

THE ART OF TIME TRAVEL: AN 'INSOLUBLE' PROBLEM SOLVED

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Abstract

In 'An Insoluble Problem' (2010), Storrs McCall presents an argument which he takes to reveal the real problem with backwards time travel. McCall asks us to imagine a scenario in which a renowned artist produces his famous works by copying them from reproductions brought back to him by a time-travelling art critic. The novelty of the scenario lies in its introduction of aesthetic constraints on the possibility of time travel, something which sets it apart from other time travel cases. McCall states that 'The puzzle lies ... in finding where artistic creativity enters the equation', and that 'Unlike the traditional "paradoxes of time travel", this problem has no solution'. We offer four responses to McCall's puzzle. Whilst we show that the puzzle is not insoluble, we also argue that it reveals something about the proper relationship between copying and creativity, which may not have been apparent without considering time travel.