

EXPERIENCE AND TIME:

ABSTRACT

We are no less directly acquainted with the temporal structure of the world than with its spatial structure. We hear one word succeeding another; feel two taps as simultaneous; or see the glow of a firework persisting, before it finally fizzles and fades. However, time is special, for we not only experience temporal properties; experience itself is structured in time.

Part One articulates a natural framework for thinking about experience *in* time. I claim (i) that experience in its experiential aspect has a realistically conceived temporal structure; (ii) that our judgements about that structure always go via judgements about the temporal structure of the apparent objects of perception; and (iii) that a subject undergoing perceptual experience of a given experiential kind is always in a position to know that they are undergoing experience of that kind simply in virtue of so undergoing. On this basis, I argue that the temporal structure of experience cannot systematically come apart from the temporal structure of its objects.

Part Two treats four puzzles relating to our experience *of* time. The first is Dennett's notorious discussion of masking and apparent motion phenomena. The second is the traditional debate regarding the very possibility of perceiving temporal properties. The third is Fara's recent contention that standard explanations of our experience of slow changes preclude us from perceiving constant motion. A common reaction to these three puzzles is to reject some element of the naïve picture of temporal experience developed in Part One. I resolve them instead by showing how each arises from mistakenly thinking that experience is *homoeomeric* down to very short durations or instants. That is, thinking that we can analyse experience into a series of independent short slices, and explain the nature of the stream of consciousness in terms of those slices. The final chapter discusses a fourth puzzle about visual motion perception which I diagnose as driven by a rather different, but equally misguided way of thinking about vision.