

CAMERON'S MOVING SPOTLIGHT

Ted Sider
Philosophy of Time

1. Eternalism

2. Spacetime

3. Temporal distributional properties

Temporal distributional properties, like *being hot before cold*, don't "reduce" to more local properties (Parsons, 2004).

4. Ages

Cameron is a primitivist about "ages", and uses them to define presentness. E.g., if something's spatiotemporal location begins on February 8, 2021, and its age is 1 year, that makes February 8, 2021 the present moment.

5. How it works

6. Things with infinite histories

What is the "age" of something with an infinite past and infinite future?

Suppose instead then that time is infinite in both directions. Well, just pick an arbitrary time—1980, e.g.—and think of the age of things as giving the distance from that time: an age of -10 years putting things 10 years before 1980 and an age of +10 years putting things ten years after. Then time can be infinite in both directions and things still have different ages at different times. I don't think ages understood as distance from 1980 should be objectionable if ages in any sense are permissible, since the bog-standard conception of ages I've been working with above is basically equivalent to distance from the first time. Why should distance from the first time be okay and not distance from some other time if there simply happens to be no first one? (Don't think of this view as 'privileging' 1980 in some objectionable way. The time we pick really is arbitrary, and the picking of an arbitrary time is just a way for us to get a grasp on the age property. It makes no difference whether we think of age as distance from

1980 and describe the age of things in the year 2000 as being 20 years after time t or whether we think of age as distance from 2050 and think of the age of things in 2000 as being 50 years before time t . These are just two ways of thinking about exactly the same property.) (Cameron, 2015, p. 143)

What is the rule, whereby ages determine which moment is present?

Also, without ages for two-way temporally infinite objects, the Cameronian facts don't globally settle the B facts (example of lamps).

I concede the point. But I think I can handle these cases—just not quite in the way I attempted to do in the book. When we consider the two lamps, Sider is right that just looking at the temporal distributional properties, locations and ages of each will not tell us whether they are in sync. But looking at the properties of their fusion will. An object composed of two lamps that flash red + red then green + green then red + red, etc. has a different intrinsic nature across time from one that flashes red+green then green+red then red+green, etc. (Cameron, 2017, p. 817)

This move toward monism at best solves the problem of unsettled B facts.

7. How A is this theory?

8. Rejecting fundamental tense

We want the spotlight to *really* move: we want how reality is itself to be subject to change, not merely to reconcile the truth of tensed talk with a fundamentally static reality.” (p. 85)

References

- Cameron, Ross P. (2015). *The Moving Spotlight: An Essay on Time and Ontology*. Oxford University Press.
- (2017). “Reply to Miller, Sider and Skow.” *Analysis* 77(4): 810–824.
- Parsons, Josh (2004). “Distributional Properties.” In Frank Jackson and Graham Priest (eds.), *Lewisian Themes*, 173–80. Oxford: Oxford University Press.