: past, present, future) onto time, which is not inherently broken up into tenses.

The other path of critique would take us through the long and complex history of the phenomenology of time. Husserl’s own lectures on the consciousness of internal time are made up of a series of notes compiled over decades. In those pages, he explores the problem of the present from a wide array of angles, though he usually continues to uphold some kind of

¹⁹ See *Conf.* XI.xxiii.30: *ego scire cupio vim naturamque temporis, quo metimur corporum motus et dicimus illum motum verbi gratia tempore duplo esse diuturniorem quam istum.* / “I want to know the force and nature of time. I am talking about the time by which we measure the motion of bodies and say that that motion is, so to speak, twice as long as some other motion.” See also XI.xxix.39, for the rhetorical climax of the language of *distentio*.

²⁰ *Conf.* XI.xv.20: *si quid intellegitur temporis, quod in nullas iam vel minutissimas momentorum partes dividi possit, id solum est quod praesens dicatur; quod tamen ita raptim a futuro in praeteritum transvolat, ut nulla morula extendatur. nam si extenditur, dividitur in praeteritum et futurum; praesens autem nullum habet spatium.* See also, inter alia, XI.xi.13: *nullum vero tempus totum esse praesens.* And see again XI.xxi.23: *praesens vero tempus quomodo metimur, quando non habet spatium? metitur ergo cum praeterit, cum autem praeterierit, non metitur; quid enim metiatur non erit. sed unde et qua et quo praeterit, cum metitur? unde nisi ex futuro? qua nisi per praesens? quo nisi in praeteritum? ex illo ergo quod nondum est, per illud quod spatio caret, in illud quod iam non est.* / “But where is time passing ‘from,’ ‘through,’ or ‘to’ as we measure it? Where is it coming from if not the future? What is it passing through if not the present? What is it passing over to if not the past? Time passes, then, from what is not yet, through what lacks any span, and into what no longer is.” All translations from Augustine are my own.

‘primary impression’ or ‘living present’ as the core of temporal experience.²¹ While retention of the past and protention of the future are intimately intertwined with that present, they do in some sense remain subordinate to it.

Though Heidegger was sensitive to these problems of temporality—as is obvious from his early lectures on the history of the concept of time, as well as *Being & Time* and the much later *On Time & Being*—he is not the thinker who went most doggedly after this particular problem of the present in Husserl.²² That distinction goes to Jacques Derrida, whose early writings demonstrate both a deep appreciation of the phenomenology of time and a sensitivity to the way that the present is unjustly privileged within that phenomenology. *Speech & Phenomena* is the text that makes this point most clearly, by applying a critique of the present instant—not unlike that of Augustine’s—to Husserl’s discussion of temporal speech in his *Logical Investigations*.

This critique is at its most rigorous in the section titled “Signs and the Blink of an Eye.” There, Derrida begins by clarifying the stakes of the question of the present:

we cannot avoid noting that a certain concept of the ‘now,’ of the present as punctuality of the instant, discretely but decisively sanctions [Husserl’s] whole system of ‘essential distinctions.’ If the punctuality of the instant is a myth, a spatial or mechanical metaphor, an inherited metaphysical concept, or all that at once, and if the present of self-presence is not simple, if it is constituted in a

²¹ Edmund Husserl, *Lectures on the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893-1917)*, trans. John Barnett Brough (Springer, 1991). The 1905 lectures are built around primal impression and its retentive and protentive modification (e.g., pp. 30-33). Yet we can already see this logic emerging in earlier notes, beginning around 1893 (e.g., pp. 178-184, on the perception of the ‘now’).

²² That is not to take away from Heidegger’s own contributions to the philosophy of time, such as his account of the ecstatic temporality of *Dasein*. But Heidegger seems more concerned with elaborating his own analytic of temporality than with working out how Husserl’s reliance on a present instant caused problems for the classical phenomenology of consciousness.

primordial and irreducible synthesis, then the whole of Husserl's argumentation is threatened in its very principle.²³

The same could perhaps be said of Garcia's system. Derrida's own position, meanwhile, is that the present need not be privileged, since it is not primordial. Rather, it is constituted out of those so-called modalities it tries to keep out—retention and protention, something of the past and something of the future. As he writes:

One then sees quickly that the presence of the perceived present can appear as such only inasmuch as it is continuously compounded with a nonpresence and a nonperception, with primary memory and expectation (retention and protention). These nonperceptions are neither added to, nor do they occasionally accompany, the actually perceived now; they are essentially and indispensably involved in its possibility.²⁴

From all this he draws the consequence:

As soon as we admit this continuity of the now and the not-now, perception and nonperception, in the zone of primordially common to primordial impression and primordial retention, we admit the other into the self-identity of the *Augenblick*; nonpresence and nonevidence are admitted into the *blink of the instant*. There is a duration of the blink, and it closes the eye.²⁵

Many of Derrida's texts, from early essays like "*Différance*" to later works like *Specters of Marx*, invoke this non-presentist account of time in the service of a larger philosophy of

²³ Derrida, *Speech & Phenomena* (henceforth *SP*), trans. David B. Allison (Northwestern UP, 1973), 61.

²⁴ *SP*, 64.

²⁵ *SP*, 65.

difference and deferral.²⁶ Here it might be helpful to recall that Garcia's project, too, wishes to express itself in terms of a fundamental difference that lies at the core of every thing's identity. And yet Garcia's metaphysical doctrine of objective difference fails to appreciate the role that constitutive difference might play within time itself. Just as things are to be defined as the difference between what they contain and what they are contained by, perhaps the present should be reduced to the mere difference between coming and going, between the not-yet and the already. Or, as Derrida might put it, we should refuse to unjustifiably privilege present intension at the expense of future protention and past retention, which might in fact turn out to be more 'primordial' than the present.²⁷

Conclusion

My goal here was not simply to throw a wrench into the gears of Garcia's seemingly well-oiled machine. Despite the critique I've begun to offer, I have to say that I've so far found his work to be more thought-provoking than frustrating. The liveliness of his arguments and the readability of his prose make him an engaging conversation partner. And, on a personal note, I'd like to strive to be more impressed by than jealous of a thirty-three-year-old thinker who's already written a number of acclaimed novels, as well as a philosophical magnum opus.

²⁶ See, e.g., "Différance," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (University of Chicago Press, 1984), 13: "It is because of *différance* that the movement of signification is possible only if each so-called 'present' element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself, thereby keeping within itself the mark of the past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element, this trace being related no less to what is called the future than to what is called the past, and constituting what is called the present by means of this very relation to what it is not: what it absolutely is not, not even a past or a future as a modified present." On Derrida's interest in differentiation in the most general sense, recall his letter from Roger Laporte, cited as an epigraph in *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Johns Hopkins UP, 1998), 65: "You have, I suppose, dreamt of finding a single word for designating difference and articulation. I have perhaps located it by chance in Robert[']s Dictionary] if I play on the word, or rather indicate its double meaning. This word is *brisure* [joint, break]—'broken, cracked part. Cf. breach, crack, fracture, fault, split, fragment—hinged articulation of two parts of wood- or metal-work. The hinge, the *brisure* [folding-joint] of a shutter. Cf. *joint*.'"

²⁷ *SP*, 85: "The living present springs forth out of its nonidentity with itself and from the possibility of a retentional trace. Being-primordial must be thought on the basis of the trace, and not the reverse."

But the critique of the present instant stands. It won't go away. It is presented in a rough sketch by Augustine, and it comes back with force in the aftermath of phenomenology. Any future philosophy of time should have to reckon not just with the relationship between past, present, and future tenses, but with the integrity of the present itself. It's here that Garcia's intensive order of time fails. And that failure may derive from the larger attempt to build a new philosophical system on the ashes of the Augustinian and phenomenological traditions, despite the fact that both are not as burnt out as they might seem.