1. The Question

What is it for an object to persist through time? For example, what makes this book before you today the same book that before you last Thursday?

These are questions of diachronic identity: identity over time.

Diachronic identity is to be distinguished from synchronic identity: identity at a time.

An example of synchronic identity: At present, this is my favorite shirt.

2. Two Views

**Endurantism:** for an object $a$ to persist through times $t_1 \ldots t_n$ a must exist wholly and completely at every time $t_1 \ldots t_n$.

Consider Teddy:

yesterday
giving

today

According to the endurantist, Teddy of yesterday = Teddy today. That is, Teddy of yesterday is numerically identical with Teddy of today. To say that this and that are numerically identical is to say that they are one and the same: one thing rather than two. So, Teddy is *one and the same thing* at each of these times and, as a result, exists wholly and completely at each.

So, the expressions ‘Teddy of yesterday’ and ‘Teddy of today’ pick out the same concrete particular (thing in the world). (Just like ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ pick out the same concrete particular.)

Teddy persists from yesterday to today because Teddy of yesterday = Teddy today. In the language of endurantism, Teddy endures from yesterday to today.

**Perdurantism:** for an object $a$ to persist through times $t_1 \ldots t_n$, there must be, for every time $t_1 \ldots t_n$ some time slice $b$ such that $b$ is a part of $a$.

Consider Teddy again:

yesterday
giving
today

According to the perdurantist, Teddy of yesterday ≠ Teddy today. That is, Teddy of yesterday is numerically distinct from Teddy of today; they are not identical.
So, the expressions ‘Teddy of yesterday’ and ‘Teddy of today’ do not pick out the same concrete particular (thing in the world). (Unlike how ‘Superman’ and ‘Clark Kent’ pick out the same concrete particular.)

But: What existed yesterday, is not Teddy himself but a temporal part of Teddy. (The same goes for what exists today.) Just like Teddy’s hand is a spatial part of Teddy, Teddy of yesterday (or Teddy of today) is a temporal part of Teddy.

According to the perdurantist, Teddy is an aggregate of his temporal parts. (In this case, we might call these temporal parts Teddy of yesterday and Teddy of today.) Teddy is the whole of his temporal parts.

Perdurantists also call these temporal parts, temporal slices, stages, or phases. Teddy persists from yesterday to today because there are particulars such as Teddy of yesterday and Teddy of today that count as parts of Teddy. In the language of perdurantism, Teddy *perdures* from yesterday to today.

**Question:** Suppose you shake Teddy’s hand. There are two senses in which you directly touch only a part of him. What are these two senses?

Both endurantism and perdurantism claim that their respective views apply to *all* material things. Philosophers will typically hold one, or the other, for all things.

(*note: not to scale)

3. **The Problem of Temporary Intrinsics (or The Problem of Change)**

Endurantists argue that their view aligns with our pre-theoretic intuitions about diachronic identity. Perdurantism does not, they say. After all, when we claim that Teddy of yesterday is the same thing as Teddy of today, it looks like we are doing nothing more than the claiming that Teddy of yesterday is numerically identical with Teddy of today.

a. The perdurantist’s strategy: Argue that a closer inspection of our pre-theoretic intuitions reveals that they presuppose a perdurantist picture, as opposed to an endurantist picture, of diachronic identity.

b. The phenomenon: Change in properties; we all agree that things not only persist through time, but that they change over time. That is, they change their intrinsic properties.

   *intrinsic property:* roughly, a property a thing can have independent of any other thing.

   *non-intrinsic property:* roughly, a property a thing can have only in relation to other things (e.g., the property of being a sister).

c. The challenge for endurantists: Suppose that, after a couple of years of being your best pal, your mom washes Teddy. Unfortunately, Teddy is accompanied in the wash by a red sock. Teddy emerges from the wash pink. So, we would say, he changes properties (from having the color gray to having the color pink). We all agree that Teddy has persisted through time—from pre-wash to post-wash. He’s still your pal, after all!

d. If we are endurantists, we say that Teddy pre-wash = Teddy post-wash.

   *But* if the endurantist does this, s/he must reject a very important principle:

   **The Indiscernibility of Identicals:** necessarily, for any two objects *a* and *b*, if *a* is identical with *b*, then *a* and *b* share all of their properties.
(*Notice that this principle is different from the Identity of Indiscernibles which states that, for any two objects \( a \) and \( b \), if \( a \) and \( b \) share all of their properties, then \( a \) is identical to \( b \).)

e. **Question:** How can the perdurantist account for Teddy’s persistence while avoiding the rejection of The Indiscernibility of Identicals?