

TEMPORAL PARTS AND CHANGE

Ted Sider
Intro Metaphysics

1. Analogy between time and space

- Space:*
- You can be in different places (where your head is, where your foot is)
 - You can have different “properties” in different places (head-shaped here, foot-shaped there)

This is possible because you have different parts located at different places.

- Time:*
- You can be at different times (even at one place)
 - You can have different properties at different times.

Idea: this is possible because you also have different “temporal parts”, located at different times.

Perdurance theory Material objects are made up of temporal as well as spatial parts. They “perdure” through time.

Endurance theory Although material objects have spatial parts, they do not have temporal parts. The entire object is present at any moment of its existence; it “endures” through time.

2. The problem of change

1. The person who entered the salon has the property *having long hair*; the person who exited the salon lacks this property
2. If one object has some property that another object lacks, the objects are not identical

3. Therefore, the person who entered the salon is not identical to the person who exited the salon

Earlier we responded that *having long hair* isn't a property. (What's a property is *having long hair before the haircut* and *having long hair after the haircut*.) But Hawley suggests there's a further issue:

The banana in the fruitbowl was unripe a few days ago, and today it is overripe. Surely nothing can be both unripe and overripe? Of course, it's the fact that the banana is unripe and overripe at different times which saves it from metaphysical peril: we all know that. But it would be nice to understand why this fact is crucial: what is it about the passage of time which makes it possible for one and the same object to have apparently incompatible properties? (Hawley)

Here's a way to bring out the further issue. Why do we think my head is a different object from my foot? Probably because of this argument:

Argument from "spatial change"

1. My head has the property *being round (at the current time)*, my foot lacks this property
2. If one object has some property that another object lacks, the objects are not identical
3. Therefore, my head is not identical to my foot

But now what if someone says that my hand is identical to my foot, and that *being round at the current time* isn't a property; what's a property is *being round at the current time and at a certain place above my torso*; and my foot also has that property. What has gone wrong?

Possible answer: *being round at a certain time* is a property. But then, shouldn't we say that actually, *being round* is a property after all? That would reinstate the argument from change.

3. Temporal parts and change

But that's ok. The person who entered the salon is distinct from the person who exited, but each is part of me—just as the head and the foot are distinct, but each is part of me.