

Seminar on the Phenomenology of Time in the Centre for Time at the University of Sydney

Mon. 16th Sept. 2024 11:30-13:00 h HPS Common Room, F07 Carlaw and

Tue. 17th. Sept. 2024 11:30-13:00 h CG1A.GR.G19 Physics Road Learning Hub Seminar Room G19

The seminar attempts an introduction to the phenomenology of time, one of the simplest, and therefore most elusive phenomena taken on by philosophy from its Greek beginnings. The aim is to awaken a sensibility for the questionability of the multifaceted phenomenon of time, not to raise and answer questions about it. Like other simple, elementary phenomena, we are all intimately familiar with time and have an implicit understanding of it. How to unfold this implicit, folded-in understanding into explicit, unfolded concepts?

Aristotle's *Physics* is not a book on physics in the modern sense. It raises questions about phenomena that are taken as self-evident and skipped over by modern physics. *Physics* delves into the deeper nature of physical beings and is therefore 'meta-physical', or ontological. Physical beings are beings that can move (*_kinounta_*) or can be moved (*_kinoumena_*), which include kinds of beings that today we would classify as either natural or artificial. Hence the *Physics* could be characterized as an investigation of physical movement that asks even the simple question: What is movement (*_kinaesis, metabolae_*)? The kinds of movement in focus first become visible through Aristotle's investigation itself. The phenomenon of time, in turn, is approached by asking what it has to do with movement. No explicit consideration of kinds of movement other than physical is given; the question is not even posed. The concept of time is developed — in the order of thinking through the phenomena — only as derivative of phenomena of physical movement that Aristotle has in view. Questions include: Can Aristotle's conception of time be regarded as linear, continuous, one-dimensional? What does dimension mean in this context? What does time have to do with being itself? What does time have to do with space? Are space and time on a par in Aristotle's thinking? What does time have to do with us as human beings? How does Aristotle conceive the (mode of) being of human beings?

Heidegger's 1962 talk on 'Time and Being' is a very late attempt to explicate the phenomenon of time after philosophy has passed its zenith and entered the age of its degeneration in which its original questions and mode of questioning are no longer understood. The 1962 talk stands near the end of Heidegger's career as a thinker, the opposite end to its initial stage that culminated in his famous 1927 monograph, *Being and Time*. The latter develops various concepts of time, starting with "vulgar time" and going back step by step to "original time". We encounter in the 1962 talk a conception of three-dimensional and even four-dimensional time that arises not by considering any kind of movement, but by asking first of all what being itself means. What does dimension signify in connection with three- and four-dimensional time? What does time have to do with the being of human beings? What does time have to do with truth (*Unverborgenheit, unconcealedness*)?

Aristotle Physics Book IV Chaps. xi and xiv. Loeb Classical Library, Harvard U.P. 1929, rev. 1957, reprinted 1980.

Passages translated from the Greek by Michael Eldred

xi 218b21:

“But also not without change (*_metabolae_*) [is there time]. For when we do not change anything by thinking (*_dianoian_*) or do not notice (*_lathomen_*) anything changing, it does not seem to us that time is become/has been generated (*_gegonenai_* perf. inf. act. from *_gignesthai_* pres. inf. mp).”

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xi 218b30:

“If not thinking/supposing (*_oiesthai_*) time to be then happens to us when we do not determine/ascertain any change, but the psyche (*_psychae_*) appears to remain in one indivisible state; when, however, we perceive and determine/ascertain [change], then we say that time is become/has been generated (*_gegonenai_*), and it is obvious that time is not without movement and change (*_kinaesis kai metabolae_*).

Accordingly, that time is neither movement [itself] nor without movement is obvious.

When we seek what time is, we must start there (*_enteuthen_*), that it has something to do with movement, for we are aware of (perceive) movement and time together (*_hama_*). And even if it is dark and we are not affected by the body, but there is something of movement in the psyche, straight away it seems that something is become/has been generated along with time. But also (conversely), when it seems that something like time is become/has been generated, something like movement appears to have been generated. So that time is either movement or something like movement, but since it is not movement itself, it is necessarily something like movement.”

(continued:)

xi 219a11:

“Since the movable is moved (*_to kinoumenon kineitai_*) from something to something and all magnitude (*_megethos_*) is continuous (*_syneches_*), movement goes along with magnitude. And because magnitude is continuous, so is movement, and because movement is, so is time, since as great as movement, also just as great also time always seems to become/has been generated. Before and after (*_proteron kai hysteron_*) in the first sense are in place (*_topoi_*), and there by virtue of position (*_thesei_*). Since, however, there is before and after in magnitude, it is necessary that before and after are also in movement, in analogy to magnitudes. But **before and after are also in time**, because the one [time] always goes along with the other [movement]. Before and after of themselves are in movement when there is any movement, but in themselves they are different and **not movement**. But now we recognize also time when we define the movement, by defining/determining before and after. Then we say time has been generated when we take in the perception of before and after in the movement. We determine it by supposing that and then that (in succession) and the interval between them as different. When we think (*_noaesomen_*) the peaks/extremities as different from the middle and say ‘now’

twice in the psyche, one before and the other after, then we say this is time. For what is defined by the now seems to be time. And this we will presuppose.

Accordingly, when we perceive the 'now' as one and not either as before and after in the movement, or as the same before and after of something, it does not seem any time has been (219b1) generated, because no movement (has happened). If, however, the before and after (are different), then we say time (has been generated). This, then, is **time: the number of movement with respect to before and after.**

(219b5) Time therefore is not movement, but movement insofar as it has a number."

xiv 223a6

"But, on the one hand, we say before and after with respect to the stand-off (_apostasin_ distance) from the now. On the other, the now is the boundary (_horos_) between the bygone (_paraekontos_) and the future (_mellontos_, 'what is about to happen'), so that if the nows are in time, then the before and after will be in time. For the now is in time and (also therefore) the stand-off from the now."

xiv 223a17

"It is also worthwhile investigating how time relates to the psyche and why (_dia ti_) time seems to be in all — on the earth, in the sea and in the sky.

...

Whether there would be time without the psyche being (_ousaes_ existing), or not, someone could ask. For if the existence of the counter is impossible, something countable is (also) impossible, so that it is clear that (there is) no number. For number is either what has been counted or the countable. If then nothing other brings forth (_pephuken_ from _phuo_ 'to bring forth, generate, procreate') counting than the psyche, and the understanding (_nous_) of the psyche, either (it is) impossible for time to be if the psyche does not exist (_mae ousaes_ is not), or unless this: that time is at anytime, say, if it is admissible for movement to be without the psyche, since before and after are in movement, and time is this (only) insofar as they are countable." *xiv 223a29*

**Heidegger 'Zeit und Sein' (1962) in Zur Sache des Denkens Niemeyer, Tübingen 1969 pp. 1-25 (or Gesamtausgabe Band 14 Klostermann, Frankfurt/M.).
Passages translated from the German by Michael Eldred**

On Time and Being transl. Joan Stambaugh Harper & Row 1972
<https://dn790005.ca.archive.org/0/items/SartreJeanPaulLiteraryAndPhilosophicalEssaysCollier1962/Heidegger%2C%20Martin%20-%20On%20Time%20and%20Being%20%28Harper%20%26%20Row%2C%201972%29.pdf>

SD:5/GA14:9:

“Being, by which all beings are marked (gezeichnet, drawn, outlined) **as** (such-and-such) a being, being says ‘presencing’ (Anwesen). Thought with respect to what presences (das Anwesende, ‘presents’), presencing shows itself as letting-presence (Anwesenlassen). But now this letting-presence has to be thought (through) insofar as presencing is admitted (zugelassen, let in). Presencing shows its own character (Eigenes) in that it brings into unconcealment (Unverborgene). To let presence means: deconcealing (Entbergen), to deconceal, to bring into the open. In unconcealing a giving is at play, namely, that giving which, in *letting* presence, gives presencing, i.e. being.

(The issue [for thinking]: ‘being’, to think through this issue itself, demands that our reflection follows the instruction manifesting in letting-presence. It manifests in letting-presence the deconcealing. From this, however, a giving speaks, an It gives [a there is].)

However, the giving now named remains for us just as dark as the named It that gives.” (SD:5/GA14:9)

SD:12f/GA14:16f:

"Who are we? We remain cautious with the answer, for it may well be that that which distinguishes the human being as a human being (man as man) is determined precisely by what we have to think about/consider here: the human being (man), the one impacted by presence (der von Anwesenheit Angegangene), (i.e.) the one who is himself present, through such impact, in his own way to everything present and absent (to all that presences and absences [in the openness of three-dimensional time]).

The human being standing in the midst of the impact of presence, and this in such a way that he receives the presencing, the It gives, as a gift by understanding [vernimmt - Seinsverständnis!] what appears in letting-presence [of an historically unconcealed cast of being]. If the human being were not the continual recipient of the gift from 'It gives presence', if what is passed/proffered in the gift did not reach the human being, then, with the failure of this gift [of three-dimensional time to arrive and impact through the fourth temporal dimension], being would not only remain concealed, not only closed, but the human being would remain excluded from the reach (Reichweite, range) of: It gives being (there is being). The human being would not be a human being," (SD:11f/GA14:16f)

Note that 'vernehmen' is Heidegger's usual rendering of Greek *_noein_* 'to think'.

SD:14f/GA14:18f:

“Time-space (Zeit-Raum) now names the openness that is cleared (lichtet) by arrival (the future), beenness (the past) and the present (Ankunft, Gewesenheit und Gegenwart) passing themselves to each other. Only this openness concedes (einräumt ‘makes room for’) to (the kind of) space with which we are familiar its possible extension (Ausbreitung, spreading out). The clearing passing-to-each-other of future, beenness and the present (Zukunft, Gewesenheit und Gegenwart) is itself pre-spatial (vor-räumlich); therefore alone (nur deshalb, only for this reason) can it concede space (make room for room),” (SD:14f/GA14:18f)

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SD:15/GA14:19:

“Prior to any reckoning with time and independently of it, however, the ownmost character (das Eigene) of the time-space of time proper (eigentliche Zeit) rests in the clearing passing-to-each-other of future, beenness and present. Accordingly, to time proper, and only to it, belongs (eignet sich) that which we call, albeit easily misinterpretable, dimension, traversal (Durchmessung, passing-through). This (passing-through) rests in the clearing passing-to already characterized, as which arrival brings about beenness and vice versa, and the reciprocal relation of both brings about the clearing of openness. Thought through from this threefold passing-to, time proper proves itself to be **three-dimensional**. To repeat, dimension is here thought not only as a domain of possible measurement, but as reaching-through, as the passing-to that clears (the openness).” (SD:15/GA14:19)

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SD:15f/GA14:19f:

“But whence (from where) is the unity of the three dimensions of time proper determined, i.e. of its three ways of passing to each other their own characteristic presencing? We have already heard: Not only in the arrival of the not-yet-present but also in the beenness of the no-longer-present, and even in the present itself, a specific kind of impact and bringing-to, i.e. presencing, is at play. We cannot assign the presencing to be thought thus to one of the three dimensions of time, namely. as seems plausible, to the present. Rather / the unity of the three temporal dimensions rests in the passing (Zuspiel, as in football) of each to each. This passing proves itself to be the proper passing-to at play in the ownmost character of time, thus, so to speak, as the **fourth dimension** — not only so to speak, but from the issue itself.

Time proper (die eigentliche Zeit) is four-dimensional.” (SD:15f/GA14:19f)