

How to Experience Time and Space: Essays on Perceptual Phenomenology

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I hereby declare that this dissertation contains no material accepted for the completion of any other degrees in any other institutions and no materials previously written and/or published by another person unless appropriate acknowledgement is made in the form of a bibliographical reference.

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For Vale

Abstract

This thesis consists of five chapters featuring five distinct essays on the spatial and temporal character of perceptual experience. They are self-contained yet connected. In the first chapter, I aim at a diagnostic point regarding the philosophical questions about the temporal character of experience. After laying out the principles and doctrines that are typically invoked in the literature, I draw certain distinctions between the phenomenological and empirical questions about temporal experience. Although this does not mean that the phenomenological and empirical are independent, their distinctness should be dealt with care. I give some examples that fail to respect this distinction, leading to the conflation of orthogonal features of temporal experience.

In the second chapter, I argue that introspective reflection can be systematically in error when it comes to revealing features of the temporal character of experience. Typically, it is often taken uncontroversial that if one is introspectively aware of the fact that one's experience features P, it cannot be that the experience does not feature P. Similarly, if one is introspectively aware that one's experience does not feature P, it cannot be that the experience features P. I argue that this is false for temporal experience. One can mistakenly *believe* that one is introspectively aware of the fact that one's experience does not feature a temporal phenomenal property P, while one's experience in fact features P.

In the third chapter, I do two things. I argue that there is no problem of perceptual presence in Alva Noë's (2004) sense. I then develop an alternative puzzle that arises for the presence of voluminous objects in visual experience and show that the version of the problem I motivate puts a different constraint on competing accounts of perceptual experience in the market. I finish by noting that imagination-based accounts of perceptual presence that Bence Nanay (2010) and Amy Kind defend (2018) cannot accommodate this constraint because their solutions are pre-empted by this new problem of perceptual presence.

In the fourth chapter, I ask the question if there are basic units that feature in the phenomenal character of perceptual experience. I argue that we lack reason to think that there are such basic individual experiences in the first place. Lacking reason to think that there are no such units, nonetheless, is not a reason to think that there are no experiences, in the way that Michael Tye (2003) suggests. To defend this claim, I develop a characterization of perceptual phenomenology, where being aware of a sensible part of an experience requires being aware of a further part of that

experience and propose that the best explanation for this is to invoke a kind of phenomenological holism, according to which experience has structural features that provide the *context* in which certain parts of the experience can be discerned. I finish by suggesting that such context can be explained by invoking a temporally extended sensory field in which temporal properties feature, perhaps more similar to the sensory spatial field that features in visual experience than many might think.

In the fifth chapter, I focus on the notion of a felt temporal present. It is relatively uncontroversial that we consciously perceive the world *now*, at the present moment. Several accounts attempt to explain this fact about perceptual experience by claiming that perceptual experience represents its object *as in* the present moment (Peacocke, 1998; 2019; Kriegel, 2009; Connor and Smith 2019). One might question, however, if there is a temporal present in the sense of a mode of presentation *now*, under which perceptual experience presents its objects based on a careful characterization of temporal phenomenology (Soteriou 2013, Hoerl 2018). I argue alongside this line of consideration and claim that we do not have enough reason to think that perceptual experience presents its objects as in the present moment. Thus, representationalist accounts of the temporal present are phenomenologically suspect. This, however, I also maintain, is not sufficient to claim that perceptual experience does not feature a felt present at all. I track some motivations for the claim that there is a felt present in conscious perceptual experience, identify the main difficulty these motivations seem to face and propose my alternative account of the temporal present. According to the view I advance, it is one's implicit awareness of one's own temporal location that gives us reason to think that there are felt presents that are experienced as successive in conscious experience.

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The writing of this thesis was in no way ordinary. I started the PhD program at CEU after a traumatic health event took place in my family, which was followed by a pandemic that provided glimpses into a post-apocalyptic scenario. I remember walking in the entirely empty downtown of Budapest, with no one in sight, in absolute silence apart from birds, feeling as if the whole city was abandoned. Dramatic, yet true. Covid-19 hit several people I know very badly, none died, fortunately, but it was certainly frightening. The pandemic was dealt with poorly around the globe. In certain ways that I should not discuss here, it left us with a lot of important questions about scientific and political authorities. On top of all these, these four years featured some moderately serious health problems in me and my family. All these turned this PhD into more than an interesting journey.

During my time at CEU, there have been several good things too. To acknowledge these goods, I should start by thanking my supervisor, Tim Crane a lot. I first read his “Elements of Mind” as an undergrad at METU. The book caught my eye in the library, and I just wanted to take a look at it. After one week, Tim’s book provided me with the first, occasionally challenging glance into the analytic philosophy of mind. Working with him was a privilege for not only his willingness to share his breadth of knowledge and command of detailed matters in philosophy but also his approach to supervision. Tim has the skill to put very complex things in more than simple and clear words and I benefitted a lot from that. I am still learning from him every time we have a chat.

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List of Abbreviations

Principles

TEC **Temporal Experience Claim:** Human subjects directly perceive temporal properties.

ETC **Experiential Temporality Claim:** Human subjects are aware of their conscious experiences as successive.

S-PSA **Strong - Principle of Simultaneous Awareness:** One's awareness of an interval (e.g., a shortly lived shooting meteor) is to be explained by an appeal only to how the experience feels for the subject at a given, present, moment.

W-PSA **Weak - Principle of Simultaneous Awareness:** One's awareness of an interval is to be explained by an appeal to how the experience feels for the subject at a given, present, moment along with a portion of how the experience feels for the subject prior to the moment.

PPC **Principle of Presentational Concurrence:** The experience of a temporally extended event appears to take the exact same time that its object appears to take.

SS **Succession Slogan:** A succession of feelings, in and of itself, is not a feeling of succession.

SSS **Strong Succession Slogan:** A succession of appearances is neither a necessary, nor a sufficient condition for an appearance of succession

WSS **Weak Succession Slogan:** A succession of appearances is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for an appearance of succession

SP **Doctrine of the Specious Present:** One is aware of the temporal present as nonpunctate, as having some short but nonzero duration.

NCRM	Naïve Cinematic Realist Model
RM	Retentional Model
EM	Extensional Model
DSM	Dynamic Snapshot Model
PPP	Problem of Perceptual Presence

CHAPTER ONE

Experiencing Change and Succession: Some Principles, Doctrines, Models and Joint Carving

1. An Introduction to Introduction

This thesis, though it has a chapter and some sections about the spatial character of perceptual experience, is mainly about the relationship between time and conscious experience. Since both consciousness and time are notoriously difficult subjects, the ways in which one might approach the relationship between them can greatly vary. In what follows, I will endorse a phenomenological approach. By doing so, I will spell out how it appears to the subject to experience temporal properties, leaving metaphysical issues about time out. As we shall see, experience and time, at least from the point of view of the subject, are essentially connected. What this claim suggests about the structural features of experience, however, is not clear.

One objective of this chapter is to clarify and elaborate on what might these suggestions be. Another thing it aims to do is to show that what many seem to accept at face value about time and experience can be rejected by others. It seems that in the recent philosophical literature around temporal experience, many things are entangled seemingly irrevocably. Different joints have been carved too many times across too many parts of the target matter that it is too easy to lose track of a real joint, if we assume that what we are working with has ‘real’ joints to carve. Here, I attempt to do this disentangling. By doing so I also place various accounts of the structure of temporal consciousness into their place in the space of reasons. My hope is that even partly achieving these tasks will set the tone for the following essays. In this introduction, therefore, I will discuss some principles, doctrines, and models that one would find in the literature and clarify how they cut

across the same pie. My attempt is, by the end of this chapter, to disentangle the smashed pieces and crumbles of the pie and put them in line, ready for a remake.

2. Principles and Doctrines

In this section, I will introduce five principles and one doctrine. These will help me in the way of sketching the part of the space of reasons that features the views about the temporal character of experience. The first principle is what I call the temporal experience claim (TEC). TEC has it that it is phenomenologically straightforward that we are perceptually aware of temporal properties, most importantly, change and persistence.¹ Arguably, we are perceptually aware of everything either as changing and/or persisting (by perduring or enduring) (e.g., Peacocke, 2019) and hence all experience features temporal properties. But even if one resists this latter claim, TEC is one point of origin of the debate around the relationship between time and conscious experience. For if change, succession, persistence, and such do not *directly* feature in the phenomenal character of experience there would be nothing to worry about: time and consciousness would not appear to be intricately linked in the first place.

The second principle I will introduce is closely connected to what William James calls the ‘Fundamental Fact’ (1892). He writes:

The first and foremost concrete fact which everyone will affirm to belong to his inner experience is the fact that consciousness of some sort goes on. "States of mind" *succeed* each other in him. (p. 79, italics original)

Note that this is not an observation of what the experience presents to the subject. Rather, it is a felt feature of experience upon the subject’s being conscious, in the sense that it appears to one that one’s conscious experience seems to be in succession. That is, being conscious is undergoing a kind of thing that *goes on*. A similar line comes from Helen Steward. She writes:

There is room for dispute about whether or not...mental phenomena are physical, whether they are spatially located, and whether they have subjects, and if so, what those subjects might be...But there is no controversy about the temporality of mental

¹ This is just another name for Barry Dainton’s phenomenological constraint (p.115, 2000).

phenomena-about the fact that they take place in, or persist through, time. (1997, pp. 75-76).

This fundamental fact, however, is distinct from the temporal experience claim. The difference has to do with another principle that James famously puts in the following succession slogan (SS): “a succession of feelings, in and of itself, is not a feeling of succession.” (1890, p. 629). In not so often cited continuation of this slogan, James writes:

And since, to our successive feelings, a feeling of their succession is added, that must be treated as an additional fact requiring its own special elucidation... (pp. 629-630)

The basic idea behind the slogan is that successive experiences need not ensure that there is a felt succession in conscious experience: one could have experiences in succession without being able to experience the succession. In James’ words, the felt succession *of experiences* is a result of the subject’s “inner states” knowing “themselves” as “succeeding” (p. 630).² A crucial point about James’ remarks above, I propose, is that the felt succession James is concerned with in those lines is *the felt succession of the successive feelings*, and not *the felt succession of what those feelings present*.³ A feeling of succession, in the way that James characterizes it, is not necessarily a feeling of successive states of affairs one is perceptually aware of. Instead, it is the feeling of the succession of feelings that present things in the world. It is important to distinguish, therefore, between two different felt successions in conscious experience. One is the felt succession of the object of the experience, e.g., experiencing an object moving, and the other is the felt succession of the experiences of the moving object, e.g., experiencing one’s experiences of the moving object as successive. This brings us to the third principle I shall introduce. I dub this principle that James calls the fundamental fact, that is, the claim that one is aware of their own experiences as successive, the experiential temporality claim (ETC).

One might be aware of a succession in the object of the experience without being aware of successive experiences and vice versa. As we will see next section, James’ slogan might have different versions, entailing different things about the relationship between TEC and ETC. One

² In these lines, James seems to hint at a constitutivist account of self-knowledge, perhaps similar to the account Sydney Shoemaker (1968) developed eighty years after James.

³ Even if upon closer examination those feelings turn out to be nothing but what they present.

thing this will show us is that many disputes, if not all of them, in the temporal experience literature boil down to what one thinks about the relationship between TEC and ETC based on what one takes the slogan to mean.

The fourth principle that is yet again associated with James is the doctrine of the specious present (SP). The doctrine has it that, as Holly Andersen puts it, "...[w]e experience the present moment as nonpunctate, as having some short but nonzero duration." (2014, p. 25). The doctrine does not only have it that there is a feeling of a present moment in experience but also has it that that felt present comes with some specious temporal extent: it takes up a brief interval. As we shall see in Section 4 of this chapter, I think the very idea of a specious present led many to cut the pie in the wrong place, because they failed to make a proper distinction between conscious experience and sub-personal information processing.

The fifth principle is often called the principle of simultaneous awareness (PSA), following Izshak Miller (1984). PSA has it that one is perceptually aware of temporal properties, such as succession at a single instant or moment in time, simultaneously. This seems to be phenomenologically direct: when I see the car's moving, I see it moving in, but not confined to, the present moment. The car's motion is to be experienced by me as taking place in the present, by experiencing the car's different locations *simultaneously*. As one might notice, experiencing temporally extended events by being aware of their temporal properties simultaneously at a moment appears to lead to a puzzle. It is odd to think that an interval can be experienced at a time because simply, there is not enough time to experience that interval.

PSA, in this form, is in conflict with the final principle I shall introduce: the principle of presentational concurrence (PPC). In Miller's words, PPC has it that "...the time interval occupied by a content which is before the mind is the very same time interval which is occupied by the act of presenting that very content before the mind" (1984, p. 107). A more neutral claim is to say that the experience of a temporally extended event appears to take the exact same time that its object appears to take. A claim very similar to PPC is used in a recent debate around the transparency of temporal experience, where it is accepted that it appears to the subject as though the subject's experience takes the exact same time as the experienced object.⁴

⁴ Versions of this claim is in Dainton (2000; 2008), Hoerl (2009), Phillips (2010), Soteriou (2013).

One's preferred account of temporal experience depends on how one puts these principles together. One might, for example, resist the idea that experience itself has a location and temporal extent that concurs with the location and extent of what is experienced. Dennett (1991) and Hurley (1998) (also see Tye (2003)) endorse this line. According to their contention, it is a mistake to think that the experience is similar to what the experience presents. In representationalist terms, the *vehicle* of a representation need not be similar to the *content* it bears.

The problem with these views is that there seems to be a phenomenological basis for the principles above—perhaps less for some than for others, but this is a separate issue. When it comes to PPC, for instance, it seems quite simply the case that if one is aware of an event that takes five clock seconds, one's experience takes the exact same five seconds in order to present that event. Experience that event less than five seconds and you would fail to be perceptually aware of it. This suggests that experience does have something to do with a nonzero temporal extent as one is perceptually aware of temporally extended events. This might lead one to say, in the case of temporal experience, that what the experience presents and what is presented seem to have some common temporal properties. This and similar phenomenological givens provide us with reason to resist the idea that it is entirely unreasonable to think that the conscious awareness of temporal properties itself lacks a temporal structure. It is true that experiences themselves *need not* be temporally extended as they present temporal properties, but they *might be*. Whether they are or not is not something that should be dismissed at the outset but something to be decided upon careful examination of the felt character of experience. In the next section, I give a brief picture of the models of this felt character. I then list the commitments of such views in terms of what they take the temporal structure of experience to be.

3. Models of the Temporal Structure of Experience

There are several models that attempt to accommodate some of the above principles. I will next turn to introduce them.

A straightforward model one can endorse is that one is aware of extremely short intervals, such as moments, or even instants, within which one is aware of a static picture of the world. As these momentary experiences concur with the parts of the experienced event, the idea would go, one would end up with the experience of an event. What explains the experience of succession, in this case, would be the momentary experiences that are themselves successive. This naïve (Rashbrook

2013), cinematic realist (Dainton, 2000), model of temporal experience (NCRM) endorses PPC yet fails to make sense of PSA along with James' slogan that a succession of experiences is not a succession of feelings. If successive experiences do not entail experiences of succession, these naïve cinematic models can explain neither TEC nor ETC.

I suggested that James' slogan and Miller's PSA have to do with the idea that successive experiences do not entail experiences of succession, where one's awareness of succession is a result of what one is aware of at a moment/instant. However, it is not entirely clear what this amounts to mean since there can be different strengths of this claim. Before proceeding to discuss further models, it is important to discuss different ways to understand the slogan and PSA. I shall start with PSA and then proceed to the slogan. I suggest that the simplest way to characterize PSA is the following:

PSA: One is aware of temporal properties in an instant.

It is important to define PSA in simpler terms because in the way in which Miller construes and ascribes it to Husserl, different claims might get easily conflated. Based on this characterization one might introduce two further versions.⁵

Strong PSA: One's awareness of an interval (e.g., a shortly lived shooting meteor) is to be explained by an appeal *only* to how the experience feels for the subject at a given, present, moment.

Weak PSA: One's awareness of an interval is to be explained by an appeal to how the experience feels for the subject at a given, present, moment along with a portion of how the experience feels for the subject prior to the moment.

Strong PSA is sometimes ascribed to James (1890) and Husserl (2019).⁶ Though I have reservations about such a characterization of their views, I will not say more on this. Rather, in the rest of this work, I will mean the definitions above when I say PSA without considering what these historical figures might in fact had in mind. Weak PSA is recently championed by Ian Phillips (2010; 2014). One way to spell out Phillips' suggestion is that one is in fact aware of an interval at a time indeed,

⁵ Phillips (2010) and Rashbrook (2013) both introduce similar, yet different, distinctions.

⁶ See Phillips (2010, p. 181)

yet one's awareness of the interval at a moment is a result of one's awareness of a part of what precedes that instant. This is in conflict with the strong claim that one's awareness at a time, within that moment, somehow features an interval. As we shall see, one's take on the versions of PSA determines the possible models one might endorse.

In addition to the weak and strong readings of PSA one can also introduce a weak and a strong version of James' slogan. Christoph Hoerl writes (2013):

...the qualified [succession] claim denies that, whenever there is a succession of experiences, there is an experience of succession. The unqualified [succession] claim denies that, whenever there is an experience of succession, there is (that is, it takes the form of) a succession of experiences. (p. 486).

The qualified slogan, which comes with the qualification of "in, and of itself" allows that there can be an experience of succession when there is a succession of experiences, yet the former is not sufficient for the latter. Rashbrook calls this the weak succession slogan:

Weak Succession Slogan (WSS): A succession of appearances is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for an appearance of succession. (2013, p. 585).

The unqualified claim, on the other hand, allows that when there is an experience of succession there are no successive experiences. This latter claim pulls apart the succession of experiences on the one hand and the experience of succession on the other, categorically. According to the unqualified claim, one need not appeal to James' fundamental fact that 'states of mind' succeed each other in the subject to experience temporal properties at all. This would be equivalent to what Rashbrook calls the strong succession slogan.

Strong Succession Slogan (SSS): A succession of appearances is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for an appearance of succession. (p. 585)

Once these distinctions are made, one might think, we have a clear picture of how models of temporal experience that reject the naive model's sheer appeal to PPC to explain TEC and ETC would be located in the logical space. One example would be what Dainton (2000) calls the retentional model (RM), which we might characterize as the model according to which SSS and

Strong PSA are true. According to the retentional model, one's temporal experience is explained as a matter of the assistance of a distinctive kind of memory that retains the character of one's experience in the immediate past as the subject is consciously aware of a part of the world at a moment, where the structure of experience has nothing to do with succession. The succession is of what the experience presents to the subject where momentary experiences can present one with this succession. Succession is experienced as a property of the objects of the experience from a momentary awareness that itself is neither temporally extended nor successive.

These rough remarks might be leaving certain other accounts that might be called retentionalism out (e.g., Lee (2014)). According to the way I am going to use the phrase retentionalism, any model that does not fit the above characterization is not a retentional model. In the way in which I characterize retentionalism, the retentional model is merely an account of TEC, without taking ETC as an independent fact. The felt succession is always of what is experienced and since there is no felt succession of one's experiences, there is no need to think that there is a felt succession of one's momentary acts of consciousness. Along the same lines as what Hoerl thinks for what he calls the intentionalist views of temporal experience (2013, p.383), I suggest that in a reasonable version of retentionalism, the sense in which the moment in which one is perceptually aware of some temporal property can be said to be successive only in the sense of a *replacement* of one momentary awareness into the other. Since they think that there is no felt succession of the experience itself, the retentionalist would either reject ETC, or explain it as an illusion. Another important note to make about the retentional model is to say that it is not a view that is incompatible with the idea of a felt specious present. For a retentionalist, there is no problem with the idea that what is presented to the subject comes with a nonzero interval. They place the specious present into the content component of the experience.

A contrasting model that is committed to WSS along with either a rejection or a weak reading of PSA is often called the extensional model (EM). According to the extensional model, successive experiences are necessary to make sense of the experience of succession. Depending on the extensionalist's take on PSA, whether they endorse a weak form or reject PSA altogether, their take on the kind of extensional model also changes.⁷ At this neutral form, however, the

⁷ Hoerl's (2009; 2013) extensionalism differs from Phillips' (2010) due to their different takes on PSA. Hoerl, along with Dainton (2000) and Foster (1979), rejects PSA altogether while Phillips appeals to a weak version of PSA.

extensionalist view attempts to give an account of both TEC and ETC by an appeal to the experience's being successive. For the extensionalist, the doctrine of specious present is indeed a doctrine about the experience itself. The specious present is a feature of the character of experience, and not only a feature of the temporal properties it presents. This successive character of the experiences themselves often leads the proponents of extensionalism to endorse a processive ontology of experience (e.g., Hoerl, 2013; Soteriou, 2013), where experiences are themselves processive occurrences that essentially unfold over time.

Another interesting model in the market is the dynamic snapshot model (DSM) that Simon Prosser has developed (2013; 2017). The dynamic snapshot theory claims that snapshot-like momentary experiences can in fact give rise to direct perceptual awareness of temporal properties. Thus, unlike the retentional or extentional models, the dynamic snapshot model insists that the direct experience of temporal properties can be explained without invoking a specious present. This can be seen as an improvement to the cinematic realist, or naïve model that we initially discuss since the dynamic snapshot model appeals to PPC by attempting to accommodate the weak version of the slogan, where momentary snapshots (i.e., experiences that present at that instant/moment) in succession would lead to the felt succession without a requirement of a specious present.

Here is a crowded table of the models of the temporal structure of experience and their commitments based on the discussion above:

	ETC	TEC	S-PSA	W-PSA	W-SS	S-SS	PPC	SP
N.C.R.M.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
R.M	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
E.M. (1) (Phillips)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
E.M. (2) (Hoerl)	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
D.S.M.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

Figure 1: Principles and Models

In the next section I will suggest some clarifications on the principles and the models of experience that attempt to accommodate them one way or another.

4. Two Diagnoses

Two diagnoses based on the skeletal picture above are in order.

First, one should distinguish between different ways in which one might claim that there is an interval as part of the temporal structure of experience. While Miller's PSA and PPC are introduced in the context of Husserl's phenomenology, many of the views in the market today are concerned with the physical sensory systems one has in *detecting* motion and change (Lee 2014, Prosser 2016). The interval one's experience might be said to feature on empirical grounds would be equivalent, perhaps, to what some call the 'windows of simultaneity' where one's sensory system processes input within a given timescale. As Julian Kiverstein writes:

All sensory systems have what Ernst Pöppel calls a 'window of simultaneity', an interval during which temporally distinct events that happen successively are fused so that what we perceive is a single event. In normal humans, distinct visual events that are presented with a gap (a 'stimulus onset asynchrony') of approximately 20ms or less are fused in this way. (2010, p. 161)

Such an idea of windows of simultaneity, however, is theoretically distinct from one's idea of a temporal interval featuring in the experience, in the way in which the principles and doctrines we start the debate have it. In this sense, the principles and doctrines above are not to be confirmed or rejected by looking at how perceptual systems process information. Indeed, I suggest, it is a mistake to start assessing these principles with an appeal to empirical evidence about sensory systems. This does not mean that one's conscious experience is independent of one's sensory mechanisms. There is certainly a relationship, yet this relationship between the sub-personal, unconscious mechanisms that are in play in sensory perception and the personal, often conscious, mechanisms in play is not clear *at all*.⁸ The very rejection or acceptance of a nonzero interval as part of the structure of experience is not necessarily a claim about the fundamental nature of the

⁸ This might appear to be a strong claim. In this work, I will not discuss the reasons one might have to endorse it. See McDowell (1994) and Hornsby (2000) for defenses of the claim that the sub-personal and personal are categorically independent. The distinction is initially introduced to philosophy and psychology by Dennett (1969), see also Drayson (2010). Notice that I do not claim that McDowell and Hornsby are right. Rather, they demonstrate that there is a lack of clarity as to what the relationship in between could be.

experience, nor is about how physical perceptual systems detect succession. It is a claim about the ways in which we seem to be aware of temporal properties, in the way that we do.

Along these lines, Hoerl writes:

The basic defect with most of the existing attempts to link the question of the length of the specious present with a particular psychophysical measure (or a combination of such measures) is that the notion of the specious present, as introduced by James, and subsequently understood by others, is supposed to be a notion that plays a fundamental explanatory role in accounting for our very ability to perceive movement and change. Yet it is far from clear how any of the psychophysical measures typically invoked to assign a particular length to the specious present are meant to be related to that role. (p. 394).

Hoerl suggests here the main motivation for the notion of a specious present has to do with how things appear to the subject as they are aware of succession and change. Hence, prior to an adequate characterization of how one is aware of temporal properties, an attempt to give an account of one's temporal awareness in terms of what is happening in the physical system is putting the cart before the horse. The explanatory import of the notion of a specious present, it seems Hoerl claims, is at the level of conscious experiences, and not at the level of sub-personal mechanisms in the brain. Though I largely agree with Hoerl, one should be careful about what is it that exactly explains one's ability to be consciously aware of temporal properties. In Chapter 4, I argue against Hoerl's own suggestion that there are individual experiences that span over a brief interval (2013). I claim that we lack phenomenological reason to individuate discrete experiences with or without temporal extent.

There could be another way to characterize the specious present as it is felt in the conscious experience. Although Hoerl himself appears to be sceptical about the introspectibility of a nonzero interval in experience, one might think that one's awareness of change and succession necessarily gives rise to a felt nonzero interval in experience. In this latter way, one's reasons to think that there is a nonzero interval one is aware of would not be explanatory in the sense Hoerl suggests above. It would rather be descriptive. It would aim at an accurate characterization of how it feels to the subject as they are aware of succession. One might read both James' and Husserl's characterization of the awareness of an interval in two ways in which one might characterize the

phenomenal character of one's experience.⁹ Irrespective of one's appeal to the specious present in conscious experience, this notion should be distinguished from the notion of a specious present that has to do with the sensory systems processing information in and over time. Given these considerations, I suspect if "[it] is...incumbent upon philosophers of perception and mind to better understand [windows of simultaneity] in order to evaluate their implications." (Wilson, 2022). Again, it is certainly important to have a bearing on the goings-on at the sub-personal level, yet it is a bit too quick to say that it is 'incumbent' to understand these psychological phenomena better in order to have a grasp of the temporal character of conscious experience.

Once we make this clarification, we have a better grasp of how the models above divide the logical space regarding the specious present. Most of the extensional and retentional models (perhaps with the exception of Lee (2014)) commit to a *felt* specious present, which is understood to be a necessary element of the phenomenal character of one's experience; be it a result of the attempt to explain one's experience of change and succession, or a direct necessity of a proper characterization of what it is likeness to be aware of temporal properties. To this extent, Prosser's (2016; 2017) suggestions about the specious present, like Lee's, do not cut the pie at the same place as the former models. Strikingly, there is even the risk that they are not cutting the same pie. Prosser, for example, relies on the waterfall illusion to undermine the appeal to the specious present.¹⁰ He writes:

The standard explanation for the waterfall illusion appeals to neural adaptation that leads to a shift in the base activation level in populations of neurons that are associated with motion detection in early visual processing (see Anstis *et al.* 1998). Due to this shift, the adapted neurons indicate motion in the absence of a moving stimulus. The suggestion is then that the brain processes information in a variety of different streams, each of which computes something different. The content of conscious experience comprises various different contents thus computed. Sometimes, due to neural adaptation, those processes produce the result that an object is moving, despite there being no variation over time in its independently computed location. (2017, p. 150)

⁹ Although James appeals to some empirical evidence of his day to characterize the specious present (1890, p. 641). For a contemporary example, see Soteriou (2013).

¹⁰ Also, see Arstila (2018).

“The content of conscious experience comprises various different contents thus computed.” I demur. The content in question in the quoted passage, and the content of conscious experience are two distinct notions. The former is an information bearing neural vehicle, posited based on its explanatory import within the computational accounts of perception and cognition (Clark 1997, Sprevak 2013). The latter is what the sensory character of one’s experience seems to present to the subject. The content of a conscious experience, even if one opts for a conception that is neutral between representationalist and relationalist accounts of perceptual experience, is simply not the information-bearing structures one might appeal to explain the theoretically ascribed computations in the brain. As Frances Egan argues, the very notion of ‘cognitive content’ in computational neuroscience, appears merely to be an intentional gloss on the input values of the representations, which she calls the ‘mathematical content’ (Egan 2020, pp. 32-34). She concludes based on this diagnostic point that the philosophically relevant notion of content seems to do no explanatory work in explanations of sub-personal computations.

Even if one disagrees with Egan, there seems to be no reason why someone who endorses a felt specious present not to agree with everything that Prosser suggests about the explanation of the waterfall illusion. The doctrine of the specious present, therefore, requires phenomenological grounds which then can be attempted to reconcile with empirical findings. One is not in a position to say that “Look, your brain can process motion information while nothing is moving before your eyes. Hence you can experience motion at a moment”. This is an unwarranted passage from the goings on in the ‘brain’, a sub-personal component of the subject that delivers information about something that might or not be moving, to ‘you’: the conscious subject yourself undergoing a conscious experience featuring motion. One cannot, therefore, use the former claim to decisively show that the latter claim is false. What one can do at most is to suggest that there is a need to reconcile these two. Therefore, it is not unfair to say that Lee’s and Prosser’s (See also Watzl (2013)) points cannot decisively support a view that can apply to conscious experience.

The second diagnosis is that all the models introduced in Section 3 are essentially models of temporal experience. They are modelled to give an account of the experience of successive states of affairs of what perceptual experience presents. In this sense, they are explanatory accounts of TEC and not necessarily ETC. They accept James’ slogan as fundamentally a matter of one’s awareness of the succession of the objects one is aware of. Take again, for example, the main line in Prosser’s dynamic snapshot model. He writes:

According to the dynamic snapshot theory, what is experienced as happening at t is in no part constituted by what is experienced as happening at other times close to t . (2017, p. 150).

Given that in the waterfall illusion one is aware of motion, nonveridically, when the experience presents a static scene, he thinks, one can be aware of dynamic properties within the confines of a momentary snapshot, or an instant. In Chapters 4 and 5, I implicitly argue against Prosser-keeping in mind the previous diagnosis, not on what happens in the brain but at the level of phenomenal character-since I will suggest it is necessarily the case that the subject is aware of a nonzero interval in virtue of being aware of one's own temporal location within a temporal field. Here it suffices to say that his model is targeted at one's awareness of the succession of what is presented to the subject. The competing views, such as, the retentional and extensional models are also defined in terms of their rejection of the subject's being aware of the succession of the 'external' states of affairs within a moment.

Being essentially models of the felt succession of the object of the experience and not the felt succession of the experiences themselves, all the models I have discussed above attempt to explain ETC *in terms of* TEC. Given that most of the parties in the debate seem to accept PPC, the felt succession of experiences is construed to be a result of the felt succession of the experienced objects. This might make one find appealing that in case an explanation for TEC is provided, an explanation for ETC is thereby given. Extensionalists such as Dainton (2000), Phillips (2010) and Hoerl (2009), for example, despite their differences, and for different reasons, claim that the temporal ordering of the experience and its object are one and the same where the temporal structure of the object is the same as the temporal structure of the experience. According to them, ETC is explained with an explanation of TEC.

I claim that this consensus is contentious. In Chapter 2, I argue that a proper characterization of what I call, following Soteriou (2013), the temporal transparency claim does not in fact support the idea that what one ultimately finds upon introspection is only the temporal location of the experienced object. Hence, there is no easy argument for the claim that the felt succession of one's experiences *just is* the felt succession of what is experienced. For now, it suffices to note that the models above are essentially models of temporal experience and not experiential temporality per se. Without a careful examination of the relationship between the perceptual awareness of

succession and the awareness of one's own experiences as successive, one's assumption that an account of TEC would explain ETC is contentious.

Dropping this assumption shows that there are distinct matters concerning the temporal character of experience that is thrown into the same pot. Here are what I take to be distinct desiderata: the experience of temporal properties, the felt ephemeral character of perceptual experience, the felt continuity of the temporal experience, the felt 'temporal present', and the felt passage of time. Although all these are in one way or another related to each other, as initial desiderata, they are distinct and should be treated independently.

If we drop this contentious assumption that ETC is to be explained in terms of TEC, we are able to distinguish these otherwise entangled desiderata. But we also seem to have a problem. How can the subject be aware of their experiences as successive by undergoing a succession of experiences? If this awareness of succession of one's experiences is not a result of one's awareness of the succession in the object of the experience, such as the motion of the second hand of the clock, how can the subject be aware of the succession of the experiences themselves? In chapter five, I argue that it is an attractive option that TEC is explained in terms of ETC. I develop an account of one's awareness of their own successive experiences in terms of one's felt temporal location of oneself within a temporal field. Then I outline how this can explain TEC, along with accommodating the principles and doctrines above.

5. A Detour: The Ontology of Experience

The discussion in the previous section provides one with the means to respond to a line of criticism of the models of experience. This line emphasizes the idea that what one means when one says 'experience' is not clear and therefore the debate about the temporal structure of 'experience' is doomed to be empty until one spells out what exactly an experience is.

Adam Pautz writes:

[...] I worry that the philosophical notion of an experience is a technical notion that is never adequately explained...Granted, in ordinary English we talk of "experiences". But ordinary talk of one's "experiences" is talk of what happened to one, what one did, what one encountered or witnessed...If I say my experience of do was before my experience

of re, that just means I experienced do as before re. If I say I had many strange experiences today, that just means I experienced many strange things. In ordinary English, ‘experiences’ is not used as philosophers use it - to pick out some alleged internal mental events. If this is right, then when philosophers use ‘experiences’ they are using it in a quasi-technical sense. *This means: Philosophers’ debates about the temporal features of “experiences” are without content until they stipulate what they mean by ‘experiences’.* (2010, p.2, italics original)

He then proposes three options in which one might characterize an experience: the introspective conception, the neural token conception, and the property instantiation conception (p. 3). He maintains that it is not clear if any of these options give reason to engage in the debate about the temporal features of experience. I think Pautz’s challenge is genuine: some of the remarks in the previous section suggest that some philosophers think that they are talking about the same issue when it comes to the features of temporal experience, yet they talk past each other since what they seem to have in mind as they use the word experience does not seem to be the same thing. Nonetheless, I suggest, the challenge is not very difficult to meet. To show why, let me turn to Pautz’s suggestions for the conception of experience that might be at stake in matters about the relationship between time and experience.

First, the introspective conception. Pautz thinks that introspection would not be a very desirable way to characterize experience mainly because he thinks that experience is transparent in the sense that one can be aware of one’s experience only by being aware of what the experience presents. Even if this strong sense of transparency holds, however, it does not entail that there could be no interesting sense in which one can say experience itself has temporal properties. In the previous section I have already described two ways in which one can characterize the temporal structure of ‘experiences’ on introspective grounds.

One of these ways was about explaining a simple phenomenological fact about experiencing change and succession. Hoerl calls this the individuation argument (2013, p. 384). The basic idea behind the individuation argument is that there are basic facts about experience one can attend to upon introspection and if these facts require explanation to the extent in which how an experience can present temporal properties, then introspective awareness might motivate a particular conception of ‘experience’. Given that one is aware of change, for example, in looking at the second hand and not the hour-hand of a clock, there needs to be an explanation as to why this is

the case. Hoerl suggests that one reason to invoke temporally extended experiences is required precisely to explain this: there need to be individual experiences with some temporal extent, where the extent of the experience itself “...determines which temporal phenomena we can be aware of *within* experience...” (p. 387, italics original). In saying this, Hoerl need not commit himself to experiential items over and above what they present. In fact, he endorses the opposite view (2009; 2018).

Another introspective reason would be based on the subject’s inability to attend to an instant within experience as a proper temporal part of a temporally extended event, *in isolation*. Soteriou, for example, argues that introspection reveals that one’s awareness of an instant as the temporal boundary of a temporally extended event (i.e., the instantaneous event of a car’s starting to move) can only be experienced *as* the car’s starting to move if one is *also* aware of the car at rest prior to its moving. In this way, Soteriou provides a conception of experience as that which necessarily takes up a nonzero interval in order to present temporal properties. These two ways in which one’s introspective conception of experience motivating the idea that there needs to be an experiential structure that enables the subject to undergo experiences of temporal properties in the first place challenges Pautz’s commitment to the idea that introspective awareness can only reveal that the subject “...experienced do as before re.” For if they did so, one might argue, introspection suggests that there needs to be an experiential structure that allows the subject to experience do as before re. It is in this sense, introspection can give reason between different models of the temporal structure of experience.

Second, the neural token conception of experience. The discussion in the previous section, and the clarifications I have suggested there should also shed light on this suggestion. It is a mistake to consider the neural token conception of experience (Dretske, 1995; Tye, 1995) as the conception of experience that is at stake in the debate around TEC and ETC. According to the neural token conception one can ascribe a certain neural pattern type with a particular content. Let alone there are serious problems considering the neural-token representations that instantiate these neural pattern types, conceptually how a conscious experience along with its phenomenal character can be reduced to a representation in the brain is not clear at all. And even if this is achievable (See Morgan and Piccinini 2018), it is not clear if it can shed light on matters about the temporal structure of conscious experience entirely.

Third, the property instantiation conception. Perhaps this is the most revealing suggestion that Pautz suggests since it will lead me to an important diagnosis that shapes the framework within certain philosophers who have been working on conscious experience and its place in the natural world. According to the property instantiation view, experiences are instantaneous events that instantiate a phenomenal or experiential property of the subject, where this property is often characterized in terms of a conscious state the subject is in. This view goes hand in hand with the various versions of the intentionalist conception of experience, for the temporal character of experience is ultimately the temporal character of what the content of the experience is where the content is what determines the conditions of accuracy of that experience at a given time t .

The property instantiation view provides a nice framework in which one can understand temporal experience as properties that are instantiated when the subject is sensorily aware of change and succession. If this picture is right, one might be reluctant to say that experiences are temporally extended, for the simple reason that according to the property instantiation view experiences are instantaneous events.

The property instantiation view, however, is not the only view when it comes to the ontology of experience. Starting with Helen Steward's work (1997), the recent analytic philosophy of mind has paid quite some attention to the ways in which conscious experience can be cashed out. One line that is especially worth discussing here is the idea that introspection reveals experience as occurring, or taking place (Steward 1997, O'Shaughnessy 2000, Soteriou 2013). The conception of the experience as occurrent relates to the very idea of ETC that we find in James's remark that one's experiences present themselves as successive. One might think that James' claim that experiences themselves are successive suggests that one's experience is to be characterized as processive (O'Shaughnessy 2000, p. 50). Alternatively, one might be inclined to think that the experience appears to be processive yet there needs to be a distinctive kind of conscious *state* the subject is in in order for this process to occur. According to this view, the distinctive conscious state one is in and the processive character of experience are mutual parts of the same single structure of experience (Soteriou 2013) (See, Steward (2018) for a critical discussion). All these conceptions provide one a clear sense in which experiences can be said to be temporally extended, or feature a nonzero temporal interval.

None of the considerations Pautz suggests then is sufficient to think that the question about the temporal structure of experience is trivial or with no content. Even if one assumes that Pautz's preferred intentionalist account of experience is correct, there are clear ways in which one can start

from the phenomenal character of conscious experience and proceed into an ontology of experience through either spelling out the structural features of the experience as they appear to the subject or providing an explanation of the very character of the experience. It should be clear based on the discussion in this section that one need not appeal to ‘experience’ as an empty concept. One need not even start with the concept of an experience. One can start with what phenomenology offers one and proceed into other matters about the structure of conscious experience.

Hoerl has been defending (2013; 2017), for example, the idea that while extensionalism is a natural fit to relationalism, retentionalism is a fit to intentionalism. Given the ontological picture I have sketched above, extensionalism would reject at least a traditional state ontology of experience which comes with the additional appeal to the experiences as phenomenal properties of subjects that are ultimately some sort of body or brain states. Similarly those few who endorse a sense-datum theory (Foster, 1979, Robinson, 1994, O’Shaughnessy, 2000, Dainton, 2000), might also opt for a processive ontology. The state (property instantiating event) ontology of experience would go hand in hand with the various versions of the intentionalist conception of experience, for the temporal character of experience is ultimately the temporal character of what the content of the experience is where the content is what determines the conditions of accuracy of that experience at a given time *t*. The process/temporally extended event ontology of experience, one might think based on these considerations, would go hand in hand with the relationalist view of perceptual experience. In this sense, a careful characterization of the temporal character of experience can be used to motivate or undermine certain accounts of perceptual experience (e.g., Soteriou 2013).

6. Accounts of the Present and Temporal Passage

Based on which account of the temporal character of experience one finds most plausible, one’s options to think about the idea of the temporal present, and temporal passage change. It seems that human subjects do have a sense in which what is presented to them by their perceptual experience is ephemeral: things stay in perceptual consciousness for a short time as they come into and go out of one’s conscious experience. This felt character might lead one to think that there is a temporal present within which these ephemera are presented. Based on this idea that there is a felt temporal present in perceptual experience, one might also appeal to the idea that human

subjects are aware of a temporal flux, where one felt present moment flows into the other leading to a sense of time passing.¹¹

One way in which one might attempt to cash out the temporal present is through inserting a temporally indexical element mode of presentation into the experience. According to such view, perceptual experience presents its objects, whether it is a medium sized material object or a temporally extended event *as* in the present. Among many others, examples of the view can be found in Peacocke (1998; 2019), Kriegel (2009) and Connor and Smith (2019). Although all these three have different takes on the temporally indexical mode of presentation in experience, the view roughly goes as follows: the object of perceptual experience appears to be in, to borrow Husserl's phrase, *in propria persona* (2001, p. 137), and this has to do with the fact that the objects of perceptual experience are present in the very now, as opposed to, for example, one's recollection of something that happened before the present moment.

Such accounts treat the idea of the temporal present as something to be explained within the confines of TEC, in terms of what the experience presents to the subject since what they seem to suggest is that it is what the experience presents that is being presented as now. The temporal present, according to these views, has to do with what the subject is presented with by undergoing an experience. Yet while this seems to be the case for mnemonic and anticipatory experiences in the sense that those experiences seem to present their objects as in a different time from the time of the recollection or anticipation, in perceptual experience, there does not seem to be an equivalent, 'different time' from the present. A closer look at what the experience presents, in fact, reveals that by characterizing what perceptual experience presents, one cannot but to fail to identify a time within which its objects are presented. What justifies the claim that mnemonic experiences present their object as in the past is the fact that there is an asymmetry between the epistemic access one has to what one's current experience presents and one's access to what one's experience presented before. Since there is no asymmetry in the case of perceptual experience, where one's perceptual awareness appears to provide one with the "...bare occurrence..." (Hoerl, 2018, p. 145) of what is being experienced, it seems that in terms of what it presents to the subject, an accurate characterization of perceptual experience does not admit tensed notions into its structure.

¹¹ Some views of the felt passage as illusion (Paul 2010; Prosser 2012) and those who reject that there is a felt passage of time at all (Deng 2013; Hoerl 2014).

This might lead one to think that there is no felt temporal present as part of the perceptual experience. The appeal to tensed notions in one's characterization of conscious experience arises only when one considers one's remembering something, or anticipating something. When it comes to the very present itself, devoid of considerations about one's recollection of the past and the anticipation of the future, there is no felt presentness. I agree with this characterization as long as one is concerned with TEC. The contentious step from the characterization of TEC to the characterization of ETC might have it that the lack of reason to introduce a felt present as part of the object of the experience entails the lack of reason to introduce a felt present as part of the experience itself. In Chapter 5, I argue that this is false. There are independent reasons to think that one's pre-reflective self-awareness features a felt temporal present, motivating the idea that there is a tensed structure to the perceptual experience. I also argue that the account I develop in Chapter 5 provides a framework to make sense of one's mnemonic and anticipatory experiences.

7. A Preliminary Conclusion and Summary

This paper is intended to be mainly diagnostic. A core diagnosis was that when it comes to temporal experience, people seem to try to carve different joints and yet think that they are accounting for the same phenomena. In that respect one suggestion I made is that different models of 'cinematic', 'retentional' or 'extensional' kind are not as uniform as they are supposed to be if they are to be regarded under the same category. Second, although ontological matters are essentially relevant to the debate, the core questions and puzzles are initially motivated based on how things feel to the subject. The very rejection or acceptance of a nonzero interval (a felt temporal speciousness) as part of the structure of experience is not necessarily a claim about the ultimate nature of the experience-e.g., what grounds or constitutes the experience in the physical world, nor is about how physical perceptual systems detect succession. It is a claim about the ways in which we seem to be aware of temporal properties, in the way that we do.

Though one might be sceptical towards the methodological matters in philosophy, the considerations above indicate that the issues that arise for the perceptual awareness of temporal properties have essentially to do with how it feels one to be aware of change, succession and persistence, along with what one might say about one's experience of this change, succession and persistence. Thus, one's first step should be clarifying this felt character of experience when it comes to experiencing temporal properties, keeping the distinctions made above in mind. In the

rest of this work, I attempt to provide some initial answers to these matters about temporal phenomenology.

Here is a short summary of what follows in the following chapters.

In Chapter 2, I defend the claim that what philosophers call ‘temporal transparency’ of perceptual experience should be approached more carefully as a phenomenological datum. For I argue that regarding the temporal character of experience, one’s introspective reflection can systematically lead to false judgments about the character of one’s experience. Therefore, the temporal transparency claim should be formulated in such a way that it entails neither that there is an introspectable temporal location of the experience nor that it is impossible to introspectively attend to the temporal location of the experience.

In Chapter 3, I turn to a different problem about perceptual phenomenology, what Alva Noe (2004) calls the problem of perceptual presence. I argue that there is no problem of presence in the way Noe conceives it if we drop the contentious assumption about the conditions of visibility of medium sized material objects. I further argue, nonetheless, that there is still a problem of perceptual presence, yet it is so different from Noe’s version that it preempts what has been called the imaginative accounts of presents.

In Chapter 4, I discuss if it is phenomenologically plausible to posit phenomenal units of perceptual experiences that make up the experience. I develop an anti-atomist account of *phenomenal mereology*, according to which there is no reason to characterize experiences as consisting of phenomenal atoms in any sense. There is still the need to explain one’s ability to discern spatial and temporal parts and wholes in perceptual experience. I defend the claim that the subject is aware of the spatial field in visual experience primarily to one’s awareness of the spatially extended objects and their parts. Similarly, there is a phenomenal temporal field one is aware of in temporal experience primarily to one’s awareness of the temporally extended objects and their parts.

In Chapter 5, partly based on my remarks in Chapters 2 and 4, I argue that there are temporal presents in succession, as a result of one’s temporally self-locating awareness. The felt temporal presents are not attached to what the experience presents but attached to one’s pre-reflective self-awareness. I suggest a view according to which temporal presents has to do with one’s awareness of one’s own experiences as successive. My proposed account accommodates phenomenological

givens such as temporal transparency successfully and explains the character of temporal experience and the felt passage of time.

CHAPTER TWO

Temporal Transparency and the Limits of Introspection

1. Introduction

Consider the following statement.

- (1) If one's experience features a property P, one is in a position to know that one's experience features P.

Though it has *prima facie* plausibility, (1) has serious problems (Williamson, 2000; Stazicker, 2018; Lee, 2019). A weaker version of (1) is the following.

- (2) If one's experience features a property P, upon introspection one knows that one's experience features P.¹²

(2) is weaker than (1) as it loosens the connection between the character of experience and one's epistemic access to it. One needs to introspectively attend to the character of one's experience in order to be in a position to know what one's experience features. Introspective attention, however, can come in various forms and need not ensure a sort of infallibility for one's judgments about one's own experience (Schwitzgebel, 2008). A slightly weaker, and more carefully formulated version of (2) is the following.

- (3) If experience seems to its subject to feature a property P upon systematic introspective reflection, then it features P.¹³

¹² Versions of (2) can be found in McDowell (1989), Dainton (2000) and Goff (2017) among many others.

¹³ Phillips (2010) uses the phrase "systematic introspective reflection" (p. 183).

The underlying contention behind this claim is that even if one might make mistakes upon introspection, a systematic inquiry of how one's experience seems to the subject could not lead to a mistaken judgment about one's experience. In other words, systematic introspective reflection puts one in a position to be introspectively aware of the facts about one's experience. In Michael Tye's words "Introspection gives us fact awareness: we are aware that we are having so-and so experiences..." (2020, p. 10). If introspection is essentially a form of fact-awareness, it is essentially a form of knowledge whose scope is restricted to the way in which things appear to the subject as they undergo a conscious experience. Thus, one's rational introspection cannot be systematically mistaken about the character of one's conscious experience. (3) entails the following.

- (4) If experience seems to its subject not to feature a property P upon systematic introspective reflection, then it does not feature P.

In this paper, I argue that (4) is false. Hence, (3) is false. There can be cases of systematic introspection in which experience seems to its subject not to feature P, yet it features P. As we shall see, this is precisely because one's *not* being in a position to be introspectively aware of a fact about one's experience does not guarantee that there is no such fact. By discussing a central debate about the character of temporal experience, I argue that one's perceptual experience can feature two distinct properties and yet one can fail, upon systematic reflection, to be introspectively fact aware that one's experience features either of these properties.

The paper divides into five. In Section 2, I pin down the core disagreement between the proponents of two distinct kinds of claims about temporal experience: those who think that the subject is aware of the temporal location of the experience itself (Soteriou, 2010; Phillips, 2010, 2014), and those who reject that the experience appears to have a temporal location (Hoerl, 2018). I show that the dispute boils down to what one thinks introspection reveals in cases of temporal experience. In Section 3, I provide an example to argue that one can be perceptually aware of two distinct properties that coincide at the same spatial location without the subject being introspectively fact aware that one's experience features two distinct properties. In section 4, I discuss the implications of the example in the debate around temporal experience and introspection in general. In Section 5, I argue that our spatial experiences are not afflicted by the claim I defended in the previous sections. Our temporal experiences, on the other hand, are not entirely safe.

If I am right, two things follow. First, introspection might be systematically misleading because the subject can be *contingently* not positioned to be introspectively fact aware of what they are perceptually property aware of. Second, no matter how systematic and rational it is, introspection alone cannot be reliably used to settle the existing debate around the temporal structure of experience. This undermines many claims that have been made in the temporal experience literature on phenomenological grounds.

2. Experiencing Temporal Properties

Perceptual experience presents not only material objects and their spatial properties, but also temporally extended objects and their temporal properties (Le Poidevin, 2007; Soteriou, 2010, 2013; Phillips 2010; also see Broad 1925). As your friend waves their hand to you, you do not only see the hand but also the motion of the hand over time. This suggests that there is a distinct category of temporally extended objects of perceptual experience, phenomenologically speaking, in addition to the experienced medium-sized material objects and their properties. Let us call this the temporal experience claim.¹⁴

What is the best way to cash out the phenomenology of experiencing temporally extended objects? Here is an answer that has become the phenomenological datum in the debate. Matthew Soteriou writes:

Introspectively, it doesn't seem to one as though one can mark out the temporal location of one's perceptual experience as distinct from the temporal location of whatever it is that one seems to be perceptually aware of. (2013, p. 92)

According to Soteriou, it never appears to the subject that the temporal location of their experience comes apart from the apparent temporal location of the experienced event itself.¹⁵ Soteriou makes

¹⁴ This claim is rarely rejected. See, for example, Chuard (2011). An older, and slightly different version of Chuard's view can be found in Dennett (1991) and Hurley (1998). See also Reid (1784).

¹⁵ In the rest of the paper, when I write spatial or temporal location of the object of experience, I mean 'apparent' spatial or temporal location, which is often different from the real location of the experienced object. For discussions of how the apparent and real location might be related see Butterfield (1984) and Callahan (2008). Also see Power (2018).

here a negative claim about how things do not seem to the subject. A more positive claim somewhat similar to Soteriou's is made by Ian Phillips:

...the...claim [is] that it seems to us that our experience itself unfolds alongside, and in step with, the temporal phenomena which we find ourselves attending to in reflecting on our experience. (2014, p. 132)

Phillips seems to contend that one's perceptual experience appears to have the same temporal location as the experienced temporal phenomenon by appearing to unfold alongside the experienced event. For him, when one sees the wave, the temporal location of the perceptual experience of the wave seems to match the temporal location of the temporally extended motion of the hand as there is a felt unfolding of the experience along with the felt unfolding of the wave over time. He elaborates on this version of the claim as an *inheritance claim*.

...when all goes well, your stream of consciousness inherits the temporal structure of the events that are its contents. You “take in” the temporal structure of the events you witness in witnessing them. As a result, the temporal structure of experience matches the temporal structure of its objects. (2014, p. 139)

According to Phillips' view, there is a match in the temporal structures between the conscious perceptual experience and its temporally extended object and they both appear to unfold over time. The conscious perceptual experience of an event inherits the temporal location and extension of the event it presents to the subject. One way to understand this claim is to think about it in terms of the idea of the *transparency of experience* in the domain of temporal experience. The idea of transparency is often traced back to the following popular lines from Moore:

That which makes the sensation of blue a mental fact seems to escape us; it seems, if I may use a metaphor, to be transparent—we look through it and see nothing but the blue. (p. 446, 1903)

Moore's claim, roughly, is that one fails to introspectively attend to a feature of the perceptual experience itself that is blue. Whenever one wants to describe the phenomenal character of the sensation of a blue vase based on introspective awareness, one's description inevitably maps onto the blueness of the vase. Moore's claim, if true, seems to hold for material objects and their spatial

properties the perceptual experience presents.¹⁶ If Moore's conception of transparency holds for cases of temporal experience, then the claim is that the subject *looks through* the experience and sees nothing more than the temporal structure of the experienced event itself. Phillips agrees with Moore to a certain extent, but with a twist. He writes:

...time is special. Temporal properties are the only properties manifestly shared by both the objects of experience and by experience itself. Experience, at least in its subjective aspect, is not colored or shaped; it does, however, manifestly have a temporal structure. As a result, the question arises of the relation between the temporal structure of experience and the temporal structure of its objects. No such question obviously arises for color or shape. (2014, p.139)

Phillips accepts here that one cannot attend to the spatial features of the experience itself, such as its shape and colour, upon introspective attention to the spatial properties presented by the experience. Yet he also thinks that the temporal properties are special, to the extent that it appears to the subject that both the experience and the object of the experience have these properties. The core contention is that any attempt to describe the experience of a temporally extended event inevitably mentions the temporal location and extension of the experience itself because the experience necessarily appears to take the exact time that its temporally extended object takes. This is a way of saying that it is not possible for the subject to introspectively attend to the temporal location of the experienced event without thereby attending to the temporal location of the experience of the event. Soteriou agrees with Phillips on this. He writes:

...it seems to one as though the temporal location of one's experience depends on, and is determined by the temporal location of whatever it is that one's experience is an experience of. (2013, p.92)

To make sense of this special transparency claim about temporal experience, one should draw distinctions between different versions of the transparency of experience. One distinction would be reminiscent of the distinction between weak and strong transparency claims that Amy Kind

¹⁶ Moore, in fact, rejects that the experience is entirely transparent (1903, pp. 445-446).

suggests (p. 230, 2003).¹⁷ According to the strong transparency claim, it is impossible to introspectively attend to features of the experience that is not exhausted by the features of the experienced object. According to the weak transparency claim, on the other hand, this is not impossible. Although Kind does not say it explicitly, like many others in the literature, she seems to have spatial properties of the experienced medium-sized objects in mind when she makes this distinction. It is important to draw a further distinction, I suggest, between the spatial and *temporal* transparency claims.

The weak transparency claim about temporal experience holds that subjects can be introspectively aware of the temporal features of their perceptual experience only by being aware of the temporal features of the temporally extended object of the experience. The spatial analogue of this claim would be the weak transparency about the visual experience endorsed by many. The weak spatial transparency claim has it that one cannot attend to the phenomenal (spatial) features of a perceptual experience without attending to the spatial features of some external (material) object the experience presents. This weak form of transparency allows subjects to be introspectively aware of some features of their experience by being introspectively aware of the features of the experienced material object or event.¹⁸

We can situate the weak spatial transparency claim against the strong spatial transparency claim which holds that by attending to the phenomenal spatial features of a perceptual experience, one can only attend to the spatial features of external objects.¹⁹ The temporal analogue of this claim would be that by introspectively attending to the temporal features of experience one can *only* attend to the temporal features of the experienced event. According to the strong temporal transparency claim, introspection reveals only features of the external events the experience presents. Importantly, the strong transparency claim does not allow subjects to be introspectively aware of any temporal feature of their perceptual experience by being introspectively aware of the

¹⁷ A similar distinction is made earlier by Crane (2000), though he does not use the weak-strong terminology to cash out transparency but to cash out different versions of intentionalism following from the different transparency claims.

¹⁸ How these features of the experience are to be spelled out has to do with one's preferred account of perceptual experience. Peacocke (1983) and Block (1996) think that one can be aware of some sort of qualia upon introspection. A proponent of the weak transparency claim, however, need not commit to the existence of qualia (e.g., Soteriou 2013, Raleigh 2021).

¹⁹ Dretske (1995), Tye (1995) and Harman (1990) endorses this version.

features of the experienced event. As a result of these considerations, we can introduce the following distinct claims of temporal transparency.

Weak Temporal Transparency: Subjects can introspectively attend to the temporal location of their perceptual experience *only* by attending to the temporal location of the temporally extended object of the experience.

Strong Temporal Transparency: Subjects can introspectively attend *only* to the temporal location of the object of the experience

It should be clear that the sort of temporal transparency claims that Soteriou and Phillips seem to endorse is a sort of weak temporal transparency claim because although it accepts that the subject attends to the temporal features of the experience upon introspection, it maintains that the subject can do so only by attending to the temporal features of the experienced event. In one plausible way to develop the experience of temporally extended events, then, one can claim that temporal experience appears to have a temporal location, yet the temporal features individuating this location are exhausted by the apparent temporal location of the temporally extended object of the perceptual experience.

In another way of developing temporal experience, the weak temporal transparency claim is not plausible. Christoph Hoerl writes:

...the truth both Phillips and Soteriou are trying to get at by seemingly denying transparency for the temporal properties of experience is in fact better captured by saying that, when it comes to time, there is a sense in which the transparency of experience applies to a particularly strong degree (2018, p.135).

The reason why Hoerl thinks Soteriou and Phillips's transparency claims are captured better by a strong temporal transparency claim has its roots in Hoerl's reading of the initial phenomenological datum that Soteriou provides: that the subject fails to mark out upon introspection the temporal location of the experience as distinct from the temporal location of the experienced event. Hoerl argues that this *negative* feature of temporal experience seems to be different for visual spatial experience, where the subject can in fact introspectively attend to a spatial location that is distinct from the spatial location of the experienced object (p. 142). Although it is not entirely clear what

this spatial location is (i.e., somewhere around the subject's upper body), one can introspectively attend to the spatial location *from which* one is visually aware of the object of the experience (Peacocke, 1983; Martin 1992). When one is visually aware of one's friend's hand, the location of the hand is introspectable by the subject as distinct from the spatial location from which one is perceptually aware of the hand. This justifies the claim that there is a kind of spatial location available to introspective awareness on top of the spatial location of the experienced hand.

Hoerl argues that given that there is no such introspectable feature in temporal experience, there is no good reason for thinking that there is a temporal location featuring in the phenomenal character of the experience as distinct from the apparent temporal location of the wave. One way to understand Hoerl's claim is to say that in the case of temporal experience, there is no room for the talk of different *modes of presentation* under which the same temporally extended event is presented. One can see the same tomato from different viewpoints *as* being certain ways such as being at a spatial location, as being red and round. In temporal experience, in contrast, there are no different *temporal modes of presentation* under which one can experience the same temporally extended object as being a certain way.²⁰ Therefore, the weak temporal transparency claim is either inconsistent or collapses into the strong temporal transparency claim.

Here is where we are. It is uncontroversial that upon introspective reflection the subject finds no temporal location in temporal experience that is distinct from the apparent temporal location of the experienced event. While Soteriou and Phillips think that this is no obstacle to think that there is an introspectable location of the experience itself that appears to be determined by the apparent location of the experienced event, Hoerl argues that the lack of a temporal location that appears to be distinct from the apparent location of the experienced object is a sufficient reason to think that there is *no* temporal location that features in the phenomenal character in addition to the apparent temporal location of the experienced object. Therefore, Hoerl claims, it is a mistake to think that we do introspectively attend to the location of the experience itself.

3. Making Sense of Temporal Transparency

²⁰ The claim is in conflict with those who think that perceptual experience presents their objects *as* in now (e.g., Valberg, 1992; Kriegel, 2009; Peacocke, 2019).

It seems that the core of the debate around temporal transparency concerns the idea of two features of the phenomenal character coinciding at a single temporal location, or not. How to assess if this is the case? One way is to resort to cases in which one can identify two events that coincide at the same temporal location and say that this is how one is aware of the temporal location of the experience itself as coinciding with the temporal location of what the experience presents. Imagine, for instance, one is visually aware of a shortly lived shooting meteor and a lightening that happen right next to each other in the subject's visual field. Upon introspection, one would be able to attend to these two events as distinct events sharing the same single temporal location. This would be an ordinary case of attending to two features that contribute to the phenomenal character of one's temporal experience that seem to coincide at a single apparent temporal location.

Clearly, this is not what is at stake with the claim that one can be aware of the temporal location of one's experience. In the case of attending to the temporal location of your experience, one fails to be introspectively aware of the experience as an item in the same sense one is aware of an experienced event as an item that contribute to the phenomenal character. That is, as one is visually aware of the lightening and the shooting, one's introspective awareness would reveal two temporally extended items sharing the same temporal location, and *not* a discernible third item as the *experience* of these events, sharing that temporal location with its temporally extended objects. This is partly the state of the debate I discussed in the previous section: one does not seem to be introspectively attending to the temporal location of the experience in the same sense in which one introspectively attends to the lightening and the shooting. Some take this to support strong temporal transparency, others take it to support weak temporal transparency.

Why do the proponents of weak temporal transparency, then, still maintain that one is aware of the temporal location of the experience in some sense? There is not a single answer to that because different proponents of the weak claim might have different views on that. I shall not get into that discussion at this point for my present purposes. Rather, I will discuss in this section *given* that they claim that the experience appears to have the exact same temporal location as the object the experience presents, whether this weak transparency claim can be coherently cashed out. If Hoerl is right, it cannot be since any coherent conception of the weak claim would collapse into a strong claim.

One might attempt to cash out one sense in which the weak claim might hold by appealing to tactile perceptual experience. For the closest that might come to the idea of the experience itself contributing to the phenomenal character as coinciding at a single location with its object would be that of a tactile experience. Tactile experiences are creatures of spatial contact. Being a creature of spatial contact requires two ingredients to coincide at a single spatial location. If we can make proper sense of two ingredients featuring in the phenomenal character of one's tactile experience coinciding at a single location, perhaps we can import some of the lessons we draw for the tactile case of coinciding to the debate around the nature of temporal transparency and how the experience and the object of the experience might be said to coincide at an apparent temporal location featuring in the phenomenal character of the experience. Here is Michael Martin (1992) with his characterization of the phenomenology of tactile experience.

Martin's view, roughly, is that the tactile perceptual experience is intelligible only with the 'felt' boundary between the limits of the body and the surface that the relevant body parts press against (p. 204). If this is right, one must experience a felt boundary between one's skin and the outer surface that it is in contact with. If not, it would not be possible for one to experience a bodily sensation since there is nothing that phenomenally distinguishes the body part from the experienced surface and hence there is no felt internal/external distinction that decides if a conscious experience is felt as an internal bodily sensation or a perception of something beyond the body.

Martin's characterization is appealing. It seems to leave little doubt that the subject would be able to attend to the same spatial location (i.e., the location of the tactile contact) as both the location of the object of the experience and the location from which the subject is tactually aware of the object once one's experience features a felt body and bodily boundary. Therefore, Martin thinks, the role of one's awareness of one's own body in generating the phenomenology of touch is necessary and partly constitutive.²¹ One might accept, without agreeing with the constitutive role of one's body, that there seems to be a felt spatial location that one takes to be both the location of a part of the object of the experience, and a part of one's body. Given that one is aware of one's body part as one is tactually aware of a part of a surface, one can attend to two different ingredients of the phenomenal character that coincide at the same spatial location, upon introspection. One

²¹ Martin's account is not the only game in town. See de Vignemont (2015, 2018) for a convincing defence of the claim that bodily awareness is not essential for tactile experience.

can introspectively attend to this location as occupied by these two ingredients not at once, but separately, in distinct acts of introspective awareness.

This case is not entirely helpful, however, for the task I have at hand. For in typical cases of touch one seems to be able to introspectively aware of two ingredients as distinct, just in the same sense one can do so in the case of experiencing the simultaneous shooting and lightening. This is not the same sense in which the weak temporal transparency claim can be made. For the task at hand, we must think of a case in which a tactile experiencer might be aware of an apparent spatial location from which one experiences some object, yet systematically fails to mark out, upon introspection, the location from which one is aware of the object of the experience as distinct from the apparent location of the object of the experience. If such a case is intelligible, we would come close to construe at least one clear sense in which the weak claim might hold. One might be perceptually aware of the temporal location from which one is aware of the object of the experience yet fail to mark out that temporal location as distinct from the apparent temporal location of the experienced event.

Imagine in two different petri dishes, we grow two primitive organisms of the same species. Imagine this species is only capable of tactual experience through a small tactile apparatus that detects certain texture properties. The organism in the first dish, let us call it O1, is held at a single location in such a way that it cannot move within the dish. The second organism, O2, in contrast, is left free in the dish to wander around. What can we say about the respective phenomenal characters of O1 and O2's tactile experiences throughout their lives? One answer is that the O1's experience would not appear to feature a surface below its apparatus. For it spends all its life without moving and experiencing the same part of the surface at the very same location, it would not be aware of the surface as the surface of an external object. In this sense, O1 would have a sensation of some sort, without the felt presence of an external surface. Another answer is that even if it is aware of that object, lacking a sense of bodily ownership, its experience would feature only the texture properties of the surface.²² No matter which option one is inclined to prefer, in both cases O1 seems to be aware of a single ingredient featuring in its experience. O2, on the other

²² Which option one would go is decided by one's take on the character of the tactile experience. If one agrees with Martin (1992), one will go with the former. If one thinks that a creature that lacks bodily awareness can still have tactile experiences, as de Vignemont argues (2018), one will go with the latter. Either of these options work for my purposes as the experience seems to the subject to feature a single property, upon introspection.

hand, would have an experience that appear to feature a surface that is distinct from its tactile apparatus as it is able to move around and be aware of different texture properties of the same surface. One thing is stipulatively clear: when we compare the experiences of O1 and O2, at a given time, their experiences would be structurally the same: they are in contact with a particular surface through the same sensory apparatus, undergoing an experience that features certain texture properties. Upon introspection, however, O1's experience would appear to feature a single ingredient, while O2's experience appear to feature both its sensory apparatus and the part of the surface it is in tactile contact. Accordingly, O1 would be introspectively aware of a single ingredient, either a sensation or a perception of a surface, while O2 would be introspectively aware of two ingredients coinciding at a single location.

To better understand the differences and similarities between these two experiences, we might release O1 in its dish, allow it to explore the surface further and think how its introspective awareness would change. Being free in the dish, O1 would be able to actively explore the surface textures as O2 has been doing, developing a sense of the surface applying varying pressure to its tactile apparatus at different spatial locations. After a sufficient amount of exploration, I suggest, we need to say that O1 would be able to discern, upon introspection, that there are two ingredients featuring in its experience coinciding at a single spatial location, just as O2 does. How should we make sense of this change across the first and the second halves of O1's life?

I think that the best sense we can make out of this case is by appealing to a distinction between one's perceptual property awareness and introspective fact awareness. Such distinction is in no way unfamiliar in recent analytic philosophy. According to Fred Dretske (1995, 2010), for example, there is a difference between being seeing properties, objects, and facts. One might see the property red without seeing the red object, and one can see a red object without seeing *that* the object is red (a white object under red light for instance).²³ Similarly, my claim is, one can be perceptually aware of certain properties that feature in one's experience, and it is a mistake to think that by being perceptually aware of certain properties one would thereby become introspectively aware that one's experience features those properties. One's perceptual property awareness of P does not entail one's perceptual fact awareness that it is P and hence one's perceptual property

²³ One might argue that one does not see a red object when one visually experiences a white object under red light (Matthen, 2015). For what matters to my claim, this is not crucial. I can accept that and still maintain that there is a difference between being aware of a property and being aware of a fact.

awareness, no matter how systematically it is studied through careful introspection, need not put one into a position be introspectively fact aware of the properties one is perceptually aware.

Going back to our example, O1 might be perceptually aware of two components that coincide at a single spatial location in veridical cases of its tactile experience without being aware that there are two ingredients featuring in its experience. Given this possibility, it does not follow from being perceptually property aware P1 and P2 coinciding at a single location that one is introspectively fact aware that one's experience features P1 and P2 that coincide at a single location.²⁴ The most reasonable account of the example above, then, is to say that O1, after it was freed to move, would *notice* or *figure out* that its experience *has been* as of two properties, featuring two ingredients, although it has not appeared until now to feature two properties. Therefore (4), and hence (3), are false. One might fail to be introspectively aware of the fact that one's experience features two distinct things, yet the experience can feature these two ingredients in the sense that one might be perceptually aware of these ingredients.

4. The Limits of Introspection in Temporal Experience

What can the case in Section 3 teach us about the nature of introspective awareness and the temporal structure of experience? In this section I will answer these questions.

The conclusion of the previous section is a conclusion merely about the perceptual awareness of two organisms in petri dishes. What can we reasonably import from this story to our experience of temporal properties? Do we have good reason to think that the phenomenology of the creature in the first dish before it was freed to move is not analogous to our temporal phenomenology? If the answer is no, we can thereby claim that one's temporal experience might appear to the subject to feature a single ingredient at a temporal location as a result of the subject's failing to be fact aware of what they are property aware.

At this point, I simply claim that we do not seem to have any good reason to think that the answer to the above question is yes. O1's passive sensitivity to the texture of the surface at a single spatial

²⁴ It is clearly the case that these organisms would lack the conceptual resources to be aware of any fact upon introspection. However, this is not the claim that is at stake. The claim is that if O1 were to have the conceptual resources, it would have still lacked the introspective fact awareness.

location, prior to its release in its dish, seems to be perfectly analogous to the sensitivity humans seem to have to experienced properties at a temporal location. In both cases, the subject seems to lack a felt sense of inner outer distinction: in one case this is a spatial inner outer distinction, in the other it is temporal inner outer distinction. Given the possibility, and importantly, not the plausibility, of the case in which we, in experiencing temporal properties, are like O1 in the first dish prior to its being set free, our temporal experiences might appear to feature a single ingredient upon systematic introspective reflection yet might feature in fact two coinciding properties.

No analogy is perfect, but I take it the one I provide is very forceful in showing us a possibility. It is important noting that I do not claim that we *are* like O1 in our sensitivity to temporal properties. I claim that we can be like O1, and we cannot simply claim based on introspection that we are not. We can be perceptually property aware of the location from which we are aware of a temporally extended event and fail to form true judgments about what the experience features, lacking the capacity to be introspectively fact aware that we have some sort of equivalent to a temporal apparatus, which determines our temporal location from which we experience temporal properties.²⁵ Hence, one cannot, and therefore should not attempt to, claim based on introspection that strong temporal transparency holds.

If we grant the analogy, there seems to be no room for disputing if there could be a temporal location from which one is aware of temporal properties. There certainly could be one. Hence, Hoerl's claim that a weak form of temporal transparency is either inconsistent or collapses into a strong form of temporal transparency is false. It could be that one is perceptually property aware of the location from which one is aware of the object of the experience, yet it happens to be, as a *contingent matter*, always the same location. Thus, in certain cases, one is contingently not in a position to be introspectively fact aware that one's experience features that location even upon systematic rational introspection. As a result, my contention is that Hoerl's claim that perceptual experience does not feature a temporal mode of presentation because it does not appear to the subject that the experience presents its objects as being now, is not well-established. If we are like the O1 in our sensitivity to temporal properties, our perceptual experiences might characteristically

²⁵ The idea of a temporal apparatus might seem unappealing first. Indeed, it is a popular view that human subjects do not have a sensory system or apparatus devoted to experience temporal properties (Gallistel, 1996; Phillips, 2010). Yet once one drops the assumption that it must be like other sensory apparati, the idea of a system that works to detect temporal properties stops seeming unreasonable. See Viera (2020) for a recent defense of the idea that we do have a sensory system devoted to experience time.

feature a temporal location from which we are aware of the temporal properties of what we experience. Hence, they might present their objects as being in the present moment. This undermines another crucial claim Hoerl makes. He writes:

The sense in which perceptual experience lacks temporal viewpointedness, thus, is that there is no equivalent ‘temporal point of view’ that we could discriminate, from within experience, from the time of the experienced events, and thus no equivalent ‘way’ in which events figure in perception temporally that would also allow for other, alternative, ways in which the same events might figure in it. (2018, pp. 142-143)

To show the problem with this line, I should say more about the distinction between the necessity and contingency of the subject’s failure to discriminate between the time of the experienced events and the time from which those events are experienced. There could be different ways to characterize the distinction, but the following should work for my purposes. If one is *not* in a position to be fact aware of F contingently, then one could be in a position to be fact aware F by non-structural changes to one’s experience. O1’s being released in the dish is an example of such a change. O1’s tactile experience is structurally the same across the two halves of its life. The change to its experience after it is released in the dish is non-structural. And it leads to the introspective fact awareness of F that it has not been able to be fact aware. If one is not in a position to be fact aware F necessarily, then one could not be in a position to be fact aware by certain changes to one’s experience.

Hoerl’s claim can hold only if one’s being not in a position to be fact aware of a temporal viewpoint is necessary. If one’s inability to discriminate, from within experience upon introspection, between these two locations is contingent, as in the case of O1, then one cannot claim that there is no temporal point of view featuring in the phenomenal character of the experience. If we are like O1, we would be the sort of creatures that cannot make our way around within time, just as O1 is the sort of creature that cannot make its way around space, and hence we fail to discern a temporal viewpoint from within experience, as a contingent matter. Introspection cannot give us reason to think that whether our inability to introspectively discern a distinct temporal location is a result of a structural necessity concerning our experience or merely a contingent matter due to the ways in which we come to be aware of things. Therefore, we do not have good reason to decisively think that perceptual experience is not temporally viewpointed.

I have been arguing that one reasonable way in which weak temporal transparency might hold gives us reason to think that (3) and (4) are false. One might fail to be introspectively aware of the fact that one's experience features P, when one is perceptually property aware P. Now, I will turn to a way to argue for weak temporal transparency claim and show that my reasoning that shows (4) is false blocks that way to argue for weak temporal transparency.

Ian Phillips writes:

Seems → Is is intended to reflect the impossibility of experience systematically presenting itself to rational self-conscious reflection in a way that it is not in fact. (Phillips 2010, p. 184)

This is a straightforward exposition of (3) and (4). Admittedly, by appealing to a 'rational self-conscious reflection' Phillips makes his seems → is claim safer than otherwise it would be. The case I introduced above, in its second reading, according to which O1 can undergo a perceptual experience without an awareness of one's own body, would not cause any threat to Phillips' claim above. For Phillips does not make a claim about such cases; his claim applies only to the rational self-conscious reflection. If one is to appeal to the first reading of O1, nonetheless, according to which O1 would experience the surface as a bodily sensation, one must accept that O1's experience can systematically seem to its subject's self-conscious reflection in some way (featuring a single bodily sensation) upon introspective reflection and be some other way (features a body part and an external surface at a single location). The subject might be systematically mistaken upon introspective reflection what one's experience features because one is not in a position to be introspectively aware of certain facts about the experience. Thus, in cases in which the subject is systematically not in a position to be introspectively fact aware of what one is perceptually property aware, what *seems* to the subject's rational self-conscious reflection is misleading and hence does not entail *is*.

This brings us back to the distinction between the necessity and contingency of one's failure to discern certain features of the experience upon introspection. If one cannot be introspectively aware of a certain fact about one's experience contingently, one can be systematically erred in one's introspective judgments about the character of one's experience. If it is necessary, one cannot. In the final section, I say more on the difference between the cases in which we can be certain that seems entails is for our failure to be introspectively aware of certain facts about our experiences is

necessary and hence (3) is true, and other cases in which it need not. As we shall see, while perceptual experiences of spatial properties is in the first group, temporal experiences belong to the latter.

5. Expanding the Limits of Introspection

As one is aware of such and such, if everything goes well, one is also introspectively aware of the fact that one is undergoing an experience of such and such. This gives introspection an epistemic status based on the epistemic status the subject holds towards worldly objects in virtue of undergoing a conscious perceptual experience. In this section, I will discuss how different this epistemic status of introspection might be in cases of perceptual awareness of spatial properties, and temporal properties.

Visual experiences of the kind in which one is aware of medium-sized objects and their spatial properties comes with a particular epistemic layout. By ‘an epistemic layout’ I mean the experiential structure in which one has certain *epistemic access* to certain parts of the region of space that figure in that experience. The epistemic layout visuospatial experiences provide the subject with, in its simplest form, is dependent on motor action. When one sees the waving hand, one can change one’s visual angle on it by walking around it, by getting closer to or farther away from it. One has epistemic access to all sorts of different directions in space just the same way, through further exploration by motor action. One might say, therefore, one’s epistemic access to space in perceptual awareness of spatial properties is *symmetric*. As opposed to this, one’s epistemic access to directions in time is *asymmetric*. One has an epistemic access to the past, through varieties of recollection, yet not an epistemic access to the future. One might anticipate the immediate future, but this is not to say that one has perceptually epistemic access to the future. What is more, this epistemic asymmetry seems to be bridged by one’s epistemic access to the very present, one’s temporal location in time. Eric Olson ingeniously illustrates how it would be if one’s experience of space was like one’s experience of time. He writes:

If it were a law of nature that light never travelled southwards, everything to the south of you would appear bright during daylight hours, while to the north you would see only darkness. Your latitude would appear unique: it would seem to be the boundary between the illuminated part of the earth and the dark part. If you moved north, the darkness would seem to recede, so that more of the earth became bright. The boundary would

appear to move, as if the dawn were following you. But this would all be an illusion. In reality there would be no boundary between the bright latitudes and the dark ones. They would all be equally bright. Nor would the overall pattern of illumination change as you moved. It is the same with the present. (2009, p. 243)

One's latitude, however, in Olson's example, would not appear unique. It would appear unique only if one could not move deliberately in all sorts of directions in space.²⁶ And if one could not move deliberately in all sorts of directions in space, it would not have been possible for one to be introspectively fact aware that one's experience does not feature a unique latitude. One would move around and figure out sooner or later that there is no unique latitude. Introspective awareness of one's experience is essentially a result of this epistemic symmetry between all directions of space one is typically aware of upon motor action. The success of systematic introspective reflection, therefore, would rely on one's having symmetrical epistemic relations to the sub-region of space one is perceptually aware of.

In contrast, when we are perceptually aware of a temporally extended event, our experience goes along with it temporally as a matter of the way in which it presents the event; it starts with the start of the event, it ends at the point where the event ends and starts presenting something anew. In conscious experience, this never ends. There is a temporal latitude that we can never explore further. We do not, therefore, have a felt temporal boundary between the experienced event and the item through which we are aware of the event. This passive character of our awareness might be responsible for our failing to attend to the location of the *means* through which we are aware of the temporal properties. The question is, if the passivity of our temporal experiences is necessarily like so, or not. And figuring out the answer is not something one can achieve by sheer introspective, even systematic, reflection. Until the subject Olson mentions breaks their unidirectional journey in space and explore the latitude in other directions, they would be systematically making false judgments about the character of their spatial experience. And those judgments would appear as if they reveal structural necessities about the experience.

Here is what I am getting at: our perceptual awareness of spatial properties ensures that systematic introspection would not mislead us about what we are perceptually aware of because it puts us in an epistemically symmetrical position in terms of our access to the parts of the space. Our capacity

²⁶ It is likely that Olson would grant this point (2009, pp. 243-244).

to explore our spatial surroundings in all sorts of sensory modalities and in all sorts of directions gives us good reason to think that our perceptual awareness in a given sensory mode is necessarily structured in certain ways to which we can introspectively attend. A visuospatial experience, for instance, cannot coincide in space with what it presents. One's visual experience *needs* to be directed at its object from a distinct spatial location. Yet this necessary fact about visual experience is revealed to the subject's systematic introspective reflection *partly* as a result of one's capacity to manipulate the character of one's experience and introspect across these variations, by entertaining a symmetric epistemic access to the region of space one is perceptually aware of.

Consider O1 after it was released in the dish. Only after some exploration, its introspective reflection would reveal that there are two distinct properties featuring in its experience. Prior to gaining a symmetrical epistemic access to its surroundings, it was not in a position to be introspectively aware of certain facts about its experience. Only after it was bestowed with that symmetrical access, it has come to be introspectively aware of those structural facts. And importantly its transition from asymmetrical epistemic access to symmetrical epistemic access renders its failure to discern two properties contingent. If it was out of necessity, no shift in one's epistemic access to what is experienced would change what the facts about one's experience that introspective awareness could reveal.

Therefore, the sensory modalities under which we are aware of spatial properties seem to be safe as we intentionally manipulate the character of the experience to systematically introspect what remains invariant by motor action. For spatial property awareness, therefore, a systematic introspective reflection would enable us to be aware of facts about what our experiences do and do not feature, necessarily. When it comes to the temporal experience, however, we might be systematically misled about how experience seems to us, and how in fact the experience is, due to the epistemic asymmetry that accompanies temporal experience. The outcome of this final section, therefore, is that we should accept a carefully spelled out temporal transparency claim without reading too much into this observation. For introspection, when it comes to temporal experience, need not be as reliable as it is in spatial experience. In its most neutral form, I suggest that the temporal transparency claim is the following:

Temporal Transparency: The subject fails to introspectively mark out *any* temporal location as distinct from the temporal location of the experienced event.

Formulated this way, the temporal transparency claim entails only that there is an experienced object with an apparent temporal location. It need not motivate either there is a temporal location of the experience that seems to be determined by or match the temporal location of the experienced event, or that it is impossible to introspectively attend to the temporal features of the experience itself because the subject is introspectively fact aware of a single temporal location. Any additional claim one might think that follows from temporal transparency hinges on the necessity or the contingency of the subject's failing to mark out a temporal location as distinct from that of the experienced event.

6. Conclusion

I have provided a fictional lab experiment featuring two identical tactile experiencers with identical experiential structures, O1 and O2. I have argued that due to contingent factors that is irrelevant to the structural features of these organisms, their introspective reflection would lead to different judgments about the character of their experiences. O1 would be perceptually aware of two coinciding properties, just as O2 do, but while O2 be introspectively aware of the fact that it undergoes an experience that features two coinciding properties, O1 would fail to be introspectively fact aware of its experience features two properties.

Extrapolating from this to our temporal experiences, I claimed that one can be perceptually aware of two properties coinciding at a temporal location without being introspectively fact aware that one's experience features them. This shows in turn that one cannot claim that a weak temporal transparency claim necessarily collapses into a strong temporal transparency claim. Another outcome of this line is that one cannot decisively claim that perceptual experiences are not temporally viewpointed as their subjects are not introspectively aware that their experiences feature a temporal location from which one's temporal experience is directed at its object. We might be perceptually property aware of both our (the subject's) temporal location and the temporal location of the object of the experience, without being introspectively aware of that fact. Interestingly, however, the reasoning above also blocks a particular way to defend the weak temporal transparency claim. One cannot rely on something along the same lines as Phillips' seems → is principle, as in cases where temporal experience *seems* 'not to' feature a property P upon systematic introspective reflection, it might feature that property, in the sense that the subject would be perceptually property aware of P.

While visual spatial experience features a spatial location available to introspective fact awareness that is distinct from the location of the experienced object, temporal experience seems to lack that location. It is not clear, however, if the seeming lack of this location is because the phenomenal character itself lacks that location, or the subject's characteristic way of experiencing temporal properties prevents them from being fact aware that that location is a location that is distinct from the location of the experienced object. This means that both the strong and weak temporal transparency is still not established, nor are they refuted.

Do we have any other independent reason to favour one over the other? This is not a question I attempt to answer here. Whatever one might think about this question, it is important to note one general thing about introspection that I take my discussion in this paper to establish. The commonly assumed varieties of the seems \rightarrow is move need to be dropped for claims about the temporal structure of experience, or at least suspended until we have good reason to think that what 'seems' to the self-conscious reflection of the subject reliably captures what phenomenal properties one is introspectively aware of.

CHAPTER THREE

Is there a problem of perceptual presence?

1. Introduction

Imagine you see a tomato under optimal lighting conditions. As you do so, your visual experience has a particular phenomenal character: it feels a certain way to visually experience the tomato. One plausible way to characterize what it is like to undergo your visual experience of the tomato is the following. On the one hand, there is a clear sense in which the rear facing part of the tomato does *not* feature in the phenomenal character of your experience. On the other hand, it is also clear that you are visually aware of the tomato as a moderately sized dry good (Austin 1962, p. 8), as something that has back facing parts.

The following two claims seem to be true about your experience of the tomato.

- 1) You see the tomato as having a back.
- 2) You do not see the back facing surface of the tomato.

Many think that (1) and (2) are inconsistent (Noë, 2004; Leddington, 2009; Kind, 2018). To illustrate why, Alva Noë writes:

In what does the visual sense of the presence of the hidden parts of a thing consist, if it does not consist in the fact that we see them? This is the problem of perceptual presence—or better: the problem of presence in absence. The object shows up for visual consciousness precisely as unseen. (2012, pp. 15-16)

Given that no object parts can both be absent and present in one's experience, Noë thinks, (1) and (2) are inconsistent. This inconsistency entails a *how-possible* question about the visual presence of voluminous wholes: how is (1) possible given (2)? Following Noë's terminology, the puzzle is often called the problem of perceptual presence (PPP). In this paper, I argue that (1) and (2) are not

inconsistent and hence there is no puzzle about (1)'s possibility. More precisely, I claim that (1) and (2) are inconsistent only with a contentious assumption about the conditions of visibility of medium sized objects and one should drop that assumption. Nonetheless, this does not mean that there is nothing puzzling about the visual presence of voluminous objects. I suggest that there is a different problem of presence that stems from (1) and (2). I later show that the version of the problem I defend pre-empts the varieties of the imagination-based accounts of perceptual presence (Nanay, 2010; Kind, 2018).

Here is the plan. In Section 2, I introduce Noë's argument for the claim that (1) and (2) are inconsistent. I then discuss two main ways to resist it. I show that one of these ways successfully undermines Noë's PPP. In Section 3, I discuss a second argument to justify the claim that (1) and (2) cannot be true together. I argue that it also fails to motivate a how-possible question. In Section 4, I argue that the second argument does support a version of PPP which motivates why-question about the visual presence of voluminous wholes. I then explore further the nature of the problem the second argument motivates and clarify what kind of explanandum we have at hand. In Section 5, I discuss accounts of perceptual experience in relation to my version of PPP and argue that the imagination-based accounts of presence are not genuine options to solve PPP since they get wrong the explanandum the presence of voluminous objects gives rise to.

Before proceeding, I shall make four preliminary points.

First, some philosophers use the phrase perceptual presence to signify a somewhat different (yet certainly connected) phenomenon: that the objects presented by perceptual experience is presented as *real* or *existing* (Matthen, 2005; Pautz, 2007; Riccardi, 2019) as opposed to the objects of episodic memory or imagination. In what follows, I will not directly concern myself with this phenomenon.

Second, I will assume throughout the paper that one consciously sees an object by undergoing a visual perceptual experience with a particular phenomenal character. This is to say that one consciously sees a tomato as a matter of being in a visual experience in which the tomato appears to the subject in a particular way (e.g., red, round etc.). There could be cases of unconscious visual perception without the subject undergoing an experience with a what its likeness (Prinz, 2015; Phillips and Block 2016). Possible cases of unconscious perception will not be the target of my proposal.

Third, by claiming that the consciously seeing subject undergoes a conscious visual experience I do not subscribe to any particular metaphysics about perceptual experience. One can characterize the phenomenal character of visual experience by spelling out its features as they appear to the subject (e.g., Martin, 1992). These structural features can be studied independently of a particular metaphysics of experience, yet they might motivate a view.

The final preliminary is about scope. The scope of PPP is often taken to be quite broad. For many, PPP is a problem that arises for all cases of visual occlusion (e.g., seeing a cat behind a fence) and the visual presence of constancy properties (e.g., seeing the constant rectangular shape of the window in view by experiencing its trapezoidal appearance, seeing the constant uniform colour of a surface by experiencing its various colour appearances). In my discussion of PPP, I will only talk about the voluminous visual presence of medium sized opaque objects.

2. Seeing Strictly Speaking vs. Not Strictly Speaking: The Argument from Appearance

Why does Noë think that (1) and (2) are incompatible? He initially answers this question in terms of a difference between what is *strictly speaking seen* and what is *not strictly speaking seen*.²⁷ While we strictly speaking see *only* the front facing parts of the tomato, we do not strictly speaking see the back facing parts hidden from our view (2004, p. 166). According to this formulation, Noë's PPP is partly based on the claim that there is a tension between two distinct aspects of visual phenomenology: the phenomenal contribution of what the subject strictly speaking sees (i.e., the front facing surface) and the visual presence of the object with not strictly speaking seen, *absent* back parts (i.e., the voluminous whole). If this is right, there seems to be a how-possible question about the voluminous visual presence of medium sized opaque objects. How is it possible for the tomato to be seen as voluminous if what one strictly speaking sees is only its front facing surface? This characterization of PPP has become the typical way to understand the puzzle and generally accepted in the debate (Leddington, 2009; Nanay, 2010; Briscoe, 2011; Kind, 2018; Bower, 2021).

There are at least two ways to resist the puzzle conceived along the lines above.

²⁷ The terminology of seeing something 'strictly speaking' goes at least back to G.E. Moore (1903).

First, one might reject (1) and argue that we are not visually aware of the invisible parts of the tomato *at all*. We either judge or believe, the idea goes, that the tomato has a back. In turn, this would reject Noë's initial assumption that visually experiencing voluminous wholes does not seem to include judgments or inferences. I think this way of resisting is no help since PPP, in the form introduced above, is a problem about the phenomenal character of experience. The claim is that PPP arises because it appears to the subject that the experience features not merely a proper tomato part, but the tomato with back parts. Noë responds to this doxastic resistance along these lines. He insists that "It is bedrock, phenomenologically speaking, that the tomato looks voluminous, that it looks to have a back." (2012, p. 16). To leave the looks talk out, one might rephrase Noë's idea that it is how the material objects *seem* to be for the subject that concerns visual presence, and they seem to have back parts in virtue of the way they feature in the phenomenal character of the experience.²⁸ A further point to make is that there seems to be no manifest judgement making process that accompanies visual experience of voluminous wholes. It seems that the very character of perceptual experience itself and not an accompanying thought, features objects as voluminous. If this is right, PPP is specifically a puzzle about what its likeness of the experience of voluminous wholes and its solution is not via spelling out the conditions under which we might take ourselves (i.e., judge, believe) to visually experience things that we, in fact, do not. Accounts of presence that invoke judgments or beliefs do not explain this phenomenological bedrock and hence I will not be discussing them in what follows.²⁹

I would like to turn to, instead, a second and much underdiscussed way to resist that there is a genuine PPP. The claim is that there is no tension between (1) and (2). This strategy is first put forward by Michael Martin (2008). According to Martin, tomatoes can feature as voluminous in

²⁸ Although *looks* play a crucial role in the way Noë formulates PPP, what one thinks about the use of looks in perceptual experience is not orthogonal to the claims I will be making in what follows. See Jackson (1977) for a comprehensive discussion of looks in perception. See Martin (2010) for another comprehensive discussion critiquing Jackson. Noë (2004) treats looks as objective properties of external objects somewhat similar to Martin (2010). Leddington (2009) argues that an adequate account of looks creates problems for Noë's sensorimotor account of presence.

²⁹ Admittedly, this is not decisive against doxastic accounts. One might endorse a doxastic account of visual experience that would reject the perceptual presence of voluminous wholes to solve PPP. Although such accounts are rare due to well-known problems (Smith 2002), the core idea is that visual phenomenology features only low-level properties. See Briscoe (2011) for a serious critique of the idea. See Dokic (2018) for a recent doxastic account of visual awareness.

the phenomenal character of your experience where "...of all of the parts of a tomato that might at some point be viewed, you see only part of its front-most surface." (p. 676). The core idea is that the voluminous presence of the tomato in experience does not lead to an inconsistency between (1) and (2). If the presence of the tomato typically features in the experience without the subject's being visually aware of its back facing parts, there is no reason to think that the absence of the unseen back parts is problematic for the presence of the tomato as voluminous. One way to elaborate on this claim is to appeal to a notion we might call *dissectivity*, in the sense that Nelson Goodman uses it.³⁰ Goodman writes:

A one-place predicate is said to be dissective if it is satisfied by every part of every individual that satisfies it. Since every part of everything that is smaller than Utah is also smaller than Utah, the predicate "is smaller than Utah" is dissective. (1951, p. 38)

It should be clear, however, the predicate "is visible as voluminous" is not dissective in Goodman's sense since it is not the case that every part of every voluminously visible thing is also visible. For a medium sized opaque object to be visible, the moral is, the visibility of all its parts is *not* a precondition. We can define dissectivity, then, as it applies to the visibility of voluminous objects in the following way.

Dissectivity: A medium sized object is dissectively visible if its visibility as voluminous necessitates the visibility of all its parts.

It seems that (1) and (2) can be said to be inconsistent only if one commits to something along the same lines as dissectivity. For if one needs to see all parts of the tomato to see the tomato itself as the voluminous opaque object that it is, not seeing the back facing parts, and the interior parts for that matter, of the tomato indeed entails the invisibility of the tomato as voluminous. However, this is clearly not the case. Phenomenologically speaking, one *can* and *does* see voluminous objects without visually experiencing all their parts. It is just another bedrock in visual phenomenology that objects as voluminous typically show up when their front facing surface features in one's experience. Empirically speaking, we have reasons to think that one's visual system does not detect

³⁰ Goodman's idea of dissectivity, in the context of perceptual presence, is first discussed by Mark Kalderon in an unpublished manuscript called '*Color and the Problem of Perceptual Presence*'. The following discussion of 'dissectivity' is partly based on Kalderon's original discussion.

the unitary shapes of objects starting from their strictly speaking front facing surface. As Bennett (2012) and Green (2017) seem to agree on, visual systems work to detect the unitary shape of the objects themselves and not merely their front facing surface.

One might conclude, therefore, that given the visibility of medium sized objects is not dissective, there is no tension between (1) and (2). One's experience features the voluminous tomato without featuring its back facing parts for it does not need to feature them to feature the voluminous tomato. Thus, there is no how possible question regarding the presence of voluminous objects. In several places, Noë appears to say that he does not endorse something along the same lines as Dissectivity. He writes:

I reject...the idea that we see the front of the tomato as it were unproblematically and that we achieve access to the back of the tomato... (2008, p. 697)

And a couple of years later, he notes:

To appreciate the phenomenon of perceptual presence there is no need to insist that we only see the face of the tomato. We need only admit that we can't see the tomato's back. How can the tomato's back show up in experience when we manifestly do not see it? (2012, p. 16).

The former line straightforwardly rejects that he commits something along the same lines as dissectivity. The claim is not that one's experience features only how the tomato appears to one's viewpoint or to the position of one's visual system and then one's perceptual capacities work one's way up to be visually aware of the tomato as voluminous. Noë here gives up on the clear-cut distinction between the strictly speaking seen and not strictly speaking seen parts of the object, and hence drops his previous claim that the subject *only* sees what is strictly speaking seen, the front facing surface. He now accepts that we see the tomato and not only its front facing surface. The second claim, however, tries not to concede all the way. Given (2) holds and you do not see the tomato's back, the puzzle is about the tomato's back featuring in the experience despite you do not see it. This puzzle, in this particular form, is not about the possibility of (1) given (2). Instead, it is about the possibility of another claim.

(3) You are visually aware of the tomato's back.

The revised PPP regards the possibility of (3) given (2). One thing to note is that this how-possible question is radically different from the initial question of presence that concerns the presence of the objects themselves. The initial puzzle was about the possibility of being visually aware of the tomato as voluminous given that the subject strictly speaking sees only the front facing surface. The revised PPP, however, is about the possibility of the presence of the unseen back parts of the *already visually present* tomato. The problem with this version of the puzzle is that once one rejects dissectivity, there is no reason to think that (2) and (3) are logically inconsistent either. The unseen back parts of the tomato *need not* be in view for the tomato to show up as having a back. Since we should accept that you see the tomato as voluminous with a rejection of dissectivity, the fact that you are aware of the tomato as voluminous is accommodated without raising any puzzle. You are aware of the tomato's back in the sense that you see the tomato as voluminous!

One might say that one is not aware of tomato's back in being aware of the tomato as voluminous (Bower, 2021). This would motivate a distinction between the visual presence of the tomato as voluminous and as having a back. If so, one might argue that there can be a possibility question regarding (3) given (2), even if there is no such question regarding (1). According to Noë, however, there is not such difference. He uses seeing as voluminous and seeing as having a back interchangeably. And even if he draws this distinction, the possibility question regarding (3) strikes me as far less important than the possibility question that concerns (1). If we accept that one can see the voluminous object without its back parts being in view, why think that these back parts are visually present while they are absent? It seems that there is no good reason. Therefore, one cannot maintain that there is a possibility question regarding (3) given (2). One cannot both reject dissectivity and maintain that there is a possibility question about either (1) or (3) given (2).

3. Hearing Words and Seeing Tomatoes: The Argument from Analogy

Noë sometimes resorts to an independent reason to motivate his how-possible question that is often ignored. He appeals to a certain kind of analogy between perceiving words and sentences by either hearing a speech act (2008, p. 679) or reading a text (2015, p.1) and seeing voluminous wholes. I will turn to discuss the analogy as perhaps it could serve as a way out from the problem of dissectivity that Noë's PPP faces.

Noë's examples vary, and it is not entirely clear to me what he commits himself to by resorting to these examples. Therefore, I will use a version of the analogy that I find *prima facie* plausible. Imagine you hear an English speaker giving a talk. As you hear the sound made by the speaker, you hear some words. Those words feature in your auditory experience. You can easily single out each word in your auditory experience if needed. Now, consider someone who does not speak English listening to the same talk. They hear the same noise made by the speaker, yet they *cannot* hear the words or sentences that you do. What they hear would be merely a noisy bulk. While you hear a structured series of sounds including words and sentences, they cannot hear them. This seems to motivate the idea that there is something in this case that requires explanation. If there is an analogy between hearing words on the one hand, and seeing voluminous objects on the other, then one might say that there is something to explain in the case of seeing medium sized voluminous objects.

One way to reject this reasoning is to say that words or sentences are not present in the auditory phenomenology of the experience of the English-speaking person. Words are individuated by their linguistic meaning and meanings are not the sort of things that feature in auditory phenomenology. Therefore, there is no difference between the auditory phenomenologies of the two subjects. I think this response is off target. Whether meanings can feature in the phenomenology of perceptual experience is controversial yet even if they cannot, the example does not rely on the fact that meanings feature in the phenomenal character of the experience.³¹ The claim is not that meanings are present in auditory phenomenology. It is that the uttered words and sentences do.³²

A further insistence on the idea that there is no difference in phenomenology between the auditory experience between an English speaker and an English non-speaker could come in a radical form. The idea would be that in both cases the subjects hear merely the uttered sound as a bulk. The uttered words and sentences are recognized by the subject's cognitive capacities that have nothing to do with perceptual phenomenology. According to those few, only low-level properties feature in the phenomenology of perceptual experience (Tye, 2005; Prinz, 2009; Dokic, 2018). The view is highly controversial, however. As I have noted above, it is empirically (e.g., Smith, 2008; O'Callaghan, 2015) uncontroversial that there is a difference. I take it entirely implausible to say

³¹ See Strawson (1994), Loar (1997), Pitt (2008), Montague (2016) for some proponents of the idea and Tye (2005) Prinz (2007), Tye and Wright (2011) for some opponents.

³² See O'Callaghan (2011), for a defence of the view that meanings do not feature in auditory experience, but uttered words and sentences do.

that the auditory experience features only the non-linguistic sounds given the phenomenological plausibility (McCulloch, 1993; Strawson 1994) and the empirical support (Remez et al. 1994; also see Smith, 2010; O'Callaghan, 2015) it receives.

There seems to be no easy rejection, then, of the idea that there is an analogy between seeing a tomato and hearing a word or sentence. Is there good reason to think that there is? And if yes, does that do enough to motivate that there is a how-possible question regarding the visual presence of the tomato as voluminous? In the next section, I argue that the first answer is yes and the second is no: there is an analogy between seeing voluminous wholes and hearing speech acts, but it does not motivate a how-possible question about presence. Instead, it motivates a why-is-the-case question. I then clarify the sense in which the analogy holds and the kind of puzzle of presence it motivates.

4. Why Do We See Objects as Voluminous?

I have argued so far that one should reject dissectivity. I have also shown that one cannot reject dissectivity and continue to claim that there is a kind of possibility question regarding the perceptual presence of a tomato as voluminous. I now will claim that the kind of analogy Noë appeals cannot support his claim that given (2) either (1) or (3) is not possible. Later, I will show that there is none the less an analogy and elaborate on the question it might provide support.

The argument from analogy might work if a possibility question arises for the case of hearing words in conscious speech perception. If one can reasonably claim that there is a question as to how it is possible for a word to feature in experience, one can thereby argue that this is the sort of question that also arises for the visual experience of voluminous wholes. My contention is that we do not have good reason to think that this question arises. First, even if there is a possibility question for the auditory presence of a word, it is not the type of possibility question that is at stake for the presence of a voluminous object. For clearly, one hears linguistic items by hearing all the uttered parts of a speech act. In this sense, the audibility of a speech act *is* dissective: to hear the whole utterance, you need to hear all uttered parts. Hence, there seems to be no possibility question regarding the experience featuring series of words, where some parts of these words are absent from one's auditory experience. Second, there seems to be no possibility question about the perceptual experience of words themselves given what the subject hears in a speech act. It is a typical feature of conscious speech perception that the same sensory input might bring about

differently parsed experiences (Smith, 2010; O'Callaghan, 2011). Nothing in hearing words is inconsistent with other things we know about auditory speech perception.

This does not mean, however, that there is nothing to explain in the case of hearing words as opposed to hearing a merely non-linguistic auditory item. As I have argued, it is both phenomenologically plausible and empirically well-established that there is a difference between hearing speech with linguistic items and hearing it a series of non-linguistic sounds. There is, therefore, the need to explain what makes the English speaker's experience feature words as opposed to the experience of someone who cannot speak English. Indeed, I suggest that this is precisely what is analogous between hearing words and seeing tomatoes. Both the words and tomatoes feature in one's perceptual experience *in addition* to the heard sound or the seen front facing surface, in the sense that one *need not* hear the uttered words by hearing the sound the speaker makes or see the voluminous whole by seeing the front facing surface of the tomato. I claim, therefore, that the right way to characterize the analogy is the following: neither the uttered word nor the tomato is *necessarily* present in one's experience as a result of the presence of the uttered sound or of the front facing surface. That is, nothing in the phenomenal character of a typical visual experience ensures the presence of the voluminous wholes, just as nothing in the phenomenal character of a typical auditory experience of a speech act ensures the presence of certain linguistic items.

To see what this claim tells us about the visual presence of voluminous objects, I shall unpack the notion of a *necessary structural feature*. It is commonplace among philosophers to refer to structural features of conscious experience that are attained by characterizing the phenomenology of perceptual experiences, where phenomenology is defined in terms of how things appear to the subject (Martin, 1992; Soteriou, 2013; also see Husserl, 2001). The fact that there seems to be a visual spatial field for the subject, for example, is a structural feature of visual perceptual experience, while there is no field as a structural feature of tactile perceptual experience (Martin, 1992). Based on this story, one might suggest that any experiential feature that is necessary for an adequate characterization of the phenomenal character of visual experience is a necessary structural feature of visual experience. An example would be that the visuospatial experience is necessarily *viewpointed*. Visual spatial experience of any perceptual sort just *cannot* lack a spatial viewpoint. In undergoing a visual experience of a medium sized object, one necessarily undergoes an experience that features an apparent spatial location from which one is aware of the apparent

location of the experienced object. To be spatially viewpointed, therefore, is a necessary structural feature of visual experience.

There can be other examples to such structural necessities of visual experience (and other sensory modalities) but the non-dissective visibility of voluminous objects is not one of them. Visual experiences of the perceptual sort can typically lack voluminous dry goods. This is demonstrated by the above example in which a properly located tomato skin that takes up the exact same space in one's visual field as a voluminous tomato would. This reveals that there is nothing in the structure of visual experience that necessitates that we see the voluminous tomato instead of seeing merely some parts of a surface i.e., a proper tomato part. The puzzle is therefore a weaker one compared to a possibility question. Being visually aware of a proper tomato part does not necessitate being visually aware of the tomato, and hence there needs to be an explanation as to why voluminous wholes feature in visual experiences.³³

According to this version of the analogy, neither hearing uttered words, nor seeing a voluminous whole requires explanation because there is a how-possible question regarding their perceptual presence. Their presence in the phenomenal character of experience is not inconsistent with other things we know about conscious perceptual experiences. None the less their presence is not straightforward: it does not follow directly from what we take to be necessary structural features of auditory or visual experience. There seems to be an additional mechanism at play that brings about their presence. Hence, there is a question as to why voluminous wholes are present in the visual experience of a part of the world analogous to the question of why words are present in the auditory experience of a speech act.

Time to take stock. The visible is not dissective and hence voluminous objects are typically a part of our visual phenomenology without leading to a logical inconsistency between the claims (1), (2) and (3). Yet their perceptual presence is not a result of a structural necessity, either. It could have been the case that we *cannot* see voluminous objects by seeing what is in view, just like the English non-speaker cannot hear the words by hearing the exact same sound the English speaker hears. This very possibility in which the presence of voluminous wholes is not necessitated by the

³³ My suggestion here is compatible with Bower's suggestion that one should drop the mereological talk in making sense of cases of visual occlusion (2021). One can give up on part/whole talk of visually experienced objects with no significant effect on my proposal.

structural features of the experience gives us good reason to think that the above analogy motivates a *why-is-the-case question*. In the case of hearing someone speaking English, there is a puzzle as to why one hears the utterance as involving words and sentences in the sense that it is not a result of the necessary structural features of the experience. The answer is one is an English speaker. The same goes for seeing voluminous objects. There is a puzzle as to why one sees the front facing surface as the surface of a voluminous tomato in the sense that what is necessarily present in the experience is merely the surface. What the necessary structural features of visual experience ensure is only the perceptual presence of a proper tomato part, not the tomato itself. None the less the experience features the tomato itself, a voluminous whole. Hence there is a question as to why the voluminous wholes are typically present in visual experience.

5. Amodal Completion and the Why-is-the-case Question of Presence

In this section, I provide a skeletal discussion of the change in the question of presence in relation to potential solutions to it. As I shall argue, while the version of PPP I proposed is neutral between several accounts of perceptual experience, it pre-empts the imagination-based solutions of perceptual presence defended by Bence Nanay (2010) and Amy Kind (2018).

One important result of the suggestion that (1) and (2) are not inconsistent and motivates a why-is-the-case question of presence is that PPP in this form is not a problem about the spatial character of experience that features two conflicting characters. Nothing is conflicting in the spatial character of experience since what is strictly speaking seen and not-strictly speaking seen are not mutually exclusive in terms of their visual presence: when one is present, the other might well be, and ordinarily is present. This is in contrast with the claim that PPP is a problem of presence in absence. Once PPP is construed as the visual presence of the absent parts of experienced objects it becomes precisely a puzzle about the spatial character of visual experience. It is for this reason Noë takes PPP to be fundamentally about what he calls the ‘deep amodality’ of perceptual experience where he takes something’s presence in absence to be that thing’s being ‘amodally present’ (2012, p. 18). If one’s experience features only the visible surface of a tomato as a result of the experience’s *modal* character and if this experience gives rise to the amodal visual awareness of the voluminous object, there must be something that fills the gap between the modal character of the experience to the amodal character of conscious perception. One’s account of how amodal completion is achieved, in this case, would spell out the conditions that renders the presence of voluminous objects possible for human subjects. Yet as I have argued, the problem at hand is not a problem of

possibility. If I am right, the role amodal completion plays in explaining perceptual presence is not filling the gap between the modal character of visual sensation and the amodal character of conscious perception. Instead, accounts of amodal completion are supposed to explain why voluminous objects are visually present given that visual experience with the same necessary structural features might systematically lack their presence.

Notice that this characterization gives a far weaker explanatory role to amodal completion as it applies to cases of experiencing voluminous objects. Mechanisms behind amodal completion are not what renders the experience of voluminous objects possible. They are what *enable* certain subjects to be aware of voluminous objects. In other words, they are not among the *possibility conditions* of the phenomenal presence of voluminous wholes; they are among the *enabling conditions*. Therefore, the constraint this characterization of perceptual presence puts on accounts of perceptual experience is very different from the constraint that the how-possible question puts. The former introduces two conflicting features of the spatial character of the experience to be reconciled. The latter specifies that what we know about the necessary features of visual experience fall short of ensuring the presence of voluminous wholes. In the final part of the paper, I will discuss a non-exhaustive list of the accounts of perceptual experience to show this shift in the explanandum.

We might start with the representational accounts of perceptual experience (Searle, 1983; Byrne 2001; Crane, 2009a, 2009b; Siegel, 2010). The core idea behind these views, despite their differences, is that perceptual experience is essentially the sort of thing whose character determines its conditions of accuracy or truth. With the change in the question of perceptual presence of voluminous objects, the task for the proponent of this idea is to explain why the experience features a voluminous tomato instead of a mere tomato part, rather than finding out a way to accommodate the conflicting dual character within a representational framework, where the experience is essentially determines its own conditions of accuracy.³⁴

³⁴ Siegel's account of mind-independency (2010) for her representational account can be read as an attempt to answer this question. She argues that the subject's experiencing an object as mind-independent (and hence instantiating properties as voluminous wholes) depends on the following two elements in play in visual perception.

Perspectival Connectedness: If S changes her perspective on O, her visual phenomenology will change as a result of this change.

Subject independence: If S changes her perspective on O, O will not thereby move. (pp. 177-179)

Naïve realists (Campbell, 2002; Martin, 2002; Brewer, 2011; Soteriou, 2016) might initially seem to have the upper hand when it comes to the why-question of presence since they typically claim that the medium sized objects themselves constitute the phenomenal character of experience by being present in the experience *simpliciter*.³⁵ They might simply contend, therefore, that the voluminous object is visually basic in one's experience for the object itself is what constitutes the very character of a given experience. Yet things are not that simple for them either considering the why-is-the-case question of presence. Naïve realists still need to spell out *why* the medium sized object itself contributes to the phenomenal character of experience features in experience voluminously rather than one-sidedly.³⁶

Noë's non-naïve-realist disjunctivism (2012, 2015, 2021), which is developed to answer the how-possible question, is another account of perceptual experience that can in principle answer the why-question. Noë claims that voluminous objects are perceptually present in their out-of-view parts being perceptually accessible to the subject (2004, p.60). The perceptual access to a voluminous tomato consists in the subject's sensorimotor understanding of how the tomato would feature in one's experience from a particular location. Therefore, the experience features the voluminous object for the perceiving subject in virtue of the subject's implicit knowledge of how a voluminous object would feature in experience from certain viewpoints. The sensorimotor understanding is the basis of the perceptual contact with the object from these viewpoints in cases of genuine perception while it lacks this component of contact in cases of illusion and hallucination (2012, pp. 25-26).

Despite the well-known problems of the idea of perceptual access to explain perceptual presence (Leddington, 2009; Nanay, 2010, pp. 247-249; Kind, 2018, pp. 170-172), there is no reason to think that Noë's account of the conscious vision, *in principle*, would not be able to provide an answer to the why question we have at hand. The skills of access, embedded in one's sensorimotor

For Siegel, the subject's visual experience must represent that these two conditionals are satisfied by the experienced objects for the subject to visually experience the material objects as having unitary continuous shapes (p.180). See also Schellenberg (2008), for a hybrid account between representational and relational conception of visual experience that try to give an answer to this question.

³⁵ Leddington (2009) implements this feature of naïve realism to solve Noë's question of presence.

³⁶ One way to do so for a Naïve Realist is to appeal to the occasion-sensitivity of recognizing voluminous wholes. See (Travis, 2008).

understanding, can be at work in perceptual experiences explaining why certain subjects undergo experiences featuring voluminous wholes and not a tomato peel located in a certain way.

Different from its implications for these accounts, however, the version of PPP I defend above does pose a *prima facie* problem for what I call the imagination-based accounts of presence (Nanay, 2010; Kind, 2018). Amy Kind, for example, suggests that the back facing parts of objects are visually present as a matter of one's *imagining* these parts as present. She writes:

Working in tandem with our perceptual capacities, our imaginative capacities contribute to our perceptual experience by making unseen features of objects seem present. As I'm looking at the Diet Coke can on my desk, it's via a conjunctive effort of vision and imagination that I have the perceptual sense of the can as a voluminous whole. The front side of the can is seen; the back side of the can is imagined. (p. 177)

Kind thinks that without the imaginative capacities accompanying visual experience, what the experience presents is merely the front facing surface of the tomato. These lines seem to assume Noë's initial suggestion that the subject strictly speaking sees only the front facing surface of the objects as opposed to not strictly speaking seen back facing parts. What is more, when imagination is in play, the back facing surface of the tomato is visually present in a less forceful way since imaginative phenomenology is less forceful than visual phenomenology: the objects of visual imagery are precisely 'as if' present. Kind explicitly notes that imagination "...enables [the subject] to have an experience of something as present as if it were present." (p. 177).

Similarly, Nanay writes:

...if what it is like to have visual imagery is similar to what it is like to perceive and being aware of occluded parts of perceived objects is having visual imagery, then, putting these two claims together, we get that what it is like to be aware of the occluded parts of perceived objects is similar to what it is like to perceive those parts that are not occluded. Thus, my proposal that we represent the occluded parts of perceived objects by means of mental imagery has the additional advantage that it gives a simple answer to the question of perceptual presence. (2010, p. 251)

Nanay's suggestion is that once we think that one represents the occluded parts of certain objects in one's visual field through mental imagery, on the premise that visual imagery and visual perception are often taken to have a similar phenomenology, mental imagery is what is responsible for the visual presence of occluded parts of voluminous wholes. Both Nanay, and Kind, then, propose that the out of view parts of an object that is experienced as voluminous contribute to the phenomenal character of the experience in the sense that the subject imagines these out of view parts of the experienced object.

It seems to me that these accounts can only be proposed to solve the version of PPP that relies on the possibility question. This is because their central proposal, that there is an as-if, or imagery-based presence of the out of view parts of an object seems to assume that the visibility of voluminous objects is disjunctive. Indeed, as a mechanism of amodal completion, Nanay's imagery-based account can only specify the possibility conditions of the presence of the absent back parts of voluminous objects. For it essentially rests on the idea that the out of view parts of the tomato needs to be less forcefully present to the subject than its front-facing surface for the tomato to be perceptually present as voluminous. If the question is about the enabling conditions of the presence of the voluminous object without its back parts being somehow present in experience, therefore, the two imagination-based proposals above get pre-empted. Neither Nanay nor Kind can explain PPP, as their accounts are too tightly tailored to the explanandum of the how-possible question.³⁷

One might wonder here if one cannot say that Nanay's or Kind's proposals need not be put in terms of an as-if presence after all. For if one could, one could also say that the enabling conditions of the presence of the voluminous tomato can be spelled out in terms of the imaginative capacities working together with sensory capacities. This consideration fails as it is crucial for both Nanay's and Kind's accounts to come up with the mechanism that bestows some kind of presence to the back facing parts of the tomato. Any mechanism that bestows presence to the out-of-view parts of an object, however, is necessarily a part of the possibility conditions of the presence of voluminous objects. Once it is rejected that the out-of-view parts needs to be present in the

³⁷ It is worth noting that Nanay advertises the above line about the conscious character of visual experience as a special application of his imagery-based account that mainly focuses on sub-personal mechanisms of representing visually occluded parts of objects (2010, p. 252). My argument here applies merely to this special application and is not materially affecting the rest of his arguments in favor of imagery-based representational mechanisms. For a critique of some of those claims see (Briscoe, 2011).

experience in some sense for the object to be present in the experience as voluminous, the need to invoke imagination to explain the presence of voluminous objects disappears once and for all. I admit that the proponents of these accounts might drop the idea that imagery bestows presence to the out-of-view parts of objects. In this case, however, I fail to see what role imagery can play as an enabling condition. If the presence of the voluminous object does not require the back parts of the object to be present in some way, it becomes very difficult to see what enabling role imagery can have for the perceptual presence of voluminous objects.

6. Conclusion

I have argued that there is an interesting problem of perceptual presence characterized in terms of a why-is-the-case question rather than a how-possible question, once we accept that the visibility of opaque voluminous objects is not dissective in Goodman's sense. The new puzzle remains after one rejects dissectivity because the non-dissective visibility of voluminous objects does not impose itself as a structural necessity for visual experience. It could have been the case that we cannot see voluminous wholes as a result of the fact that we do not see the back facing parts of objects, and this requires explanation.

I have also argued that the puzzle characterized along the lines above pre-empts two popular imagination-based solutions of PPP since these solutions essentially treat the unseen back parts less present than the presence of the front facing parts. Accepting that the back parts of perceived objects are not as-if present in visual perceptual experience comes with two merits. First, it enables one to reject the contentious and implausible claim that the visibility of voluminous objects is dissective. Second, it renders the spatial character of experience unproblematic in the sense that there are no conflicting or inconsistent features of the spatial character of visual experience. In this new form, the problem of presence is not a problem the presence of the spatial proper parts (i.e., back parts) of an object while they are absent from the view. There is nothing, as a matter of fact, in visual experience that is present while absent.

The solution to PPP, therefore, is not through fleshing out the possibility conditions of how something that is absent from experience is in fact present in experience. Instead, I have argued, it is merely to figure out the mechanisms that *enable* subjects to typically see voluminous objects as they undergo visual experiences. I admit that there is a lot that could be said about these mechanisms on both empirical and philosophical grounds, but my aim has been merely to propose

a phenomenologically accurate and theoretically fruitful characterization of the puzzle, which should lead to a clear direction in the study of the conscious perception of voluminous objects and the constraints that it puts on various accounts of perceptual experience.

CHAPTER FOUR

On the Phenomenal Mereology of Perceptual Experience: The Case Against Atomism

1. Introduction

Perceptual experiences appear to have a complex structure where an array of different features contributes to their overall phenomenal character. First, the overall perceptual experience includes several sense modalities. In perceptually experiencing a concerto, you hear the violin as you see the violinist play it. Second, each sense modality is populated by a rich number of features. In auditorily experiencing the concerto, you hear different notes and their qualities. In visually experiencing the concerto, you see the violin and the strings, the handle, and the violinist's hand, also their shape and colour. It appears to you that your perceptual awareness consists of multiple sense modalities and that these modality-specific experiences involve multiple features.

One way to characterize the overall phenomenal character of perceptual experience is to treat it as a perceptual phenomenal manifold (e.g., Husserl 2001). The idea of 'the manifolds of appearance' in perception is a useful and important tool to characterize the complex phenomenal character of the perceptual experience as it is a unified "...quasi-spatial arena where experiential items are located." (Dainton 2000, p. 93). To utilize the idea of the phenomenal manifold one need not have any commitment regarding the metaphysical nature of the experiential items populating the manifold. The idea is most charitably understood to be that the overall phenomenal character of the subject's point of view (e.g., perceptions, emotions, thoughts) upon being conscious seems to have different experiences within it, where these experiences might be individuated in terms of their modality-specific character such as the tactile modality or their involving different features of the things in the world, such as their colour, shape, sound etc.

This kind of phenomenal manifold can be said to have a mereological structure that pertains to the relationship between the modality-specific experiences and between the experiences of the features that figure within these modality-specific experiences. The former group of part-whole relations is about how distinct sense modalities work together to merge into the overall perceptual experience. The question is how the auditory, visual, tactile, etc. modalities *bind* together as the subject perceptually experiences, say, the bushes where they are hiking. The latter group of part-whole relations is about how distinct features of the parts of the world feature in a modality-specific experience. The question is, in the case of a visual experience of the bushes, for example, how the experience of the shape and colour and edges of distinct trees and plants result in the overall visual experience of the bushes. In this paper, I focus on this latter question about the phenomenal part-whole relations of modality-specific experiences. I shall argue that we lack good reason to think that there are atomic components of visual experiences both in terms of their spatial and temporal character.

Before proceeding, some preliminaries are needed.

First, my conception of the conscious experience is the phenomenological conception of experience. The phenomenological conception is not to be underestimated as a merely stipulative conception³⁸, rather, it is the clearest way of characterizing what we mean when we say “experience” without committing to a particular metaphysics. As it is, the phenomenological conception of experience does not commit one to the existence of ‘experiences’ as items one can be aware of, in the sense that one is aware of external spatial and temporal properties.³⁹

Therefore, my mereological discussion of the phenomenal character of experience will be different from the survey of the mereological structure of experience that Geoffrey Lee provides (2017). Lee’s metaphysical assumption about conscious experience distinguishes his case seriously from mine. Lee writes:

I will assume that experiences are events, and they involve the instantiation by subjects of certain special properties, call them “experiential properties”, such that what it’s like

³⁸ See Pautz (2010) and Tye (2003) for such a move.

³⁹ See Martin (1992), Campbell (2003) and Peacocke (1992).

to be a subject at a given time is constituted by the experiential properties they enjoy.
(p.3)

According to this property instantiation view of experience, experiences are instantaneous events that instantiate the sort of properties the subject bears as she undergoes a conscious experience.⁴⁰ These properties are often characterized as state tokens the subject is in. The view, therefore, has it that the following three claims amount to saying the same thing. The subject visually experiences the tomato; the subject is in a state of visually experiencing the tomato; the subject bears the experiential property of visually experiencing the tomato.⁴¹

A claim of phenomenal holism, for example, with the assumption that experiences are property instantiating events, is equivalent to the following lines:

Phenomenal Holism is the view that the experiential parts of an experience exist only in virtue of the whole existing. Each part of the whole will be a phenomenal property instantiation; for the Holist, this part exists only in virtue of the instantiation of a total experiential property. (p. 7)

Since Lee treats the overall phenomenal manifold with its complex structure as a ‘total experiential property’ that the subject bears in having the relevant experience, the account of a part-whole relation amounts to what the relationship is between the instantiation of the part of an experiential property of a subject and the instantiation of the whole of that experiential property. For instance, the subject can experience the brown trunk in the bushes by visually experiencing the cylindrical shape of the trunk plus its colour. If experiences are property instantiating events, the phenomenal property of the shape and colour of the trunk is instantiated separately by these separate experiences. If one is a holist, one thinks that these instantiations can take place only as a matter of the instantiation of the overall visual experiential property the subject bears. This story might have different implications when it is combined with physicalist, property dualist, or perhaps panpsychist views. No matter what one might prefer among these options, the claim of holism (or atomism), with the property instantiation view of experience, has it that,

⁴⁰ See Jaegwon Kim (2000). I say more on the ontology of experience in Chapter 1.

⁴¹ Notice that the subject can be in the state of visually experiencing the same tomato in virtue of bearing different token experiential properties.

...the “phenomenal field” is not itself a concrete particular, but rather involves a concrete particular like a body, brain, or brain region having a certain complex, structured *property*. (p. 7).

It is obviously worth exploring the part-whole relations of conscious experiences with the assumption that experiences are property instantiating events. However, I neither share this assumption nor think that, methodologically, starting with an assumption about the nature of experience does well with the task at hand: to explore the basic units of conscious experience and their relations to each other. Therefore, I should note that there is a methodological difference between Lee’s approach and mine: I start from the phenomenological study of the conscious experience without assuming what a conscious experience in fact is and how it fits into the physical world, in a Husserlian fashion (2001). For, arguably, a phenomenological analysis of conscious perception might provide constraints that can rule out certain metaphysical accounts of experience. But even if it does not, it is important to have an adequate phenomenology if one is concerned with the structural features of conscious experience, without importing commitments from the metaphysics of experience to the phenomenology of experience.

The second preliminary point I’d like to make is that what I aim to do in the following is connected to but independent of the question that has been shaped around the unity of consciousness (Chalmers & Bayne 2003, Bayne 2010). One would find concepts like ‘phenomenal field’, ‘atomism’, and ‘holism’ in that literature. Yet the method endorsed by Chalmers and Bayne is not from phenomenology to metaphysics in the way I construed above. Similar to Lee’s intentions, Bayne (2010) talks about the atomistic and holistic approaches to the phenomenal field (p. 226) and quickly passes to how this might cut across different scientific accounts of consciousness. In that respect, Bayne’s approach, as he accepts, “...is the rather more modest one of sketching a framework that might inform theory-building in consciousness studies.” (p. 224). The aim of this paper gets different from this approach as it is thoroughly phenomenological. The phenomenological atomism or holism about experience might also inform studies of consciousness indeed, but by themselves, these views need not have any bearings on the empirical and metaphysical studies in a straightforward way. A form of phenomenal holism need not entail or suggest that one must find holistic structures in the physical substrates of a conscious state or occurrence, or a form of atomism need not provide an easy passage to the idea that phenomenologically atomistic units of experience must be grounded by atom-like discrete physical

structures (e.g. object files for each phenomenologically individual object). The claims I make in this paper, therefore, are about the structural features of experience that can be arrived at by phenomenological inquiry and not about the metaphysical nature of experience (e.g., Martin, 1992).

The final preliminary point I shall make is that a phenomenal field or manifold, as I use the term, is the overall visual ‘perceptual’ field or manifold the subject entertains, as she is perceptually aware of a part of the world. I will not also, in this paper, concern myself with how distinct modality-specific experiences get together into one unified perceptual experience. Rather, I will be focusing on the visual experience as the case study for the modality-specific experiences and their phenomenal part-whole relations.

In light of these preliminaries, I think one should make the following distinction in the mereological study of one’s experience. First, we have the question of *metaphysics*, which concerns the fundamental constituents of a given visual experience. This question is distinct from the question about the experience having phenomenal atoms of some sort, as things appear to the subject. This second question is the question of *phenomenal mereology*. The phenomenal mereology concerns if there are atomic experiences, as they appear to the subject, that phenomenally make up the whole visual experience synchronically and diachronically. If there are such experiences, then one might say that the spatial or temporal character of an experience as a whole is determined by the spatial or temporal character of these atomic experiences. In what follows, my focus is going to be on this latter question.

The paper is divided into six. In Section 2, I discuss the spatial phenomenology of visual experience and argue that phenomenological considerations do not give us reason to think that there could be spatial atoms that would constitute the whole experience. This amounts to the claim that the visual experience cannot be characterized atomistically in its spatial character. In Section 3, I argue that possible versions of phenomenal atomism about the temporal character of experience also fail. I claim that a proper temporal part of the experience can only be discerned by discerning some further temporal part of the experience. Similar to the spatial case, the visual experience of a temporally extended event is not to be characterized atomistically in its temporal constituents. In Section 4, I clarify the sense in which phenomenology supports an anti-atomist mereology of experience. I argue that one might invoke a notion of a temporal field similar to a visual field to make sense of the phenomenal anti atomism I defend in the previous sections. In Section 5, I

claim that regarding the temporal field one might invoke contributes to the phenomenal character of perceptual experience implicitly. This move enables one to claim that the temporal field that might feature in perceptual experience is more similar to the visual field than one might initially think.

2. The spatial character of visual experience

A spatially atomic unit of a visual experience refers to a phenomenal part that cannot be decomposed further into its phenomenal constituent ‘spatial’ parts. One candidate for such non-decomposable phenomenal atoms is the type of parts of the phenomenal manifold that cannot be further decomposed into their constituents in virtue of their phenomenal properties. These would be equivalent to what some philosophers call *minima sensibilia*: spatially minimal experiences that are either spatially extensionless or minimally extended. These phenomenally atomic experiences would contribute to the overall spatial character of the visual manifold somewhat similar to how pixels contribute to a TV screen. They are atomic experiences as they cannot be divided further into their phenomenal parts either in virtue of their being spatially non-extended or having minimally sensible spatial extension. Phenomenal points with some values for solidity, colour, brightness, etc. would be the best approximation for such atoms.

A second candidate for the phenomenal atoms of a complex visual experience would be the phenomenal constituents that cannot be decomposed into their further constituents in a *meaningful* or *canonical* way. The idea is that the visual spatial manifold can be decomposed into its components analogous to a sentence being available to be decomposed into its meaningful components. The paradigm example for such chunky atoms of visual experience would be experiences of medium sized objects and their properties. This view would have it that the experiences of these objects and their properties are non-decomposable: once one ends up decomposing the phenomenal manifold in terms of objects and their spatial properties such as their shape, there could be no further decomposition that would justify the move from, say, the tomato and its shape and colour and so on, to the further phenomenal constituents, e.g., the minimal sensibles, of the experience of the tomato.

The first version of the phenomenal atomism about visual experience is characterized in terms of the point-like *minima sensibilia* of the subject’s ‘visual-spatial’ point of view. I will discuss Christopher Peacocke’s idea of the *scenario content* (1992, p. 105) as a stalking horse for the view I have in mind as phenomenal atomism. Scenario contents are spatial types that are supposed to

capture what is presented to a subject relativized to a subject's position in space and time. These scenarios and origin (i.e., the centre of the subject's chest) and three axes (i.e., back/front, left/right, and up/down) (1992, p. 106). Peacocke spells out the core commitment of his view some years later as follows:

The region of your visual field...when you look at a white dinner plate when sitting at the table is literally an oval region. If we do not use spatial properties in characterizing the visual field, we omit a subjective feature of the experience. (2008, p. 10)

There are two points here. One is about the region of the plate that takes up space in the subject's visual experience of it. The second one is about the dual character of that space. According to some philosophers who endorsed a dual character view of the spatial properties that figure in one's experience the plate appears both elliptical and round. The following points I will be making are silent on the question if there is a dual aspect or character to visual experience. I will focus on the first point Peacocke makes.

Once we accept Peacocke's suggestion that in visually experiencing an object, there seems to be a spatial location of the object taken up in the visual field of the experiencing subject, a serious question arises. How do we discern the region of the subject's visual phenomenal field that is taken up by that object? One straightforward answer is by discerning the material object that takes up that space as it appears to the subject. How do we discern the material object that takes up that space in one's visual phenomenal field as it appears to her? There seems to be that only two answers are available. It is either by discerning further phenomenal parts of the material object as it figures in the subject's visual experience, or by discerning the material object (i.e. the plate) as a whole. Peacocke's point types comprising a scenario content might be read as an answer of the first sort:

...for each point (strictly one should say point-type) identified by its distance and direction from the origin, to specify whether there is a surface there and if so what texture, hue, saturation, brightness, and temperature it has at that point, together with its degree of solidity (1992, p. 105).

The idea seems to be that the sub-region of space that figures in the phenomenal character of visual experience is constituted by the minimally sensible point-like atomic parts. It is the specified

qualities of these points that compose the overall phenomenal character of the subject's point of view. The token of a scenario, which Peacocke calls a scene, is what is responsible for the region that the plate takes up to figure in the phenomenal character of that particular experience. This spatial phenomenal atomism belongs to the first kind of atomism I have introduced above based on non-decomposable minimally sensible 'atomic' constituents of the phenomenal manifold.⁴²

There is, however, a problem with characterizing the phenomenal character of the experience of the plate in terms of the qualities of minimally sensible point-like atoms. The problem stems from the phenomenological observation that a minimally sensible part of the visual phenomenal manifold can never be discerned in isolation. The contemporary origins of the view can be found in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's ideas (2005). He writes:

The perceptual 'something' is always in the middle of something else, it always forms part of a 'field'. (p. 4)

And hence,

An isolated datum of perception is inconceivable, at least if we do the mental experiment of attempting to perceive such a thing. (p. 4)

We can read these lines to suggest that one's introspective awareness can reveal a part of the visual phenomenal manifold always as part of a further part of the phenomenal field. One's introspective awareness of undergoing an experience that features certain minimal sensibles, therefore, is also one's introspective awareness of undergoing an experience that features certain medium sized dry goods, such as a plate.

Similar observations are made by Martin (1992), Noë (2004), Rashbrook (2013), Soteriou (2013) and Shardlow (2019). Shardlow, for example, argues that whatever the ultimate minima sensibilia of an experience might be, the subject does not seem to be able to discern these upon introspection

⁴² Note that Peacocke need not commit to the spatial phenomenal atomism I introduced. I use his scenario content to characterize how a point atomism would look like.

without thereby discerning some portion of the object itself that these posited minima sensibilia allegedly compose.⁴³ He writes:

We can be said to be visually aware of the edge of the desk—taking the edge to be an extensionless line, where the desk stops—but only insofar as we are visually aware of some portion of the desk and some portion of the space beyond this; we are not introspectively aware of the extensionless line in isolation (p. 8).

The claim captures the fact that upon introspection the subject can never be aware of minimally sensible components of the experience in isolation. Shardlow offers the following precisification for the phrase ‘discerning in isolation’:

In order to be aware of something in isolation, a subject need not be aware of anything else, or anything of a greater extent. (p. 9)

In a weak way of understanding Merleau-Ponty, this case of discerning a part without being aware of anything of a greater extent is simply never the case upon introspection. This is particularly because, in order for a discernible item to appear to the subject in the way it does, and hence its being introspectively discernible, some further ‘sensible’ part of the visual spatial manifold must appear to the subject in a certain way. It is, therefore, a phenomenological bedrock that one attends to the alleged minimal sensibles (e.g. the corner of the desk, the edge of the plate) *only* by attending to some further part of the visual manifold.⁴⁴ This weak claim does not establish that it is a necessary condition for the subject to be introspectively aware of a minimal sensible they are aware of by being aware of a further part of the visual manifold, but it says that awareness in isolation is never the case. Hence, one does not have reason to think that experience might have minimally sensible phenomenal parts that make up the experience.

I suggest that the observation that there are no parts that can be discerned in isolation can ground an even stronger claim about the phenomenology of perceptual experience. One way to

⁴³ What the minima sensibilia are seems to be a matter of empirical inquiry, which has to do with detecting the minimal threshold that human visual system can catch and process.

⁴⁴ Notice that the issue at stake is not the minimum sensible that the human eye can see. The question is when one is characterizing the visual phenomenal manifold, what the ultimate composing parts of the visual field would be.

understand the ‘no minimum sensible in isolation’ claim is that in order to be visually aware of a minimal sensible one *needs* to be aware of some further portion of the visual field beyond that sensible. To be aware of the edge of the desk, for example, one is necessarily aware of some portion of the desk itself and some portion of the space beyond it. As opposed to the above claim, this claim has it that it is a necessary condition for one’s being aware of something in their visual field that they are aware of the greater part of the visual field. In this suggestion, one’s systematic failure to discern a part of the visual field without discerning a further part is taken to be good reason to think that the awareness of the whole scene and what it populates is primary to the awareness of the parts.

This is particularly because, in order for a minimal sensible to appear to the subject in the way it does, some further part of the visual spatial manifold need to appear to the subject in a certain way. One can attend to the point or line-like components (e.g. the corner of the desk, the edge of the plate) of an object only by attending to some further part of the visual manifold.⁴⁵

Imagine being aware of a crowded street. Upon introspection, the question is, what do you seem to be aware of about your experience of the street? There is certainly a range of colours, instantiated by what populates your visual field that features a sub-part of the street. My suggestion is that it seems that no matter how hard you introspect your experience, you cannot identify these phenomenal components. One important reason for this is that your visual awareness of the mosaic is not like a static picture, its character changes along with your attempts to discern certain parts of it. When you shift your attention to different parts of the mosaic, for example, certain shades of colour dots could appear to have a slightly different shade.

In experience, things are not given like pictures consisting of dots with determinate colour properties; upon introspection, it does not seem to one that one is aware of a fixed character that one can *inspect*. Rather, the character of the experience changes based on where one’s stare is fixated, which part of the focal area is attended to and so on. What you experience at different times, with different directions of attention and differently fixed stare, comes with a different character and hence gives rise to different facts about the experience. Thus, your failing to identify individual atoms that can be said to make up an experience does not seem to be due to the limits

⁴⁵ Notice that the issue at stake is not the minimum sensible that the human eye can see. The question is when one is characterizing the visual phenomenal manifold, what the ultimate composing parts of the visual field would be.

of your epistemic access to an experience with some determinate character featuring determinate colour dots. The phenomenal character of a given experience does not feature *determinate* colour dots. Rather it features a field in which determinate properties can figure. Consider the following colour mosaic:



Figure 2: Colour Mosaic

It seems that the figure above is close enough to simulate one's experience featuring minimally sensible dots and the introspective awareness that accompanies it. If all the dots were the same shade of the same colour, after all, you would not see a colour mosaic, you would see a rectangle with a unified colour. If your experience had a colour mosaicy character in a somewhat similar way to the character of the image above, it would seem to feature a series of colours without featuring a determinate number of dots and determinate shades of colour of each dot. When you shift your attention to different parts of the mosaic, for example, certain shades of colour dots could appear to have a slightly different shade.

In experience, therefore, things are not given like pictures with determinate colour properties; upon introspection, it does not seem to one that one is aware of a fixed character that one can *inspect*. Rather, the character of the experience changes based on where one's stare is fixated, which part of the focal area is attended to and so on. What you experience at different times, with different directions of attention and differently fixed stare, comes with a different character and hence gives rise to different facts about the experience. Thus, your failing to identify individual atoms that can be said to make up an experience does not seem to be due to the limits of your epistemic access to an experience with some determinate character featuring determinate colour

dots.⁴⁶ We might thus have good reason to think that the mosaic above does have a determinate number of dots and determinate shades of colour but we do not have enough reason to think that our visual awareness of the mosaic and its phenomenal character is like so. If those reasons are along the right lines, introspection can put you in a position to know (to be fact aware, more precisely) that you undergo an experience of a colour mosaic, but not individual colour dots.

One might use an observation that is similar to what I suggested above to support the claim that there is an objective set of phenomenal realizers of conscious experience that constitutes a microstructure of experience that one cannot introspectively discern.⁴⁷ This is not what I extract from that claim. Rather, I think that my characterization above reveals that one's experience does not have minimally sensible *phenomenal* atoms that can be sensibly invoked to explain the character of the experience, given that one is not in a position to identify those minimally sensible colour dots individually. For again, the very attempt to be aware of minimally sensible parts of the experience changes the character, and hence the facts about the character of the experience itself. Thus, it seems that there is no fact to the matter (i.e., the phenomenal character of the experience) regarding the single dots the experience features prior to the facts about how the mosaic itself appears to the subject as a whole.⁴⁸

According to this alternative account, the experience cannot be said to present individual colour dots that make up a mosaic to give rise to the very character of the experience. One's introspective awareness of the fact that one's experience features a blueish-coloured dot on the right-most part of the mosaic is a result of one's introspective awareness that one is aware of a pixel-mosaic that is made up of dots. It could be uncontroversial that the pixel mosaic is made up of individual pixels with determinate colour properties, yet this is not the case for the experience of the mosaic. The experience does not present each colour dot that makes up a pixel mosaic; it presents a mosaic that is made up of colour dots.

If one is inclined to endorse this second interpretation of one's inability to discern phenomenal atoms that make up one's experience, Merleau-Ponty's observation can be said to be stronger than

⁴⁶ There is a lot to say about the origins of this character and arguably one's attentional capacities and resources are crucially in play. I will not say more on this in this thesis. For discussion, see Campbell (2003), van Gulick (2007), Block (2015) and Stazicker (2018).

⁴⁷ One example seems to be Andrew Lee (2019).

⁴⁸ Notice that this is not an infallibility claim.

it might first seem. It seems that the idea of a minimal sensible as a constituent of one's experience is intelligible only if it takes place within a further part of what one is visually aware of. One's invoking minimal sensibles to account for the character of the experience is necessarily through identifying them within a larger part of the experience and hence minimal sensibles cannot play a fundamental explanatory role on *phenomenological grounds*. One way to cash this claim out is to say that for one to be said to be visually aware of the edge of the desk, one *needs* to be aware of some portion of the desk itself and some portion of the space beyond it.

This is to say that to be visually aware of an object, it is necessary for one to experience some portion of the spatial boundaries of that object and some portion of what falls beyond these boundaries. And then we are forced to iterate this characterization for each experienced part of the visual field: to visually experience the space beyond, one needs to experience the wall that stays at a certain distance to the desk and that brings an end to the experienced portion of the space. To visually experience the portion of the wall that falls into the subject's visual field, one needs to visually experience its edges and the space between the wall's edges and the desk and to visually experience the edges and the space between the wall and the table, one needs to visually experience some portion of the table and the table's edges and so on. There seems to be no end to this game. One's attempt to introspectively discern a part of what falls into their visual field in isolation from the rest of the visual manifold is doomed to fail.

This suggests that one *cannot* visually experience either a minimal sensible or a medium sized object within one's visual field in isolation from the rest of the visual manifold. The resulting view we might call a spatial phenomenal holism (or perhaps more carefully put, an anti-atomism) about the visual-spatial experience: the view that the visual-spatial phenomenal field does not consist of non-decomposable (i.e. minima sensibilia), or meaningfully decomposable atomic parts (i.e. medium sized objects with their properties) which enable them to figure in the phenomenal character in their *own right*. Similar to the point-like components of the visual field, object experiences need to feature in the overall visual field self-standingly if they are to be discerned as some sort of basic components of the visual experience. If it is right that one can discern the edge of a visible object only by discerning some visible portion of the object and some portion of the space beyond, and that one can discern the visible portion of the object only by discerning a part of its edge (or edges) and some portion of the space beyond, it is not possible for any 'single' object or object feature in the experience as basic. Therefore, neither of the two options available to the phenomenal atomist is plausible.

3. The Temporal Character of Visual Experience

The same question we asked in the second section about the spatial character of the visual experience can be asked about the temporal parts and wholes of visual experience. What would be the phenomenal atoms of a visual experience that cannot be decomposed further ‘temporally’ into its parts? Similar to the spatial case, the first option for atoms of the temporal character would be temporally non-extended point-like instantaneous (or momentary) experiences whose succession constitutes the temporally extended visual episode. The other option for the temporal atomist would be the chunky form of atomism, where the most basic units of the experience of change or persistence would be atoms that take up some brief interval. The reason for this chunky view is more or less the same reason one might have for the chunky spatial atomism: that the experience can be meaningfully decomposed only into some brief intervals of experience similar to the meaningful object experiences. Any attempt to decompose further these nonzero intervals would be arbitrary, not carving the experience at its joints.

It seems that introspective awareness of a temporal minimal sensible in isolation is not possible for the subject, similar to the visual spatial experience. Try to discern an instant of your experience of the car’s being at rest. By itself, an instant cannot provide information regarding the car’s being in rest or motion. It is impossible for you to decide if that instant is from a car that is moving or at rest. If you are to discern a part of your experience of the car persisting or changing over time, you necessarily discern an instant in terms of its contribution to the phenomenal character together with the instant that comes before and/or after. If there is no change with respect to the previous instant to the car, you perceive it as of unchangingly persisting, if there is, you perceive it as of changingly persisting. And given that you experience an object as persisting in either case, your experience of an object when there is no change to the subject still necessarily comes in brief intervals, phenomenologically speaking.

One’s being able to discern an instant as part of the experience of a temporally extended event, therefore, can only take place as part of a brief interval. If one cannot discern an instant of her experience in isolation from a brief interval, one can only be aware of the relevant instant by being aware of its temporal location as part of some portion of the temporally extended experience that takes up a brief interval. This is to say that an instant can be discerned only if the subject is aware of some portion of what falls before and/or after that instant. To that extent, an instantaneous temporal part of an experience is analogous to the minimally sensible points or edges in one’s

visual phenomenal manifold: temporally minimally extended instants or moments of a visual experience can only be discerned in virtue of discerning some further the parts of the experience that is temporally extended.

This motivates the idea that there is an explanatory priority of the interval over the instants and moments that can feature within that interval of experience, similar to the explanatory priority of the visual field that I have introduced in Section 2. One's inability to discern an instant in isolation, and the necessity to cite the preceding or upcoming instant to discern a temporal boundary, such as the starting of the car's motion, seems to entail that there is a felt brief interval within which the boundaries, and other temporal parts, of temporally extended events can be experienced. Lose the felt interval and you lose a precondition for being aware of temporal boundaries, phenomenologically.

The explanatory priority of the whole interval over its instants parts is exemplified by Ian Phillips in the following way:

...a batsman experiences a ball's motion from one end of the wicket to the other. It will not be true that, at an instant during this period, the batsman has an experience of any of the ball's motion. Nonetheless, it may be true that he is experiencing the ball's motion at that instant *in virtue of that instant being a temporal subpart of a longer experience* that has the ball's motion as the object (2014, page ref, italics mine).

Phillip's remarks undermine the idea of the temporal phenomenal atomism in the first sense of temporal atoms as minimal sensibles while it seems to commit one to the second sort of chunky view of the temporal character of experience where he mentions *a longer experience*. According to this chunky view, the temporal structure of experience consists of proper temporal parts of the experience of the ball's motion with a brief interval.⁴⁹ Recently, some philosophers have developed various forms of chunky accounts of the temporal character of experience because of the difficulties in accommodating the idea that perceptual experience provides immediate awareness of temporal properties that extend over time.⁵⁰ These varieties of views that appeal to chunky parts

⁴⁹ See Hoerl (2009) and Phillips (2010, 2014).

⁵⁰ See Foster (1979), Dainton (2000; 2006), Hoerl (2009), Phillips (2010). This view is to be contrasted with what Dainton calls a retentionalist view, according to which the content of experience is chunky, yet experiences that bear that content are momentary. Husserl (2000) is often read as a retentionalist, although

of experience are developed for explaining the phenomenal character of temporal experience. The question one shall ask, thus, is if temporal phenomenology really motivates this specious chunky form of phenomenal temporal atomism. In the rest of this section, I will argue that it is not clear that it does. I will discuss two versions of the view proposed by Ian Phillips and Christoph Hoerl and argue that both face important problems.

Before discussing their respective views, here is a *prima facie* problem for the chunky atomism based on the characterization of temporal phenomenology I have outlined above. One cannot discern an instantaneous or momentary experience in isolation from the temporal part of one's conscious experience that has a greater temporal extent. If one cannot discern these instant-like experiences in isolation, one cannot also discern a chunk of experience taking up some interval in isolation. Whether an instant or a temporally extended chunk, if a temporal part of the visual experience is discerned, a further temporal portion of the experience must be thereby discerned. If this is true, the 'chunky' specious atomism option is not motivated phenomenologically because the temporal chunky atom cannot feature in the phenomenal character of the experience in its own right. It can only be part of the phenomenal temporal manifold in virtue of its relation to some portion of the rest of the phenomenal character of the perceptual experience.

It is not the case, however, that proponents of the chunky view claim that there are temporally extended chunks as basic phenomenal units of experience based on the contention that one can attend to the boundaries of these chunks. In fact, they accept that one fails to attend to the boundaries of these chunks upon introspection and hence these chunks are not manifest in the felt character of one's experience (e.g., Rashbrook 2013). One might, therefore, accept this characterization and nonetheless argue that there are independent motivations for the chunky phenomenal atomism. One of these reasons is a puzzle that Delia Graff Fara puts forward in the context of vagueness. Fara writes:

If the reason that the hour-hand strikes us as still-looking for any twenty-second interval is that we cannot visually represent a change in position as small as, say, $1/6$ (on a normal-size clock), then the second-hand should look still for any $1/36$ second interval, for it changes its position only that amount during such an interval. But, when we watch the

one can find nuances indicating that he was an extensionalist (e.g., Hoerl 2013). A contemporary retentionalist is Pelczar (2010; 2015).

second-hand moving, it never looks still - it appears to be constantly moving. (2001, p. 927)

The claim seems to be that the exact same changes we ascribe to the hour hand, which cannot be directly perceived by human subjects, give rise to a direct experience of a continuous change in the case of experiencing the second hand. This is to say that if certain changes are too slow to notice by the subject, then there must be discontinuities in experiences of fast change too. Notice that what we might call the traditional memory theories, according to which a portion of the past is remembered by the subject to be aware of succession and change, do not have the means to explain Fara's Puzzle. Phillips sees this as a motivation for his chunky atomism, suggesting that to solve this difficulty one might invoke a temporal field that consists of *both* the present moment and the 'retained' immediate past (2011, p. 811). In this sense what is retained is constitutive of the experience at the present moment. An attempt to decompose one's experience into minimally sensible discrete times fails to explain cases like the above and hence the ultimate components of temporal experience are temporally extended brief intervals of time. Phillips writes:

If we are to perceive change at all, a certain amount of change must take place within the temporal field. As a result, whether one is perceiving change over some very brief period may depend on whether the change presented over that very brief period forms part of a change across the whole temporal field which is large enough to be perceived. (2011, p. 819).

This is in line with Phillip's "revised memory theory" (2010, p. 197). According to Phillips' revised theory, instead of a memory of the previous moment (i.e., a past-tensed element) contributing to the present experience (i.e., a present tensed element), the previous moment is 'retained' in the temporal field which happens to be a chunky atom of the experience.⁵¹ This proposal of retention without reminiscence (p. 192) has it that perceptual experience presents its object at a time t_1 *as* having been preceded by t_0 . If this is right, basic facts about temporal experience arise for the temporally extended chunk that consists of the present moment along with a portion of what

⁵¹ Notice that this temporal field is compatible with two distinct, and conflicting views of temporal experience. According to one, the field is entirely a part of the content of a momentary experience. According to the other, the experience itself is a brief temporal interval. Phillips endorses the latter. For the former, see Pelczar (2010), Kiverstein (2010).

precedes it. Hence, facts about the experience at a time is determined by the facts about the experience over a brief interval of time.

One might think that one problem with Phillips' revised theory is that it does not seem to advance much on the traditional memory theories that he finds unappealing. What Phillips does to revise the traditional memory theories is to reject a strong form of principle of simultaneous awareness (PSA) (Miller, 1984) and opt for the weak form which allows him to say that one is aware of temporal properties at a time in virtue of what has preceded that moment. The way in which I characterize PSA is as follows:

Strong PSA: One's awareness of an interval (e.g., a short-lived shooting meteor) is to be explained by an appeal *only* to how the experience feels for the subject at a given, present, moment.

Weak PSA: One's awareness of an interval is to be explained by an appeal to how the experience feels for the subject at a given, present, moment along with a portion of how the experience feels for the subject prior to the moment.

While traditional memory theories seem to commit to the strong PSA with an appeal to the memory of the character of the experience that immediately precedes the present, Phillips commits to the weak form where he argues that the character of the experience is somehow retained in the present experience without the assistance of one's memory. One might think, however, that this modification to the traditional views is not adequate. Christoph Hoerl, for example, claims that in explaining the experience of an interval (e.g., a 'bang' after a 'whizz'), the proponent of the revised memory theory must either reject that there is direct contribution to the character of the experience of the whizz (as the view rejects the strong form of PSA), *or* accept that there is no perceptual contact with the experienced object at, but only an experience of "...some sort of proxy for that contact." (2009, p. 4). For it seems that "...we are left with a view on which the whizz has a similar kind of paradoxical existence as the Cheshire cat, whose smile can still be around even if the cat no longer is." (p. 4). Phillips' commitment to the weak PSA leads him into this dilemma: if one is aware of the bang after the whizz at a time in terms of one's awareness of what precedes it, the whizz is already past by the time one is aware of the bang. Thus, it is either that what precedes does not contribute to the experience or it remains in the present mysteriously.

Hoerl's alternative suggestion is a different version of chunky atomism, which he dubs *molecularism*.⁵² According to molecularism, perceptual experiences of temporally extended events take up the exact same time as the experienced event takes up (p. 6). If one commits to this claim, Hoerl argues, it is not reasonable to think that temporal experience presents certain events as in the present and as having been preceded by others a short while ago. The simple reason behind this is that if the experience takes the exact same time as the experienced event, then there seems to be nothing "...that pre-dates the onset of the experience." (p. 6). The view has it that there is a discrete 'chunky' molecule of experience that is essentially unfolding over time, just as the experienced object is (2013, p. 388). Hence, there seems to be no way in which tense can feature in temporal experience. The perfect harmony between the experienced event and the experience itself would explain the experience of temporal properties that require experiences of succession. In this sense, Hoerl distances himself from both traditional memory accounts and Phillips' revised account.

The difference between Hoerl and Phillips, then, boils down to their different takes on PSA. Phillips thinks that his revised memory view commits to a weak form of PSA, by introducing that what precedes the experience at a given time can be reasonably invoked to explain the character of the experience at that time. Hoerl finds the idea as untenable as the strong form of PSA because he thinks that once we accept that the whizz is in the past, and endorse a weaker version of PSA, there does not still seem to be an experience of the whizz the subject can be 'perceptually' aware of.

In spite of their differences, given the terminology I introduced in this paper, both Hoerl and Phillips endorse a kind of chunky view about the temporal structure of experience: the latter claims that it is tensed in the sense that the chunk picks out what precedes a given moment within the chunky brief interval, while the former says it picks out a chunk of "bare occurrence" by being concurrent to the occurrence (2018, p. 146). I should note that I do not claim that Hoerl's argument against Phillips' view is decisive, yet it puts serious pressure on the view. If one is to introduce a temporal field that should be characterized in terms of the object of experience at the present to have been preceded by another, one seems to have difficulty spelling out how exactly the perceptual contact with what has preceded the present moment is maintained, instead of contact with a proxy. Nonetheless, Hoerl's view faces an equally pressing problem. The tenseless

⁵² Hoerl's molecularism, given the terminology I introduced, is a form of chunky atomism.

molecular chunks Hoerl appeals to might explain how successive events can be experienced within those chunks, yet it is not clear what the relationship between these chunks over certain greater intervals is. I will briefly turn to that next.

As I briefly noted above, one reason that Hoerl can rule out an appeal to tense in characterizing experience is the following:

...if the experience of a sequence of events takes up the same time that the experienced sequence of events itself takes up, there is nothing that falls within the experience to which the notion ‘a short while ago’ could apply, because there is nothing experienced as having happened at a time that pre-dates the onset of the experience. Thus, it also can’t be the case that, within the experience, any event is presented as happening “now” in contrast to others. (2009, p. 6).

If we go along with this suggestion, there seems to be a problem with experiencing temporally extended events that take up a greater interval than “...the maximal interval an individual experience can span.” (2013, p. 388). In Hoerl’s account, what explains Fara’s problem and the difference between experiencing a discontinuous change and continuous change is that these discrete chunks occupying some brief interval, as individual experiences, feature what falls within the interval of time they occupy. Hoerl claims that the extent of these discrete chunks is what “...determines which temporal phenomena we can be aware of *within* experience.” (p. 388, italics original).

If there is nothing that pre-dates the onset of a chunk, however, it is not clear how we might account for the experiences of temporally extended events that take far longer than what an individual chunk of experience can maximally span. The question is, how can Hoerl’s account explain the experience of, say, a handwave that takes ten seconds that is made up of the individual specious atoms he invokes? There are at least two answers. One is what we might call a discrete block model. According to the discrete block model, a single molecule would follow in succession the previous block to compose a longer interval of experience. This model does not seem to work well with Hoerl’s account for the simple reason that Hoerl claims that there is nothing that pre-dates the onset of an experience. If there are distinct discrete molecules that are in themselves process-like and concurrent with the parts of the experienced event, yet follow one another to

account for the experience of the rest of the temporally extended event, there is in fact something that pre-dates the onset of the previous event. Namely, the end of the previous molecule.

Therefore, it seems to me that Hoerl can opt for what some call an overlap account (Foster 1982; Dainton, 2000). According to the overlap model of chunky atomism, a portion of a chunky atom's 'end' and a portion of the following chunky atom's start overlap. Consider the following figure to illustrate how the overlap model would work.

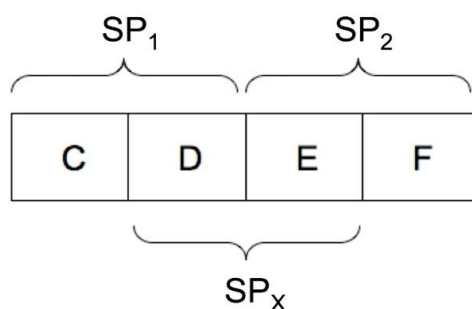


Figure 3: The Overlap Model

Regarding the figure above, Dainton writes:

...there is a D-type experience to be found in SP_1 and also in SP_x , but there are not two *token* D-type experiences, for the simple reason that the D-token in SP_1 is numerically identical with the D-token in SP_x , and similarly for E. By holding that specious presents can *overlap by sharing common parts*, phenomenal continuity can be secured in an economical manner. (2023, SEF, italics original)

Hoerl's account with the aid of an overlap model can account for experiences of temporally extended events that occupy a large interval. But accounting for the idea of SP_x requires invoking a certain, and importantly, additional, relationship between distinct temporally extended chunks of experience. Dainton himself introduces what he calls a 'diachronic co-consciousness' to spell out the SP_x element above. Hoerl's molecularism assisted with an overlap model would be problematic if one is to introduce something similar to a primitive relation similar to SP_x since Hoerl's initial attack on Phillips' revised account was based on the implausibility of how the previous moment can be retained in the present experience in such a way that it would ensure the cognitive contact with the character of the experience in the immediate past. For something like a co-consciousness seems as mysterious as the presence of the immediate past in the present moment. If one finds it reasonable to invoke primitive relations between chunky experiences such as co-consciousness, it

is difficult to see why Phillips' revised theory is more problematic than Hoerl's molecularism assisted by an overlap theory. What is more, if one can maintain a weak version of the claim that one is aware of temporal properties at a time in the way that Phillips suggests, appealing to an overlap model for the chunky view seems to be redundant.

Again, I have no intention to settle the debate around different chunky models of temporal experience. I rather note that we do not seem to have any phenomenological grounds to introduce something like an SPx (whether it is cashed out as a co-consciousness relation or something else) which would ensure that there is nothing that pre-dates the onset of a given chunky discrete experiential part. It remains problematic, therefore, to think that there are temporal chunks with their own temporal boundaries that take just the same time as the experienced object. And if there is an alternative, *explanatory*, account of temporal experience that does not appeal to chunky molecules of experience and the additional relation they have in between is desirable as it would avoid this unhelpful clash between opposing views of chunky atomism.

4. Experience without Chunks: Making Sense of Temporal Holism

I have made some negative points about the structural features of temporal experience that are accessible by introspective awareness. I have said that neither a minimal sensible nor a brief interval based chunky conception of phenomenal temporal atomism is well-motivated. I have also said that chunky accounts based on the explanatory advantage they bring to make sense of the character of temporal experience face serious problems on phenomenological grounds. Such accounts seem to need to appeal to mysterious features to make sense of the temporal relationship between posited chunks.

What does this amount to saying? Is the lack of reason to posit individual moments or chunks of experience equivalent to the lack of reason to posit any experience parts at all? In this section, I will show that they do not. By discussing how my suggestion differs from Tye's one-experience view (2003), I propose that the way in which we should understand the temporal parts and wholes of an experience is in a certain sense of contextual: there is an invariant structural feature of experience which takes up a brief interval, in a somewhat similar sense in which a visual field takes up a spatial extent. This felt temporal field is what provides the subject with the felt experiential *whole* interval in which they can discern *parts* of a given experience, without committing one to the existence of discrete chunks of experience (Hoerl. 2009; Rashbrook-Cooper 2017).

Tye's one-experience view has it that there is a unified perceptual experience whose complex features are not proper basic parts of the experience but merely a matter of different ways of describing the same experience in "more or less rich ways." (2003, p. 28). This is to say that there are no individual basic experiences that make up the complex experience either in terms of distinct sensory modalities or within particular modalities. Rather, these parts stem from describing the same, 'single' multi-modal and complex experience in different ways. This single experience, Tye suggests, has both a synchronic unity at a moment (p. 35) and a diachronic unity over time (p. 96). The complex spatial and temporal character of the perceptual experience, according to the one experience view, are results of the grain of description of what a single unified experience *presents* at a time and through time.

The core argument Tye provides for his one experience view can be captured by the following claim:

When we introspect, we are not aware of our experiences at all. (pp. 22, 96)

One way to spell out Tye's claim here is to say that the experience is *strongly transparent*, the claim that introspection only reveals features of the object of the experience and nothing else.⁵³ When I look at the blue sky, as Moore observed (1903), I seem to be aware of the blue of the sky, and not a blue experience. If this is right, one's feeling of the experience being successive is only a result of one's experiencing succession in the external world. Tye writes:

If I experience a loud high-pitched sound, it is the auditory qualities of the sound that are experienced as continuing from moment to moment; if I feel a pain in a thumb, it is the changing qualities of the disturbance I experience in my thumb that are experienced by me, as the pain starts to throb and intensify. (pp. 96-97)

If this characterization is accurate, Tye maintains:

With each experienced change in things and qualities, there is an experience of the change. But this does not necessitate that there be a new experience. The simplest

⁵³ I discuss the notion of transparency in detail in Chapter 2.

hypothesis compatible with what is revealed by introspection is that, for each period of consciousness, there is only a single experience—an experience that represents everything experienced within the period of consciousness as a whole. (p.97)

I am not going to give further reasons to reject this strong form of transparency claim where the entire character of experience reduces to the descriptions of what that experience presents. It suffices to note here that if one rejects the strong transparency claim and holds the view that one can be aware of certain structural features of the experience itself, e.g., features of its modal character, then Tye's characterization loses its appeal. If one is inclined to think that introspection reveals certain structural features of the *way* in which one is aware of the spatially extended medium sized goods and temporally extended events, one can reject the idea that there are basic phenomenal components of the visual experience without rejecting the idea of a phenomenal or sensory temporal field altogether. What I have argued so far in this paper should partly be seen as an attempt to do so.⁵⁴

I take it that the phenomenology I have defended in the previous sections motivates the idea that visual experiences do, in fact, have phenomenal spatial and temporal parts (both in the minimal sensible sense and chunky sense) in the important sense in which one cannot help but to invoke these *parts* in their characterizations of the experience. But one cannot do so *without exception* in isolation. One cannot discern a minimal sensible or a chunky object experience upon introspection. Similarly, one neither can discern an instant nor a chunky brief interval in isolation upon introspection. Therefore, we also lack reason to think that there are phenomenal *components* of the experience that contribute to the overall phenomenal character individually.

Crucially, the lack of phenomenological reason to invoke phenomenal atoms or relations between atomic experiences such as Dainton's 'co-consciousness' is not equivalent to the lack of phenomenological reason to think that there is no temporal manifold of appearance at all. If one rejects Tye's strong transparency claim, as many seem to do, there is room for introducing a temporally extended interval featuring in the experience as part of the way in which experience presents temporal properties to the subject. The phenomenal anti-atomism I have defended, therefore, is not the view that there is no experiential feature at all that one can introspectively

⁵⁴ For an argument for the idea that Tye himself can be read to characterize the *way* in which experience presents temporal properties, see Rashbrook (2013).

attend to, since there are no proper phenomenal parts of the visual experience the subject undergoes from waking to falling asleep. I suggest, instead, that the phenomenal holism that follows from the considerations above is best construed as the claim that introspection reveals a temporal experiential structure, in the sense that discerning an experienced instant or temporal extent necessitates discerning them within *a* temporal field—where one can discern a part of an experience only in terms of that part’s place within a larger portion of the phenomenal character of the experience that falls within the field.

One way to elaborate on the notion of a phenomenal temporal field is through a characterization of the visual field one is aware of. One’s visual field is experienced to be presenting a sub-region of the space, where there seems to be more to what the whole visual field can feature. In this sense, as Michael Martin notes, “The space is part of the experience in as much as one is aware of the region as a potential location for objects of vision.” (1992, p. 189). Similarly, Louise Richardson writes:

...the limits are our own visual sensory limitations, and that we are aware of them as such. We are aware of our visual sensory limitations in that it always seems to one that there is more to be sensed than one is currently sensing. (Richardson 2010, p. 235)

Matthew Soteriou suggests along the same lines that the limits of one’s visual field appears to one to have a different kind of boundary from the experienced objects seem to have (2013, p. 118). The objects have edges as things that limit their bodies. The boundaries of the field, on the other hand, are felt *as the sensory limitations* of the experiencing subject. Any awareness of a visual field features a felt boundary that hints at more space to be experienced. These *felt limitations*, therefore, are felt as the limitations of the subject’s sensory awareness. Hence, they are the boundaries of the sensory mode of awareness and not what the experience presents to the subject. Hence, one’s awareness of the whole field is an awareness of the part of something greater than what one is aware of at a given time, providing the felt limitations of the sensory visual modality.

Aiding these observations with the Merleau-Pontian line above, one can suggest that every experience of either a minimal sensible or a medium sized object is part of a sensory visual field the subject is aware of at a given time, *necessarily*. One’s awareness of the field as part of a larger spatial field is necessary in making sense of the fact that one can discern what appears to be the phenomenal parts of the spatial character of experience as spatial objects and properties in the

world. In this clear sense, one's awareness of the parts of the phenomenal character of one's experience is secondary to one's awareness of the character of the field, which provides the subject with the compositional context within which one can discern these parts. It is in this sense we must invoke a spatially extended visual field featuring a region of space, within which one can be aware of spatially extended items, along with their boundaries. It is not only that one is aware of some sensory visual field by being aware of a sub-region of the empty space but it is that one is *primarily* aware of that field to be aware of what populates it.

It is important to note that the claim is *not* that without one's awareness of the whole scene, one is not aware of its parts *at all*. The claim is that one's awareness of the field as populated *in some way* is primary to one's awareness of the particular way in which it is populated. The set of descriptions that can fit the character of experience gets determined only after the subject is by default aware of a visual field. Similarly, one might argue that there is a conscious temporal field one is aware of somewhat similar to the sensory field the visual mode of awareness features.

My claim is precisely this: there is a primary awareness of the temporal field within which one can discern proper parts of the temporal character of experience without treating these parts as individual experiences contributing to the phenomenal character in their own right. To defend this claim, I shall start with the distinction between two claims that has relevance to the point I shall make.

The relevant distinction is between what I call the temporal experience claim (TEC) and the experiential temporality claim (ETC). While TEC is the claim that one is perceptually aware of succession, ETC is the claim that one is also aware of their experiences as successive. How to understand these two claims given the picture I depicted above? First, one's awareness of succession in both the object of the experience and the character of the experience itself is not successive due to one's experiencing temporally distinct items succeeding each other. Rather, one is aware of both the object of one's experience and the experience itself, as many call it, as continuous (Tye, 2003; Dainton, 2008; Soteriou 2013). For Tye, it is straightforward that ETC is to be explained by an explanation of TEC. Similar to this basic idea in Tye, both Phillips and Hoerl, though for different reasons, appear to explain ETC in terms of TEC: for Hoerl experience consists of molecular chunks since experience always concurs with its temporally extended object. For Phillips a brief temporal chunk features in one's experience because the experience inherits the structure of the temporally extended it presents. One reason why they are attracted to this line

is that they think that introspection suggests that there is no mode of awareness of temporal properties.

I have argued in Chapter 2, that one cannot claim that introspection motivates the claim that there is no temporal mode of awareness. One's conscious experience might in fact feature a temporal mode of awareness even if the subject fails to be aware that their experience features that temporal mode upon systematic introspective reflection. If this is right, the temporal extent one can be said to be aware of upon being aware of change and persistence need not be determined by the interval one is aware of in perceptual experience. This suggests that there is an alternative way to think about the relationship between TEC and ETC.

According to this alternative way of thinking, the temporal field one is aware of is provided by the features of the subject's mode of awareness. This mode appears to the subject to be different from other sensory modes of awareness, where they often come with a devoted sensory system.⁵⁵ Yet the very fact that it does not appear to the subject that there is no sensory system that is devoted to experiencing time does not entail that there is, in fact, no such system. One important note to make is that the assumption that a system that enables one to be aware of temporal properties must be similar to the sensory perceptual systems we seem to have in play as we undergo perceptual experiences of spatial properties. Dropping that assumption opens the way to conceive a mode of awareness for temporal properties that features a temporal field. Once one drops that assumption, it is reasonable to think that there is the following similarity between the temporal field as a feature of the temporal mode of awareness and the visual field as a feature of visual awareness. Just as the visual field is experienced to have limitations and hence there is more to sense that is beyond one's visual field, I suggest that the felt character of temporal experience features the same: at any time one is conscious, one is aware of a temporal field in the sense that it feels like there is *more to be sensed* than what one is currently sensing.

Hoerl provides a recent consideration of such a potential way of thinking about a temporal field. He writes:

⁵⁵ Perhaps, with the exception of tactile experiences. It is an open controversy in philosophical and empirical studies of touch that if touch is a multi-sensory mode or not. I say more on tactile experiences in Chapter 2.

There is of course, a sense in which perceptual experience might also be said to involve a temporal ‘perspective’ in so far as, at each point in time, experience takes in less of the world than there is of the world – i.e. only what is then present. And because we’re also equipped with the ability to remember and anticipate other times, we can become aware that our experience is ‘perspectival’ in this sense. But its being so is not part of the phenomenology of the experience itself. That is to say, the point in time from which things are being experienced does not contribute to what it is like to have the experience. (Hoerl 2018b, p. 3)

It is not clear why the sense in which one can say that there is temporally more to experience is not about the felt character of the experience. As Hoerl seems to do, one reason one might have to think that is the idea that a sort of mnemonic and anticipatory capacity is responsible for this felt character (2014a, p. 25). The idea seems to be that given that one can remember the past and anticipate the future, one can have a felt ‘moreness’ at a time but this does not mean that there is a felt temporal field that takes up a brief interval with more temporal stuff at either side of that interval.

One might simply claim, therefore, that there is no temporal field in the same sense as there is a visual field because in the latter case, one is aware of sensory boundaries while in the former one is not. There seems to be a straightforward problem for the idea of a temporal field, if it is to be conceived along the same lines as a visual spatial field (Rashbrook 2013, Soteriou 2013). Hence, one might think that one does not seem to be aware of the limits of one’s mode of awareness when it comes to temporal experience, different from visual experience.⁵⁶ If true, this would create a problem for the idea that there is some kind of felt temporal field, as it seems that invoking a felt temporal field similar to a visual field is phenomenology odd.

My response is that this claim is a result of the attempt to explain ETC in terms of TEC. Hoerl seems to be saying that one’s perceptual awareness seems to lack a felt temporal field in the sense that there are no boundaries featuring phenomenal character of the experience that would lead to a felt moreness of the experienced object. Such conception of moreness would be characterized in terms of what comes into and goes out of one’s conscious awareness over time. This characterization does not entail however that there cannot be a temporal field characterized in

⁵⁶ Views along this line is defended by Hoerl (2009), Rashbrook (2013) and Soteriou (2013).

terms of the felt succession of one's conscious experience, and not what it presents, featuring a felt moreness to one's conscious experience: that one's conscious experience *had* more to the immediate past and *will have* more to the immediate future at any given time. It is in this sense it can be plausible to claim that there is a temporal field one is aware of. The temporal field is to be invoked insofar as one is aware that there is more to one's experience temporally -and again, not only to what it presents- than what one is aware of currently. If there is such character, this felt 'moreness' would come with the felt character of one's awareness as falling between the past and the future.

5. The Temporal Mereology of Experience

There is a felt 'moreness' to the temporal character of one's conscious experience yet there seem to be no felt boundaries. How to make sense of this felt temporal moreness? My suggestion is that the felt interval that is responsible for this felt moreness is *implicit* in one's conscious experience in the sense that it is not explicitly discernible upon introspective reflection. Hence, *its boundaries* need not be *explicitly* available to one's introspective awareness. In that respect, the felt temporal field is in the same vicinity as, though distinct from, what many call the 'pre-reflective self-awareness'.⁵⁷ In the case of pre-reflective self-awareness one seems to be aware of oneself as the experiencer prior to introspective reflection on the character of one's experience (Sartre, 1943). I suggest, similarly, one's awareness of the temporal field as part of the temporal mode of awareness is a part of the character implicitly. I shall not provide a thorough defence of the idea of pre-reflective self-awareness here. Rather I will discuss the core commonality between philosophers' conception of pre-reflectively felt self and my notion of implicitly felt temporal field.

One motivation behind the need to invoke a pre-reflective self-awareness to characterize conscious experience is sometimes taken to be a matter of necessity. Jean-Paul Sartre argues, for example, that the pre-reflective mode of awareness of oneself is "...the only mode of existence which is possible for a consciousness of something." (1943, p. 20). The claim seems to be that in order for one to make sense of an experience presenting something, one needs to invoke a *someone* featuring

⁵⁷ While pre-reflective self-awareness is often characterized as an awareness of oneself prior to one's introspective reflection, this need not necessarily entail that it is prior to a form of introspective attention. See Giustina (2019), for a discussion. Giustina argues that if we draw certain important distinctions pre-reflective self-awareness can be construed in a way that it is available to a form of introspection she calls 'primitive'.

in the character of the experience, as the one who is presented with whatever the experience presents. Nonetheless, this felt self is not an item within the character of the experience like the worldly objects one can discern via reflecting upon one's experience. Hence, one's awareness of oneself in this particular sense, is pre-reflective. This characterization comes with the need to invoke a felt first-person as part of the phenomenal character of the experience, which is not reducible to the character of what the experience presents. In this way, pre-reflective self-awareness is among the conditions of possibility of an experience to present something *to* the subject. In being so, it is not merely a discernible part of the character of experience upon introspection. It is what enables the experience to be the way it is. As Gallagher writes:

...anybody who denies the for-me-ness of experience simply fails to recognize an essential constitutive aspect of experience. Such a denial would be tantamount to denial of the first-person perspective. It would entail the view that my own mind is either not given to me at all...or is presented to me in exactly the same ways as the minds of others.
(SEP, 2019)

I will say a bit more on pre-reflective self-awareness in Chapter 5. For now, it suffices to say that my appeal to the notion of an implicitly felt 'moreness' in terms of the temporal character of experience is very similar to the above characterization of the pre-reflectively felt self: one cannot identify a 'self' or its qualities directly upon introspective reflection, yet still it features in the phenomenal character of the experience as a necessity for the very character of the experience. This kind of implicit presence can be established by spelling out the conditions which, once satisfied by a given experiential structure, would ensure that there is a pre-reflective, implicit, awareness of a temporal interval within which one's experience features temporal properties. I will claim now that there is a sense in which one is aware of the temporal field implicitly insofar as two conditions are satisfied by the type of awareness they undergo.

First, one is aware of one's own experience as *occurrent*, as something that takes place or happens, and the occurrent character of conscious experience comes with the particular mode of awareness in which one can be aware of temporal properties. Second, one always fails to introspectively attend to an *experienced* instant or a chunk without attending to a further portion of what the experience presents. The first claim is in the domain of ETC, while the second claim is in the domain of TEC. One diagnosis I have made in the previous section is that the recent appeal of philosophers to TEC as prior to ETC has led them to overlook the first claim and hence ended

up with resistance to the idea that there cannot be a temporal interval one is aware of in the sense of a sensory temporal field. This seems to have led Hoerl to claim that there are no structural features of the experience when it comes to its temporal character. On the contrary, let us see how introducing the first claim should work in tandem with the second claim to motivate the idea that there is a felt temporal field.

The idea that experiences are occurrent is widespread in recent analytic philosophy but what that amounts to say is not always spelt out. Philosophers sometimes say they conceive experiences as occurrences (Crane and French, 2005) or experience has an occurrent character (O'Shaughnessy, 2000). Philosophers also sometimes say that this occurrent character is a matter of how experience appears to the subject as a result of one's first-person reflection (Crane and French 2005). To clarify the sense in which I refer to experiences appearing to their subjects to be occurrent, I will now briefly turn to O'Shaughnessy's discussion of the occurrent experience as opposed to being asleep (2000).⁵⁸

One straightforward way in which philosophers are inclined to characterize experiences as occurrent is a result of their first-person reflection on the character of conscious experience is that when one is conscious something appears to take place. This fact can be attended most clearly when one considers people in a comatose state or a dreamless sleep. In those states, the subject's mental life lacks something fundamental, a felt character of being conscious. As a first approximation, one lacks *feelings* in the general sense of experiences or awarenesses; there seems to be no feeling occurring with some kind of character available to the experiencer, for the experiencer is not present: they are unconscious. This claim is not necessarily the claim that one lacks feelings that always present temporal properties when one is unconscious. It is, by itself, a claim about the feelings themselves. One's awareness in this sense comes with the idea that something takes place, happens or occurs when someone is conscious, where this occurrence comes with a felt, phenomenal, character. Therefore, one's experience appears to one to be occurring not necessarily because its object is an occurrence that unfolds over time, but because the experience itself as something that the subject lacks in a dreamless sleep, appears to be occurrent.

⁵⁸ Also see Soteriou (2013; 2019) and Crowther and Soteriou (2017). I say more on this issue regarding the notion of temporal present in Chapter 5.

One should be careful about what this occurrent character indicates. As O'Shaughnessy himself is aware, one should make a distinction between the conscious state, which he describes as "...the vastly familiar light that appears in the head when a person surfaces from sleep or anaesthetic or dream" (2000, p. 68) and the felt stream of consciousness due to the felt occurrent character. This distinction, nonetheless, does not change the fact that there is a felt occurrent character of experience in the sense that the familiar light that appears once one is wakeful. O'Shaughnessy further argues that the lack of feelings in a dreamless sleep comes with a lack of awareness of temporal properties. Although I am sympathetic to this view, I will not say more about that.⁵⁹

If the experience appears to be occurrent in this latter sense, as a part of ETC, then one can ask the further question that how this works with TEC. This brings us to the second condition I mentioned above. If my characterization of temporal phenomenology is along the right lines, the felt occurrent character of conscious experience *needs to* accommodate the fact that one is aware of instantaneous boundaries of events and temporally extended events themselves only by being aware of a further portion of what they are aware of. That is, the felt character of one's experience features neither minimally sensible momentary temporal parts of what is experienced nor chunky parts of its objects. How can this be the case given that the conscious experience appears to be something that occurs?

It seems that the relevant anti-atomistic characterization of TEC I have defended above rules out the possibility in which experiences as felt occurrences are instantaneous events. For if experiences are instantaneous, it would not have been possible for one to be aware of the intervals and their boundaries, if one does not endorse a simple view of temporal experience, where successions of instantaneous experiences can explain the experience of succession. If one wants to reject this simple view, one needs at least to commit to the weak version of the Jamesian slogan that a succession of feelings is necessary but not sufficient for a feeling of succession (1890, p. 691).

If one does not reject the Jamesian slogan, therefore, the felt occurrent character of conscious experience *needs to* feature a felt interval *of the mode of awareness* within which one is aware of temporal properties. This felt interval as part of the temporal mode of awareness, in the terminology of the previous section, would provide a temporal compositional context, within which temporal

⁵⁹ I say more on the ways in which one's experience appearing to be occurrent to its experiencer in Chapter 5.

properties can be experienced and hence available to introspective awareness. Different from the TEC-based accounts of temporal experience, then, if one's conscious experience satisfies the two conditions I spelt out above, there needs to be a brief occurrent interval the subject is aware of since in order for an occurrent experience to feature instants and intervals that fit the characterization I provided above, according to which the awareness of instants and intervals require a further portion of what is experienced, that occurrent structure must itself *feature*, and not merely *present*, a felt nonzero interval within which a further portion of what is experienced can feature in.⁶⁰

To reject the proposal I have been defending in this section, one might have four options. More precisely, if one is to reject that there is an implicitly felt temporal interval in the sense of a temporal mode of awareness that provides a phenomenal temporal field, one needs to reject one of the following four:

- (1) that one can discern parts of what is experienced in isolation.
- (2) that the conscious experience appears to the subject to be occurrent.
- (3) that the weak version of the Jamesian slogan is false.
- (4) that temporal transparency entails that the temporal structure of experience just is the temporal structure of the experienced event.

(1) seems to be not possible to reject. As I have argued, the very idea of anti-atomism in both spatial and temporal cases is very plausible. It is very odd to claim that one can discern a part of what is presented in isolation. The first bullet can be a more reasonable option for the objector. It is possible to reject (2), the idea that experience appears to its subject to be occurrent. Hoerl's resistance to the idea that there seems to be an introspectably occurrent experience belongs to this objection (2018). As I have argued above, however, this resistance is due to a sheer appeal to TEC in making sense of ETC. At least on the grounds of TEC, I have argued that one cannot decisively reject that the experience appears to be occurrent. Rejecting (3) can also be reasonable for an opponent of a felt temporal field in the way I characterized above. If one rejects the weak slogan, one might either endorse a strong succession slogan or reject it altogether. Rejecting the slogan

⁶⁰ All instantaneous characterizations of the experience (Chuard, 2011, 2022; Prosser, 2016) would fail to accommodate these two conditions. Chuard rejects the slogan while Prosser attempts to explain ETC in terms of TEC, leaving the possibility of the case I describe out.

altogether would take one to important problems about temporal experience that can be traced back to the naïve cinematic account I have discussed in Chapter 1. Accepting the strong slogan would lead one to be an intentionalist about the temporal experience. An intentionalist might claim that one's awareness of experiences as occurrent is a result of one's experiences representing the time of itself (e.g., Kriegel 2009). This temporally token-reflexive account would neatly explain the occurrent character of the experience that often appears to be concurrent with the occurrent character of the object of the experience.

There are two problems with such a strategy. The first is that certain intentionalist accounts are undermotivated phenomenologically. Kiverstein, for instance, argues that momentary experiences feature a temporally extended content (2010). Although I find Kiverstein's account overall coherent, there does not seem to be a momentary awareness from which one is aware of something that obtains a temporal interval phenomenologically speaking, and hence insisting on an intentional account on phenomenological grounds is odd. Second, intentionalist accounts do not seem to do justice to the felt occurrent character of experience. Again, an intentionalists might say that experience appears to be occurrent in virtue of having a token reflexive content (Kriegel 2009) or featuring Kaplanian indexicals (Connor and Smith 2019) but doing so is to attempt to explain the felt occurrent character of experience in terms of what the experience presents, and one's awareness of temporal properties do not seem to feature temporal properties of the experience itself.

If the discussion I provide above makes sense, however, one's feelings are felt as occurrent *not necessarily* because one's perceptual experience has a content that represents the time of the experience in some way. There is something about the distinctive *mode of awareness* of temporal properties and the structural features one is implicitly aware of that mode. As a final note, similar to the visual field's boundaries, the boundaries of the felt temporal field are not to be found in the objects of the experience. Instead, they are implicitly attended to as a result of the felt moreness to one's occurrent experience.

The last option is to reject (4) and insist that temporal transparency entails either a lack of temporal structure of experience or that the temporal structure of experience just is the temporal structure of the experienced event. This option does not seem to be plausible again, for the reasons I have discussed in Chapter 2. One can be systematically wrong about how one's experience appears to them upon introspective reflection in terms of the temporal character of their experience. If this

is right, one cannot simply reject the last claim on introspective grounds. The point needs to be argued for.

Finally, I would like to note a few advantages that my account brings over the chunky atomist accounts of temporal experience. First, the idea of an implicitly felt temporal field as a feature of one's temporal mode awareness need not be supplemented by something like a primitive and mysterious co-consciousness relation. For according to this idea, there are not any individual experiences. Rather, there is a temporally extended field the subject brings on the world and through which one is aware of temporal properties. Second, and in line with the first point, invoking an implicitly felt field without being aware of its temporal boundaries explains all the phenomena that chunky atomist accounts of temporal experience attempt to explain. A third advantage, which also draws the boundary between my view and Phillips' chunky view I have discussed in the previous section, is that the features of the temporal field I have introduced are not inherited from the temporal structure of the object of the experience. As I have argued in Chapter 2, there does not seem to be enough reason to think that phenomenology straightforwardly motivates such an inheritance claim. Yet we must still invoke a field that features in the phenomenal character of the experience, contra Hoerl, in the sense that our experience appears to be occurrent with a character that features temporal parts only within a further temporal portion of the felt character of the experience.

6. Conclusion

There is more to say about the features of the temporal field within which one can be said to be aware of temporal properties. In this paper, my aim has been to spell out the framework in which one can make sense of certain phenomenological facts along with certain desiderata about one's temporal experience. The phenomenological facts were the following.

- (1) One's experience does not seem to have any parts in terms of what it presents, strictly speaking, upon introspection.
- (2) One nonetheless can discern instants and events with temporal boundaries upon introspection.
- (3) One's temporal experience comes with a felt 'moreness'.

The explananda were the following.

- (4) There is a difference between experiencing continuous change and discontinuous change.
- (5) There is a puzzle that arises from the idea that one is aware of fast change continuously and slow change discontinuously.

I have argued that positing chunky experience parts to give an account of the explananda is in conflict with the phenomenological characterization one might provide to accommodate the phenomenological data. One does not find temporal chunks that are somehow related to each other upon introspection. I then proposed that thinking about the felt moreness of temporal experience in terms of a feature of the temporal mode of awareness and not what one is perceptually aware of. Such characterization of a felt interval of occurrent experiences within which one can discern experienced parts accommodates both groups of facts about temporal experience. The implicitly felt interval as a feature of one's mode of temporal awareness is a necessary component of the phenomenal character that enables the subject to be able to discern temporal and spatial parts of both what the experience presents and the experience itself.

CHAPTER FIVE

Temporal Present and the Felt Passage of Time

1. Introduction

According to an influential line of thought, perceptual experiences present their objects as in the present. Christopher Peacocke writes:

Perceptual experience presents objects as having a particular egocentric location now; a certain orientation, colour, and texture now. Perceptual experience presents events as having certain properties and relations now. These statements ought to be uncontroversial. They do not involve commitment to any particular metaphysics of time, or to any distinctive metaphysics of the present. (2019, p. 96, italics original).

What Peacocke takes to be uncontroversial here is that the objects of one's perceptual experience are presented to one as being in now. When one opens their eyes in the morning to a grey ceiling, they see the ceiling as grey *now*. As they get up and walk to the kitchen for a cup of coffee, they see the cup and the Mokapot on the counter *now*. This felt character of perceptual experience is sometimes called, following J.J. Valberg's phrase (1992), *the temporal presence* (Rashbrook-Cooper 2017, Hoerl 2018):

We have a strong inclination to view objects that are present in experience as being, at that very time, existent: if something is now present, it now exists. This inclination to encompass the object within the temporal present does not extend to reference, or thought in general. There is no problem about referring to, or thinking of, objects which no longer exist. But our inclination is to say that such things cannot be present in experience, that they cannot now be objects of experience. (1992, p. 20)

A further characterization of Valberg's temporal presence can be made in terms of the *content* of perceptual experiences. Peacocke continues:

The statement that the content of perceptual experience is present-tensed concerns not the nature of the time that the experience concerns, but rather how it is given in the experience. It is given under the present-tense type mode of presentation *now*. (2019, p. 96, italics original).

The claim is that perceptual experience has representational content that features *a* now, where the content is typically understood to be the accuracy or truth (i.e., the veridicality) conditions of the experience (Searle, 1983; Peacocke, 1992; Crane, 2009, Siegel, 2010). Peacocke seems to suggest that the very *presentational* character of perceptual experience comes with a felt now and a natural way to explain this is to appeal to a representational content that features a temporally indexical mode of presentation. Here is Uriah Kriegel, making the same point more directly:

...the feeling of presentness is not self-standing, but seems to attach to something: something is presented as in the present; and second, that what it seems to attach to is the perceived object: it is the perceived laptop that is presented as existing in the present (2009, p. 596).

One might attempt to accommodate this felt nowness in the temporal content of perceptual experience in different ways, endorsing different views.⁶¹ The very acceptance of the idea that there is felt nowness, nonetheless, comes with the common contention that the *content* of experience has a particularly tensed structure. Thus, these attempts to explain the felt nowness fall into the representational accounts of perceptual experience. According to them, an experience token has some kind of temporally indexical content that in some way picks out the time of that token.

There are a variety of ways in which one might disagree with these main tenets of the views sketched above. One way is to say that there is no *felt* tensed element in perceptual experience. As one undergoes a perceptual experience, one's introspection would not in fact reveal any feeling of

⁶¹ Peacocke most recently distinguishes between three types of temporal content (2019, pp. 100-105). Kriegel appeals to the temporally token-reflexive content of experience where the content of perceptual experience reflects the time of the experience (2009). Connor and Smith (2019) opt for a Kaplanian account of indexicals which they call the minimal account.

presentness, but “...just the bare occurrence of that event...” (Hoerl 2018, p. 146). Another way to disagree is to say that there is a feeling of presentness that features in perceptual experience yet this presentness is not attached to the object of the experience, but to the structure of the experience itself (Soteriou, 2019). In this paper, my proposal will have some common ground with both these views. I shall defend the claim that conscious perceptual experience has a tensed structure yet not in terms of featuring a present-tense content—a temporal mode of presentation. Instead, I argue that we have the phenomenological basis to claim that conscious experience features a felt temporal location of the subject’s own *as* the present, where this felt temporal location is discerned by the subject only in virtue of discerning a temporal field one’s temporal location is a part of. Hence, the felt nowness in experience is not attached to particular events or objects one is perceptually aware of. Instead, it is attached to one’s awareness of oneself. That is, it is a matter of the temporal mode of awareness one has as one is consciously perceiving some part of the world.

Here is the plan. In the next section, I discuss the way in which perceptual experience does not seem to be tensed. In Section 3, I assess a simple argument based on the felt passage of time for the felt temporal present in perceptual experience and show that it does not work. In Section 4, I discuss a different account of the temporal present proposed by Matthew Soteriou (2013). In Section 5, I pin down a shortcoming of Soteriou’s account against Hoerl’s characterization of temporal phenomenology. In Section 6, I propose an account of temporal presence that accommodates the phenomenology discussed in the previous sections. In Section 7, I consider some objections and along the way of responding, I clarify the view I outline in Section 6.

2. Time and The Structure of Experience

Perceptual experience, at least to some extent, is transparent (Moore 1903; Harman 1990; Tye 1995). When one introspectively attends to one’s visuospatial experience, for instance, one is aware of properties, objects, and facts in the world. One is not, importantly, aware of the properties of a psychological item we might call an *experience*. A weaker version of this claim would allow that introspection reveals certain features about the *way* in which one is perceptually aware of these worldly features. A paradigm example would be what some philosophers call *modes* (Crane 2000) or *manners* (Chalmers 2004). The red round tomato that one is perceptually aware of, for example, can be said to be presented under a particular visual mode which features an egocentric perspective that features the subject’s spatial location and orientation relative to the tomato. This sensory mode

could be contrasted with other sensory modes: one can touch the same tomato, or smell its smell. In all these modalities, the object of the experience features in the experience as having an egocentric spatial location. This feature of the experience is not merely a feature of the experienced object. It is, rather, about the different ways (modes or manners) in which the same object can be experienced.

If one is attracted to this line of thought, one would introduce a type of structural feature to the experience. Perceptual experiences of regions of space do not merely feature the properties and objects in the space, but they essentially feature an egocentric location of those properties and objects as they fill the sub-region of space one is perceptually aware of. In this case, one might endorse a *weak transparency claim* where one's introspective awareness can reveal certain features about one's particular way of being in a perceptual relation to an external object in addition to the spatial properties one's experience feature.

As we have seen, a popular line about perceptual experience suggests that there is a temporal mode of presentation, *now*, as the temporal location of what one is perceptually aware of. Strikingly, however, in the case of perceptual experience, one does *not* seem to be introspectively aware of a temporal location *from which* one is perceptually aware of an object or event, which would in turn determine the egocentric temporal location of the experienced object (Soteriou 2013, Hoerl 2018). As I hear an instantaneous scream, it appears to me that its time and the time I hear it just is the same.⁶² They appear to coincide at a single temporal location. Similarly, as I see an Instagram short, the temporal location of the playing of the video clip, and the temporal location of my perceptual awareness of the video playing, appear to be the same 'single' temporal location. In other words, it appears to one that the temporal location of what is experienced is not distinct from the temporal location of the perceptual awareness of what is experienced.

Contrary to this picture, one might think that an accurate characterization of perceptual experience undermines the idea that the content of perceptual experience is presented under a temporal mode of presentation. A view along these lines is recently defended by Christoph Hoerl (2018). He writes:

⁶² Following Miller, many calls this the principle of presentational concurrence (1984). Miller describes the principle in the context of Edmund Husserl's account of time consciousness (2019).

...it is in fact an important feature of the phenomenology of perceptual experience that nothing equivalent to tense features in it. Temporally speaking, there is a sense in which things are not given to us under any ‘mode of presentation’ at all in sensory perception (2018a, p.145).

Given that the subject fails to introspectively attend to a temporal location that appears to be distinct from the apparent temporal location of the experienced object, Hoerl argues, there seems to be no temporal mode of presentation under which the same object can be presented. Instead, it seems on phenomenological grounds that the objects of conscious perception are merely presented as *occurring*, and this is it. One is perceptually aware of *only* the bare occurrence of the event, and not aware of that event *as in* the present. Hoerl writes:

There is just no scope within a description of our experience of temporal properties for a distinction between the experienced properties themselves and a point in time from which they are experienced. (2018, p.143)

It *seems* to the perceiving subject upon introspection that there is *not a* temporal location of the experience, that is distinct from the temporal location of a given experienced object, and this is in contrast with cases of visuospatial experiences in which there is an introspectively discernible *here*, which justifies the characterization of the visual experience presenting its objects as in a location in space. However, it seems that there is no such character in experiencing temporal properties that would justify the use of tense in a proper account of perceptual experience. Hence, temporal experience has no temporally egocentric structure in the *same sense* as visual experience has a spatially egocentric structure featuring spatial directions relative to one’s location and orientation as the perceiver. For what it is worth, this claim might be correct.⁶³ Regardless of the truth of this claim, however, Hoerl seems to be right in that we do not have sufficient reason to think that perceptual experiences present their objects as in a felt now in the way that visual experiences present their objects as in a felt *there*. This plausible claim puts pressure on the idea that there is a tensed structure of perceptual experience, in the sense that the experience presents what it presents under the temporally indexical mode of presentation now.

⁶³ See Chapter 2, for an argument that this claim also is not well established based on introspection.

The moral of this section is that since there does not seem to be a temporal analogue of the egocentric character of what is presented in spatial experience, there does not seem to be distinct temporal locations one is aware of, *from* a distinct temporal location. There is no reason to invoke a felt *now* one's perceptual awareness presents a temporally extended event to be in, in the same sense in which a felt *here* or *there* is invoked to characterize the way in which one's perceptual awareness presents spatially extended objects.⁶⁴ Does this entail that there is no reason to invoke any sort of felt *now* to characterize the conscious perceptual experience? Next, I turn to a second way in which one might think that there is a felt present in perceptual experience and argue that Hoerl's reasoning blocks that strategy too.

3. Experiencing Change and the Passage of Time

As one experiences change, it is often assumed, one is also aware of the time passing. As Robin Le Poidevin writes:

We are not only aware of [the passage of time] when we reflect on our memories of what has happened. We just see time passing in front of us, in the movement of a second hand around a clock, or the falling of sand through an hourglass, or indeed any motion or change at all. (2007, p. 76)⁶⁵

It is not entirely clear how a felt presentness in one's experience and one's feeling of the passing of time are related. The very feeling of time passing seems to just be the feeling of the *present moment* changing. There are numerous examples, yet as Donald Williams famously puts it, the passage of time is felt when "...we are immediately and poignantly involved in the jerk and whoosh of process, the felt flow of one moment into the next" (Williams 1951, p. 466). If Hoerl's attack on the temporal mode of presentation is correct, and there is no felt present-tense element contributing to the phenomenal character of the experience, then it also becomes very difficult to

⁶⁴ Note that this does not mean that there can be no temporal field in the sense of a temporally extended brief interval within which one is perceptually aware of events and objects. Hoerl, Phillips and Soteriou are all committed to different versions of the idea that there is something like a temporally extended field in which one is aware of temporal and spatial properties.

⁶⁵ Many, agreeing with Le Poidevin's remarks, attempt to explain the felt passage of time as a perceptual illusion, where one's phenomenal character does feature temporal passage, and one's perceptual awareness is systematically erred (Prosser 2007; 2017; Paul 2010; Dainton 2011).

spell out what the sense of time's passing could be as there is no felt present moment to flow. If it is not the sense of the present moment changing, what is it to feel the passing of time? If there is no present to appear to change in experience, how to make sense of the straightforward contention that there is a passage phenomenology? I think a proper answer to these questions has to do with the ways in which one can introduce a felt presentness into the character of experience.

If one agrees with Le Poidevin's claim above, one might proceed with the following simple argument for the felt present.

Argument From Change

Pr1. One experiences change.

Pr2. The experience of change features a felt passage of time.

Pr3. The experience of the passage of time just is the flow of one felt present into the other.

Thus, there is a felt present.

The argument might seem plausible at first, but Hoerl's characterization I discussed in the second section blocks Pr3. The experience of the passage of time cannot be the felt flow of the present moment because it seems that perceptual experience does not present its objects as in a present moment. If there is no felt present in this way, one needs to spell out the felt passage of time differently. At this point, one might go with the idea that one is perceptually aware of change and this gives rise to a felt passage of time but in this case, there seems to be no reason to think that there is a kind of felt passage accompanying the felt change of the object of experience since one's inclination to claim that perceiving change gives rise to a feeling of passage is motivated in the first place by one's appeal to the idea that there is an indexical now under which perceptual experience presents its object changing.

What can explain, then, the felt passing of time if not the changing of a felt present? Similar to Natalia Deng (2013), Hoerl argues that the answer is the contribution of one's memory (2014a, 2014b). He writes:

...in a case in which an object changed colour only very slowly, all we might have are experiences of the object having different colours at different times, without us actually

being able to *see* the change in colour occurring. But it is a mistake to conclude from this that perceptual experiences...in which we do have a direct perceptual experience of an object moving or changing must involve something else being presented in experience in addition to the object occupying a series of different positions at different times or having different colours at different times. (2014a, p. 25).

Let us call this line of reasoning the argument from *slow change*. The argument from slow change relies on the idea that one is typically aware of a change in the perceived object in cases of slow change as a result of one's recollecting the previous colour the object instantiated at a previous time. If so, it is not straightforward, as Le Poidevin seems to take it, that in cases of fast change where the subject is directly aware of change there must be an additional flow of *time*: the change of the present moment into the other present moment. It is, rather, the assistance of the memory along with one's immediate awareness of the change at an instant that gives rise to the experience of the change, e.g., the car's starting to move without a felt change of the moment in which one is aware of the car's being at rest to the moment in which the car's starting to move. To think otherwise, Hoerl suggests:

...is to mistake the difference between two different modes through which we can become aware of the movement of an object—that is, through the involvement of memory as well as through direct perceptual experience—for a difference in what it is we become aware of. (2014b, p. 95).

The felt presentness of experience, therefore, cannot be grounded with an appeal to the felt passing of time, along with the claim that a felt passing of time is essentially a change in the felt present moments. Hoerl's characterization, if right, puts serious constraints on the ways in which a proponent of the felt present can defend their thesis. First, the elegant representational solution of invoking temporally indexical content is not motivated on phenomenological grounds. Given that the representational content of a given experience must ground the phenomenal character of the experience, positing a kind of content that has no phenomenal counterpart seems to be unreasonable.⁶⁶ This suggests that not only a representational appeal to a temporal present, but any sort of appeal cannot insert a temporally indexical element in the object component of the

⁶⁶ Connor and Smith (2019) argue that their minimal account has a way to move around Hoerl's first constraint.

experience. Second, one cannot appeal to an organic relationship between the uncontroversial felt passage of time and the change of the present moment for if the perceptual experience does not appear to present its objects as in the present moment (i.e. now), then there is no easy step from the phenomenology of passage (no matter how misleading it could be regarding the objective time), to the phenomenology of temporal present.⁶⁷

4. Experiencing Succession and Succession of Experiences

It has been an interesting ride so far: many claim that certain things are uncontroversial about the way in which conscious experience and time are interrelated, while many others reject it. Apparently, it is not as straightforward as one might think, that perceptual experience presents its objects now, or features present moments that flow one into another. In this section, I will suggest that yet another claim of uncontroversy can help us with this dispute at hand. Helen Steward writes:

There is room for dispute about whether or not...mental phenomena are physical, whether they are spatially located, and whether they have subjects, and if so, what those subjects might be...But there is no controversy about the temporality of mental phenomena-*about the fact that they take place in, or persist through, time.* (1997, pp. 75-76, italics mine)

If experience takes place in time, that is, it is the kind of thing that takes place, or occurs, then I will claim that there is reason to think that there is a felt temporal present. Before proceeding, however, I shall make a clarification. One might question if Steward's claim is made on phenomenological grounds; if the subject can arrive at judgments like "My experience takes place now.". Since terms like *taking place*, and *persisting* are metaphysically loaded concepts, one might think that the uncontroversial claim she is after is not merely attainable through introspective reflection. What one would think about the theoretical origins of this claim depends on what one thinks about the limits of the phenomenological approach to the study of experience. I would reject, nonetheless, a dim conception of phenomenology according to which phenomenological inquiry is entirely limited to how things appear to the subject, limited to a purely phenomenal

⁶⁷ Felt passage of time is not only phenomenologically evident, but also empirically supported (Shardlow et al. 2021).

domain. As one spells out how certain things appear to one as one undergoes a conscious experience, one essentially refers to the ontological matters about mental phenomena. In what follows, I will take it that experiences do appear to their subject to take place in time and in the final section, I will briefly consider the ways in which conscious experience appears to its subject to be occurrent.

One way to elaborate on Steward's idea that experience seems to take place in or persist through time is to spell out the components of the phenomenal character of conscious (including perceptual) experience that might make one think that it is uncontroversial that experience takes place or persists in time. Soteriou's account of temporal passage (2013, Ch. 6) would provide us with an attempt of that sort which also makes claims about the felt presentness in experience. Before proceeding with Soteriou's account, I shall introduce a distinction between two claims that will be important to assess what is at stake with Soteriou's view in the context of Hoerl's attack on temporally indexical modes of presentation. The distinction I have in mind is between the two following claims:

Temporal experience claim (TEC): We are perceptually aware of succession and change.

Experiential temporality claim (ETC): We are self-aware of our own experiences as successive.

The notion of a felt temporal present can be treated as a version of TEC, where the felt present is part of what the experience presents, in terms of the experienced object presented as in the present moment. All the representational strategies in Section 2 opt for this, where the felt presentness is attached to what the experience presents. If Hoerl's core claim is correct, and there is not sufficient reason to invoke a felt now under which perceptual experience presents its objects, it turns out to be not quite easy to defend the idea that there is a felt temporal present based on TEC. The starting point that Steward suggests above, nonetheless, is a version of ETC. It starts with the idea that mental phenomena appear to take place in time. As James writes:

And since, to our successive feelings, a feeling of their succession is added, that must be treated as an additional fact requiring its own special elucidation... (1890, p. 621)

James seems to think that there is a felt succession of one's feelings, and not strictly what those feelings present. And that we have a feeling of successive experiences is an independent fact from

the fact that we do experience temporal properties in the world that are due to succession. This former fact has it that one's experience of succession can also come in the form of being aware of one's own experience *as* successive. This is the reason why we must treat TEC and ETC as distinct. One might provide reasons to understand one in terms of the other, but without these reasons, these two claims are independent.

We also have reason to construe Edmund Husserl's account along these lines, where the temporal structure of experience is not merely stemming from the fact that one's experience presents its objects as in some moment or interval. Rather, according to Husserl, there is a double *intentionality* of the stream of consciousness (2019, p. 131). In the first *mode* of this double intentionality, one is aware of "...the flux with its flux-form—we consider then the series of primal lived experience, which is a series of intentional lived experiences, consciousness of...". And in the other mode, "...we direct our regard to intentional unities..." (p. 131). In these lines, Husserl seems to make a characterization of experience that respects James' distinction between a felt succession of the experience and a felt succession of what the experience presents. Thus, Husserl can be read to claim that the 'inner consciousness' appears to have a temporal structure that cannot be entirely cashed out by appeal to what temporal properties the experience presents. Rather, Husserl introduces two distinct temporal fields for these two distinct modes of being aware of succession (2019, pp. 131-132).⁶⁸ What Husserl and James seem to suggest, therefore, is that TEC and ETC are distinct claims. If this is so, there is a possibility, in which the idea of a felt temporal present is based on a version of ETC. In the rest of this section, I will explore this possibility.

Soteriou's account of the temporal present, according to the distinction I have provided above, is a version of ETC, based on a particular version of TEC. The core idea he defends is that one's conscious experience appears to its subject to take time, along the same lines as Steward's remarks above and hence to be *occurrent* (p. 140). The character of one's perceptual awareness of an occurrent, temporally extended object that takes up an interval, Soteriou claims, itself appears to be an interval that is made up of sub-intervals that are experienced as *temporally present*. The idea is similar to the view of temporal field I have defended in Chapter 4: if the experience appears to be occurrent and features temporal properties of the objects that take time, it is essential to the characterization of perceptual experience that its occurrent character features occurrent sub-

⁶⁸ This distinction, however, does not entail that these two modes are entirely independent. Instead, they seem to go hand in hand in the structure of experience.

intervals of the interval that the temporally extended experienced event apparently occupies. About the phenomenological basis of this claim, Crowther and Soteriou write:

...in cases of experience of change and succession...a subject who experiences such change or succession occurring at the present moment of time is characteristically aware, at that moment, of a temporally extended object of experience as temporally extended over an interval of time which is longer than the present moment. (2017, p. 187).

Here are two different ways in which the above observations seem to hold. First, imagine one is aware of a continuous change in an object's colour between t_1 and t_5 . If one is aware of a change in the colour of an object, that change is experienced to take time in virtue of experiencing the instantaneous event of the object's starting to change, *and* the moment where the object was not in change.⁶⁹ Hence, to be aware of a change at t_1 , one needs to be aware of the object's colour at the preceding moment one was aware of the object. Visual experiences of the boundaries of temporally extended events such as the object's colour's starting to change necessarily feature a non-zero interval since it is impossible for the subject to be aware of the colour's starting to change without also being aware of the object's colour at the moment that immediately precedes the moment where one is aware of its starting to change. The same seems to apply to the instantaneous event of the colour's stopping to change at t_5 . This is one clear sense in which the experience of change essentially features a temporally extended phenomenology.

Second, imagine the same subject being aware of the change between t_1 and t_5 at t_3 . Once one is aware of the object's colour changing at t_1 , one is characteristically aware of a temporally extended interval at any moment one is aware of the change as something that takes longer than one's awareness of the change at the very moment one is aware, until t_5 where the event comes to an end. It is a characteristic feature of one's experience that one is aware of a temporally extended event at any time within the interval that event seems to take.

There is also a third way in which experience might appear to be occurrent upon introspection. Even when the experience presents an unchanging static scene, there seem to be unchangingly persisting objects featuring in one's experience. Even if nothing seems to change, therefore, this time the unchangingly persisting object appears to persist over an interval. Hence, the experience

⁶⁹ See Chapter 4, for more on this.

of an unchanging object at a time has to do with its persisting over an interval. To experience an unchanging object at a time one needs to experience it, again, within a brief temporal interval. Similar to the line Crowther and Soteriou put above, one's awareness of an unchanging object at a time comes with the subject's characteristic awareness of the unchangingly persisting object that takes some time. Thus, the awareness appears to take time in cases of experiencing static scenes.

Based on these considerations Soteriou's view can be said to commit to the idea that one's perceptual awareness of an interval, which might belong to any of the three ways I described above, gives rise to the fact that one's experience appears to one to have the same interval where the subject is aware of the sub-intervals of that greater interval as temporally present, since each sub-interval is experienced as falling within the greater interval one is aware of. If this is right, one's *experience itself* appears to one to take place over an interval, upon introspection. Notice that although the claim of the experience appearing to be occurrent is based on the idea that the object of experience is occurrent, the part of this view that concerns the felt temporal presents is a version of ETC. It is the experience itself that appears to be consisting of successive sub-intervals in virtue of one's experience of succession and change in the object of the experience and hence the sub-interval one is aware of is experienced as temporally present. Hence Soteriou's account of the temporal present is in the domain of ETC, yet is based on TEC.

5. Two Views of the Principle of Presentational Concurrence

One might challenge Soteriou's claim that there is a felt concurrence between the subject and the object that contributes to the phenomenal character of the experience. This line would highlight the idea that although there is a sense in which it *appears* that the experience of a temporally extended event takes the exact same time as the temporally extended event itself, this sense of 'appear' is not the precise sense that 'upon introspection' it appears to one that one's experience takes the exact same time. According to this line, perceptual experience does not 'appear' to be occurrent *upon* introspective reflection. One's experience appears to take the exact same time as the object of the experience as a theoretical principle, whose truth-maker is not to be found in the phenomenal character of the experience. We might call the former *p-appear* and the latter *t-appear*.

This difference between these views can be traced back to the ways in which their proponents endorse what is sometimes called the principle of presentational concurrence (PPC).

PPC: Experience of a temporally extended event appears to take the exact same time that its object appears to take.⁷⁰

While Hoerl takes PPC as a theoretical principle that features appear as t-appear. Soteriou takes it to be a phenomenological claim, which has to do with p-appear: how things seem to the subject upon introspection. Based on this distinction, Hoerl seems to reject the version of PPC as a phenomenological claim: he insists that there is no room in the phenomenal character for any structural feature of the experience. And since Soteriou thinks that it does appear to the subject, upon introspection, that one's experience is occurrent, he is in a position to claim that there are structural features of the experience figuring in the phenomenal character.

The main motivation for the claim that there is p-appear in play when it comes to PPC is that one's awareness of a part of a temporally extended event or unchangingly persisting object requires awareness of a nonzero interval that appears upon introspection to concur with the intervals of time that feature in the object of the experience. If we accept that this line of p-appear, there seems to be no room for disputing if there is a felt temporal interval whose sub-intervals are experienced as temporally present-in experiencing a temporally extended event with an occurrent character. For, with that assumption, the following claims are clearly true.⁷¹

- 1) I was directly aware of the car's moving between t1 and t5.
- 2) I was aware of the motion in virtue of being aware of the instantaneous events of the car's starting and stopping to move.
- 3) I was aware of the start and stop of the car's moving only by being aware of the car's being at a certain spatial location immediately prior to t1 and being at another location immediately after t5, respectively.

One who might think along the same lines as Hoerl about PPC, however, can challenge this claim by questioning if there is really a felt occurrence of the experience featuring sub-intervals of the

⁷⁰ Miller (1984), Dainton (2008).

⁷¹ What comes next is also applicable to the awareness of a static scene appearing to take an interval of time.

experienced greater interval by rejecting (2). One might reject (2) by rejecting that the instantaneous event of the car's starting to move does not feature in the experience *as* the 'starting' of the car hence invoking a felt *occurrence* in the object of the experience. This would entail that there seems to be nothing that necessitates the awareness of a nonzero interval of an occurrence to be aware of a temporally extended event. The alternative picture would look like the following.

- 4) I was aware of the spatial locations of the car from t_0 to t_5 .
- 5) I was aware of the event of the car's moving in virtue of being aware of the spatial locations of the car at these times.

(4) and (5) seem to be a *prima facie* plausible characterization of what happened without any mention of the experience of instantaneous events that require a brief temporal interval featuring in the experience. In this picture, one might say, that t_1 relative to t_0 can be said to be the moment where the car *started* to move, but this need not capture, and indeed it is a mistake to think that it captures, anything that contributes to the phenomenal character of the experience of the car's *starting* to move that needs to take place within an interval. One way to elaborate on this claim is to reject the Jamesian slogan that a succession of experiences is not an experience of succession (1890). By rejecting this, one would be in a position to argue that one merely has experiences of the distinct positions of the car at distinct times, and these experiences being successive is responsible for the experience of succession (Chuard 2011; 2022). I will leave aside this view because it rejects the very idea that there is an immediate awareness of temporal properties and rejects the temporal experience claim at the outset.

Another way to elaborate on the claim that instantaneous events are not immediately experienced in virtue of a felt nonzero interval they were a part of, would be to say that one is aware of the event of the object's colour changing (or the object's unchangingly persisting) between t_1 and t_5 by being aware of the colour to be different (or the same) at these distinct times, and at each t_n , one's experience is accompanied by the memory of the scene before one's eyes at t_{n-1} . Hence, there would not be a need to invoke the sub-intervals that are experienced as temporal presents in succession to characterize the experience of a temporally extended event or a static scene featuring persisting objects. Instead, it would only be the case where the subject tricks themselves into thinking that it seems to the subject that there are times one is aware of that are temporally present and are in succession. This would block the move from TEC to ETC to claim that experience

itself is occurrent and features temporal presents. The worry is in line with Hoerl's account of felt passage I briefly discussed in the previous section, according to which it is a mistake to think that there is any sort of present moments in succession just because one is aware of an object having a series of different colour properties at different times.

One thing which is not entirely clear is why one must endorse the idea that the experience of change is based on one's recollection of the previous moment together with one's immediate awareness of the present moment. Here I shall bring back Hoerl's views about the temporal passage I discussed in Section 3. His main reason to think that his opponents conflate between two distinct modes of awareness (i.e., memory and perceptual experience) in explaining temporal experience seems to be that one is aware of the slow change by recollecting the previous state of the experienced object. It does not follow from that in the slow change case one is aware of the change merely by having a memory, however, that one is *not* immediately aware of the fast change by being aware of sub-intervals of the larger interval the object of the experience occupies. In this form, the argument is a clear non-sequitur. To see how one's experience of slow change can be explained by the help of memory and the fast change by one's awareness of temporally present sub-intervals in succession let us assume that there is a felt presentness that appears to be successive.

Even if the experience features felt presents in succession, this need not explain the character of *all* visual experiences, including those as of slow change or unchanging persistence. If the change is taking place too slowly for the subject to notice, such as the first hand of the clock's moving, the very temporal field one is aware of as temporally present would not be able to feature that motion. If the change is too small such that a temporal part of it cannot feature in the sub-intervals one is aware of, one's awareness of the temporal presents in succession might fail to feature the slow change.⁷² In this case, what would explain the experience of the slow change might well be the memory of the previous-different-state of the hour hand one's temporal field features. This does not change the fact that one can explain the immediate awareness of the fast change by an appeal to felt presents as parts of a greater interval the experienced object occupies.

The argument from slow change, therefore, needs a further commitment to work: these two cases of experience (i.e., slow change-or no change and fast change) must share a common explanation:

⁷² Soteriou considers this too (2013, pp. 129-130).

their explanations must be unified. And why this must be the case is not clear at all. One might resort to simplicity and parsimony as explanatory virtues, but these are not uncontroversial. Since there is no need to insist that there must be a single structural feature providing a unified explanation for both slow and fast change cases, Hoerl's argument fails to decisively show that there is no felt present featuring in the experience ⁷³

There is still something tricky to maintain for the proponent of the account of felt presents I outlined above, however. Although Hoerl's commitment to a single unified explanation of both the experience of slow and fast change might be unwarranted, his argument from slow change blocks a particular strategy to argue that one's experience features temporal presents in succession. The argument from slow change shows that one cannot reliably appeal to the temporal properties of the objects of the experience as they feature in the phenomenal character of one's experience (e.g., the object's colour starting to change) to invoke a felt present based on the occurrent character of the experience because appealing to memory along with the immediate awareness of an instantaneous change would also explain the character of that experience.⁷⁴ One might be immediately aware of change and persistence with the help of memory, where one is ultimately aware of different (or the same) spatial properties of the experienced object at distinct times. In this case, the felt succession would be of the distinct times one is aware of the spatial properties of the experienced object. If it is really one's memory that explains one's experience of change, or a static scene as occupying an interval of time, it cannot be that it appears to one that one's experience takes intervals by one's being aware of sub-intervals of that interval.

It seems that the opposing views I have outlined above can be traced back to the opposing readings of what I called in Chapter 2, following Soteriou, the temporal transparency of perceptual experience. I think one might make progress in the dispute above by getting clear about temporal transparency. Soteriou's appeal to the idea of experience appearing to be occurrent with the experienced temporally extended event is an example of what I have called the weak temporal

⁷³ As opposed to this, for instance, the argument works against a temporally token-reflexive account of perceptual experience that locates the tensed structure entirely in the representational content of the experience. Hoerl's argument, I take it, demonstrates that it is vain to invoke a tensed structure by looking merely at the representational content of the experience, at what the experience presents. Kriegel's account (2009) is an example.

⁷⁴ As opposed to the case in which one can appeal to the spatial properties of the objects to invoke a visual spatial field.

transparency according to which one can in fact attend to the features of the experience by attending to the features of the experienced object. Hoerl's view is that there seem to be no temporal features of the experience itself contributing to the phenomenal character of experience, and hence committing to the strong temporal transparency claim.

I have argued in Chapter 2 that it is a mistake to construe temporal transparency as the idea that one fails to introspectively mark out the temporal location of the *experience* itself as distinct from the temporal location of the object of the experience. This formulation leads to the strong and weak versions of the temporal transparency claim above, which I have argued cannot be made based on introspection alone when it comes to temporal experience. Therefore, I have suggested that a more neutral and careful formulation of temporal transparency is the following:

Temporal Transparency: The subject fails to introspectively mark out *any* temporal location as distinct from the temporal location of the experienced event.

If my reasons in Chapter 2 are along the right lines, this version of the temporal transparency claim entails neither that there is a temporal location of the experience *upon introspection* that might be concurrent with the location of what is experienced, as Soteriou suggests, nor that there is no felt temporal location of the experience, as Hoerl suggests. Rather, what it might or not entail is based on what one can say about the necessity or contingency of the limits of one's introspective capacities about one's conscious contact with time. Temporal transparency is therefore neutral regarding the relationship that might hold between TEC and ETC, suggesting neither that there is no introspectable temporal location of the experience that appear to be concurrent with the temporal location and ordering of the experienced event, nor that the experience appears to take an interval as occurring concurrently with its object.

Despite their different views on the temporal present, both Soteriou and Hoerl take the unrevised version of the temporal transparency claim to establish that the interval the subject is aware of is essentially different from the spatial field one seems to be aware of upon undergoing a visual experience. As I have suggested in Chapter 2, both parties agree on the fact that there does not seem to be a temporal location *from which* one is aware of a temporally extended event. If I am right about the neutral form of temporal transparency we should endorse, however, we need not go along with Soteriou and Hoerl and think that the temporal field one might invoke to characterize temporal experience is fundamentally different from the sensory visual field that features as part

of the visual mode of awareness.⁷⁵ For it does not follow from the fact that one fails to be introspectively fact aware that one's experience does not feature a temporal location from which one is aware of temporal properties, that one's experience does not in fact feature that location. Based on the revised temporal transparency claim I propose, one might claim that the temporal field one seems to be aware of is more similar to the spatial field one is aware of in visual experience than one might think.

Inevitably, there will be some differences between the sensory spatial and temporal fields one might appeal to characterize conscious experience, but the revised temporal transparency claim allows that one's perceptual experience of temporal properties might feature a temporal field with boundaries as one's sensory limitations, even if it does not seem to one as though upon systematic introspective reflection. If this is right, one can develop an alternative account in which experience appears to be occurrent upon introspection, without appearing concurrent with its object. According to this line, the experience appears to be successively occurrent sub-intervals of a greater interval not because it appears to be concurrent with its temporally extended object. In the next section, I develop an account along these lines. According to the view I will outline and defend, one is *implicitly* aware of a temporal field that features in the experience along with its boundaries that need not be explicitly featuring in the character of the experience, and within that field, one is pre-reflectively aware of one's own temporal location.

6. Self-locating in a Temporal Field

The task of this section is two-fold. First, I shall argue that there is a felt temporal location of one's own that features in the experience. Second, I shall argue that that felt temporal location gives rise to felt temporal presents in succession. Spelling out the ways in which one is aware of one's own temporal location automatically delivers the latter. As I will argue, if one can self-locate temporally, that is, if one entertains a sort of awareness of one's temporal location upon being conscious, one needs to do so within a nonzero interval that features a felt passage of time.

The notion of self-locating is normally construed as a matter of judgment or belief (Lewis, 1966; Egan, 2022). A good example is what John Perry calls the problem of essential indexical (1979).

⁷⁵ Too fundamentally different, in fact, that makes Hoerl claim that there is no felt temporal field (2018a, 2018b).

In his famous example, Perry is a messy shopper with a torn sugar sack, sprinkling sugar into the aisles of a grocery store. Perry claims that he can have a belief that the shopper with the torn sack is making a mess, without thereby believing that he, himself, is making a mess. He needs to have a self-locating belief that he, himself, is the messy shopper. In this sense of the term, having a self-locating belief is not relevant to my purposes: the sense in which one's conscious awareness features a temporal self-location. As Andy Egan observes:

Perry's problem may be a failure to properly self-locate, but it's not a failure to properly *spatiotemporally* self-locate. When Perry realizes what's going on, he locates himself among the (widely spatiotemporally dispersed) messy shoppers of the world. Perry's new belief state is one of self-location in the sense that it locates him in a space of possible individuals, or in a quality space the components of which aren't restricted to things having to do with spatiotemporal position. (2022, SEP, *italics original*).

Different from the issue of self-locating beliefs, the target here is the awareness of the spatial and temporal location of oneself. And we can attempt to understand the latter by an appeal to the former. When one is visually aware of some surroundings, one occupies a location that is essentially a part of the egocentric character of one's experience.⁷⁶

One *non-trivially self-locates* by being consciously aware of their location, only if one is aware of one's location in relation to other locations that surround one's location, as the location of the *perceiver*. Otherwise, one's awareness of one's being 'here' would be trivial, for each conscious subject, as a concrete item, needs to be 'here', where this here can get any location value in space. This seems to show that the notion of non-trivial self-locating is an awareness of the location of oneself as the experiencer with respect to one's location within the felt visual field. Without one's spatial awareness featuring a field, one cannot differentiate between one's location and other locations and hence fail to non-trivially self-locate one's spatial location. And with the felt visual field, one is *automatically* aware of the location one occupies as one's own. As Evans points out, as one undergoes a visual experience of a tree, one cannot doubt if the very experiencer of the tree which is a part of the character of the experience is oneself: one cannot simply form a judgment that

⁷⁶ One way to spell out that location is to say that one is the origin of the viewpoint that features things in an egocentric space (e.g., Soteriou, 2019).

someone is in front of a tree based on one's perceptual experience, but not thereby be aware of that someone as oneself (1982, p. 222).⁷⁷

The claim I will defend in the rest of the paper is that the sense of non-trivial temporal self-location as contributing to one's experience is precisely in the above sense, yet the egocentricity of the temporal properties that feature in the temporal field is different. Indeed, I suggest that the core mistake both Soteriou and Hoerl makes in claiming that perceptual experience lacks a temporal field of the sort that is delimited by one's sensory limitations similar to the sensory limits of the spatial field that features in one's visual experience is to ignore this possibility in which temporal experience can feature a different kind of egocentricity from its spatial counterpart. The mistake, I believe, rests on thinking that since, in visual experience, the locations with respect to which one can be aware of one's self-location are egocentric locations of the experienced objects, it must be the same with temporal experience, if one is to posit a temporal field with similar structural features with its limits experienced as the sensory limitations of the subject.

Before proceeding to discuss what this different, temporal, egocentricity might be, I should note that in Chapter 4 I have argued that it is plausible to think that there is an implicitly felt temporal field in perceptual experience that can be cashed out in terms of *a felt moreness* of the experience, and not what it presents, as a version of ETC. As a version of TEC, the idea of moreness boils down to the idea that one's experience has a temporal field in the sense that certain changes can feature in it and others cannot. I have suggested that the felt moreness is to be understood not necessarily in terms of the feeling that there is more to the world and the spatial properties it features, but in terms of the idea that there is more to one's *awareness* than there is at the current moment. Contributing to the phenomenal character implicitly, and by shaping the structure of the experience in such a way that conscious experiences can be directed at things in the world, this experiential temporal field's boundaries are not to explicitly feature in the experience.

I would suggest now that this felt moreness of one's experience that motivates the idea of an implicitly felt temporal field is what enables the subject to temporally self-locate non-trivially. I will

⁷⁷ This partly has to do with the idea of the immunity to error through misidentification (Wittgenstein, 1958). The idea seems to be that one's judgments about one's experience can be in error but not due to one's misidentifying oneself as *not* the subject of the experience. There is room for doubting if IEM is true yet in the way I will characterize my view in what follows this is not going to be a threat. See Merlo (2017) for a recent discussion.

defend the idea that when it comes to the temporal location of oneself featuring in conscious experience, it seems that it suffices to discern egocentric temporal locations of *the subject themselves* to introduce a temporally egocentric character of the subject's experience. There is a temporal field within which one can be aware of one's own temporal locations with respect to the other locations one occupies within that field.⁷⁸ At any given time one is conscious, one is aware of one's location in relation to the immediately preceding location one has occupied. Thus, one's experience features one's own temporal location, the location of the experiencer, as falling within an implicitly felt temporal field. One's own experience, experienced as falling within an implicitly felt temporal field, is experienced as a sub-interval of the brief interval one is implicitly aware of. Being experienced as sub-intervals, any non-trivially felt self-location is experienced *as* a temporal present. Here is a characterization of temporal phenomenology that motivates the view I have just outlined.

As one is conscious at a given moment, one's conscious awareness appears to one to *occur* at that moment as the temporal location of oneself. The subject's experience features a temporal self-location non-trivially at this moment only if one's location at that moment contributes to the phenomenal character together with the immediately preceding moment one was conscious since one cannot non-trivially self-locate oneself in time by merely aware of oneself at that time. This *togetherness* is not a peculiar characteristic of the temporal character of experience. It does not mean that different times are experienced together; just as in experiencing a region of space one experiences different spatial locations together but not at the same spatial location. At any spatial location one is perceptually aware of one's own spatial location non-trivially, one is also aware of some medium sized goods in the world as having egocentric locations. This does not mean that one's experience features a region of space by occupying different locations that surround these spatial locations. One occupies a single spatial location and can non-trivially self-locate in virtue of one's location within the spatial field featuring in the visual experience.

⁷⁸ One might think that given that one is not aware of the limits of a brief interval as one is aware of temporal properties, the temporal field in question should be characterized in terms of the *temporal resolution* the experience features. According to this conception, one might say that there is a temporal field in the sense that it allows one to be aware of certain cases of change while it fails to present some other slower changes. I think this conception is compatible with the claim that there is no sensory temporal field featuring in one's experience available to the subject. Hoerl might contend that his molecularism⁷⁸ also invokes a temporal field, as a result of the explanatory role it plays in making sense of the character of experiencing change and succession.

Just in the same way, my suggestion is, at any moment one is conscious, one is aware of one's temporal location within a temporal field that features earlier and potentially later parts as the location of the conscious subject who undergoes occurrent experiences. In this sense, similar to the case of visual spatial awareness, one always occupies a single temporal location *within* a temporal field. One does not occupy the entire nonzero field. One occupies an instant, or a moment, necessarily *within* that interval, where the interval, as a temporal field, is given to the subject in experience. For otherwise, one cannot be said to be aware of one's temporal location non-trivially. This characterization delivers the temporally egocentric character of the experience: one's awareness of one's temporal location non-trivially at a moment is essentially a matter of self-locating with respect to one's *egocentric* location in the past that immediately precedes the temporal location of oneself.

A closer look at this felt temporal location of oneself reveals that to temporally self-locate non-trivially in the way I characterized above is necessarily to self-locate oneself within a temporal field that features not only before-after relations but also a tensed structure, through one's temporal orientation to the egocentrically immediate past and immediate future. One is aware of one's location non-trivially with respect to one's egocentric locations. This requires the togetherness of the preceding moment and the moment one is conscious, as I outlined above, resulting in an implicitly felt temporal field that takes up a brief interval. It is worth repeating there that this invoked phenomenal temporal field is not felt to feature explicit boundaries that appears to be the sensory limitations of the particular mode of awareness one is entertaining, for one's awareness of the field is a result of the felt 'moreness' of one's occurrent experience at a given time, as I have argued in Chapter 4.

The difference is that these boundaries are the boundaries of the temporal interval one seems to be aware of as one is aware of one entertains an implicit awareness of one's own temporal self-location non-trivially. When one is conscious at a given time, one is non-trivially aware of one's temporal location by being implicitly aware of one's location *within* the egocentric locations of oneself: one of which has just passed, and one of which is yet to come. It is in this sense there is a felt interval as the subject maintain their consciousness. And since the subject's temporal locations features as falling within and outside of these intervals, the subject's awareness of their temporal location gives rise to a felt *present* insofar as the subject's felt temporal location is between the two egocentric locations the subject seems to occupy, at each present moment. In short, the subject is

aware of present moments that make up the specious present, where these moments are explanatorily secondary to the interval within which they can feature in the experience. At any moment one is conscious, therefore, one's temporal orientation towards one's immediate past (egocentric past) and immediate future (egocentric future) contributes to the character of the experience.

One must be careful with regards to this claim of speciousness. The claim of the specious present as a result of one's felt temporal location should be distinguished from the claim that specious present demarcates individual experiences with nonzero intervals, as Hoerl has been defending (2009; 2013). In this sense, the view I am describing here does not invoke individual experiences that extend over time. It invokes an invariant specious present within which the subject is aware of their temporal self-location as they are conscious. For any moment one might be said to discern as one's temporal location would be a result of one's discerning it within an interval that falls between the past and future one is oriented towards. Hence, one's non-trivial self-locating is neither something that is a result of one's awareness of an instant in isolation nor something that features, incoherently, both the past and the future. Rather, it features a specious temporal field of which one is aware, where one's awareness of the moment one occupies is only intelligible as part of this temporal field that features a temporal extension and breadth.

My claim at this point is that we seem to arrive at the idea of a relatively invariant temporal field that seems to be necessary for one's awareness of their own, where this invariant temporal field is the very structure that enables the subject to be aware of the temporal location of oneself, as in the present, within the temporal field that consists of one's own locations. One can be said to be aware of one's temporal location as part of an experienced temporal field, where egocentricity has to do with the felt specious present that is characterized as having earlier and later parts and falling between an egocentric past and an egocentric future. In this sense, my proposal of one's awareness of one's own temporal location within a temporal field is similar to Soteriou's (and hence Steward's, in general) characterization of experience in the previous section. One's experience appears to be taking place in time, as occurring. This felt occurrent character leads one to be aware of one's experiences as successive. What I claim differently, nonetheless, is that the sensory temporal field one might invoke to explain this felt successive character is not to be invoked due to the awareness of a temporal interval that is attached to the object of the experience but to the awareness of the succession of the experience where this enables subject to locate themselves in the very present.

The way the account I developed above plays around Hoerl's suggestion that a mnemonic mode of awareness combined with a sensory mode of awareness can give an account of the phenomenal character of experience featuring temporal properties that take time is that the felt temporal location of oneself is not based on the awareness of some temporally extended perceptible (e.g., a changing or unchangingly persisting object). Across both cases of experiencing the slow and fast change of the colour of an object, one's awareness of one's self-location consisting of a steady change between one's own temporal locations contributing to one's experience together within a specious present remains the same, that falls between varying pasts and futures. In O'Shaughnessy's slogan, the subject's internal clock continues ticking on (2000, p.61). And it does it steadily. One's experience does not present the present moment in the way it presents the temporal properties and boundaries of a given perceptible as in present, but it presents it as of one's own temporal location at the present moment as part of a greater interval one is aware in terms of the successive change of these present moments. This provides one with a plausible option to explain James' idea that one is aware of one's own feelings succeeding each other.

Another important note to make here is that the claim of temporal self-location being independent of the experienced temporal properties and locations of particular perceptibles does not entail that one can be aware of one's self-location without being perceptually or sensorily aware of anything at all. For at any moment one is conscious, it seems that one is sensorily aware of something. In this sense, the point I am making is compatible with the idea that one's consciousness appears always to be *of* something, including purely sensory experiences such as pains and itches. In this sense, the claim is compatible with a particular version of the weak form of transparency, although it rejects a strong form. According to the weak version of temporal transparency that the account just sketched is compatible with, one is aware of the temporal character of the experience, *without* necessarily attending to the object of the experience. But this does not mean that the experience does not experience anything at all, or one is introspectively aware of an entity such as a sense datum.

Here is Dan Zahavi on Husserl's appeal to the felt temporal field, making a similar point to mine:

To claim that the field of experiencing must be distinguished from the specific experiences that arise, endure, and become past in it, and that it is in no way reducible to either some specific experiential content or some relation that might obtain between the individual experiences, is not, of course, to claim that it has a distinct and independent

existence, as if there could first be a pure or empty field of experiencing upon which the concrete experiences would subsequently make their entry; rather, the experiencing simply is the invariant dimension of pre-reflective self-manifestation possessed by each and every experience. (2014, p. 66).

This seems to be in line with my suggestion above where the felt temporal field is ‘the invariant dimension of the pre-reflective self-manifestation’. Along these lines, I suggest that one can invoke an invariant felt interval, a specious field of *ocurrent experience*, within which one can non-trivially self-locate in time, which results in a *tensed* structure of conscious experience featuring egocentric locations of oneself at any moment one is conscious.

I admit that there are more to say about the view I sketched above. Yet if these considerations are at least coherent, they motivate a novel alternative to the existing views of temporal present. According to this view, there is a *unique temporal signature* of the experiencing subject in conscious perception. Conscious perceptual experience has a temporal signature because it appears to have a temporal location and orientation of its own from which it is directed at its objects. Its signature location and orientation are determined by the felt self-location that can be discerned as a sub-part of an interval that features an immediate past and immediate future. The temporal signature of the experience is unique because it features egocentric locations of oneself within the greater interval as one’s temporal orientations: neither the location nor the orientation of one’s experience can be entirely traced back to the temporal properties of the particular content the conscious experience can be said to have (e.g., token reflexive content).

The idea of the subject’s unique temporal signature provides explanations for phenomena like the temporal present and the temporal transparency of perceptual experience. Regarding the perceptual present, it has it that one experiences in perception things to be temporally present as a result of one’s temporal self-locating conscious awareness. One is aware of oneself as being conscious, at this very moment, as located in a sub-interval of a greater interval that features an immediate past and immediate future and hence what one is aware of is experienced as being at a now. One’s temporal mode of awareness, in this sense, projects its structure on what it experiences, in the temporal case, rather than the experience inheriting the temporal structure of what it presents. It features temporal presents as the location of the subject that undergoes experiences

with an occurrent character in the sense that it p-appear that one's being conscious comes with occurrent experience, where each present moment of occurrence leaves its place to the other.⁷⁹

This brings us to how my claim explains the temporal transparency of perceptual experience. One fails to mark out *any* temporal location upon introspection that is distinct from the apparent temporal location of the experienced object because the apparent location of the object of the experience matches the apparent temporal location of one's own-not the other way around. It is not the object's temporal location and ordering that is inherited by one's conscious experience; it is one's pre-reflective awareness of one's own temporal self-location that is felt as a sub-interval of a temporal field which gives rise to the subject's inability to discern two distinct temporal locations upon introspection. And finally, my account explains the felt passage of time as characterizing the felt passage in terms of one's awareness of one's own temporal locations as successive, where this successive character is experienced as sub-intervals within a temporal field, where each sub-interval is felt to be falling between an egocentric past to which the subject has access only through recollection, and an egocentric future to which the subject has no access but to anticipate that there is going to be one.

7. Objections

I will consider four potential objections to the view I outlined above to provide more detail about how the self-locating passage phenomenology can deliver a specious present with successive proper temporal parts where the present itself is experienced as successive and hence leading to a felt passage of the present moment into the other.

The Conceptual T'

A conception of temporal self-location requires the subject to be conceptually aware of an I.⁸⁰ According to this idea, one's awareness of oneself is essentially a matter of the experience presenting the experiencing subject *as* oneself. My response is that the conception of self in 'temporally self-locating' is not this 'the self' as the object of one's rational reflection. What I am particularly sympathetic to, as I hinted at before, is a pre-reflective conception of self-awareness that one might find in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1943). Although I will not attempt to give a

⁷⁹ A similar suggestion is Brian O'Shaughnessy's idea of the 'occurrent renewal' (p. 49, 2000).

⁸⁰ James (1890) seems to be defending a version of this view.

thorough defence of the view here, I shall give a sketch of how this conception would work with the suggestions I have made above.

If one's self-awareness is pre-reflective, it is essentially prior to a conceptual reflection upon the character of experience. One's self is not a proper 'object' of one's perceptual awareness in the sense that other objects that are presented to the subject by the experience are the objects of experience. As Zahavi and Kriegel recently put it, one way to make sense of the idea is to say that "...all what it's likeness is actually what it's like for-me-ness." (2016, p. 36). Yet, one might want to ask, what exactly the phenomenological evidence is for this for-me-ness element that is pervasive in all conscious experience. I will not attempt to give a decisive answer here. What I would suggest is that there is no serious difficulty with the idea that there is pre-reflective awareness of oneself. Even if we agree with the idea that those feelings do not *necessarily* belong to a pre-reflectively felt I, they *appear* to do so. These feelings come with the 'felt' character of belonging to one's self in the sense that by being aware of them, one is also aware of them taking place as one's own experience. In this sense, the pre-reflective awareness of one's self as the subject of the experiences seems to be a good reason to think that there is a form of self-awareness that is different from one's awareness of the objects of the experience, and one's self-awareness *as* where this self is part of what the experience presents, along with a conceptualized self as the owner of one's experiences.

Admittedly, this consideration can be resisted. Yet it provides a coherent way to make sense of the idea that there is a felt temporal self-location from within experience, as part of the conscious experience one is in. Assuming that we do have a pre-reflective awareness of ourselves that is different from our awareness of the object of the experience, the difference between the token-reflexive, or minimal views of the temporal present and my view is that the former inserts the present in the content as a temporally indexical mode of presentation while my conception inserts it in the 'experience' as a temporally indexical mode of awareness. Any conscious experience features this temporally indexical mode, whether one is perceiving, dreaming, introspecting, imagining, verbally thinking and so on. This demarcates the distinction I have been defending throughout this work, between the experience of the succession of the object, and the experience of the succession of one's experiences. The view I introduced in this paper explains the felt succession of one's experiences in terms of the pre-reflective awareness of one's temporal self-location, in virtue of one's pre-reflective awareness of one's own experiences as taking place in time and hence having a location, which features a temporally indexical mode of awareness.

The Felt Self-Location and the Future

One objection to my account can come in form of a classic objection to the idea of the specious present. One might argue that if one's pre-reflective awareness of one's temporal self-location features the immediate past and future together (temporally egocentrically), then the felt specious present features the future, which is absurd!⁸¹

In the view I defend, however, as I attempted to make clear in the previous section, one's relationship to the past and future are matters of orientation and not location. Surely, one cannot occupy a temporal location in both the present and the future, just as one does not occupy the locations that one is aware of as a matter of one's spatial orientation. The claim I defend does not subscribe to the unreasonable claim that past and future are both experienced within the experienced present. As Wilfrid Sellars observes, this would be trying to combine literal simultaneity with literal successiveness, which is clearly incoherent (1982, p. 232). The claim is that the felt present is the interval within which one can temporally self-locate by being aware of it as a sub-interval of one's experience as occurring. One is aware of one's location at each moment within the felt specious present by virtue of being aware of the specious present itself. And at any moment one is aware of one's location by being aware of the specious present, one is oriented towards the past and future in an asymmetrical way. Future is neither protensed nor foreseen. It is therefore not a part of the felt specious present. It falls beyond the very felt present and within the next felt present. Therefore, the felt present as one's self-location is not a discrete unit of experience with extension. In fact, this is another merit of the self-locating account of temporal present and the experience of succession. It provides a conception of a felt specious present that is not stuck between the conflicting claims of simultaneity and succession.

No Felt Occurrence

The third objection I will consider is the claim that one is not aware of occurrent experiences upon introspection. This has to do with the distinction I introduced above, between p-appear and t-appear. If one rejects that it p-appears to the subject that their experience is occurrent, one might reject my view.

⁸¹ An example of this objection can be found in Kelly (2005).

Yet it does p-appear to one that one's experience is occurrent. One is aware of one's experience is a kind of thing that takes place in the three following senses. First, when one wakes up from a dreamless sleep, something that the unconscious does not seem to have seems to *take place* in the subject.⁸² Second, for instance, when you are staring at the blue sky thoughtless, and then you consciously think of something, the relevant thought appears to *happen*. You think the thought and at any moment you continue thinking the thought it continues to occur. When you think a different thought or return to your meditative state of mind with the clear blue sky, it stops occurring. Thus, the thought is felt to be occurrent. Third, at any moment in which one is conscious, one is also - implicitly- aware that one might stop being conscious in the sense that there is more to one's experience to the past and potentially to the future.⁸³ One is thereby pre-reflectively aware of one's being conscious as something that can stop taking place, happening, or occurring as this is what happens when one goes into a dreamless sleep. It is in this sense that one's experience can be said to be, phenomenologically speaking, occurrent. How one can accommodate this claim in one's ontology is an additional issue that I will not get in here.

No Future Orientedness

According to this objection, one might have an orientation to one's own temporal location that is egocentrically past, but not to the future. Given that my response to the second objection is to say that the future is not a part of the specious present, one would say one's awareness of one's own temporal location can only take place within the temporal field where the immediate past and the very present features.

My response to this is that there is no reason not to characterize the awareness of one's temporal location in terms of a dual awareness of oneself in terms of *ownership* and *agency*. In the first kind of awareness, one is aware of oneself as the subject who undergoes the occurrent experiences. In the second kind of awareness, one is aware of oneself as the subject who initiates a motor (e.g., waving one's hand) or mental action (e.g., thinking a thought as staring at the sky). If the self that figures in the pre-reflective awareness of oneself is *both* the owner and the initiator of *some* experiences,

⁸² See O'Shaughnessy (2000) and Soteriou (2013; 2019), for a detailed characterization.

⁸³ See Chapter 4, for more on the idea of a felt 'moreness' featuring implicitly in the phenomenal character of experience.

there is no problem in cashing out one's orientation towards the future as the part of the temporal field where one can accomplish certain actions (See, Gallagher 2004, Peacocke 2008; O'Brien and Soteriou 2009). As one can take a step back without that spatial location explicitly featuring in the phenomenal character of one's visual experience, one's actions seem to take place *towards* a temporal location that does not explicitly feature in the character of the experience at a given time, yet the subject is aware that there is that location at each moment the subject is conscious.

8. Conclusion

I have developed an account of the constantly changing temporal present that would explain the felt passage of time. At any rate, this was an outline: my objective was not to decisively show that my self-locating awareness account is the only or most plausible option nor was it to lay out the view in its entire detail. The view provides an attractive alternative to the accounts of the temporal present in the market, by accommodating the idea that the present is specious as sub-intervals of the one's temporal location one is aware of, and by explaining the felt passage of time in a straightforward manner. If the considerations above are on the right track, they entail that conscious subjects have a unique temporal location in terms of their orientation towards their own past and future. Each subject therefore occupies a temporal point of view at any moment in which one is aware of some part of the world, as part of the mode of awareness itself.

CONCLUSION

Here is a brief outline of the core suggestions I have made throughout the thesis.

First, I argued that the temporal transparency of perceptual experience should be handled with even more carefully than it is being handled now, for there is nothing in introspection that ensures that our epistemic access to our experience is a result of the necessary structural features of our experience itself, or some contingent non-structural constraints on our experience of temporal properties. This challenges several important lines in the literature and demands revision according to the modified temporal transparency claim that I proposed.

Second, once one stops reading too much into the temporal transparency claim, one might see the possibility in which a temporal field that might contribute to the phenomenal character of one's perceptual experience could be more similar to the visual field that features in perceptual experience. The latter would also feature some temporal boundaries as a result of the mode of awareness the subject is in, yet being an implicit part of the experience, these boundaries would not be explicitly available to introspective reflection as they are in the case of visual experience. Hence, there is still a difference between the temporal and spatial fields that might be invoked to characterized perceptual experience, yet the difference is not that big. The core difference, if my considerations are along the right lines, is that the boundaries of the spatial field are available to introspective reflection based on the ways in which we can be perceptually aware of the space, and the boundaries of the temporal field are not directly available to introspective reflection, based on the ways in which we can be perceptually aware of the time.

Third, I proposed that this implicit character of the felt temporal interval has to do with the felt temporal present and the accompanying felt passage of time. I have argued that it is a plausible view, once one drops certain assumptions, that one's experience features a temporal location of itself and does that not in virtue of presenting its objects as in a temporal location. Instead, one is pre-reflectively, and hence implicitly, aware of one's own temporal location upon being conscious. I suggested that this is the main reason why we are inclined to insert a 'now' element to the character of our experience. Yet since temporal phenomenology puts constraints on what that 'nowness' could be, we cannot simply claim that perceptual experiences have present tensed, or temporally indexical contents. They come with a sense of the temporal present in the same way all experiences come with a sense of self. This results in the view that there are temporal presents as

sub-intervals of the felt temporal field as one is aware of some part of the world. My account thus provides a view of temporal present and the felt passage of time in terms of these temporal presents experienced as falling within one's occurrent experience in the immediate past and one's occurrent experience in yet to come future, felt as the subject's temporal location.

I have also argued that there is no problem of perceptual presence as a how-possible question about the visual presence of medium sized objects. If this suggestion is right, the credit one might want to give to amodal completion as a condition of perceptual awareness of voluminous wholes significantly lowers. Amodal completion does explain something about our perceptual awareness of objects as voluminous. But does not explain how such awareness is possible. Rather, it explains why there are voluminous objects in our visual awareness given that it need not be the case.

This brings me to the final remark I shall make. One common theme in this work has been the necessity and contingency of certain structural features of experience that one can come to know upon phenomenological inquiry. In the view I have developed, to accommodate certain phenomenological data and provide explanations of these phenomenological givens, one needs to invoke a brief temporal interval with implicitly felt sensory boundaries, that are similar to one's sensory limits in visual spatial experience, within which one is aware of temporal presents as sub-intervals in terms of the subject's own temporal location, just as the subject's spatial location in visual experience is felt as a sub-part of the spatial field one is aware of. If I am right, being careful about what is necessary and contingent about the features of spatial and temporal experience leads one to endorse the view that the subject is pre-reflectively aware of a sensory temporal field within which one's occurrent experiences feature, and as a result, one is aware of one's own temporal location as a sub-interval within that temporal field, leading to the felt temporal presents flowing one to another.

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