

A critical examination of Abner Shimony's Transient Now

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Abstract

I criticize Shimony's argument from the Transient Now (Shimony 1993) that the B-series view of time is inadequate but offer a reading of that argument that is more charitable than one offered and rejected by Eilstein (1996). Shimony's argument turns on putative phenomenological features of the Now (singularity and numerical identity) but transience only arises as a logical implication of those features. Transience is thus a second order phenomenon. If these two features are accurate then the B-series cannot provide a complete account of the Now and Eilstein misses the role of Shimony's Phenomenological Principle (PP) in this regard. Holding a B-theoretic view then demands giving up the numerical identity of person-slices across time.

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