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CATEGORIES OF SPACE AND TIME IN THE HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF CULTURE

SUMMARY. This article touches upon the issues of space and time in the history and philosophy of culture. Evolution of the notion of time in cultural development from antiquity to the current state has been reviewed. According to the antique concept of harmonic and absolute spherical cosmic space, being self-closed, it does not have a dominant direction in space. The moving space of antiquity is indissolubly tied to the problem of time in culture. In the Middle Ages an individual did not have authority over time. Space acquires direction, grows to be non-uniform and emotionally coloured. In the Renaissance, individual and psychological time comes to the fore. Its main characteristics are linearity, non-uniformity, focus on the future, irreversibility and limitation. The scientific worldview of the Modern Age includes into its structure the notions of linear space and linear time. A new level of understanding time and space lies in the context of progress, since space and time are of great significance for human existence.

KEY WORDS. Space, time, philosophy of culture, existence, dominant, culture.

Categories of space and time agitated philosophers as early as in the Ancient World. Over many centuries philosophers were in thrall to sensorial perception and everyday use of time for measuring the past, present and future; and scientific description of the problem of time and space was related to the notions of “Being”, form and movement, of which Aristotle spoke.

Antique space remains active, moving, and inhomogeneous; however, it does not have a rigid net of dominating coordinates. It is uniform in a number of directions, in spite of its inhomogeneity in many sections and interspaces, and in spite of dynamically varying tension of its specific localities. Time and space are not divided; the moving cosmic space remains a continuous spatial-temporal unity.

Absence of the dominating direction in the space comes from the antique concept of harmonic and absolute spherical self-closed cosmic space.

The moving space of antiquity is indissolubly tied to the problem of time in culture. Time perceptions cannot yet be defined as connected with human individualized temporal rhythm sets: they are suppressed and subordinated by the rhythm of natural processes superimposing on the rationalistic constructions of the cosmic space pattern — the rhythm taken as a basis of the cosmos space with its circumrotation and eternal turning to itself, namely, the cyclic time of astronomical and natural processes, the time that has not yet lost all of its value.

Evolution of the notion of time in the cultural development of antiquity has been formed on the basis of the idea of everlasting becoming. Thus, according to Heraclites, the future while approaching turns into the present and the present formation is leaving for the past [1;211]. The point time “unfolds” and becomes an expanded sphere. The passage from myths, religious views and legends to the rational, theoretical investigation of events is underway. The realistic mentality of the Greeks played a great role in this passage.

Steady cultural relationships between people in antiquity are reflected in public consciousness of that period as an idea of the doom and fate predestining all the events, and the orders of this destiny are carried out by a human being. It stands to reason that under such a cognitive structure prediction of future events becomes possible. The latter ones appear as strictly determined and fatally inevitable by virtue of ideological instructions and stereotypes.

Nevertheless, taken globally, the world events are impossible to predict in advance since they are merging in the united turnover. Such a contradiction demonstrated the complicated nature of predictive consciousness and temporal culture of the ancient world. For example, in literature, it is possible to trace formation of antique temporalism having the most complicated inner structure — rendering time as a substance, development of the static and dynamic substance, emergence of the relational time concept.

Antique description of time even in philosophy was not limited to the cyclic time of Heraclites and Pythagoreans, because it was provided with a systematic development by Aristotle. It is in Aristotle’s view that time stops being cyclic and becomes linear (“vectorized”). If according to Plato, time is related to the image of eternity, to the idea of inversion in global cycles, Aristotle considers time as connected with the eternity of movement, the driver. The time cyclicity itself in antiquity is not quiet; it is fraught with becoming at the point of present. Alongside that, time as an instant (also in Buddhism) does not deny its strategic cycles [2; 26].

In the Middle Ages time is regarded within the context of Christian doctrine and represented as a psychological fact, an inner experience of human existence. Indifference to movement, a meditatively detached attitude towards the flow of time is observed.

If in the Middle Ages a human being did not have authority over time, because it was owned by God, in the Renaissance an individual perceived time as his/her own property. Alberti stated in his work “About family”: “There are three things an individual may call personal property: wealth, body and the most precious thing — time” (1440). [3; 5]

The Medieval concept of time is getting not only linear but finalist as well, particularly within the frames of the formal ideology of the Middle Ages.

Mutual interrelation of two worlds, arising in Christianity, is reflected in the fact that space loses its quietness and relative equilibrium; it loses its uniformity in all directions, which was quite typical of antiquity.

Space, first of all, acquires direction, guiding vectors — a vertical indicating movement upwards, to the heavenly world, starts prevailing in it. Secondly, in the dualistic medieval world space is growing more and more non-uniform. Space turns to be emotionally coloured. Personal attitudes, penetrating into the world in two directions: from above — from the Absolute Personality, intensively invading the world, and from below — from an individual pushing towards this Absolute Personality, have crucially

changed the nature of the emotional colouring of space. They made it more intense, personal, sharply separated by segregating spatial layers, and more dynamic.

It seems quite natural that all these feelings, caused by a range of Christian medieval views, set their seal on perception of concrete terrestrial space in human ordinary ideas. They change its picture; make it non-uniform and heterogeneous, and split into layers of diverse colours.

Religious ideas set their seal on perception of the space inside Christendom too — within the limits achievable for an individual's sense perception. Particular sections appear which are more tied up with the heavenly world [3; 138].

These sections of the sacral space represent “holy places”, namely: territories of churches, monasteries, cemeteries, places of Visions and Acts of the Saints that also prevent us from perceiving real terrestrial space as a homogeneous one. In this very space a clearly defined vertical dominates — at these points vertical bonds in space are sensed sharper and more intensely. Alike feelings at times come up to the point that they create an illusion of some facet — availability of a passage, a junction of two worlds here, which erupts for the faithful in almost physical sensations of “levitation” or “ascension”.

In the Middle Ages perception of time is different in various social classes; and researchers consider as quite an indicative reality for this period the fact that there are plenty of times available: agrarian, patrimonial, Biblical and historical.

At dawn of messianism its ideas, reworked then by Christianity, were as such: prevision assumed a shape of prophecy and divinations. As the antipode of an ordinary forecast in prophetic and apocalyptic literature an idea of the future existence was understood as an endeavor to something superhuman, unreal, though this idea was of importance in the development of the view on the future, which differed from the present.

It is exactly in religious consciousness that differentiation of historical time is in contemplation, although an opportunity for an individual to take an active part in the development of society is denied. At the same time, a valuable aspect is totally shifted to the sacral time, and human self-esteem in the world loses its value at all. Cyclism is replaced by vectorized time, although eternity is still atemporal. Denying the cyclism of the ancients, Augustine clearly differentiates between divine eternity and earth time, i.e. human time. Being perishable, earth time acts with regard to the eternal, heavenly one — as the relative to the absolute. Temporal time flow and complete quiescence of eternity are complimented by existence exceptionally in the present. Later Thomas Aquinas also distinguished between a timeless being where all parts exist simultaneously and the time that allows real existence of the present as a passage from the future to the past. This relation is mediated by the notion of eternity, which at the level of ordinary consciousness is interpreted as the idea of the everlasting present.

Subjective human time and its evaluation represent a new conceptual idea of the medieval consciousness. Another idea is connected with “straightening” of time. Time is deprived of its ontological status and turns to be a characteristic of only mortal plain. It is the “way to death, where nobody is permitted to stop even for quite a bit” [4; 46].

Linear perception of time is associated with the idea of its inconvertibility; it dominates public ideology of that period, though in everyday life the time specific

for the rural way of life seems to be a circular cycle; for the agrarian society it is always completed with a definite subject-matter, like agricultural activities, and cannot be an empty duration. Yu.M. Lotman noted that “the Medieval time is for the most part continuous, slow and epic”. [5; 22]

The peculiarity of Christian temporalism is that it brings an individual and the world back to the Creator, and time — back to eternity. Within a complicated temporal structure of Christianity an emphasis is displaced from cyclism to the modes of linear vector time, existing apart from eternity, whereas eternity remains atemporal.

The idea of time developed alongside the evolution of the prognostic function of the society, including the prerequisites for natural scientific prediction. Astrological divinations and prophecies played a major role in the Middle Ages.

Ideological richness and a spirit of human emancipation, ideology of humanism and a new worldview formed the basis of the entire Renaissance culture, determined by new social relations and development of a new production type, emergence of early bourgeoisie and loosening of spiritual dictatorship of the church.

The first half of the 15th century passes under the slogan of assertion of a linear perspective as a system of space arrangement and transmission. This is directly connected with the assertion of Renaissance anthropocentrism. A substantial turn in human ideas of the world happens under its influence. If earlier these ideas proceeded from the assumption how the world influenced an individual, now they are determined by the needs arising from the necessity of a human being to have an impact on this world.

A straight linear perspective evokes, first of all, a sense of infinity. The vanishing point of all lines is located so far away that it should not be taken as something one can ever reach. It is possible to move and move towards it endlessly and never get at it. The feeling of linear infinity is inseparably connected with a sensation of freedom.

Space begins transforming into an environment which is uniform, similar in all directions, and penetrable; in other words, it becomes a qualitatively homogeneous and empty space, dead and lifeless in relation to a human being. Nevertheless, space cannot remain empty, since even empty space, seized by a uniform feeling of a lonely Renaissance person, starts being filled with the person himself — his emotions, sensations, mental movements. The strongest psychologism and colouring with human emotions represents another distinctive consequence of space subordination to an individual.

Renaissance anthropocentrism puts individual biological and psychological time to the forefront. Its main characteristics are linearity, non-uniformity, focus on the future, irreversibility and limitation.

Time perception is also linked with Renaissance anthropocentrism. Time as well as space begins transforming into an element governed by a human being, i.e. an individual starts controlling time that begins being perceived as a measure of intensity of worldly activity. It is in the Renaissance that the category of time is regarded in a wide cultural range.

Baroque perception of space and time is characteristic of dynamism. Time flow for Baroque period represents elusion at any instant; time consists of subtle moments. A

popular motif in Baroque culture was the motif of temporality and mortality: symbols of temporality are frequently encountered in poetry, painting, literature and music.

The scientific worldview of the Modern Age includes a long-range action principle, heliocentricism, classical mechanics, the material and substrate model of the world unity, Euclidean geometry and a new model of linear (yet not finalistic, but infinite), absolute and substantial time. This is how the physicist Newton understood the real processes' time relativity; however, on the level of philosophic generalization he considered it as an absolute mathematical continuance; that is why all time instances in the worldview appeared undistinguishable from one another, and time evolved into an appendage. Objective time in the spirit of metaphysical materialism turned into the entity independent of consciousness and nature and into a phenomenon absolutely alien to a human being and culture.

In modern European culture appears and becomes dominant the idea of qualityless linear space, empty and homogeneous, i.e. similar in all directions. This space presupposes that all inconveniences for calculation of any mechanical movement are intentionally eliminated.

Linear space and the asserted idea of the linear at the heart of any movement require linear time, because the very notion of time is closely connected with the idea of motion. A new notion of linear time, qualityless and uniform, divided into equal periods, is gradually gaining popularity. Cyclic time has finally been superseded by linear time. At the same time, the idea of time as an endless movement, ultimately suppressing the static of Eternity in consciousness, is being asserted.

Newton's understanding of time is called substantial just because according to Newton, time may exist without filling it with a material process; this concept interprets instances as individuals, i.e. as "independent" time objects, whereas a contemporary idea is closer to Leibniz, who regarded "time without the world", or time, not related to the world, as fictitious.

In the conception of objective extensionality, in the form that is merged with the substantial content, there is a prerequisite for the forthcoming stages in philosophical thinking, from fusing attributes with substance through differentiation to their absolute separation.

Provided that the bond of both attributes of material substance — space and time — was understood in a more or less the same way, a tendency to ideate by analogy followed from this relationship. In other words, the notion of absolute time (existing independently) was preconditioned by the initial idea of absolute space.

Recognizing material substance does not necessarily mean acknowledging matter as a substrate of any processes. The validity of this may be found in Hobbs' works, who took the view about independent time in substantial spiritual sense. According to Berkeley, in physical space only those notions make sense, which presuppose that the position of one object correlates with the state of another. Berkeley criticized Newton for an absolute and substantial view on the concept of time, and also for the assumption that time and space "have existences beyond spiritual boundaries" [6; 222].

Kant reveals a higher level of philosophical time reflection [7; 50-51]. He is rated among those thinkers who anticipated the relativity theory ideas, elaborated

prerequisites for Hegel's dialectic view on time [8; 313-318], and drew attention to the relationship between objective and subjective aspects of the category of time.

With regard to nature, time is understood as disconnected from formation, for the principle of development is withdrawn here. In relation to history, time acts as a major condition for spiritual development.

The most diverse notions and views on time are expressed by Hegel; it is the case when linear and cyclic views overlap, when mythological and poetic images (e.g., the image of Chronos) co-exist with the concepts of natural science; and theosophical repercussions (atemporal existence of spirit) co-exist with historicism [9; 46].

Natural science also formed a new understanding of the concept of time. It is no coincidence that, according to Engels, the first breach in metaphysical methodology was made by Kant's cosmogonic hypothesis and the second one — by palaeontology [10; 113]. That is why when the static paradigm of Western European natural science had been abolished, interest to the issue of time increased, not in the Newtonian sense of mathematical abstraction, but within the context of development. Hegel argues with the Newtonian perception of time as a receptacle of events. Hegel interprets time as "abstraction of absorption": since things are finite, they are in time and consequently, things themselves represent temporary ones.

Space and time are categories of major theoretical and practical significance in any field of human activities, since there is no sphere of the world around us accessible to practical influence, visual supervision or theoretic comprehension, which would not fit into spatial and temporal parameters. Space and time are fundamental characteristics of existence. On the one hand, the categories of space and time possess the supreme degree of abstraction and on the other — contemporary scientific knowledge reduces them to such substantive and concretized concepts as, for example, "personal space" and "individual time".

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