

Tensed time

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146 Philosophy of Physics
Class 5, 11 October 2007

Tense vs. dynamism

Two distinct issues:

- 1 static vs. dynamic dispute: concerns reality or unreality of temporal passage
 - 2 tenseless vs. tensed dispute: concerns concepts required to describe world in metaphysically adequate way
- e.g. B-theory combines two distinct claims:
- 1 world is static, all times/events equally real (block universe)
 - 2 world can be fully described in tenseless terms

	static	dynamic
tenseless	B-theory	×
tensed	×	A-theory

“the tensed view takes McTaggart’s ‘A-series’ terminologically indispensable for the metaphysics—not just the epistemology and the semantics—of time, whereas the tenseless view takes the ‘B-series’ terminology alone to be indispensable for the metaphysics of time.” (Lowe (1998), 43)

Lowe maintains that

- only abstract objects which do not exist in space and time can tenselessly have properties
 - anything that does exist in space and time can possess properties only in a tensed way
- ⇒ “There is rain in San Diego on 25 September 2071.” is tensed i.e. it’s an abbreviation for saying “There was, is now, or will be rain in San Diego on 25 September 2071.”
- **disjunctive tensed predication**

Reminder: Mellor's challenge

Consider Mellor's dilemma for the A-theorist: "they must accept that either (i) tensed sentences are made true by tensed facts that are *non-token-reflexive*, or (ii) tensed sentences are made true by token-reflexive facts that are *tenseless*." (Dainton, 64)

- but (ii) amounts to rejecting tensed facts (and thus the metaphysical significance of tense)
- but (i) is incoherent: "World War One is now over" is true if tokened after 1918, and false if tokened before, but this cannot be the case if the truthmaker is a tensed fact that is independent of when the sentence is tokened

Lowé grabs the second horn of the dilemma but rejects that the truthmakers must be tenseless facts.

According to him, the truth-conditions of tensed facts must be stated e.g. as follows:

A token of the proposition "It is now raining in San Diego" [is] true iff it [is] uttered at a time t s.t. it [is] raining in San Diego at t .

where the square bracket indicates the disjunctive tensed predication.

- This is necessary bc we are talking about truth-conditions for a token sentence, not an abstract type, and these are concrete entities in time and space and are so subject to tensed predication.

McTaggart's indexical fallacy

Lowe charges McTaggart with what he calls an “indexical fallacy”:

- It's incoherent to say things like “Caesar's death was future”, just as it's incoherent to say things like “It's raining here over there”.
- Rather, what is meant by the latter sentence is sth like this: an utterance over there of the sentence “It's raining here” is true.
- Likewise, an A-theorist is at most committed to sth like this:

“For any event e , (i) it either was, is now, or will be true to say that ‘ e has happened’, and (ii) it either was, is now, or will be true to say that ‘ e is happening now’, and (iii) it either was, is now, or will be true to say that ‘ e will happen’.” (Lowe (1998), 46)

More generally, “presentness” etc—whatever they are—cannot be properties bc

- If presentness is a(n intrinsic) property predicated of events, then either it's tenselessly always so predicated or it is now, has been, or will be predicated only temporarily.
 - That a property such as presentness is eternally predicated of an event is absurd.
 - If events possess properties such as presentness only temporarily leads to overdetermination problems as encountered in §2.6 of Dainton.
- ⇒ Presentness, pastness, futurity are not (intrinsic) properties of events.

- But if they are not properties, what are they?
- Lowe doesn't really help here, beyond saying that they are fundamental concepts which are “semantically irreducible”
- Does this mean that the difference bw past, present and future is merely verbal?!?
- Let's look at metaphysically more substantive proposals...