

Questions on Markosian, 'A Defense of Presentism'

PHIL 1480 Metaphysics

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1. 'According to Non-presentism, on the other hand, non-present objects... exist right now, even though they are not currently present.' (p.2) Is this a fair presentation of the Non-presentist view, bearing in mind the qualification in footnote 3?
2. Markosian doesn't even purport to give an argument against 'Unrestricted Presentism' (5–6). What, if anything, might be wrong with this view?
3. Apropos of section 3.3, distinguish the claim that *there are* singular propositions from the claim that sentences using proper names *express* such propositions. Here is an argument for the former claim: for some x , someone believes that x is red; therefore, for some x , someone believes the proposition that x is red; therefore, for some x , there is such a thing as the proposition that x is red; therefore, there is at least one singular proposition. Is this decisive? To what extent would merely denying the *second* claim help the presentist?
4. Apropos of section 3.4, what exactly is the point of bringing in haecceities supposed to be. If one were prepared to accept that the property of being identical to x does not depend for its existence on x , why would one not also accept that the proposition that x is F does not depend for its existence on x ?
5. What, exactly, is Markosian up to when, as in 3.6–3.8, he provides (what he takes to be) literally true substitutes for (what he takes to be) literally untrue claims? How is this different from the 'paraphrase' strategy discussed in 3.5? To what extent does Markosian succeed in mitigating the implausibility of his denial that the original claims are literally true?
6. Is it plausible that Markosian's claim (8) 'captures what is true in the claim that I admire Socrates' (p. 19)? Does it matter that, intuitively, I could have admired Socrates even if he had never been called 'Socrates'?
7. How serious is the problem for this kind of approach raised by Sider in section 2.2 of his book (available on the courseweb site?)
8. What is the contrast between propositional content and linguistic meaning (section 3.8)? Why does Markosian assign (9) the truth condition (TC9) rather than "'George W. Bush is president of the US" is true iff $\exists x \exists y (x \text{ is the referent of "George W. Bush" and } y \text{ is the property expressed by "is president of the US" and } x \text{ has } y)$ '? Does it matter?
9. In the final section, Markosian embraces the claim that if things are going to be exactly the same way, qualitatively, in 100 years as in 200 years, then there is only one *time* that we refer to when we talk about 'the time 100 years from now' and 'the time

200 years from now'? Why does he say this? How counterintuitive is it, and is that a problem?

10. How bad is it for a presentist (or other A-theorist) to claim that, Special Relativity notwithstanding, there is such a thing as absolute simultaneity, and hence (as explained in class) such a thing as absolute velocity?