

Letter from A.N. Prior to Hans Kamp, December 9, 1967

Balliol College,
Oxford.
Dec. 9, 1967

Dear Hans¹,

Many thanks for your letter and for the enclosed material. I have written a reference for you & posted it to David Kaplan. I attach my own latest piece on “Now”. It will also be printed as one of the papers in a collection of mine, Papers on Time and Tense, that is coming out next term. Section VII, I think, is relevant to your own treatment of this subject. I haven’t fully assimilated this letter, but it looks as if you have succeeded in formalising something which I regarded as practically unformalisable. – I like your piece on dates too. It is, I suppose, closer to my own treatment of “instants” than to my treatment of dates, esp. in one of my new papers (to appear in the collection above mentioned) where I say that *Uab* could be defined not only as *LCaFb* but equally well as *MKaFb* – if one said similarly that *Tap* could be defined not only as *LCap* but equally well as *MKap*, we would get your definition of “*p* is true at the date *a*”. I agree that this is a more fundamental notion of a date than that which I defined in terms of metric tense-logic, but don’t we need something like the latter if we are to have a system for naming dates? {2} (My account is like an account of the decimal system of numerical notation; yours is like something from the more fundamental sort of number theory). – I think that in the Montague thing you sent me, a page is missing from the bibliography (my bibliography only goes up to Kripke).

Yours sincerely,

Arthur Prior

¹ Editors’ note: This letter has been transcribed by Woosuk Park, Adriane Rini, Patrick Blackburn and David Jakobsen. It is located at the Bodleian Library Oxford in the Arthur Prior Collection, box 2.