

## Questions on Sider's 'Temporal Parts'

PHIL 1480 Metaphysics

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1. '[the temporal parts theorist] will want to give the following temporal-parts theory of indexing: a person has long hair *at* time *t* because that person's temporal part at *t* has long hair *simpliciter*' [p. 6]. This suggests, without clearly endorsing, a general analysis of '*x* is *F* at *t*' as '*x*'s temporal part at *t* is *F simpliciter*'. Is such a general analysis defensible? (Hint: consider substituting something like 'is a person' or 'is a child' or 'is red at *t*' or 'is a timeslice' for '*F*'). If not, how does the untenability of this general analysis bear on the argument from temporary intrinsics?
2. Is there any force to the 'metaphysical intuition' that some objects are straight, black, or weigh 50 grams *simpliciter* [p. 8], as opposed to relative to this or that time? If so, is the force of this intuition undermined if the objects in question are going to turn out to be things (temporal parts) that don't belong to any of the kinds we normally talk about?
3. Now that you've considered the various alternatives, what appears to you to be the most reasonable response to the arguments for 'cohabitation' on pp. 9–10? Should we accept their conclusions? Or should we resist them somehow?
4. How compelling are the two arguments against cohabitation that Sider presents on p. 11? How good are the objections to these arguments that Sider presents on pp. 17–18? Are there other good objections to the arguments that do not require one to believe in temporal parts?
5. In arguing against mereological essentialism and nihilism, Sider appeals to various commonsense beliefs, e.g. that there are statues, and that statues can survive the destruction of some of their parts. How bad a problem for these views is this clash with common sense?
6. Sider claims that things would *look* just the same no matter which of these views [mereological essentialism, nihilism, temporal parts] were true. In the light of this, should we conclude that we can't have good reason to believe or disbelieve any of the views?
7. On p. 15, Sider claims that for all we know, there are no simples [things without proper parts] at all. Are the reasons he advances in support of this claim good ones? Is there a serious problem here for the proponent of the nihilist solution to the paradoxes?
8. On p. 20, Sider says that it would suffice to establish temporal parts theory if one could establish that all tracing scenarios have targets. But if we define 'temporal parts theory' in such a way as to include the claim that the most fundamental notion of parthood is a timeless one, I don't think he's right about this. How plausible is

the view that accepts that all tracing scenarios have targets while rejecting the notion of timeless parthood? How might a believer in timeless parthood argue against it?

9. On p. 20-21, Sider argues that all tracing scenarios have targets on the grounds that any limit that admitted ordinary objects while ruling out certain extraordinary ones would be unacceptably *anthropocentric*. How good is this argument?
10. On p. 21, Sider argues that all tracing scenarios have targets on the grounds that any limit that admitted ordinary objects while ruling out certain extraordinary ones would be unacceptably *vague*. How good is this argument? In particular, how plausible is its central premise, namely the claim that existence [or better, unrestricted quantification] is not vague?