

SOCIAL TIME IN THE AUGUSTINIAN PHILOSOPHY:**THE INDEXICAL RETROSPECTIVE INTERPRETATION OF A SACRED LINEAR HISTORY***TEMPO SOCIAL NA FILOSOFIA DE AGOSTINHO:**a interpretação indicial retrospectiva de uma história sagrada linear**TIEMPO SOCIAL EN LA FILOSOFÍA AGUSTINIANA:**la interpretación retrospectiva indicial de una historia lineal sagrada***Marcus Alves***(Universidade Nove de Julho)**marcus.lyra@gmail.com*

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ABSTRACT

The present essay focuses on ‘social time’, as distinct from the concept of this phenomenon on the scope of physics. Social time here inhabits the discourse, the habitus, expressed through practice as a medium over which human actions are formulated according to the logical possibilities it provides. Christianity knowingly propounded a linear history, as an endless process, and albeit sacred, punctuated by divine interventions. However, this linear sacralized history could only be properly understood with an exegetic medieval system; a set of intellectual rules rationally organized for the reconstruction of history through dormant signs and similes. The work of Augustine of Hippo provided tools for these interpretations. We attempt to demonstrate that we can find foundations of a Christian model of social time in his works, being ‘indexical’, as a meaning-creating process based on a retrospective reading of the linear history, an open book prone to interpretation. Augustine’s formulations about a psychological time, as a founding father of Christian theology, provide some important cues to this social notion of indexical time, and how it became so central to Western culture.

Keywords: Augustine, social time, discourse, signs.

RESUMO

O presente artigo enfoca o 'tempo social', como distinto das compreensões desse fenômeno na física; o tempo social habita o discurso, o habitus, expresso pela prática como um meio sobre o qual as ações humanas são formuladas de acordo com as possibilidades lógicas que fornece. Reconhecidamente, o cristianismo propôs uma forma histórica linear, como um processo contínuo embora ainda sagrado, pontuado por intervenções divinas. No entanto, essa história linear sacralizada só poderia ser adequadamente entendida por meio do sistema medieval exegetico; um conjunto de regras intelectuais organizadas racionalmente para a reconstrução da história através de sinais e símiles inativos. Biograficamente, o

trabalho de Agostinho de Hipona forneceu ferramentas para essas interpretações. Podemos encontrar algumas das bases de um modelo cristão de tempo social, sendo a 'indexicalidade' como um processo de criação de significado com base na leitura retrospectiva da história linear como um livro aberto que pode ser interpretado. As formulações de Agostinho sobre seu tempo psicológico, como pai fundador da teologia cristã, fornecem algumas pistas importantes para essa noção social de tempo indicial e como ela se tornou tão central na cultura ocidental.

Palavras-chave: Agostinho, tempo social, discurso, signos.

RESUMEN

Este artículo se centra en el "tiempo social", a diferencia del concepto de este fenómeno en la física; el tiempo social habita el discurso, el habitus, expresado por la práctica como un medio sobre el cual las acciones humanas se formulan de acuerdo con las posibilidades lógicas que proporciona. Es cierto que el cristianismo ha propuesto una forma histórica lineal, como un proceso continuo, pero aún sagrado, marcado por la intervención divina. Sin embargo, esta historia lineal sacralizada solo podía entenderse adecuadamente a través del sistema exegético medieval; un conjunto de reglas intelectuales racionalmente organizadas para la reconstrucción de la historia a través de signos y símiles inactivos. Biográficamente, el trabajo de Agustín de Hipona proporcionó herramientas para estas interpretaciones. Podemos encontrar algunos de los fundamentos de un modelo cristiano del tiempo social, con la "indexicalidad" como un proceso de creación de significado basado en la lectura retrospectiva de la historia lineal como un libro abierto que puede interpretarse. Las formulaciones de Agustín de su tiempo psicológico, como el padre fundador de la teología cristiana, proporcionan algunas pistas importantes sobre esta noción social del tiempo índice y cómo se ha vuelto tan central para la cultura occidental.

Palabras clave: San Agustín, tiempo social, discurso, signos.

1. Augustine and the subjectivist temporality

Regarding the great Christian influencers at the beginning of our era to deal with the theme of 'time' as a leading factor in the organization of mundane affairs, a name that cannot be left aside is that of *Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis* (354AD to 430AD), Augustine of Hippo, or Saint Augustine. Having become a referential pinnacle by the intellectual influence and cultural value conquered by himself, it is said that Augustine - after Saint Paul - "was the figure who played the most important role in the establishment and development of Christianity." (le Goff, 2005: 16). His contribution to what would become the final aesthetics of the Christian linear temporality is also undeniable; Augustine was "Prominent among the early Church Fathers who, in their struggles against rival doctrines competing for the spiritual conquest of the Greco-Roman world, vigorously disputed the traditional cyclical view of time" (Whitrow Apud Fraser, 1972: 6). Augustine lies in the centrality of Christian construction of social time; in several excerpts of his works, be it *de Doctrina*, *Confessions* or *City of God*, the repetition of the Augustinian angst to uncover the nature of time draws attention. In the extensive work of Augustine, we find a curious constancy of themes related to the concepts of time and duration, even if cited *en passant*, varying from explanations regarding the creation of the world to more particular questions such as if the time of God differs from that of mundane creatures.

The extension of his work exceeds the efforts of the present analysis, forcing us to focus on two of his most influential publications - that became official documents of the intellectual centrality of the Christian world - being *De Doctrina* and *Confessions*. Important to reinforce though that there is no consensus whether Augustine provided a definitive answer regarding time (Wetzel, 1995: 341). We should, however, consider the fact that many of the published researches on the topic consider 'time'

as a natural phenomenon that Augustine could potentially elucidate, and this perspective deeply diverges from the efforts of the present work. As James Wetzel puts it, Augustine is one of the most investigated theoreticians of Christianity and much has been said about his conceptions of time and eternity, but few take it from the vantage point of a reflex of a deeper historical context, so instead of a physical validation of his theory, “The best interpretations convey some religious gravity of Augustine's interest in time.” (Wetzel, 1995: 341). Here, however, we aim on investigating the epistemic sense of temporality in Augustine’s philosophy that provides meaning to a historical narrative, a Christian model of time that culturally bears an indexical foundation, based upon an interpretation of signs in a socially sustained historical narrative intending to provide an understanding of history through retrospective interpretation, by means of exegesis and other rational hermeneutic tools. This retrospective interpretation is the most important aspect of the Christian model of social time as we should explicate ahead.

To begin with, we find the work entitled *de Doctrina Christiana*, four volumes written between 379 and 426 AD, in which Augustine, through his rhetorical style inherited from teaching Cicero’s *Rhetorica* (Chadwick, 2009: 12), already discerned different dimensions of time as distinct qualities between levels of existence, that convey a judgment of value and function to human actions. This work of Augustine’s - one of the most influential of the church among those that precede the *Summa* of Aquinas’ - had as its main function, to serve as a guide to the craft of teaching the Christian doctrine, as its name well presumes. It stood for the merit of providing orientations to the efforts of the exegetic and hermeneutic works, mainly supporting the appropriate interpretation of signs and similes spread in sacred biblical texts. Among the elements presented by the work as practical orientations to the ecclesiastical educators, we find: (i) grammar in its prototypical shape, claiming that the educator should not associate its knowledge concerning the bible only by its straight illuminations, but should instead, be fully capable of identifying within the net of an inspired text the meaningful elements. (ii) Geography and natural history standing to the realm of being capable of interpreting the relations between conditions of places and creatures taught about in biblical texts. (iii) Technology - whilst useful to interpreting similes and analogies provided by inspired scriptures. (iv) Pagan studies that englobe astrology and magical knowledge employed on discerning the origin of profane knowledge. (v) Logic - indispensable once the validation of logical inferences was not considered a plain human creation, but a “finding of a divinely provided fact” (Chadwick, 1995: 86). (vi) And lastly comes the concept central to the present analysis: Chronology. There should be a way for properly interpreting the meaning of history, and that takes place on retrospective interpretation of signs hidden in the Holy texts. This aspect also arrives as validation of argumentative processualities, helping to construct a logic narrative to a bigger and wider worldview. For example, in that time, “Ambrose had made a great impression by his claim that Jeremiah and Plato lived in the same century and therefore could easily have met and conversed in Egypt” (Chadwick, 1995: 86). Thus, the senses of chronology and logic were somehow entangled.

However, the conception of a chronology bears with it something even more valuable than standing solely as an argumentative tool, being: the construction of bonds between historically correlated facts rendering a trans-historical textuality liable to an exegetical interpretation. What we have at hand with the work of Augustine in *de Doctrina* is a perspective of a deep awakening of senses towards the world, instrumented by ‘inspired reason’, as an operation of logical mechanisms in search of meanings, presumably inscribed in the world's materiality, dormant, waiting to be revealed through a proper conduct. Augustine (1995: 16) writes: “All teaching is the teaching of either things or signs, but things are learnt through signs. These are things, but they are at the same time signs of other things.” He goes further on discerning meaningful signs from simple material ‘things’, - that reinforces the need for a specific science of interpretation - in his words: “So every sign is also a thing, since what is not a thing does not exist. But it is not true that every ‘thing’ is also a sign” (Augustine, 1995: 16). So only trained eyes could decipher what is and what is not a sign of an ultimate truth. This conception of time present in Augustine’s works can only make sense if we consider that in *de Doctrina* he promulgates a worldview in which we are distanced from the promised land, trapped in a world-

medium that sustains a meaningful web of signs, not disposed to aesthetic admiration only, but to investigation through inspired forms of discernment, we read:

So in this mortal life we are like travellers away from our Lord: if we wish to return to the homeland where we can be happy *we must use this world*, not enjoy it, in order to discern 'the invisible attributes of God, which are understood through what has been made' or, in other words, to ascertain what is eternal and spiritual from corporeal and temporal things (Augustine, 1995: 17 - our emphasis).

It is not a surprise that the prominence of temporal questions in Augustine's works must occupy the centrality of the whole exegetic conception of the world, once narrativity is the facet of a linearized form of sacred history brought about by the Christian doctrine. First, it is deeply relevant to comprehend that Augustine does not deal with time as a substance of any physical order. Wetzel claims that the descriptive method of physics, to Augustine, appears to be only one more way to elucidate the perception of time as a phenomenon of consciousness (Wetzel, 1995: 343). This psychologist perspective from Augustine's approach to temporal questions is crucial and it appears to be its problematic core. For instance, this same issue apparently raised great suspicion in Western philosophy. Russell and Wittgenstein came to a hard schism about Augustine's works, as Wetzel puts it:

Russell has Augustine begin with the world of time, only to lose it over the course of inquiry, whereas Wittgenstein has Augustine first lose his hold on time's reality, then regain it upon reflection (Wetzel, 1995: 343).

The relation with the aspect of time as a meaningful attribution to an external 'thing' implies that although it is external and presumably objective, it can only be ultimately grasped as a phenomenon of consciousness. It is hard not to consider that, for these reasons "Of the great philosophers of the twentieth century, Wittgenstein probably comes closest to sharing Augustine's conception of philosophy" (Wetzel, 1995: 344). And then comes the problem of God's 'being'. Chronologies reside in the basis of the narrative structure of the Christian historical myth, and thus, face an epistemological aporia if one considers Augustine's perspective of time: underneath the whole concept of historical chronology, there must be a permanently present deity immersed in an eternal temporal configuration. He provides a few answers in his parallel work "Confessions" (written between 397AD and 400AD), where we find a more explicit division on types of time, being 'duration' and 'eternity' systematically examined; "in the Eternal nothing passeth, but the whole is present; whereas no time is all at once present" (Augustine, 2005: 199). The ambivalence between 'duration' and 'eternity', claims Weinert, casts some troubles on the trail of establishing the concept of a purely linear time on the beginning of Christianity, forcing Augustine to define whether God inhabits human time or something else. For Augustine the answer is quite simple; God must be outside human time (Weinert, 2013: 13). It happens because questioning the classic paradigm about the broken inertia the act of Creation would mean that Augustine apparently knew that God should stand outside its own creation for a reason: If God inhabited the progressive temporal dimension as humans do, it would suppose that He would have made a 'decision' after being idle for a long time, implying that there occurred a shift of intentions that opens for interpretations concerning the perfection of the divine being. This aporia is registered in Confessions, seventh book, fifth chapter. God, thus, was and has always been the same apart from the creation, as He stands in eternity while humans inhabit duration.

If God takes a decision in time, then time should be prior to God Himself. But what the Holy text says about it? The concept of creation *ex nihilo* is present in the Bible as "He spoke and they were made" (Psalm 33.9) and "By the word of the Lord were the heavens established" (Psalm 33.6). But a history immersed in a temporal linearity forces God to be expelled from inside of its own creation so that no vulnerability in his perfection has to be assumed through a discontinuity. To Augustine, "the divine act of creation is eternal, and there is no room for questions like "What was God doing before he made heaven and earth?" (Williams Apud. Stump & Kretzmann, 2006: 61). This weakness would be implied in the change inside the deliberation of a deity that 'chooses', takes decisions, comes to conclusions, thus creating what was not already foreseen. To create something is to undergo the decision of creation, to bring to an existence what was not there beforehand, configuring a change of 'state'. In

Revelation 1:8 we read: "I am the Alpha and the Omega - says the Lord God - who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Augustine was the one who, out of opposition to the pagan sarcasm of his day, needed to dissociate God from human time, avoiding a current confusion. They believed the eternity in which God dwelt to be an extension of the same time humans lived. Considering the act of creation in the face of this question would mean that creation was a spontaneous and deliberate act, compelling the understanding that God had made a 'decision' (that of creating the universe) and was thus previously idle. This prospect deeply troubled Augustine, even regarding Christian supporters; he emphatically wrote in Confessions "At no time then hadst Thou not made any thing, because time itself Thou madest" (Augustine, 2005: 200). As registers go, in response to the troubling question, "So what was God doing before He created everything?" They would repeatedly say, "It made hell hotter for curious questioners" (Chadwick, 2009: 135).

Bullying with God, however, was not constrained to mere anecdotes and these issues became a very prolific source of questions centered on the discussion of the origin or nature of time. To understand the reason why this became a problem, it is necessary to keep in mind that the divine loneliness of monotheism completely ceases the dialogs in superior spheres - the dialog of the gods - opposite to what was common in Greek theogonies in their mythology, meaning that the Christianized universe becomes deeply silent, hence, being the silence itself the proof of a superior form of wisdom. As God cannot make decisions, the world is as it is, as it was, and as it is to come, as one. In this sense, Augustine's account on the condition of the material world reflects a straight opposition to the creation of Plato's *Timaeus* - a great reference of his time - in which reality comes into being as a reification of a demiurge's will, so "Augustine rejects this account of creation as fabrication because of its presupposition that matter is coeval with God" (Mann Apud. Stump & Kretzmann, 2006: 41).

It is also true that Augustine vehemently opposes the Christians who conceived eternity as a long duration, as if God could become weary within it (Chadwick, 2009: 135), hence, he takes the deity away from human history, embracing its completeness, but not dwelling within its movement. We find in these initial arguments a pattern of logical confusions that cannot be taken simply as deviations, but as symptoms of a greater historical and contextual *pathos*, heading towards the elaboration of an intellectual *constructo* about the inference of a deity in human history as the keystone of an indexical notion of social time. As Augustine elaborates a linear historical time for humans, and places God in an 'eternal present' found in the past and future all at once, the proposition between this and a temporal progression keeps bringing epistemological troubles, and it inserts God repeatedly into a fluid time (Marenbon, 2007: 54). We detect that much of these confusions, again, might derive from a heavy influence of Platonism (Whitrow, 1988: 191), whose basis do not leave space for metaphysical claims that comprehend distinct temporal dimensions.

The Christian theological-philosophy stresses the need for a universal unity, in such a way that the descriptions of time-related categories follow rhetorical elaborations forcing them to ponder whether positive or negative in relation to this "universality". This accounts to say that all the argumentative construction in this line of thought is based upon differentiation, having at its principle the epistemological tool of the concept of 'resemblance'. If time is movement, then the Augustinian metaphysics apparently deduced that 'eternity' should presume a single never-ending moment - a stretched fragment - of the continuous time. With this, Augustine projects the same 'time' he experiences into the universe, as Farndell claims, so on the one hand God and humans inhabit different dimensions of temporality, while on the other, 'eternity' and 'time' are more into a distinct approach to the same condition, once the 'eternity' in early Christianity is, after all, a never ending 'now' (Farndell, 2010: 77). Consistent to all the temporal revolutions in the church's dogma, perhaps here we witness the rise of the first components of an indexical approach to social time. Indexical time is a social discourse of time, promulgated and maintained orbiting the premise that "If Nature revealed such careful planning, it was easy to assume that history too was the unfolding of a design" (Haber Apud. Fraser 385). The hugeness of this postulate is such that we may say that this notion of time only finds a paradigm of such grandeur when Darwin creates a drastically new perspective of temporality deprived from 'design'.

Such had been the view of Christianity since St. Augustine, and even in the secularization of the Enlightenment, when salvationist history was under attack, it was easy to retain the concept of a transcendental time pattern in history through a divinized Nature (Haber Apud. Fraser: 385).

To explicate its relations, Augustine discerns two forms of time, namely: the intended time and the distended time; the first being a composition of time as a conscious element, the latter as an exogenous temporality (Wetzel, 1995: 347). It is notable that these are adjacent issues extracted from the necessities imposed by the theism: In response to these difficulties, Augustine finally confers to the humanly experienced time a strictly psychological aspect. To this question, foreshadowed in Chapter 14 of the book XI, Augustine's answer is only provided in chapter 27. There, we read that time is "a mental affection, or a disposition of his mind" (Wetzel, 1995: 346). To grasp the foundations of this gradual shift from the notion of a cosmic time towards a human-based mode of time, it is crucial to comprehend that narrative - a fundamental factor underlying any chronological linearity - is an element that is only present within cognitive articulations, perhaps, even as its inherent condition. Augustine seems to know that, and attempts to manipulate his argumentation's syllogisms in such a manner as to reach this very shift, producing the documented sparkles of what will come to be known as the historical trend of the psychologism of time.

Augustine approaches these conclusions in Confessions XI, in a very characteristic manner: Since the present moment is the only one that actually exists and not the past or the future, this condition means that time has to be analyzed from the standpoint of its plain observation, in other words, subjectively rather than objectively, and therefore, psychologically. With this argument Augustine makes room for the most varied interpretations, without adding particular qualities to each modality of time. From this aporia arises an ethereal figure of time in which the distinction occurs only through the peculiarities of perceptions. Among the common contradictions in the Christian initial elucubrations, this argument goes against the traces of Platonism identified in the same text, and again, accentuates the ideological divisions that the church was to witness in the coming centuries. We end up with a time that is linear, cumulative, and historical, as it is only accessible through rational operations, not only in terms of allowing its perception, but in terms of interpreting its similes too. The contradictions inherent in these works serve as important indications of changes in the *modus* and discourse between periods in which these works were made public, becoming huge influencers as cultural texts and official historical documentation.

But it was not so straightforwardly accepted; the linear-rational scheme of time faced resistance in its implementation. Augustine indicates awareness regarding the difficulty of distinguishing the divine existence from the duration in which the human being is immersed, by the impossibility of defining what time itself is.

From Augustine himself is the famous passage about the time, saying: "What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know."¹ Marenbon (2007: 45) asserts that Augustine's explanation, concerning the most complex pagan questions related to time, bases on the proposition that the world has not begun in time; it begins 'with' time. It is important to stress that from this point on, the human matter and the human world distance themselves from the divine sphere in such a fundamental way that this split finds no return over the centuries to come.

Finally, it is - one could say - out of despair, that Augustine places the deity in an eternal "now" (14:17), which is no more than projecting the particular into the universal, extending, tearing, broadening the ephemeral fragment of time as if seen under the microscope. But underneath it all, the psychological characteristic imbued in Augustine's work reveals a crucial point for the church's rituals that have the ambition to represent (bring to the present) historical facts. It could regard memory itself as the act of psychologically bringing something to the present (Wetzel, 1995: 348), thus, history as a

¹ (Confessions: 11. 14. 17)

narrated statement is a form of conferring meaning to a succession of happenings, and this function is present at the root of the ritualistic aesthetic manifestations of Christian linear temporality.

We find in this stage an important point for the scope of the present analysis; the concept of time imbued in Augustine's work bears a sentiment of continuity, and if time is cumulative and God participated in it, humanity then shares the same trail of divine interference, rendering existence as a linear sacred chronology, or the sacred history.

This makes human, social, political happenings not only meaningful once juxtaposed, but above all, necessary to the final picture of history, as Revelation, or apocalypse. Hence, this figure of an opened chaotic sacred history is the cradle of the concept of progress. In the words of Mircea Eliade, it is "precisely within the official anti-millenarism of the church that it is recognized the first manifestation of the doctrine of progress ... Only God knew the time of the End of the World and one thing seemed certain: this End was not near" (Eliade, 1972: 50). At this point, the world is no longer seen as submerged in an irreconcilable process of degradation and decay, and the ultimate end is postponed with the gradual abandonment of millenarian concepts, although the *eschaton* as a concept returns punctually throughout history.

In the work of Augustine, the *Aetas Christiana* (Christ's age) rests upon all nations, and just as it could foreshadow the withering of the condition that Rome enjoyed, so could Christian salvation be supposed to all the emperors who succeeded as long as they were faithful to the *Doctrina Christiana* (Chadwick, 2009: 130). Important to register that Jesus is an aeviternal being for Augustine, as he inhabits both chronological temporality and eternity (Wetzel apud Stump & Kretzmann, 2006: 56). It is not for any other reason that the annual count to define the age - Christian in this case - was of disproportionate value to Christianity in its post-Roman stage, with the official institution of a count that had begun with the fact (discourse) of the coming of the Son of God to earth. The years following from a punctual divine intervention in human political history inaugurate an era as a foreshadowing sign of what is to come; the *Anno Domini* (AD, or years of God, in Latin), had its definition in 527AD through the work of Dionysius Exiguus; even though his calculations were not considered correct for too long (Mosshammer, 2008: 339). It is not the creation of the universe that became the pinnacle of our time, but the physical occurrence of Jesus in political history. This theological form of history is crucial, as Mircea Eliade reminds us, because for Christianity the procession of events in the world are no longer regarded as random occurrences; they become something profoundly meaningful. These 'happenings' in the apparent chaos are signs, similes, vestiges, traces, clues, and the linear configuration of time carries a central aspect: Redemption. He states:

We must remind ourselves that, for Christianity, time is real because it has a meaning - the Redemption. "A straight line traces the course of humanity from initial Fall to final Redemption. And the meaning of this history is unique, because the Incarnation is a unique fact. Indeed, as Chapter 9 of the Epistle to the Hebrews and I Peter 3:18 emphasize, Christ died for our sins once only, once for all (*hapax, ephapax, semel*); it is not an event subject to repetition, which can be reproduced several times (*pollakis*). The development of history is thus governed and oriented by A unique fact, a fact that stands entirely alone (Eliade, 1954: 143).

Two main points are worth mentioning: First, Eliade (1992: 139) recalls that the conception of linear time and history had already been stressed as early as the "second century by Saint Irenaeus of Lyon, being taken by Saint Basil and St. Gregory, finally being explored by Saint Augustine". Second, concerning the conceptions of temporality that took wide cultural reach, we must consider that other ecclesiastical authorities tested the cyclical theory until later in history, starting with Clement of Alexandria, Minucius Felix, Arnobius and Theodoret, but "in the theories of Tycho Brahe, Kepler, Cardano, Giordano Bruno and Campanella, the cyclic theory survives" and parallels the pre-scientific temporal linearity of a Francis Bacon or Pascal, for example, albeit in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Eliade, 1992: 141).

Even millenarist perspectives permeated Christian forms of social time, for example, the eschatological theory in the work of Joaquim de Fiore, formulated between 1132 and 1202. This

notion receives its most considerable impulse as a theory that divides human history into three moments according to the order of the Holy Trinity in the Eternal Gospel. First being Father (corresponding to the Old Testament and the time of Creation and foundation of time), Son (corresponding to the New Testament and the incarnation of Christ, and the teachings of enlightenment advanced there), and finally the Holy Spirit (corresponding to the moment when humanity should be completely oriented with the due clarification of the historical event of a divine incarnation, thus being complete). As just mentioned, however, at this point in history (we regard here 12th and 13th centuries) there are enough records that prove that the cyclic theory had not yet fully withdrawn from the ecclesiastical thought (Eliade, 1992: 141), and thus was actively opposed to the idea of linearity among strict intellectual circles, reappearing in various places under the most varied formulations.

We should keep in mind that besides the indexical scheme of social time, during the fifteenth century, multiple other examples of Christian forms of chronologies existed in the shapes how official calendars were organized, presenting years in circular structures with the overlapping twelve phases of the annual zodiac cycle, being an extremely common format. It was also common that they included the demonstration of planting and harvesting seasons as purely technical guides, as Hodges claims (2008: 406), suggesting the complex dimensions of the social construction of conceptions of time serving sometimes as an instrument, sometimes as a signification of higher and mystical orders.

2. The impact of the Augustinian psychological time

Augustine seemed inserted in a historical condition in which ‘time’ does not receive full attention, and is regarded as a parallel phenomenon by the intellectual productions of his time. In this stage, Augustine draws up the following explanation: “Time is coming out of what does not yet exist, passing through what has no duration and moving into what no longer exists” (Augustine 1961, BK XI, Sect.21 apud. Weinert, 2013: 14), meaning that the topic of Time is invoked to the very centrality; in fact “Much of Book 11 of the Confessions is taken up with a meditation on the relationship between God and the created universe” (Burton, 2007: 15). And interestingly, the book 11 of Confessions - in which Augustine makes his projections about time - is among the most discussed articles in his work (Knuuttila Apud Stump & Kretzmann 2006: 109). Such is the incredible relevance of Augustinian discussion on time, regarding questions such as: how can you measure something that does not belong to any of the human senses? However, time itself is left out of most questions that address this theme during the Middle Ages. Apparently most medieval formulations regard time as a side-effect, a secondary phenomenon, derived from observations that come from our direct senses. In this regard we find curious excerpts of medieval thinking that lead to the conception of time as engendered by a mechanical aspect, thus, directly connected to the motions of celestial bodies, almost as their byproduct. As an example, relating to the miracle of Joshua, in which they stopped time to lengthen the day, Duhem registers that:

From this the Averroists derived the following conclusion: If the diurnal movement stopped, all other movements, all other changes would have to stop, for there would be no time to measure their duration (Duhem, 1987: 297).

Further on, Duhem stresses the relevance of the psychological aspect of time for Augustine in the light of the same biblical event, he writes: “Saint Augustine, on the contrary, derived from the miracle of Joshua a reason to deny the whole Peripatetic theory of time and to deny that time has any existence outside the mind” (Duhem, 1987: 297). Augustine’s Confessions keep alive this understanding, as John Duns Scotus reads it a half millennia after its publishing, who promptly denies the Aristotelian perspective of a mechanically sustained time, as registered in the fourth book of *Scriptum Oxoniense* (Duhem, 1987: 298). Throughout these periods, they often considered the concept of temporality as an element of mystery that covers a huge ditch between conscious observation and the mysterious foundations of the universe. Only divine enlightenment could reveal the obscurity of the element of time to the consciousnesses of its creation.

In these lines, 'time' is regarded as a residue or a conscious 'result' and not necessarily as an independent substance. Although, Augustine recognizes the Aristotelian principle that the movements of bodies in the universe are linked to temporality or duration, he denies that they determine duration or time; on the contrary, if they stopped, time would continue to flow (Knuuttila Apud Stump & Kretzmann, 2006: 109). It deduces that forms of measurement are only insights of time, but no form of control over time would be ever possible, in opposition to the other four natural elements of Platonic philosophy upon which human ingenuity supposedly conquered absolute manipulation. This perspective, corroborated by Augustine, again, illustrates the relational doctrine of time, which, according to Philip Burton (2007, 16), derives from the insistent use of John 8:35 in the book 11 of Confessions, and resides on the use of the verb "speech" (*loquor*) as connection of Jesus from the beginning to eternity. Important to highlight though, that according to Friedel Weinert (2013: 14), the Augustinian perspective structures time as a phenomenon that starts from the observation of the movement of bodies in space, thus not providing a complete independence of time from physical movement: "time could not exist in an empty universe" he says. As a mode of measuring, unsurprisingly, we find links of temporality to its psychological aspect. The linearized construction of history interweaves with a form of rationality that is nothing but an inspired tool for interpretation (keep in mind Augustine's early efforts in *de Doctrina*), and finally time comes handy as a conscious lens through which narrative meaning is uncovered.

Investigating the Christian logic in the discourses of some of its most important names throughout history, we can highlight the ever-increasing presence of the elements of linearity. Augustine emerges - it is worth stressing - not as another side-proponent of linear temporality, but as the greatest name of Christian theology, and for this reason the impact of his work to establish a cultural sense of time is incommensurable. His sphere of influence is such that, as Jacques Le Goff points out: "all medieval theologians, without exception, were to some extent followers of Augustine" (Le Goff, 2005: 16). His premises quickly flowed from the intellectual core to the sentiment and the *pathos* of an age. The whole cultural process unleashed in the midst of the Christian discourse was, as we have pointed out earlier, engendered toward a historical tendency that slowly solidified the institution of the concept of "sacred linear time" in the centrality of a cultural establishment (Haber Apud Fraser, 1972: 395-396). It is very important to consider that, beyond all these metaphysical speculations at the heart of Christian philosophy, the actual attitudes toward time were in principle the direct reflection of their theoretical propositions.

An example of its influence, as Le Goff (2005: 16) recalls, it is with Augustine's proposition that the basis of the jurists' arguments gradually oriented towards "absorbing the natural law of the state into a supernatural justice of ecclesiastical law". In any organization and production of Western politics and science that find the Christian illustration of the logic of the world as a common factor, we will somehow find copies of the matrix of behavior or thought as performance or narrative that leads towards linearized temporality as well as sacredness and its moral derivatives. It closely relates moral questions to indexical linear temporality as the medium of its realization, considering the actualization of morality as a group of subsequent historical facts. In this example, faced with questions about the problem of free will against the proposal of divine providence, in a linear temporality, Augustine explains in Consolation of Philosophy, Book five that: "since the order of the universe proceeds from Providence and that nothing is left to the initiative of men, it follows that our evil deeds also come from the Author of all that constitutes good" (Le Goff, 2005: 16).

Here, Augustine waves at human actions as something distinct in dimension from the quality of God, who inhabits a whole from which all potentialities have already been, necessarily, freely realized. Thus, the human work, though free and susceptible to punishment, is free-willed, while God may also possess omniscience. If it were not, one could ponder: "Why, under these conditions, wait or beg?", after all.

It is precisely from these mystical formulations from Augustine about the nature of linear time that we witness some of the earliest efforts to add to the human consciousness the ability to formalize

internally - psychologically - what would come to be regarded as a 'response' to an external phenomenon. This factor makes him one of the founders of psychological time, at first, as a mere relation of the sensation of before and after (Weinert, 2013: 13). Later, it would be understood that, as is currently evident, a psychological time is a time subjected to "psychological changes," which means that there is no temporal unit per se, nor the object of time to which we would all have access to, but a function of this aspect in our understanding, a category of knowledge with which we assume the powers of a temporal variation. The linear social time, being the facet of a deep concerning question about duration, becomes explicit as it receives along history a multiplicity of politically charged interpretations, being Augustine's view one that provided profound cultural impacts.

3. Some Final Remarks

These trends of thought of an eschatological linear time measured through rational operations resonate in other works along history, as in the above-mentioned case of John Duns Scotus (early 14th century). In a leap, this same aspect returns as late as the Cartesian thought. Even though it was divided into two elements (duration and time) time itself remains a mental entity while duration is regarded as an objective element. For proof of that, we see resonations in the Third Meditation where Descartes proposes that "God, and only God is self-caused" (Flage & Bonnen, 1997: 841) for, in the Cartesian postulate, the human mind establishes a relationship of "measurement" and "counting" to temporality to make it possible to contemplate its flow. His perspective is hence academically regarded as "cinematic" with duration being composed of divisible particles of temporality, taken as a constant, a continuum, put forth by conscious operation (Secada, 1990: 45), even though there was also the division between an objective duration and a subjective temporality. In Descartes' words:

Of these attributes or modes there are some which exist in the things themselves, and others that have only an existence in our thought; thus, for example, time, which we distinguish from duration taken in its generality, and call the measure of motion, is only a certain mode under which we think duration itself (Descartes, 2002: 21).

To further extrapolate some parallels with Kantian noumena, its judgments and faculties could be, for logical reasons, perfectly convenient, but this could overflow the present scope. As long as Cartesian dualism is regarded, it is perhaps fair to state that it then shares a remarkable resemblance to the psychological proposition of Augustinian time, as it renders the subjective perspective as something isolated from the objective duration.

Time becomes an instrument of measurement of duration; 'duration' taken as a real *datum*, and time, presumably, its covalent mental model. This psychological perspective of time as a 'potential time' spotted by Pierre Duhem on Scotus' works, sheds light upon the conception that Christian linear temporality is not just a manifestation of the mind despite physical phenomena, but on the contrary; although there were physical phenomena, the understanding of these phenomena would be of another order; namely a relation of '*logos*' versus 'substance'. We cannot thus claim that time would cease even if there was an extraordinary action, such as the paralysis of the celestial bodies (referred to as heaven). This denotes that temporality becomes a psychological phenomenon at the moment it indicates that the paralysis of celestial bodies would only interfere in the units, in the momentary absence of measures and reference points for the establishment of a mathematical or logical discourse about duration.

The importance of subjectivity as a provider of the truth to a discourse of reality engenders this dualist relation, as it will be present in the Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) later on, manifested as the basis of the Kantian claim about the linearity of time for example (Pruss, 2006: 37), proposing that time is a logical manifestation provided that - and only from the fact that - one can identify changes in nature that will give rise to the very concept of 'time'.

It is very important, however, to point out that the autonomy of the rational elaboration of these conclusions does not render the argument invalidated by 'subjectivism'. Relying on reason as a unit of measure cannot be, at this historical stage, a premise for the demoralization of results, because in this context reason itself can be nothing but the manifestation of the divinely enlightened human spirit, a *mathesis*. We must keep it in mind that Augustine occupies the central stage as the greatest proponent of rational techniques for identification of similes hidden in history through exegesis - as shown in the beginning of this work while concerning the cultural relevance of *de Doctrina*. To consider that humans had a purely subjective reason, and that this human reason was itself a result of historical, cultural, social and political conflicts would only become a prevalent idea much later in history, probably starting in Hegel (Honneth, 2003: 60). Therefore, Augustine's subjectivism or psychologism still carries out the autonomy of reason as an instrument of enlightenment, one more trick of God's providence, and only in this way it can be properly understood.

Augustine's works establish a worldview that imbues a linear temporality over historical reality that, first, stains the cloth of physical reality with 'signification', permitting the reading of the world's signs, a world supposedly designed in a linearized, continuous, finalist and above all, significant manner. Indexical social time - in the way Augustine designed it - is proved in the human manifestations of recreation of meaning, based on this conception of a sacred linear history, clearly seeing in the way Christian medieval temporality took history for its purposes, stipulating metrics and interpretive systems. These systems should then allow for a retrospective 'reading' of happenings in history, in order to interpret the condition of the 'now', and hence the future. From Augustine's *Doctrina Christiana* therefore comes the set of rules by which the scattered signs are meant to be reunited, especially in the form of words through exegesis (Williams Apud Stump & Kretzmann, 2006: 68), to which the truest reality owes its interpretation.

The temporality sustained by this indexicality - on the assumption of history as a progressive cumulative line - permeated history with meaningful divine interventions susceptible to interpretation, turning the gaze of the ecclesiastical intellectual centrality backwards as a constant effort for the construction of cultural identities and search for the meaning of history as the greatest divine work of all. Augustine indicates the matter of history - as a revelation proper to the symbols through which divine reality manifests itself - as a picture waiting for its interpretation. Unsurprisingly, in his second book, *De Doctrina*, we read:

Whatever the subject called history reveals about the train of past events (from Latin "*ordine temporum transactorum*") is of the greatest assistance in interpreting the holy books, even if learnt outside the church as part of primary education" (Augustine, 1996: 105).

This indexical notion of social time is a set of ideologically construed attitudes towards a sacred linearized historical time. It manifests itself in the premises that drive political actions, and in this sense, Augustine can be regarded as the first major proponent of a meaningful linear form of historical time, which underpinned the hermeneutic sciences that succeeded historically. Hence, in the core of this Augustinian indexical temporality we find the retrospective interpretation of mysterious happenings in history in search for meaning. According to Augustine, knowledge presents itself through signs or similes known by the proper study of chronologies (Chadwick, 2009: X).

These perspectives are persistent, present among the rituals of the indexical temporality that became the basis of scholasticism, reaching an extraordinary historical extension that ranges from Augustine to Aquinas, the Renaissance to enlightenment. These eras, by themselves, brought further layers and yet other paradigms for social temporality worth analysing, which indicate differences in types and complexities that must be saved for another time, given the broad scope of research regarding their rich vastness.

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