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IS SPACE FOR ME – SPACE FOR YOU?

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SUMMARY

The paper presents philosophical thematization of space in relation to sporting and motor activities, which specifically define the horizon of potential possibilities of man. Philosophically thematized space represents a space and time-related structure dependent on the physical facticity of human existence, which leads to the origination of a specific space for life referred to as “space for me”. Through this process emerges a specific type of space – security, safety, home, which is formed by original archetypal structures. The rejection to phenomenologically thematize the topic of space may result in illusion that “my space” is “space for all”. The explication of the interactions represents a predisposition for methodological formation of relations of intersubjective phenomena and mutual space, where the social life is present. This context includes the axiological dimension of the phenomenon of sport, which creates global space for free human life – in the context of postmodern world, which respects the plurality of individual axiological spaces in specific subcultures (mountain climbers, cyclists, runners, skateboardists, snowboardists, golf players, etc.).

Key words: space, subjectivity, phenomenon, motor activities, motor possibilities, existence

Philosophical alternatives to perception of space in sport

Our spatial dimension is the subject matter of physics on the basis of mathematical abstraction, which places objects and processes into Euclid’s three-dimensional space. However, the question is: How do we move in this space? ... how do we perceive space and how do we deal with it?

The term space in Greek was referred to as *chora*, in our understanding a related term to this being the physical term “field”, which represents space able to accept and conduct various types of determination, to become a varied type of existence. In this context we have drawn much inspiration from the phenomenological modality of time, which was the

subject matter of Heidegger's work *Sein und Zeit (Being and Time)* and which directly points towards the problem of space representing the analogy to the problem of time. Philosophy performs the alternative thematization of space, which subsequently appears different from the defined mathematical and physical structure.

Phenomenological thematizing of space may be inspiringly developed just as a field of free subject's possibilities. Despite this fact, space is (and usually proves to be) satisfactorily defined by the objective language of geometry. To comprehend and describe space from the geometrical aspect reflects the natural human nature aiming to insert the complicated world into comprehensible spatial designs, however, Kant himself critically stated and doubted the certainty, with which man in the framework of knowledge, is depending on the source of empirical material: "... if we removed the subject of our own, or only as little as subjective character of senses, all properties would disappear, all relations of the object within space and time, even the space and time themselves would vanish..." (Kant, 2001 [B59]). Human being is condemned to spatiality and man attempts to define the existential factors including space by means of generally valid referents, which enable him/her to compare them and simplify the life orientation.

All of us possess the experience of how the fantasy manages to widen the space for game via imagination, when during a child's play the sandcastle becomes a real castle; the shelter in the bushes becomes a real residence and a housing estate becomes a space for a major international competition.

This experience evidently shows how semantic plasticity is related to the term of space. The phenomenological approach thematizes the issue of space in relation to human existence. Space is directly connected with the manner of human existence and may not be satisfactorily explicated on the basis of reflection of cognitive functions: perception, cognition and imagination. Phenomenology points out the role of man in creating, designing and defining space itself and that human being represents in a physically significant manner a form of special existence. This line of philosophy (J. Patočka, M. Heidegger, E. Fink, M. Merleau-Ponty) views space not as an entity, which is objective to man and represents a special type of subject surrounding us, but as an entity we are existentially connected with. Heidegger characterized man as „stay“ – in German *Dasein*, referred to as “**being there**” and thus indirectly implied that man and space are closely interconnected. “Space is something, free, in order, thus designed according to the framework of any size, from Greek *peras*. Measure is not the place where something ends, however, as the old Greeks suggested, measure is the place from which the essence emerges (from which something becomes what it is)” (Heidegger, 2004, p. 293).

From the moment of birth, man applies the need of orientation in his/her closest space, whose qualitative dimension is the feeling of security and which consequently transforms into defining the well-known space – home. Throughout ontogeny man finds and enters spaces of his/her own inner self that by its subjectivity and intimacy represents new space, where man finds the opportunities for carrying out relevant existential performances – as a being of historic, free and responsible nature.

Both approaches towards space, thus understanding of space as geometrized – objectified and intimate inner space – subjectified, influence one another, which is in everyday life characterized by oscillation between the two modes of spatial occupation.

- I. Objectified space, rid of the subjective view, is created especially by natural and exact sciences that define identified objects as possessing extension, shape and appearance. This geometrized space enables to perform the description and localization of objects and to depict the spatial movement.
- II. Subjectified space is, on the other hand, space for negotiation and activity based on intentionality. In this context, space creates opportunities for communication – self-realization, which is closely connected with the freedom of choice. This space is represented by the nature of a personal challenge – being challenging and addressing.

Phenomenology (phenomenological philosophy of sport as well as phenomenological line of philosophical kinanthropology) thematizes the space for motor activity as a developed field with opportunities for free subject, which may also be described and defined by objective tools of mathematics and geometry. For sport kinanthropology, on basis of determining its specific research area, it is vital to thematize space by merging the two aforementioned approaches – objectified and subjectified. This determination also modifies the aim of performing physical exercises, the development of motor abilities and human organism's functions within the Holistic viewpoint, and space (where the aim is fulfilled) significantly determines the quality and sense. Philosophical view on this issue existentially accents the moment of experiencing the space, where the physical exercise is performed and the mathematical and physical description is less relevant.

Spontaneous motor activity of man is directly related to the free physical movement and sensorimotor cognition of space, which enables and disallows the movement. Free open spaces in nature (forests, meadows, parks, stadiums) intentionally evoke the psychological effect to perform spontaneous physical activity with space challenging us to make use of it. Closed spaces of industrial fitness centers to a certain extent eliminate this psychological phenomenon. Man in the space of a fitness centre resembles the position of the manual worker, who upon entering the environment of production lines, is forced to both get acquainted with and submit to their cold rationality.

Alternative situation emerges in the process of clarifying the behavior of man during the execution of physical exercise, where we register evident spatial pre-apprehension of sports games and their rules. The subject consciously identifies the specific type of space, simply stated: "I understand what the situation is all about..." This is a practical instance of how we subconsciously use the philosophical method of *bracketing-off* and *decomposition*. This is directed towards philosophical explication of world understanding on the basis of realizing the mutual subjective influence and coordination in experiencing situations and reflections of spaces. To concretize the effect of decomposition principle is possible through schematism: the more closed the space, the more limiting structures activate communication pre-apprehension of human behavior in the limited space (long corridor of underpass makes us leave the defined in the shortest time possible). What from the viewpoint of psychology may be termed intuitive behavior, in the field of philosophy can be within space explicated by the conception of a priori stated universals.

The sphere of sport is endowed with an effective mechanism that enables easier communication between both all actors of becoming and structures determining and defining space, which activate pre-understanding of sports games and competitions. On the basis of aforementioned reason, sports games and competitions held in relatively big and open

space (e.g. football, tennis, and basketball) have structuralized the game in accordance with strict rules.

On the contrary, sports contests held in a relatively closed space (for instance athletic track, swimming pool, boxing ring, etc.) intentionally in pre-apprehension, influence the behavior of participants to such extent that it is not necessary to construct behavior structures according to complicated rules. The revelation of philosophical dimension of performing physical exercise leads us to the knowledge that space is not a geometric section of reality, the space communicates with us, it onticizes us, we give him the sense! “Mountain climbers do not perceive the rock, just as swimmers water, as an object. Rock and water are becoming their part (sphere – space), which challenges them to lead a specific dialogue and addresses them with its own language” (Hogenová, 2006, p. 202).

Sport – space of universal understanding

Philosophical thematizing of space in sport and physical education enables to explicate the process of structuralization of physical education reality, which represents space of universal (global) understanding. In the framework of these semantic dimensions, we may locate the potential of sport phenomenon, which especially in the form of Olympic sport, creates symbolic, semantic and communication structures influencing axiological and ethical spheres of life of people with global reach. Space is a structure arising from the activity of psychic and constant process of *retention* and *protention* like a network that is being made real. Each subject – individuality, creates around itself a communicative world, to which it forms special bonds. Through the specific process of projection space transforms into space for the subject – expressed as “*space for me*”.

By misunderstanding this process, the development of the generally valid nature of this pseudo-certainty may lead to the phase that “my” space becomes “space for all”. In this sense we commit open or hidden violence of forcing one’s space to those with a different type of space.

The space of children is different from the space of adults; the space of Roma people, Eskimos, people from Tibet, Pygmies is different as well. These people intentionally and in a distinct manner relate to the world and perform the structure of objective and subjective spatial possibilities, where the Cartesian measure of subject-object relations may be easily questioned.

Social life is possible due to the fact that individual autonomous spaces onticize on the horizon of historical events, which are characteristic of merging of individual autonomous spaces in the mutual aspects. The realization of this mechanism of interactions means to methodically create space for the phenomena of mutual and close nature for the realization of space of inter-subjective character as well as mutual space – open space, or public, social space. The knowledge of ancient Greeks led to the creation of space of mutual forum (forum) – from Greek *agora*, the public political centre of the state – from Greek *polis*, where the space of social life was created both philosophically and politically. Origination of the tradition of antic democracy is related to these bases with the origination having created space for realization and acceptance of free life of individuals. In this historical context the factor that appears significant is the philosophical relevance of Greek agnosticism and Panhellenic Games, where the space for the execution of competition was carried out in a socially acceptable form. In these relations we may focus on the axiological dimension of

the global phenomenon of current Olympic Games and sports movement, which from the historical viewpoint revitalize the space of antic *agora* as the original acceptable sphere that enabled co-existence of free citizens. “Hardly any human activity possesses such transcendental meaning as Olympic Games, or as sports competition” (Hogenová, 2002, p. 211). This philosophical idea actualizes the historical position of Olympic movement, which through symbols forms a new structure of *sense* – new space of globally accepted reality of postmodern space that is full of political, religious and cultural pluralism.

“Important historical phenomena, such as ancient Olympic Games and revitalizing of the traditions in form of modern Olympic Games emerged and are still preserved because they realize the very intersection of both objective and subjective structures” (Junger, Nemeč, 2007, p. 96).

These intentions include the current situations in postmodern sport in its plurality and polysemous character of the worlds (ultra-marathon runners, mountain climbers, surfers, freeriders, skateboardists, etc.) as subcultures of sport with autonomous and specific hierarchy of values and rules of social life of the members.

Sport – “space for one’s opportunities”

The phenomena, toward which the term space is directed, are to a certain extent dependent on the people who perceive and utilize them. The space provides the perceiver with special opportunities, or rather in the context of intentionality focuses on certain opportunities. To certain extent perceived space influences and affects oneself, changes one’s state of mind and challenges one to perform specific activities, or on the other hand discourages one from carrying them out. Through this process and the use of mentally archetypal structures the sportsperson creates a relationship to a specific space, territory and the area becomes “his” space – regarded as “*space for me*”, where he/she is confidentially acquainted with the space, where he/she feels sure thus creating and enlarging the space of home, in which he/she is at home. This spatial localization of certainty is a relevant dimension of what we usually call home. In its core home is an ontic basis determining the horizon of our life opportunities and routes. It resembles a space, with its distinct character being between “close” and “far”, “truth” and “lie”, “permitted” and “prohibited”, or “possible” and “impossible”. It is this distinct polarity that emerges and is enforced by the relation to the immediate surroundings and nature and at the same time makes the home become the dynamic sphere that enables the creating of more life opportunities. The surrounding country becomes the extension of our home just as home is the existential and spatial dimension of corporeity.

What is the factor that makes man decide whether to share his/her space or not? Is it possible to set the conditions, which are decisive for man from the view of space selection and acceptability?

We have considered 4 conditions:

- Space needs to be localized (I have to be able to identify the space).
- Space needs to be accessible (a situation must arise, which consequently enables to access the space physically – the horizon of situational accessibility).
- I may remain in the space (I am not going to be threatened and I am not going to be forced to leave it early).
- Space has to be relevant in terms of the sense of situation (dimension of inter-subjective sense is important...).

Challenges of various spaces thus represent possible potentialities of space development within our inner space. What was before an insurmountable obstacle and appeared objectively limiting is becoming the enrichment of life and a new inspiration. Patočka in this context adds: “It is not the case that we do not possess certain subjective space as a part of mental life, we only have own attitude towards space and things situated within” (Patočka, 1995, p. 58).

If we condemn any event in our life and ascribe it a negative connotation, consequently the whole event becomes an unsolvable conflict in relation to how we would carry out the design of our life if this negative event did not occur. Conflict experienced this way leads to the opening of the internal space, which offers the solutions and opportunities, however, it may lead to more significant reduction and limitedness. “In relation to Cartesian philosophy, external world creates specific aspects of subjectivity in that on one side it loses its subjectivity in relation to the observer, on the other side the perspective of man as an independent and objective observer of external becoming is diminishing...” (Bop, 2004, p. 77).

Space and its definition in any form are relevant in that they create dynamic tension between what “I can” realize in the space, that is free realization, and the matter which is limited by the space. Therefore, space not only means sphere of free movement or a sphere of using one’s chances, but in the authenticity of life performances it represents *agens* to realize transcendence to new, unknown and strange spaces, where the design of my opportunities is presented in new qualitative aspects.

The understanding of the whole as a space for motor activity is predetermined by one’s motor experience, or the level of one’s motor skills and knowledge in the process of synthesizing their relations, which is directed towards the perception of space (playing field, athletic track, ski slope, etc.) in a metaphorical sense “I see my options”. From this view of space perception, the possibilities hermeneutically appear more than one’s field of vision is able to perceive at a particular moment. Patočka developed this idea to almost mystical statements: “...man originally does not know about himself/herself, what his/her qualities are, what tremendous power he/she possesses and that the world is included in him/her” (Patočka, 1996, p. 402). In this context we may encounter alternatives for the development of one’s existential options in the consciousness, which are challenged by the space and are being activated towards next and new realizations. Well-known space “space for me” creates specific situation of a mood state with its geometric parameters retreat, or completely vanish as it is usual to occur in contemplative meditation. The interaction of space and a human being thus creates modality of space, which is experienced by runners, cyclists, mountain climbers, when being awake (“with their eyes open”) perceive the actual section of space that communicates with their inner world.

Sport – space and embodied knowledge

External objectified space loses its dominant factor of an external determinant, which influences the activity of the subject and diffuses with its internal space, sometimes even becomes the element of mutual communication between “inside” and “outside” space of the sportsperson... This situation in sports psychology is referred to as *flow*, from the spatial point of view it includes states, when for instance steep ascend of the slope by a cyclist is perceived as an actual section of space-time that communicates with the competitor,

which is represented by an intuitive choice of ideal gear in the right phase of the ascent. Similarly, a marathon runner perceives a narrow line of the track and creates space in the group of runners by tactical selection of position, which enables him to perform the break-away at the most appropriate moment... The issue is where the border between the individual reflection of experiencing the space and its possible theoretical analysis is, or what may the defining of space indicate?

The space we perceive is not a passive representative of objectively fixed world, but an active and dynamic synthesis – “shaping of the space and the world”, which occurs during our life.

In this context it is necessary to refer to attitudes of Merleau-Ponty or Patočka, who emphasize that the existence of perceiving upright body is determined by the constitution of visual space. This evokes a general question of the relation between space and our body.

Visual perception of space is possible only for the subject with a body, as only incarnated mind possesses its “from somewhere”. “... our individualization in the world is individualization of our subjective corporeity; we are individual due to the fact that we perform the movements of our life, physical movements” (Patočka, 1995, p. 125).

From the phenomenological point of view, it is needed to note that interesting experience between the over-lit space and the dark, when in the dark we lack the feeling of space and consequently suffer from claustrophobia (outdoor activities, hiking and stay in nature). It is in these situations that the dimensions are eliminated to maximal extent and the function of space certainty is substituted by subjective and almost virtual space.

Embodied knowledge, or knowledge mediated by the body is a term implying that every experience is possible due to the existence of the body and its sensorimotor abilities. The decisive factor is the size of our body, as it determines the measure extents for the interaction with the surrounding world. Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the relevance of the body as a system of possible actions, its position is determined by the situation and needs and not like “things in objective space”.

“What counts for the orientation of the spectacle is not body as it in fact is, as a thing in objective space, but as a system of possible actions, a virtual body with its phenomenal “place” defined by its task and situation. My body is wherever there is something to be done” (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 250).

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JE PRIESTOR PRE MŇA I PRIESTOROM PRE TEBA?

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SÚHRN

Príspevok prezentuje filozofickú tematizáciu priestoru v súvislostiach realizácie športovo-pohybových aktivít, ktoré špecificky vymedzujú horizont potenciálnych možností človeka. Priestor filozoficky tematizovaný predstavuje priestorovo-časovú štruktúru závislú od telesnej fakticity ľudskej existencie, čím pre subjekt vzniká špecifický priestor života verbalizovaný ako „priestor pre mňa“. V tomto procese sa vytvára špecifický druh priestoru-istoty, bezpečia, domova, vytváraný pôvodnými archetypálnymi štruktúrami. Odmietnutím fenomenologického tematizovanie problému priestoru, môžeme upadnúť do ilúzie, že „môj priestor“ je „priestorom pre všetkých“. Vysvetlenie spomenutých interakcií predstavuje predpoklad pre metodologické vytváranie vzťahov fenoménov intersubjektívnej povahy a spoločný priestor, kde sa realizuje sociálny život. V týchto súvislostiach nachádzame axiologickú dimenziu fenoménu šport, ktorý vytvára globálny priestor pre realizáciu slobodného ľudského života – v kontexte postmoderného sveta, ktorý rešpektuje pluralitu individuálnych axiologických priestorov v špecifických subkultúrach (horolezcov, cyklistov, bežcov, skate a snowboardistov, golfistov apod.).

Kľúčová slová: fenomén, subjektivita, pohybové aktivity, motorické schopnosti, existencia

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