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SUFİ PHENOMENOLOGICAL TIME

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Sufi phenomenology presents a synthesis merging Sufism with Husserl's phenomenology and bridges Eastern and Western philosophical traditions. According to Sufi phenomenology, time accompanies the cognitive process, and its trajectory follows a cyclic pattern. Thus, the "now," situated at the cross-point of the divine and material lines of time, serves as the genesis of consciousness, with time acting as the defining boundary of cognition. This approach not only facilitates comprehension of the intricate relationship between the "now" and universal time but also sheds light on novel perspectives regarding the connections between cognition and time, as well as space and time.

Keywords: *Sufi phenomenological time, mega-time, time and space, eidos, eidetic structure*

Introduction

Time holds significant relevance in the realms of mythology, theology, science, and philosophy, reflecting our profound relationship with creation and cognition. Despite the existence of precise time standards and measurement devices, time transcends mere clock-based quantification. It continues to stimulate intellectual inquiry, persisting beyond the conventional, objective concept that has endured for centuries. Much like Newton's cradle, ideas reverberate through time and circumstances. For instance, an idea in physics can reverberate in philosophy, or a philosophical theory from antiquity can inspire fresh perspectives in modern science. This phenomenon underscores the existence of a temporal link that extends beyond the material world, on one hand, and the remarkable ability of time to preserve and propagate ideas, on the other.

Sufi phenomenology is a novel philosophical theory [1] that amalgamates the insights of two eminent schools from the East and the West: Sufism and Husserl's phenomenology. Consequently, the concept of time derives from the amalgamation of Sufi spiritual experiences and the phenomenological exploration of consciousness. Within this framework, time takes on a distinct meaning in which irrational perception complements rational thought. In other

words, this innovative philosophical approach allows us to transcend the constraints of material frames when contemplating the nature of time. Within Sufi phenomenology, time not only serves as a foundational element of cognition but also represents a pivotal juncture for shaping ideas and spaces. Indeed, time is an integral component of the smallest particles that constitute everything, and it plays a paramount role in the quest for truth. Alternatively, it can be seen as an inherent aspect of being intricately connected to its essence. Understanding the nature of time is pivotal for grasping the truth of a thing or event. It sheds light on the fundamental simplicity as well as the intricate complexity of time itself. Consequently, a comprehensive exploration of its structure and its interplay with other conceptual categories is essential.

In Sufi phenomenology, time is understood not as a mere sequence of events but as an interconnected, cyclical experience shaped by both temporal and meta-temporal (Mir Damad's view¹) dimensions. This contrasts with

¹ The significant aspect of Mir Damad's thought is the existence of time inherent to Allah. Although the thinker refers to it as *timeless*, it exists and encompasses Allah within the framework of time. In Sufi phenomenology, time commences with creation, positioning the Absolute Creator beyond temporal constraints. The lowest and final level of time is inherent to the material world, while

Edmund Husserl's understanding of phenomenological time, which he defines as the "unitary form of all mental processes within one stream of mental processes (within one pure Ego), and the 'objective' cosmic time" [3, 192]. He writes: "...It can traverse according to the three dimensions of Earlier, Later, and Simultaneity; or, in other words, we have the whole, essentially unified and strictly self-contained stream of temporal unities of mental processes" [3, 196].

Husserl's perspective views time as a one-dimensional stream of perception, shaped within the observable world. In contrast, Sufi phenomenology presents a broader and more complex understanding of time. First, it sees time as a stream that accompanies the process of cognition and can be regulated by consciousness. Second, it expands the concept of time into a three-dimensional phenomenon, incorporating both time and meta-time. In this framework, objective universal time encompasses various subjective timelines, representing the times of different creators. However, it is only humans, with active consciousness and will, who have the ability to penetrate the time of other creators and generate new timelines. For instance, a child, much like an animal, does not distinguish between yesterday and tomorrow, or minutes and hours, resulting in their experience of *nows* being chaotic and lacking in deeper knowledge.

Sufi phenomenological time is not a fixed sequence but a subjective timeline shaped by the movement of consciousness. While a clock or similar device provides an objective reference for time—much like a lighthouse standing firm amidst shifting waters—each person navigates their own course, attempting to align their personal experience of time with this shared framework. However, unlike objective time, Sufi phenomenological time follows only trajectory of consciousness, which may linger in the *now*, shift toward the past or future, or even

extend into meta-time—a dimension beyond ordinary temporal experience, where moments are not bound by succession but by meaning and illumination. Consequently, the same segment of time can unfold differently for two individuals: a yogi may suspend their perception of time through deep meditation, a student preparing for exams may experience 24 hours as fleeting, and a Sufi in contemplation may enter a state where past and future dissolve into an expanded *now*.

Each person selects *nows* in accordance with their plans and thoughts. This signifies that Sufi phenomenological time lacks a fixed direction and may diverge from objective time. In essence, Sufi phenomenological time is a subjective eidetic system constructed from the *eidē* of objective time. Just as the *eidē* of time complement each other within this framework, they also function within the larger eidetic system of existence.

The direction of Sufi phenomenological time is guided by the intention of consciousness, and two specific moments warrant special attention. First, phenomenological time emerges when a human manages to penetrate the eidetic system of a thing or event. Here, the primary role of consciousness is to study the objective eidetic system, trace its patterns, and distinguish its trajectory amid the chaotic timelines. For example, Newton's investigation into gravitation allowed him to unveil a portion of profound truth, while later developments by Einstein and quantum physics further expanded this understanding, with future discoveries still unfolding.

Second, human beings not only perceive but also create new noematic systems, thereby generating new timelines. This act of creation occurs within the framework of objective time, yet the newly formed eidetic structure dictates its own temporal flow. For instance, the process of sculpting a marble statue depends on the artist's skill and vision. While the marble itself remains bound to its objective time, the timeline of the statue begins with the artist's intervention and reaches completion when the creation is finalized and placed within the world.

the vertical timeline consists solely of meta-time, known as *dahr* as termed by Mir Damad, representing the time of the divine stage and creations. Both the horizontal and vertical timelines are linear and one-dimensional, thus intersecting at a single point [4, 105].

Thus, while the material adheres to its inherent temporality, the created from inaugurates a distinct timeline shaped by human intent.

Sufi phenomenological time, therefore, represents an interplay between perception and creation, where consciousness not only navigates existing temporal structure but also establishes new ones. Through this dynamic process, time is neither linear nor absolute but emerges as a fluid and multidimensional experience, shaped by the evolving awareness and actions of the conscious observer.

As a result, the time of every creature is an integral part of universal time, interwoven in a harmonious and coherent structure. Each being exists within its own temporal flow, yet these flows intersect and interact within the vast continuum of past, present, and future. When a human perceives their own time as a distinct segment within this immense stream, they may find themselves navigating the labyrinth of timelines, seeking orientation through external markers such as clocks. However, true orientation lies not in mechanical measurements but in the consciousness that actively interprets and integrates these timelines into a meaningful eidetic system.

Conversely, when a human perceives time not as a linear progression but as a spatial construct of interwoven timelines, they seek to immerse themselves in this network, unveiling the hidden coherence that binds all moments together—starting from their own *now*. While Sufi phenomenological time remains inherently individual, it is simultaneously embedded within objective time, allowing one to perceive themselves as part of a greater, divine harmony. In this view, time is not merely a sequence of events but one of the fundamental conditions of existence. Sufi phenomenological time, in turn, becomes a means of penetrating the essence of things and events, revealing dimensions of reality otherwise obscured.

For example, the hermeneutic method examines an idea within its original temporal context before extracting it from its historical timeline and integrating it into a new one. However, not every cognitive process exhibits phenome-

nological time; it primarily emerges in cognition that operates at the eidetic level. The *now* of Sufi phenomenological time—exclusive to human consciousness—arises at the intersection of time, meta-time, and awareness. In contrast, the time of a newly formed eidetic system, whether an idea or a tangible object, begins only when the cycle of cognition or phenomenological time reaches completion.

Hence, every product of creativity or scientific inquiry experiences two distinct *lifetimes*—phenomenological time, which unfolds within the realm of human thought, and observable time, which begins with the realization of the finished work. Consider, for instance, *Pietà*, Michelangelo's marble sculpture of Jesus and Mary. Its existence is conventionally measured from 1499, the year of its completion. However, its Sufi phenomenological time—its true genesis—began much earlier, as the idea took shape within the master's consciousness before manifesting in marble.

Time plays a crucial role in shaping the boundaries of an idea, both in its formation and materialization. Heidegger observed that this ontological distinction, rooted in time, has persisted since antiquity:

“‘Time’ has long functioned as an ontological—or rather an ontical—criterion for naively discriminating various realms of entities. A distinction has been made between ‘temporal’ entities (natural processes and historical happenings) and ‘non-temporal’ entities (spatial and numerical relationships)” [2, 39].

However, Sufi phenomenology challenges this binary asserting that every act of creation is inherently temporal. While Heidegger highlights time as an alternative framework for understanding existence, Sufi phenomenology extends this notion, positing that even so-called ‘non-temporal’ entities are embedded within phenomenological time through their engagement with consciousness. This perspective suggests that ideas, once conceived, exist within a dynamic temporal field, shaped by the process of cognition and their integration into human experience.

Since every *eidos*—and, by extension, every eidetic system—possesses its own unique time as an intrinsic aspect of its existence, the process of forming human ideas unfolds within and requires the completion of its respective time. Cognition and creativity can be understood as a trajectory leading from materiality to the divine realm, with the outcome of this process depending on the development of consciousness. In essence, the degree of perfection an idea attains is proportional to the depth of human penetration into the objective structure of creatures. The formation of human ideas emerges from the intersection of time, meta-time, and consciousness, following circular trajectory. The completion of this phenomenological cycle marks the transition from contemplation to realization, initiating the time of implementation—whether in the form of a new scientific formula, a work of art, or a literary creation.

Husserl's assertion that "No matter how alien in essence mental processes can be with respect to one another, they are nonetheless constituted altogether as one temporal stream, as members in the one phenomenological time" [3, 283] invites us to consider that each *eidos* or eidetic structure possesses its own finite time. For instance, the transplantation of an organ extends its temporal existence within a different structure, demonstrating how time can be transferred or recontextualized. Moreover, since time also encompasses information, the coherence of ideas reflects the interdependence of their respective temporalities, reinforcing the notion that eidetic structures exist in a complementary temporal relationship.

On the other hand, every *eidos*, as a part of the universal structure, can unfold within its own subjective time. The information contained within these distinct temporalities acquires meaning within an eidetic stream or structure, serving either as the realization of a subject's thought or as a component of objective truth. In both cases, the idea attains realization; however, in the first instance, as Husserl posited, "...no concrete mental process can be accepted as self-sufficient in the full sense. Each is 'in need of supplementation' within a prescribed

concatenation, which is not arbitrary in kind of form" [3, 198].

Each subsequent *eidos* is illuminated according to the intention and potential of consciousness, completing and extending the *one* that precedes it. The final structure emerges as the fulfillment of consciousness's intention. We can assert that consciousness develops along a 'ready truth,' an a priori pattern awaiting realization.

In contrast, when we consider creativity, a human being brings an idea to life, giving rise to a new eidetic structure where time unfolds alongside it—one that allows for interruptions, refinements, and even errors. If the first case represents the illumination of objective time, the second embodies the creation of new time. For instance, the law of universal gravitation was bound to be discovered, whether by Newton or another scientist—it was simply a matter of time. However, Beethoven's *9th Symphony* could not have been composed by anyone else. Nevertheless, boss cases affirm an idea and mark the completion of Sufi phenomenological time.

Sufi phenomenological time is, at its core, the time intrinsically linked to consciousness—the period during which an idea reaches full maturity. In other words, it is the time of thought and creativity. The perfect realization of an idea is only possible once phenomenological time has fully unfolded.

In conclusion, time serves as both the index of being and the measure of movement—an enduring philosophical concern explored from multiple perspectives. First, time acts as a repository of information, preserving the essence of objects and events. Second, the intention of consciousness illuminates specific points along its timeline, shaping perception and understanding. Finally, time delineates the boundaries of our worldview, structuring our engagement with reality.

Conclusion

Time, serving as the index for both being and movement, has been a phenomenon extensively explored by philosophers from various perspectives. Sufi phenomenology, a novel philosophical concept rooted in the fusion of Sufism and Phenomenology, seeks to broaden the understanding of time in two directions – from the material to the divine realm, and from observable reality to the eidetic level. According to this innovative concept, which encourages the contemplation of time at the eidetic level, each *now* becomes the minutest particle of time and represents the intersection of three lines: *meta-time* (divine time), material time, and consciousness.

In this context, the *now* assumes a pivotal role in the processes of cognition and creativity. Despite living within the confines of objective time, human consciousness has the capacity to draw a subjective timeline. It is crucial to emphasize that only at the eidetic level can humans perceive time as an additional dimension of

creation and delineate their distinct timelines. This perspective posits, firstly, that time operates as a repository of information about objects and events, prompting a continual need for exploration and expansion. Secondly, conscious intention molds a new subjective timeline, seamlessly integrated into the fabric of objective time. Lastly, the standard for objective time is a subjective one, defined by an individual's consciousness and acknowledged by society.

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SUFI FENOMENOLOJI ZAMAN

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Sufi fenomenologiya Sufizmi Husserlin fenomenologiyası ilə birləşdirən bir sintezdir və Şərq və Qərb fəlsəfi ənənələrini birləşdirir. Sufi fenomenologiyaya görə, zaman idrak (kognitiv) prosesini müşayiət edir və onun trayektoriyası tsiklik (dövrü) model üzrə gedir. Beləliklə, ilahi və maddi zaman xətlərinin kəsişmə nöqtəsində yerləşən “indi” şüurun başlanğıcı kimi çıxış edir, zaman isə idrak prosesinin sərhədlərini təyin edici rolunu oynayır. Bu yanaşma yalnız “indi” və universal zaman arasındakı mürəkkəb əlaqəni anlamağa kömək etmir, həm də idrakla zaman, eləcə də məkan və zaman arasındakı əlaqələr barədə yeni baxış bucaqları açır.

Açar sözlər: Sufi fenomenoloji zaman; mega-zaman; zaman və məkan; eydos; eydetik struktur

СУФИЙСКОЕ ФЕНОМЕНОЛОГИЧЕСКОЕ ВРЕМЯ

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Суфийская феноменология представляет собой синтез, объединяющий суфизм с феноменологией Гуссерля и соединяющий восточные и западные философские традиции. Согласно суфийской феноменологии, время сопровождает когнитивный процесс, и его траектория следует циклической модели. Таким образом, «сейчас», расположенное в точке пересечения божественной и материальной линий времени, является источником сознания, при этом время выступает определяющей границей познания. Этот подход не только облегчает понимание сложной взаимосвязи между «сейчас» и универсальным временем, но и открывает новые перспективы относительно связи между познанием и временем, а также пространством и временем.

Ключевые слова: суфийское феноменологическое время, мега-время, время и пространство, эйдос, эйдетическая структура