

James E. KATZ

Time and Biography – Folk Visual Metaphors

Kristóf Nyíri (2008) *inter alia*, has urged upon us (and contributed to) a “pictorial turn” in philosophical inquiry. For his part, Rudolf Arnheim (1971: 186) argued that “all thinking is perceptual, whether it relies on direct sensory observation or on memories and the constructs of the imagination”. Yet phenomenology and other philosophical subfields related to everyday life continue to remain curiously divorced from the pictorial components of the *Lebenswelt*. Given both the pictorial turn and the lacunae of systematic pictorial analyses, it may be worthwhile to examine pictorial representations of the abstract concept of time. Doing so would provide insight into the everyday experience of time and its relationship to the “lived life”. Consequently, we have investigated spontaneous figurative depictions of time from a small sample of people as well as conducted a larger more systematic survey of hundreds of young people to explore the relationship between figurative representations of time and psychological attitudes. We replicated Arnheim’s 1960s research on pictorial depictions of time. We also extended research on figurative representations of time and psychological attitudes about time. This line of research provides insight into folk understandings of time and its relationship to personal biography. Our findings yield insight into the philosophy of everyday life, psychological orientations towards the experience of time’s passage, and the linkage between externally manifested pictorial representations and internal images of an abstract concept.

James E. KATZ, Ph.D., is chair of the Communication Department at Rutgers University where he also directs the Center for Mobile Communication Studies. Currently Prof. Katz is investigating how personal communication technologies, such as mobile phones and the internet, affect social relationships and how cultural values influence usage patterns of these technologies. His several books include *Perpetual Contact* and *Social Consequences of Internet Use* (with Ron Rice) and he is the author or co-author of more than 60 peer-reviewed journal articles. Among his recent awards are the 2011 Ogburn award for career achievement from the American Sociological Association and the 2009 Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Twentieth Century Communications History. E-mail: j.k@rutgers.edu.

