

Philosophical Anthropology and the Study of Time

Plamen N. Nikolov 

Department of Philosophy, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, Bulgaria
Email: papiseal@gmail.com

How to cite this paper: Nikolov, P. N. (2024). Philosophical Anthropology and the Study of Time. *Advances in Anthropology*, 14, 15-20.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/aa.2024.142002>

Received: March 25, 2024

Accepted: April 12, 2024

Published: April 15, 2024

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Abstract

The idea about time within the outlines of philosophical anthropology erases the boundary between the cognitive intentions of the philosophical and non-philosophically oriented knowledge as well as it tries to raise the question about the comprehension of time within consciousness in the context of a total cognitive theory. The paper displays how the most significant thinkers within the history of the philosophical reflection on time up until the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century aim (even intuitively) critically to distinguish themselves from the non-philosophical visions of temporality. However, we believe this is an undertaking in vain, because we claim there is a cognitive discipline which can unify the entire knowledge about time and not keeping it only in the realms of specific fragmented regional ontologies, i.e. philosophical anthropology.

Keywords

Anthropology, Time, Human, Kant, Experience, Philosophy

1. Introduction

The history of science provides different theories about the objective phenomenon of time. If we have to summarize the epistemological results of the research achievements about time postulated by the fundamental science, we will undoubtedly come to the conclusion that it is far from the sought objectiveness but it rather can be thought as a subjective phenomenon. If the attempts of fundamental science researches to reveal the mystery of time in its complexity for now remain in overall unsuccessful, the focus of the human cognitive intention in the outlines of an actual possibility for systemising the predominant part of already accumulated knowledge about temporality in its multidimensional manifestation becomes inevitable.

Having declared the above, we cannot cease to wonder how it was possible up until now one not to create a separate science about time, which to embrace in its cognitive realms the entire knowledge about it. Thus, we ultimately come up to the question why the most human defining seat of learning—the philosophical anthropology (as broad as this concept might be)—cannot segmentate and take the lead of a tendency, which will in a most profound manner describe the phenomenon of time, unifying the intertopical actuality of this phenomenon.

2. The Science of Time

Having in mind that in philosophical aspect the grasp of the idea about time can bear ad hoc postulates in each and every branch of philosophical knowledge, the necessity for pre-supposing and rationalising of a unified philosophical paradigm about time, comprising the entire factual temporal philosophical narrative, seen through the prism of philosophical anthropology in its quality of a supreme sublimate, which unifies all the theoretical philosophical tendencies in this discourse, cannot wait any longer.

The anthropological interest among philosophers towards the structure of time could have been explained in a versatile manner. As far as the totality of time could be understood only reflectively, those, who think over it, must know very well the nature of the human mind, which indeed is the only referent, capable to comprehend it.

Of course, for non-philosophically oriented explorers of this phenomenon it is also a must to possess the required reflective capability to be able to weave it into their research intentions. The relation between the philosophical and purely empirical subordination of temporality steps to the same foundation, which gives an expression to the realization of human cognitive functions, comprising the very philosophical reflection of the human situation itself as well as the objectivation of its subjective capabilities amid the “neutral” field of scientism. End even more—the very human capabilities sometimes could have been comprehended in methodological way much more significantly in the discourse of empirism rather than in the area of metaphysics. And if in the developing course of the philosophical tradition as a whole, the human experience could be perceived in its quality of a main thematic topic, one should not be at all astonished when the possibility for exploration of its anthropological correlates (e.g. time) could be *a priori* incorporated in the results of the philosophical discourse. Having in mind that the philosophers claim they are in possession of both unique method and purpose for research of human nature, the issue for description of time should have been considered as genuinely philosophical one. Here lies as well the purely pragmatic meaning of an eventual anthropological interest towards time itself among some of the philosophers. The very circle of the human experience, where the philosophy extrapolates, inevitably as well comprises phenomena, which could have been understood by themselves only in their relation to the subjective consciousness.

Both natural and social sciences, history and religion say their word concerning the understanding of time. However, philosophical anthropology is the only source, able to describe the necessity of immutable connection between man and time in the meaning of an immanent cognitive unity.

While pretending for a resolute reflectiveness along with all other contents in the philosophy, the philosophical anthropology determines itself as a seeking its autonomy philosophical entity.

That is why, extrapolating on matters like the one for the essence of time, philosophy—being the supreme achievement of human mind—is in the position to offer the most adequate knowledge about the human actuality. This means that anthropology of time, reviewed in the narrow definition of its own phenomenology, needs by necessity to be perceived as philosophical.

3. Anthropology of Time

Time, in its quality of a sublime constituent for the human nature, converts itself from a simple object into the highest abstraction. The very polemising about the human nature, even only in a sense of rationality, requires an interpretation of human phenomena too, at that specifically of those, which most profoundly and vastly define it.

In addition, maybe just because time, being understood as such an anthropological phenomenon, does not receive an extensive description within the philosophical sphere of thinking, it becomes an object for empirical sciences, which aim to acquire a cognitive monopoly over it. Such a regional rationalistic anthropology though cannot at all to be speculatively self-sufficient, especially because it misses the metaphysical intention.

The Copernican turn (Schulting, 2009) done by Kant and proposing a methodological revolution within the understanding of human experience reveals new opportunities for an empiric-metaphysical cohesion of phenomena, which inhabit the human evidenceness. Unfortunately, the transcendental philosophy of time does not either propose a universal methodology for research of this phenomenon. Kant's critical philosophy retains within the subject those possibilities, which make accessible the experience about human phenomena, as well as make the very phenomena to come-at-able. This, however, is not at all enough to achieve a sufficient result by the research of these phenomena. The transcendental mind, which a priori contains and operates with the possibility of the experience, does not itself succeed to become a phenomenon within the temporal system, constructed by and within the mind. The subject of this mind is a product in-itself derived by the synthesis, which creates the time. The latest, according to Kant (Kant, 1998), is solely an object of the empirical knowledge. The philosopher from Königsberg claims that the very nature of time, which normally subordinates the other phenomena, cannot originate by the human mind. The very fact, that Kant does not propose a completely anthropo-oriented philosophical theory about time, tend us to believe, that, right after him, it com-

mences the tendency for the anthropological alienation of temporality in favor of metaphysics and ontology.

Not until Husserl, it started the overcoming of the created by Kant perception about time—the idea about its possibility within the human experience was born. Husserl’s methodological intention (Husserl, 2019) describes the most important structure of human experience (time) regarding its revealing in front of the subjective and reflective rational capability. According to him, the presence of temporality within the human nature becomes an object of purely subjective phae-nomenological explication. Moreover, even if phenomenological anthropology stays closest to the most adequate philosophical and anthropological description of time, it remains incapable to incorporate within itself the very grounds of its own theory about the human time. The knowledge, which will upgrade the phae-nomenological anthropology in its attempt to comprehend time, will commence with the asking, concerning the possibility of the human experience about time in its relation to the very capability time to be a thought object. This fundamental synthesis by the description of temporality could become an object of a future larger research on time-being.

Subjectively oriented transparency and autonomy of thinking about time must turn into an apodictic factor for its research. As a guarantor for such research could perform the philosophical anthropology, which will not make a cult of the substantiated sterile knowledge about time. Methodological critique of the substantiated requirement for study of time receives an optimal realization namely in the field of philosophical anthropology, which would not be possible, if it focuses only on one of the aspects about the subjective description of temporality. Otherwise, philosophical anthropology would have invalidated its claims for a total presence in the realms of human phenomena.

Regardless if the philosophical anthropology would be perceived as the most constructive method for a description of the concept “time”, it should not be disregarded as a research approach at the expense of the other philosophical disciplines. This, however, by no means indicates that the exteriorial—regarding the philosophical anthropology—philosophical cogitation must be declared as inappropriate to study this so human (according to us) phenomenon. The very capability of philosophical anthropology to describe temporality must have been perceived as so adequate as the one, which had been granted to the other philosophical disciplines and empirical sciences as well. Thus, the very “language” of the philosophical anthropology does not only serve as its instrument for a description of time, but also it shapes the entire concept about it.

4. Conclusion

Having revealed the influence of phenomenology on anthropology, we not only stay by the recovery of some conceptual values for both disciplines, but we also ascertain the effects of “ritual” practices in producing altered states of time-consciousness discovering the universal structures underlying the existential in-

teractions, or uncovering the universal neuropsychological structures producing human experience. The very impact of philosophy on anthropology is increasing when the affair in question is about the phenomenology of time perception. Probably the most important reason for the current revived attractiveness of phenomenology comes from the issue of consciousness, long excluded from the detailed scientific discourse. The concept of time in anthropology has been reintroduced through the domains of both philosophical fieldwork and cognitive theory. We may fairly expect in the future for the role of phenomenological methods to develop to the extent that anthropology would become more focused upon both meaning and expertise in any transpersonal or psychological encounter.

As we have shown, above the best and most direct route to uncover the essential structures of time perception within the consciousness available to us as of today is to steep ourselves in the cross-discipline evidence pertaining to human experience, and then to explore the universal structures of human experience via the amalgamation of phenomenology with the fundamental science. More specifically, philosophical anthropology gives us a sense of the full range of human experiences, while at the same time it offers some of the universal similarities regarding those experiences.

Phenomenological anthropology provides a kind of cross-cultural laboratory for exploring these universal structures from inside. Thus, the fundamental science provides an independent source of observation for the structures of experience while the phenomenology secures a direct look at the architecture of the human temporal perception.

In the play of presence and absence, temporality and intersubjectivity as interdependent forms of time-phenomenon constitute the pre-eminent forms of absence. Indeed, both have played starring roles throughout the phenomenological tradition as well as in its precursors and its legacies. Given, however, the scope and importance of these topics, intersubjectivity is regularly referred to as the newest philosophical discipline where temporality is regularly referred to the most fundamental problem of phenomenology—how the phenomena appear within the human mind. There is a cardinal immanent dependence between time and perception because the alterity of intersubjectivity ultimately relies on the alterity of temporality, or perhaps even further—the alterity of temporality rationalizes the alterity of intersubjectivity. Thus, phenomenology of time refers to any method for the study of time-consciousness that grounds knowledge about both consciousness and time in the intuition as the prime source of insight and as the final arbiter of truth about the human perception.

At the end, we would like to conclude that the idea about time, thought within the outlines of philosophical anthropology, erases the boundary between the cognitive intentions of the philosophically and non-philosophically oriented knowledge as well as it tries to submit the question about the comprehension of time within consciousness in the context of a total cognitive theory. The entire history of the philosophical reflection on time up until the beginning of the second dec-

ade of the twentieth century aims (even intuitively) critically to distinguish itself from the non-philosophical visions of temporality. However, philosophical anthropology is the discipline, which tries and, to a significant extent, succeeds to identify the reflective relation between the philosophical temporal paradigm and the entire availability of the remaining fundamental knowledge about time.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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