

Review of: "Thought Experiment: from Phenomenology to Transcendental Meditation and Dream about the Meaning of Time"

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The author has approached an interesting topic, a reflection on the experience of time from a phenomenological perspective. While there are many interesting insights, the paper suffers from the author's efforts to cover too much ground, and do too many things. Too many threads are began and each could be a subject for an entire work. As I read the paper its main thrust is to conduct an introspective analysis of the passage of experiential time in various mental states (such as dreams and mediation) in relation to, and in contrast with, time as we "objectively" measure it. Had the author stuck to this task his results and overall project would be easier to evaluate. However, the introduction of his dream content and its interpretation seems like an entirely different project, and even though there is an effort to relate it to the overall theme, it distracts from the author's main goal.

While the conclusion that time as phenomenologically experienced during different mental state varies from objective time is a well accepted idea, it is unclear what the author's introspective account adds to the literature on this. The author does not pay adequate attention to the problems in all introspective research, especially introspective research in which one individual is the subject and investigator, such as the unavoidable impact of the researcher's knowledge of the hypotheses on his results. For this, and a variety of other reasons, it will be impossible to generalize from his experience. I, for one, often wake up in the middle of the night and have an almost perfect sense of what time it is on my clock, but I can't conclude from this that the sense of time in sleep is the same as objective time. It seems to me that there are individual differences on these questions, and to the extent that it would be possible to create a controlled experiment one would need to look at a large number of subjects. However, in this paper the author adumbrates a model for phenomenological analysis of time and the use of statistical analysis towards the end of the paper seems to me to be very much out of place in a study of this kind.