

Letter from A.N. Prior to Hans Kamp, March 24, 1967

Balliol  
March 24, 1967.

Dear Hans<sup>1</sup>,

Many thanks for your letter of the 19<sup>th</sup>. The results you're getting are very exciting indeed.

One query: Suppose time is circular, i.e. suppose

we have

1.  $\vdash p \rightarrow Pp$ ,
2.  $\vdash Fp \rightarrow Pp$ , 3.  $\vdash PPP \rightarrow Pp$ ,

In addition to the minimal tense-logic  $K_t$ . All those theorems are of course easily expressible in terms of S & U. Now, in a system of this kind,  $\vdash Pp \rightarrow PPP$  does not express time's denseness, but is a trivial consequence of 1. What formula would distinguish dense from discrete time in such circumstances? Will something in S & U do it? John Lucas of this University can do it with something triadic; & your theorem about the "completeness" of S & U suggests that anything triadic can be defined in terms of [them??] – but that theorem, as I understand your exposition of it, has only been proved for dense time.

I'm not sure whether, when you wrote, you had got my own note asking about your thesis-title &. From your letter it looks as if you probably haven't anything definite enough for me to include in my bibliography; but maybe you have now.

I don't know whether I mentioned in my note that my Past, Present & Future is now being bound, & should be out soon. I'm afraid that, as its already printed, it's too late for me to alter  $\Phi$  &  $\Psi$  to S & U in the bit that sketches your own work, but you'll be able to make the alteration when you publish your own stuff. – I may or may not have mentioned that Ann's book the The Sky Cage<sup>2</sup> is also due to be published in the next few month.

The best from us all to yourself, to Richard, & to such of our old friends as you see

– Yours,

Arthur Prior

P.S. Please note that my College isn't All Souls but Balliol. (C.C. Chang, however, is at All Souls; so are Crossley & Dummett).

Yours,

Arthur Prior

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<sup>1</sup> Editors' note: This letter has been transcribed by Woosuk Park, Adriane Rini and David Jakobsen. It is located at the Bodleian Library Oxford in the Arthur Prior Collection, box 2. The letter is written on an Aerogramme addressed to H. Kamp, 10949 Williams Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90024 USA.

<sup>2</sup> Editors' note: This was Arthur's daughter Ann Prior's first book published when she was 16, published by Chatto and Windus 1967. A sequel followed: *Mirror Image* (1969). For more information see Ann Prior Obituary in *The Guardian*, 9 June 2016: <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2016/jun/09/ann-prior-obituary>

