We begin with Aristotle, a good place to begin. His understanding of time grounds all subsequent discussions of the nature of time, including discussions among those who argue for, or theorize, or imagine, or experience no-time in a non-place.

For Aristotle, time does not exist without change: “So just as there would be no time if there were no distinction between this ‘now’ and that ‘now,’ but it were always the same ‘now’: in the same way there appears to be no time between two ‘nows’ when we fail to distinguish between them.”¹ Indeed, for Aristotle, time depends on change occurring or on change that has occurred, both of which mean that an interval of time has elapsed, whether or not we realize this.²

¹ Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. Philip H. Wicksteed and Francis M. Cornford (Cambridge, 1929, rev. and rpt. 1967) iv, ch. 11, 218b (p. 383). Aristotle’s definition of time describes what is now called the A-series theory of time, where time is *tensed*—experienced as past, present, or future—and *moves*—said to be always passing in a “forward” direction. The B-series theory of time holds that events stand in “the unchanging relations of temporal precedence or simultaneity to each other” (see Robin Le Poidevin, *The Images of Time: An Essay on Temporal Representation* [New York, 2007], p. 63: “that time does not pass: there is only temporal order”). As Le Poidevin explains, “if there really is an A-series, if time really is passing, then B-series relations are simply a product of A-series positions... To hold that there is an A-series is not to assert the unreality of the B-series.” There is, however, “no plausible way to invert this and represent the A-series as supervening on the B-series in...a simple way. Passage [of time] does not simply emerge from order... It would, perhaps, be possible to hold that A-series passage and B-series order were completely independent of each other, but this would be a deeply unattractive position” (p. 63). We are left, therefore, with often irreconcilable semantics of time that entail confusion, for example, about what we mean when we say that we perceive events as *present*: we might mean that we are present as *events pass*—that we perceive events passing—or that we remember events so that we perceive a memory image as *present* in which events pass. See also M. Joshua Mozersky, “The B-Theory in the Twentieth Century,” in *A Companion to the Philosophy of Time*, eds. Heather Dyke and Adrian Bardon (Chichester, 2013), pp. 167–182.

² Not realizing this seems to create a “now of indeterminate duration,” not a present and, therefore, “no time” in Aristotle’s sense, because there seems to be no change in such a “now”: time is the measure of change. See *Physics*, iv, chap. 11, 218b (p. 383): “For when we experience no changes of consciousness, or, if we do, are not aware of them, no time seems to have
But Aristotle’s discussion of time is not a view that makes no-time—time without change—impossible to postulate or experience. And indeed Sidney Shoemaker suggests how the idea of time without change might be argued for.3

When we have been asleep, we are prepared to allow that a good deal of time has elapsed since a given event occurred even though we were not ourselves aware of any change during the interval, for in such cases it is plausible to hold that our belief that an interval of a certain duration has elapsed is founded on the inductively grounded belief that changes did occur that we could have been aware of had we been awake and suitably situated.4

There are, as Shoemaker implies here, logically conceivable circumstances “in which the existence of changeless intervals could be detected.”5

passed, any more than it did to the men in the fable who ‘slept with the heroes’ in Sardinia, when they awoke; for under such circumstances we fit the former ‘now’ on to the later, making one and the same and eliminating the interval between them, because we did not perceive it.” On Aristotle’s understanding of change, see Physics, v.

3 Aristotle’s understanding of a “now of indeterminate duration” provides the context for Shoemaker’s argument that there can be no-time, which is not the same as “no time” in Aristotle’s sense. See Aristotle’s rhetorical question in Physics iv, chap. 10, 217b–218a (p. 373): “Some of it is past and no longer exists, and the rest is future and does not yet exist; and time, whether limitless or any given length of time we take, is entirely made up of the no-longer and not-yet; and how can we conceive of that which is composed of non-existents sharing in existence in any way?” Aristotle’s question implies that a “now” without a discernable past or future means that time, as a measure of change, does not exist: without boundaries, there is, in Aristotle’s sense, no change. But Aristotle’s argument here, implied by his rhetorical question, is an argument that for Aristotle isn’t true. The argument is meant to catch those who, for Aristotle, reason incorrectly. A “now of indeterminate duration” has a past that, yes, “no longer exists,” but that had to exist, and a future that does not “yet exist,” but will exist. There always is, for Aristotle, a past and a future, hence a present, hence change, hence time, the measure of change. See also iv, chap. 10, 218b (pp. 375, 377): “Again, if simultaneity in time, and not being before or after, means coinciding and being in the very ‘now’ wherein they coincide, then, if the before and the after were both in the persistently identical ‘now’ we are discussing, what happened ten thousand years ago would be simultaneous with what is happening to-day, and nothing would be before or after anything else.” For Shoemaker’s argument that there are ways to perceive what occurs or has occurred in this one continuous “now,” see “Time without Change,” in The Philosophy of Time, Oxford Readings in Philosophy, eds. Robin Le Poidevin and Murray MacBeath, (Oxford, 1993, rpt. 2009), pp. 63–79.

4 Shoemaker, p. 65.

5 Shoemaker, p. 79 (italics his).