

TIME EXPANSION EXPERIENCES: THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TIME
PERCEPTION AND THE ILLUSION OF LINEAR TIME

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Steve Taylor's *Time Expansion Experiences* is an overall captivating and integrative exploration of how human consciousness interacts with perceived time in ways that complicate or perhaps even defy conventional, linear models. Combining insights from psychology, neuroscience, and transpersonal philosophy, Taylor argues that our lived experience of time frequently departs from the standardized, clock-based conception dominant in Western thought. The result is a well-organized treatise that is both accessible and intellectually ambitious, inviting readers to reconsider not only what time *is*, but how it *feels*.

At the heart of Taylor's argument is the phenomenon of 'time expansion experiences'—altered states of consciousness in which time seems to slow, stop, or stretch. Taylor notes that these experiences are well documented in situations involving danger, heightened emotion, spiritual insight, or meditative absorption. Drawing on cognitive psychology, he contextualizes these reports within research on temporal distortion under stress (e.g., Arstila, 2012; Stetson et al., 2007) and flow states (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), suggesting that such distortions are not mere anomalies but valuable windows into the true nature of subjective time. From an anomalistics standpoint, Taylor's work is of particular interest for its engagement with unusual temporal perceptions associated with mystical states, out-of-body experiences, and near-death experiences. While the book does not focus specifically on parapsychology, its implications are far reaching for scholars in consciousness studies beyond the materialist paradigm. Taylor's assertion that expanded states of consciousness provide access to a more 'authentic' experience of time parallels longstanding claims within both Eastern spirituality and Western esoteric traditions. His model offers a psychological bridge between such traditions and empirical psychology—a bridging effort long valued in the pages of this journal.

The book's strength lies in Taylor's synthesis of diverse perspectives. He deftly meshes neuroscientific findings—such as the role of the insular cortex and the dopaminergic system in temporal processing (Wittmann, 2015)—with introspective and transpersonal accounts. His broader thesis echoes thinkers like Henri Bergson (1911/2015), who distinguished between *temps* (mechanical time) and *durée* (lived time), and contemporary scholars in consciousness studies

who argue for the primacy of subjective temporality (Gruber et al., 2020). The book is particularly notable for its rich collection of first-hand reports. Taylor treats these not as mere anecdotes but as valid phenomenological data—an approach increasingly recognized within psychology, parapsychology, and consciousness studies (e.g., Little et al., 2021; O’Keeffe et al., 2024; Petitmengin, 2006). This lends the book a depth and emotional resonance often missing in more reductionist accounts.

However, certain limitations warrant attention. While Taylor thoughtfully contrasts his thesis with physicalist models of time, his engagement with these perspectives—particularly those grounded in the physics of spacetime and the block universe theory—remains relatively limited (Callender, 2010). Readers well versed in cosmology or the philosophy of time may find the discussion of such models too cursory. A more sustained dialogue with critics of subjectivist and phenomenological accounts (e.g., Gruber et al., 2020, 2022) would have added depth and sharpened the book’s argumentative rigour. Further, Taylor acknowledges non-Western conceptions of time, including cyclical and relational views found in Indigenous and Eastern traditions, but these are treated somewhat briefly. A fuller integration of these perspectives would have enriched the cross-cultural dimension of his argument and broadened its applicability beyond the Western intellectual framework.

The book’s core contribution is its unification of the psychological and the existential. Taylor not only describes *how* time may expand in human experience but also gestures towards *why* these experiences matter. In an era dominated by acceleration and temporal compression (Rosa, 2013), his reflections feel timely and even therapeutic (pardon the pun). Altogether, *Time Expansion Experiences* is a useful and original contribution to the study of time perception, altered states, and the phenomenology of consciousness. It will appeal to psychologists, philosophers, spiritual seekers, and anyone curious about the deeper textures of lived experience. While Taylor occasionally sacrifices argumentative precision for rhetorical sweep, he ultimately succeeds in providing an informative and enriching work of integrative psychology and the broader domain of anomalistics.

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