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Some thoughts on Experiencing Time#

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Some Thoughts on *Experiencing Time**

Braford Skow

This is a great book. There's a lot in it. Simon writes about whether our experience can justify belief in the reality of the passage of time; about what could be going on in our minds, or our brains, when time seems to speed up, or slow down; about where our sense that we are moving into the future comes from; and this is only a partial list. Obviously I can't discuss everything. Here are some thoughts about the parts of the book I had the most to say about.

Chapter 5 is called "Is Experience Temporally Extended?" and it was my favorite chapter. I really really liked it. Let me take a second to cheer for it. Go Simon!

Okay, so what's going on in chapter 5? Some changes are changes we can perceive. C. D. Broad's famous (if not particularly exciting) example is the second-hand of a watch: you can see the second-hand moving. In this it differs from the minute hand, which you cannot see moving, even if it is one of those minute hands that is always moving. This fact has led some philosophers to conclude that experiences have "temporally extended content." This is the "doctrine of the specious present." It is obscure just what the doctrine is; on one interpretation, it says that each experience represents things as they are throughout an extended stretch of time, rather than as they are at an instant. So if I am watching a second-hand move, then the experience I am having *right now* represents the second-hand as being in different places at different times. Since that one experience represents the position of the second-hand at many different times, the experience has a "temporally extended content." I love Simon's discussion of why various arguments for this

*Forthcoming in *Inquiry*, as part of a symposium on *Experiencing Time* by Simon Prosser.

conclusion are bad. Since the mistakes Simon exposes have been around for a long time, I want to use a few of my allotted sentences to repeat what he says.

One of his key claims is this: even if nothing can move without being in different places at different times, it does not follow that nothing can *represent* something as moving without *representing* it as being in different places at different times. Simon uses speedometers as an example: a speedometer needle represents your car as moving, without representing it as located anywhere.

Of course one might object that visual experiences do not represent the way that speedometer needles do. Visual experience, one might hold, represents in something like the way pictures do. If this is correct, is the doctrine of the specious present in better shape? It's tempting to say that since a single picture can't represent something as moving, to represent something as moving you need something like a collection of pictures, showing the thing at different places at different times. If visual experience works like pictures, then an experience of motion must have the same content as that collection of pictures—a temporally extended content.

There are two parts to Simon's response to this. He says—I especially like this bit—that one should not move so quickly from (i) a single picture cannot represent something as moving, to (ii) a collection of pictures can (137-8). Is representing the second-hand as at different places at different times really sufficient for representing it as moving? Of course it is a necessary truth that if the second-hand is in different places at different times, it is moving. So representing it at different places at different times *would* be sufficient for representing it as moving, *if* necessary consequences of the contents of an experience were themselves *also* part of the content of that experience. Simon, I take it, is suggesting that this conditional is false. He does not note this suggestion explicitly, but I think it's plausible, and worth emphasizing. For further defense of it, note that we do not think that the analogous conditional is true of the content of belief. Each mathematical truth and each logical truth is a necessary consequence of anything, but no one believes them all (I know there are those who deny this, but I think they're wrong). It would be weird for the conditional to be true of experience but not of belief.

The second part of Simon's response is the main part: he denies that visual experience represents the way pictures do. (“[A]n experience is nothing like an

internal picture,” page 126). I agree—if by “picture” we mean “photograph” or “hyperrealist painting.” If, on the other hand, we are liberal enough about what counts as a picture, then a picture *can* represent something as moving without representing it as being in different places. Just think of how a picture in a comic strip does it, with appropriately placed wavy lines. Anyway, either way a temporally extended content is not needed to represent something as changing.

Simon says that the doctrine of the specious present is more apt to seduce you if you believe, even just implicitly, in what Daniel Dennett calls the “Cartesian Theater.” The Cartesian Theater is a brilliant metaphor, brilliant because it is so multi-faceted. It’s something like the idea that there is a special place in the brain where representations are “put up on display” or “on stage” in some sense, and that it’s their being put on display that constitutes their being conscious. Now if this is the way you think about consciousness then you will be apt to think that visual experience represents the way that pictures do, since it is pictures that can be put up on display.

Dennett thought the Cartesian Theater is a completely false way to think about consciousness, and Simon thinks so too. While I agree that you shouldn’t think that visual experiences are like pictures on the ground that seeing something involves an image being projected on some movie screen inside your brain, I want to register some hesitation about going too far with the “believing X just reflects your inability to let go of the Cartesian Theater” form of argument. There are several separable aspects of the Cartesian Theater, and you can reject the totally crazy bits (consciousness consists in representations being “put on display”) without rejecting all of it.

Brains process representations. For any one of the representations that my, or your, brain is currently processing we can ask: does the content of that representation (currently) constitute (part of) the content of my, or your, conscious experience? This is a yes/no question. But Simon (and Dennett) hold that in some cases the answer is neither yes nor no. This comes out in their take on the debate between Orwellian and Stalinesque treatments of certain illusions. The cutaneous rabbit illusion is one such puzzling illusion; here is Simon’s summary of it: “fifteen taps are made at 40-60ms intervals; the first five taps are at the subject’s wrist, the

next five are 10 cm from the rest, and the final five are 20 cm from the wrist...The subject reports feeling a series of taps roughly evenly spaced along the arm” (153). The subject’s reports do not match the facts about the taps. Now there is something intermediate between the taps and the report: the subject’s *experience* of the taps. The obvious question, then, is: where along the stream from the initial registering of the taps, to the experience of the taps, to the subject’s report, does falsity first enter? Does the subject’s report match his experience (so his experience represented the tapes as evenly-spaced), and his experience misrepresent where the taps were? That’s the Stalinesque hypothesis. Or instead did his experience correctly represent where the taps were (not evenly-spaced), and the subject just mis-remembered what he experienced? That’s the Orwellian hypothesis. Simon, again, says that neither of these questions has yes or no as its answer.

Why does he think this?

You could deny that experiences have representational content, and so say that the question has a false presupposition. But Simon likes the idea that experiences have content, he even likes the idea that their phenomenal character is determined by their content. So that’s not Simon’s reason.

One part of the Cartesian Theater idea is the idea that is a special place in the brain where consciousness “happens” (after all, every theater has a particular location). If this is true, then the answer to our question is either yes or no: the representation is either in the special place or not. I don’t know much neuroscience, but it seems to me a good idea to deny that there is any such special place in the brain. But belief in such a special place is hardly the only thing that could justify thinking that every representation is either a conscious one or not.

Simon writes as if once the Cartesian Theater metaphor has been swept off the table, there is nothing left to be said in favor of the idea that the answer to “Is this representation conscious?” must be either yes or no. But that’s not right. What about *logic* as a source of justification? “That representation is either conscious, or not” is an instance of the law of excluded middle. The law of excluded middle is a law of logic, and so therefore true. But if it is true, mustn’t the answer to the question of whether this or that representation is conscious be either yes or no? Maybe we have “no good reason to believe” *all parts* of the Cartesian Theater

idea, but this part has what at least appears to be an independent justification that doesn't depend on the idea that conscious experience "is an encounter with a kind of internal object...or else some kind of inner awareness of an instantiation of a qualitative property" (154-55).

Simon's view about the cutaneous rabbit, I think, is that we have here a case of indeterminacy. ("[T]here need be no fact of the matter about which of the two putative models is correct," page 155.) This is not an unprecedented thing to say. There are plenty of other examples of questions that philosophers have said should be answered not with yes, or no, but with "There's just no fact of the matter." (Some of these philosophers say that their claim is consistent with the law of excluded middle, some say that it requires giving up the law of excluded middle, but that's not going to be relevant here.) My point is just that the argument for this view has got to consist in more than just saying, look, there's no special place in the brain where conscious representations are projected onto some neural screen.

Now I want to talk about the detector and multi-detector arguments, the subjects of chapter 2. The most immediate conclusion of the detector argument is that nothing, no experimental device, no matter how constructed, could be a "passage detector," a device capable of detecting the passage of time. This is supposed to be relevant to the debate between the block universe theory of time, on the one hand, and its opponents, including presentism, the growing block theory, on and the moving spotlight theory, on the other. The standard terminology for classifying these theories is to call the first theory a "B-theory" and the rest "A-theories," but I swore off this terminology¹ and won't use it here. To have a label for the two classes of theories we can say that the first, the block universe theory, is a theory that says that time does not really pass, while the other theories say, each in its own way, that time does pass. This is a little misleading, since defenders of the block universe theory (like me and Simon) will say that "time passes" *can*, in some contexts, mean something true. To make the discussion easier I'm going to assume that we're not in one of those contexts.

That being said, I can say that a believer in the block universe theory will of course think that the immediate conclusion of the detector argument is absolutely

¹In Skow 2015.

right, since she will deny that there is any such thing as the passage of time to try to detect. Simon aims to show that even if, say, the growing block theory is correct, there can be no passage detector.

The argument goes like this. Imagine an MIT undergraduate shows up with a box and says hey, here it is, I've built a passage detector. The box has a lightbulb on top, and an on/off switch on the side. He says, the thing is ready to go, let's switch it on, if the lightbulb lights up, it's detecting the passage of time. He switches the thing on, the lightbulb goes on, he says what do you know, time is passing. Simon argues that this box, no matter what its internal make-up, cannot really be a passage detector. His argument comes down to just this: supposing the growing block theory (for example) is true, the lightbulb still would have gone on, had the block universe theory been true. He takes the truth of this counterfactual to establish that the box is not a passage detector (see page 34, the middle of the page). Since the argument doesn't depend on any details of the box's physical make-up, it applies to any possible physical device.

I don't think this argument is very good. What does it take to be a detector of something or other? Detection involves causation. Something is a rock detector, for example, if (i) under normal conditions it is *caused* to go into a certain state by the presence of a rock, and (ii) under normal conditions, if no rock is present, it does not go into that state. (That certain state might be one in which an attached lightbulb is lit up.) Similarly, the box presented to us is a passage detector if under normal conditions the bulb is caused to be lit by the passage of time, and does not light if time does not pass.

The bit about normal conditions is important. The best rock detector in the world will give false positives under a variety of circumstances. For example, it will give a false positive, the bulb will light up even though there is no rock present, if it is turned on in circumstances—these are not normal circumstances—where there are rock-mimics floating around, things with the same causal powers as rocks. (There is of course an interesting question here, the question of why that thing is a rock detector, rather than a rock-or-rock-mimic detector, or in other words what could make the absence of rock-mimics required for circumstances to be normal. I'm going to pass this question by.) The rock detector will also give a false positive

if it malfunctions, some short circuit makes the bulb light even though no rock (or rock-mimic) is around.

Now if another MIT undergraduate presents us with something he says is a rock detector, and he turns it on, and the bulb goes on (we're standing outside, not in my office), we can't prove the thing is not a rock detector by observing that there exist possible circumstances (ones that are possible but abnormal) in which the bulb goes on even though no rocks are present. Obviously, no rock detector can be that good. But that's all Simon has done in the case of the passage detector: described abnormal circumstances (namely, circumstances in which the block universe theory is true, which are abnormal by the lights of his opponent) in which the bulb goes on even though time does not pass.

Why would the truth of the block universe theory constitute abnormal circumstances, if the growing block theory is true? Well, I'm not sure, but there is this: if we're supposing the growing block theory is true, then block universe theory worlds are far-off worlds in which the metaphysical facts are strikingly different. It's not hard to accept that such strange circumstances (strange from the perspective of the growing block theory) count as abnormal.

Simon's argument reminds me of a idealist (in Berkeley's sense) trying to convince us that there cannot be a rock detector. Samuel Johnson claimed to have refuted idealism by kicking a rock (okay, a "large stone") with his foot. He might have said instead, I'm a pretty good rock detector, there is a distinctive kind of pain I get when I detect rocks, and I'm detecting a rock right now with my foot. If Johnson had stopped there, Berkeley would have little success persuading him that he was not a, that there could be no, rock detector, by observing that if idealism is true, he would still have that pain, even though there would be no rocks.² The fact that under some extravagant metaphysical hypothesis Johnson's pain is not caused by a rock does not show that *as things actually are* his pain is not caused by a rock, that he has not just kicked a rock.

If we want to prove that the box is not a passage detector, we need to argue either (i) that the passage of time is not among the causes of the bulb's lighting, or

²Of course Berkeley would not put it this way, he claimed that on his view there are rocks.

(ii) that even in normal circumstances, the bulb would light up even if time were not passing. But I don't see how to put an argument like that together. In fact if we work with the growing block theory of time, there are positive arguments available both for the conclusion that the passage of time *is* a cause of the lighting of the bulb, and that the bulb would *not* have lit, if time had not passed (and circumstances been normal). If we want to test for causation, we can use a counterfactual, but not the counterfactual that Simon uses. We should check this one: if time had not been passing, the bulb would not have lit. Now we are supposing the growing block theory to be true. Supposing that theory is true, if time had not been passing, it would be because the block suddenly stopped growing. So if time had not been passing just before the student flipped the switch on, it would have been because the block stopped growing; and if the block stopped growing just then, the event of the bulb's lighting would never have come into existence. And if that event had never existed, it certainly would never have happened. So the claim that the passage of time caused the bulb to light passes the test: if time hadn't passed, the bulb wouldn't have lit. The same line of thought shows that the bulb would not have lit, if time had not passed in normal circumstances. For the way for time to not pass in normal circumstances, if the growing block theory is true, is for that theory to remain true, and for the block to stop growing.

If you accept the growing block theory of time, then, you should be convinced that this box is a passage detector, despite what Simon says.

Simon discusses something like this response to the detector argument on the bottom half of page 34, and says that it "misunderstands the dialectical situation." The dialectical situation he takes himself to be in is this: we don't know whether the block universe theory, or some theory of passage like the growing block theory, is true; we hope to settle the question by doing some experiments; turning on the alleged passage detector and seeing whether the bulb lights up is proposed as an experiment we could use. Simon is totally right that this is a terrible proposal. Doing this experiment cannot help us settle which theory is true, because all the theories agree on what the outcome of the experiment will be: the bulb will light up.³ But this conclusion, that no experiment can settle the debate, or even favor one

³The situation is actually more complicated; it's false that whenever two theories

side, is just a different conclusion from the conclusion of the detector argument. It's a mistake, I think, to frame this conclusion as the conclusion of the detector argument, put into its proper dialectical context. The thoughts are independent: a growing block guy, I've said, should think there can be passage detectors, but should also think that it's useless to bring his passage detectors to a debate with a block universe guy (if his goal is to change the block universe guy's mind). Moreover, even if there could not be passage detectors, it doesn't follow that experiments are useless: maybe we could be in a position to know that some phenomenon was correlated with the passage of time, and that we can build a machine that detects whether that phenomenon occurs. Well then we could use that experiment to figure out whether the block universe theory is true, even though we cannot detect passage itself.

Simon tries to bolster the conclusion of the detector argument with what he calls the "multi-detector" argument in section 2.6. He imagines a box with not one but a bunch of lights, and argues that "nothing could make one light, rather than another, the light that indicated that time was passing. Consequently the passage of time cannot be detected" (43). I think Simon makes a mistake in his argument for the first claim (the claim that nothing could make one light, rather than another, the light that indicated that time was passing). If I have a multi-detector and I turn it on and one of the lights lights up and stays lit as long as the thing is switched on, while the other lights light up and go out, then certainly the other lights do not indicate that time is passing. That's because there are times when even though conditions are normal and time is passing, the passage of time is not causing them to light. Simon might respond (he says something similar) that there's no more reason to take the light that's always on to indicate that time is passing rather than that the big bang happened. Maybe that's true, but I don't see what's wrong with taking it to indicate both.

To repeat, from the claim that nothing could make one light, rather than an-

agree on the outcome of an experiment, and we have no further evidence, then the outcome of that experiment does not favor one of the theories over the other. One of the theories might be simpler, or explain the outcome of the experiment better. I'm assuming that the theories we're discussing are on a par with respect to these other factors.

other, the light that indicated time was passing, Simon concludes that the passage of time cannot be detected. I've challenged the explicit premise, but he seems to rely also on another, independent one: the premise that if a light indicates that an event of kind K happened, it cannot also indicate that an event of kind H happened. I've conceded that any light that indicates that time is passing also indicates other things, but I don't see a reason to accept this premise. Surely some phenomena can be so inextricably linked that you can't detect one without detecting the other?

Simon extends the multi-detector argument to an argument that the passage of time cannot be experienced. I think the extension suffers from similar weaknesses. I find it helpful to think about this argument in terms of the sense-data theory. The theory is false, of course, but not, I think, in ways that favor Simon's opponents. So suppose that whenever I have any experiences, my having of them consists in a variety of sense-data, which are particular mental things, being directly present to my mind. A sense-datum's being present to my mind is the analogue of a lightbulb's lighting up on the multi-detector; the fact that there are various lightbulbs that may or may not light is the analogue the fact that there are various kinds of sense-data that I may or may not have present to my mind. A believer in passage who says that I experience the passage of time, on this view, should say that that my experiencing passage consists in the presence to my mind of certain sense-data. Simon's pointed question, then is this: *which* sense-data? The fact that I am aware of sense-datum S1 cannot bear any relation to the passage of time that the fact that I am aware of sense-datum S2 does not also bear. At this point we get another key premise from Simon: "No phenomenon could be experienced unless it stood in some relation to one element of experience and did not stand in that same relation to other elements of experience" (45). In the theory I'm working with, the sense data theory, we can take "elements of experience" to be sense-data. Why should we accept this premise? What's wrong with thinking that we experience the passage of time in virtue of each of the sense-data we have?

Simon does say this:

I have heard it suggested that all of our experiences are somehow 'infused' with passage, and that this somehow undermines that assumption that there is a specific element of experience that seems to tell us

that time passes. But this seems to be a confusion....consider a subject who perceives nothing but a single red object, which then turns blue. Suppose that both the 'red' and the 'blue' phenomenal characters were 'infused' with passage phenomenology. The supposition is presumably that the 'red' phenomenal character is exchanged for the 'blue' phenomenal character, yet the 'passage' phenomenal character is present throughout. But this shows that the passage phenomenal character is distinct from the red or blue phenomenal characters. Consequently there is nothing in the notion of 'infusion' that could undermine the claim that there is a specific element of experience that seems to tell us that time passes (50).

I'm not sure what to make of this, since I'm not sure how to understand what Simon means by the "element of experience" talk, or his use of "phenomenal character" as a count noun. But I am confident that this argument does not translate well into the sense-datum framework. In that framework it can be true both that the passage-y phenomenal character is distinct from the red phenomenal character, even though in a sense every element of experience is infused with the passage of time. That can be true so long as we identify phenomenal characters with properties of sense-data, and elements of experience with sense-data themselves. The guy being imagined first has a red sense-datum, and later has a blue sense-datum. Both these sense-data are also "passage-y" sense-data. Each sense-datum has more than one "aspect" to it, true, in that each has more than one property. (Sense-data are transparent, in the sense that if a sense-datum is present to my mind, then every property it has is a property I am aware of its having.) But the red and the passage-y aspects of the first sense-datum are not separable, that is, they are not assignable to distinct things. They are aspects of one and the same sense-datum. So there it is: every element, every sense-datum, is a passage-y datum, while still, the passage phenomenal character is distinct from the red phenomenal character, since talk of phenomenal character is being construed as talk of the properties of sense-data.

In Chapter 6 Simon takes up the question of "why change seems dynamic." Simon argued in chapter 2 that it cannot be part of the content of our experience that time is passing (in whatever sense opponents of the block universe attach to this

phrase). But he concedes that there is something about our experience, specifically about our experience of change, for example the experience we have when we watch a continuously-moving second hand move, that misleadingly suggests to us that the block universe theory is false. His aim in chapter 6 is to propose an hypothesis about what feature of our experience this is.

He proposes that what misleads us is that our experiences of change have a certain kind of content. So what kind of content is it? And, why does our experience having that kind of content mislead us about the metaphysics of time?

The second question is hard and I don't know what to think about it, but I do have some thoughts on Simon's answer to the first one. Simon claims that our experience of change represents the changing thing "as enduring," as opposed to "perduring." One problem here is that there is a lot of debate about just what the endurance theory and the perdurance theory say, or should say. One common statement is this: the perdurance theory says that everything in time has, at each time it exists, an instantaneous temporal part that exists at just that time; the endurance theory denies the existence of temporal parts. Simon seems to have this characterization in mind, so let's work with it.

Now Simon does not just say that the experience I have when I see the second-hand move represents the second-hand as enduring; he says that it represents it as having incompatible properties. Since nothing can have incompatible properties, this representation is necessarily false.

I'm confused about why Simon thinks that this hypothesis about the content of experience is plausible. It seems relatively uncontroversial that while I am watching the second-hand move, I first have an experience with the content that the second-hand is here, and shortly afterwards have an experience with the content that the second-hand is there (somewhere else). But *this* isn't enough either to represent the second-hand as enduring, or to have experiences which, when you combine (conjoin) their contents, give you something necessarily false. To represent the second-hand as enduring my experience would have to represent, not just that it exists at both times, but that it lacks instantaneous temporal parts at those times. As far as I can tell, though, my experience is just silent on the question of whether things have temporal parts. True, my experience does *not* represent that

the second-hand has a temporal part. But failing to have as its content a certain proposition is not the same as *having* as its content the *negation* of that proposition.

When Simon considers the objection that the perdurance theory, as much as the endurance theory, says the the second-hand exists through the whole stretch of time during which I watch it move, and so that the perdurance theory is consistent with the claim that my experience represents the second-hand first as here and then as there, he writes that “When we experience change we do not—I suggest—have experience as of an F temporal part of an object succeeded by a *non-F* temporal part of that object” (173). That’s right but I’m not sure why it matters: again, that my experience does not represent the second-hand as having temporal parts is not enough for my experience to represent it as enduring. To represent it as enduring my experience must represent it as *lacking* temporal parts. I don’t think it does that.

I see much the same problem in Simon’s claim that “it is more economical [computationally] to represent a simple enduring identity . . . than a perduring identity” (183). If this is true it’s a reason to think that experience represents things as enduring, since evolution has presumably made our brains relatively economical. But I think the claim is false: representing something as enduring is just as difficult, computationally, as representing it as perduring: either way, you have to represent facts about whether it has any temporal parts. The simplest thing is to represent it as neither, to remain silent on the issue of temporal parts.

Suppose Simon is right, my experience represents the second-hand as enduring. Why is the content of my experience (or the conjunction of its contents at two different times) a necessary falsehood? According to Simon, my experience has the content *that the second-hand is here*, and shortly after has the content *that the second-hand is there*. Simon’s claim is that since it is impossible for the second-hand to be both here and there (suppose “here” and “there” have referents that make this true), the conjunction of these two contents is a necessary falsehood. But when we take account of tense this seems wrong to me. When I say “my experience has the content that the second-hand is here” the “is” is in the present tense; to report the content of that experience in a different, later, context we need to use either the past tense or a tenseless “is.” The tenseless “is” gives us this: the proposition that gives the content of my experience at the earlier time is the proposition that the

second-hand is (tenselessly) here at T1 (where T1 is the time I had the experience). Similarly, the proposition that gives the content of my experience at the later time is the proposition that the second-hand is (tenselessly) there at T2. The conjunction of these propositions is not a necessary falsehood.

Maybe Simon's claim is that the content of my experience at T1 is, instead, the proposition that the second-hand is (tenselessly) here *simpliciter*. But I see no reason to think that this is the content of my experience. Here's a quick argument that it isn't: absent strange circumstances, competent speakers can report the content of their experience in speech. Ask your standard psychology study subject what things look like to him while he's watching a second-hand, and she'll say (among other things maybe) "the second-hand is here." But this will be the present-tense form of "is," and so will express the proposition that the second-hand is here at T1. The tenseless use of "is" is rare (maybe non-existent) outside of philosophers who specialize in the philosophy of time.

Simon's main response to all this, I think, which runs through his replies to several objections, is to claim that properties are not experienced as relations to times (for example, on page 177). This just looks like a bare denial that (for example) my earlier experience has the content that the second-hand is (tenselessly) here at T1. I reject the denial. Ask a subject: when you were looking at the second-hand, and it looked like it was here, did it look like it was here in some "atemporal" way, or did it look like this: it is here at *this* time (the time I'm doing the looking)? I'm confident that those who understand the question will answer the second.

Simon suggests that "the expediencies of evolution might have resulted in a perceptual and imaginative system that misrepresents the metaphysics of the perceived environment" (182). I wouldn't be surprised if this were true. But thinking about evolution works against Simon more than it works for him, I think. Evolution has surely made it likely that our brains represent, in experience, information that is useful to us. But the proposition that the second-hand is, in some timeless sense, here, is useless—as is the proposition that a bear is, in some timeless sense, near here. What is useful is what the world is like *at the time it's experienced*. Surely, then, the content of my experience concerns what properties things have at the time of the experience, not what properties they have in some time-independent way.

Alright, so I'm not persuaded by Simon's proposal about what feature of their experience it is that so many people are keying in on when they think that experience shows them that time really passes (in a way that is incompatible with the block universe theory). But I really admire Simon for working to get this question on the agenda. A comprehensive defense of the block universe theory should have something to say about this question, and Simon rightly takes other block universe theorists to task for ignoring it, or not taking it seriously enough. While I don't like Simon's answer, he unlike me *has* an answer he likes. I've got nothing.

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