



TIME: AN INCISIVE QUESTION FOR THE HUMAN BEING

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ABSTRACT

This article offers an analysis of the term time based on the review of the key moments of its interpretation through the history of thought. To this effect, an analysis was made based on the three key stages of understanding this concept; that is, the Hellenistic perspective, the issue in the Jewish thought, and the particularity of the Christian view manifested in the thought of San Agustín (1998), (2005), (2007). An implicit aspect of this analysis is the close relationship between time and eternity; relationship which is nonetheless marked by the difference between eternity, which experiences no change in its existential horizon, and time, which is constantly part of a process of change. Finally, and as an element that provides a more anthropological dimension to the problem, the review relates to Heidegger's thought (1999), (2009) and his conclusions on the issue, which led to our conclusion that time is given meaning by the human being –the Dasein– who lives in the presence of their soul and conscience; for the human being is a historical being who opens itself to questions and reflections, getting to answers from its ability to make interpretations as a being immersed in time.

Keywords: time, eternity, day-to-day, being, human consciousness.

RESUMEN

Este artículo pretende ofrecer un análisis del término tiempo a partir de un recorrido de los momentos fundamentales de su interpretación en la historia del pensamiento. Para ello, se hace una reflexión sobre los tres estadios fundamentales de comprensión del concepto; esto es, la perspectiva helénica, la cuestión en el pensamiento judío y la particularidad de la visión cristiana manifiesta en el pensamiento de San Agustín (1998), (2005), (2007). Un aspecto implícito es la estrecha relación de tiempo y eternidad; marcada por la diferencia donde la eternidad recorre su horizonte de extensión existencial sin eventuales cambios, mientras que esto es inevitable para el tiempo que constantemente se ve envuelto en un proceso de mutación. Finalmente, y como elemento que proporciona una dimensión más antropológica de la problemática, se pone a este



recorrido en conexión con el pensamiento de Heidegger (1999), (2009) y sus conclusiones acerca de la cuestión, donde se concluye que el tiempo es propio del hombre, del ser-ahí, que vive en presencia de su alma y de su conciencia; pues, es el hombre un ser histórico que se abre a interrogantes y reflexiones, alcanzando respuestas desde su capacidad interpretativa en cuanto al ser en el tiempo.

Palabras claves: tiempo, eternidad, cotidianidad, ser, conciencia humana.

RIASSUNTO

Questo articolo pretende offrire un'analisi del termine tempo iniziando con il rivedere i momenti fondamentali della sua interpretazione nella storia del pensiero. Per questo si rende una riflessione sulle tre fasi fondamentali di comprensione del concetto; cioè, la prospettiva ellenica, la questione nel pensiero giudeo e la particolarità della visione cristiana manifesta nel pensiero di San Agustín (1998), (2005), (2007). Un aspetto implicito è la stretta relazione di tempo ed eternità; marcata per la differenza dove l'eternità ricorre il suo orizzonte di estensione esistenziale senza cambi eventuali, mentre questo è inevitabile per il tempo che costantemente si incontra impegnato in un processo di mutazione. Infine, e come elemento che fornisce una dimensione più antropologica della problematica, si mette questo percorso in connessione con il pensiero di Heidegger (1999), (2009), e le sue conclusioni sulla questione, dove si conclude che il tempo è proprio dell'uomo, dell'essere-li, che vive in presenza della sua anima e della sua coscienza; poiché è l'uomo un essere storico che si apre a domande e riflessioni, raggiungendo risposte, partendo dalla sua capacità interpretativa in quanto all'essere nel tempo.

Parole chiave: tempo, eternità, quotidianità, essere, coscienza umana.

INTRODUCTION

Many are the expressions commonly used to describe the human experience of time: "times have changed", "I can't; I don't have time!", "these are difficult times", "behold the signs of end-time!", "it's time for conversion", "the good old times!" In fact, these expressions manifest the human beings' consciousness of time, and the deep experience of limitation that people feel in front of its reality.

This issue is often ignored in its meaning and relevance when people are confronted with their daily lives. Nonetheless, whether one is aware or not that all things are connected to time, its presence is unmistakably necessary to the realization and edification of the world. Therefore, the reflection proposed in this article –far from attempting to reach full comprehension of its meaning, and to cover all possibilities for reflection– attempts to heighten the importance of time and its meaning, provided by the various lines of thought available through history. This is achieved through clarifying certain questions that are fundamental for the understanding of the subject matter.

What follows is a brief description of the concepts of time presented from the viewpoints of the pre-Christian Greek, Jewish and Christian conceptions, with the objective



of promoting a better understanding of the term time, and from there open ways for interpretation from the point of view of the writer. This historical review intends to offer a more finished contribution.

THE CONCEPT OF TIME IN HISTORY

The question that marks the beginning of this journey of reflection is the same question that has been and continues to be present in many people in the search for conscience of the factual presence of time in the world. A human being is marked and regulated by the perception of the passing from one instant to the next which is distinct, and constantly progressing; where only that human being can conceive itself as being in the world, because it knows itself as being in time (González, 2002).

In fact, to arrive at a closer and more concrete answer to the question of time, and to find its true meaning in human life, it's necessary to turn the gaze to the origins of human history itself, and then move forward around the fundamental perception of the concept of time, given that this is the "basic assumption of all history that is authentic" (Ruíz, 1996).

It is generally accepted that the first conception of the temporal which has been determinant in history is that of the pre-Christian Greek. Its origins are marked by a continuous relationship between time and eternity, where time is conceived as infinite in its endless spinning, and in this way it resembles the perennial characteristic of eternity (Trejos, 2000). Both concepts, intertwined in a mutual relationship, constitute one universal being since, in themselves, they are eternal in their duration; where time is characterized for a continuous flow that does not entail beginning and end (González, 2002), overcoming all limits of the immanence that can identify it with any aspect of temporality.

From this point of view, it is determined that it is not possible to qualify the passing of time other than something that is as much inborn and imperishable as the world itself, since that of which the world is made –matter– is also eternal and imperishable; "it is a whole which is still, without end nor beginning" (Parménides, 2003, Fragment 8,4), for it has not been created: "This order of the world, the same for all, was not made (ἐποίησεν) by any god, nor man; but was and is, and ever shall be ever-living fire (αἰεζῶον), lit as per measures and put out as per measures" (Heraclitus, Fragment 30, cited by Pérez, 2009).

In the pre-Christian Greek conception, there isn't a temporal beginning that is the beginnings of time (that are physical); since there can't be times before such beginnings because the idea of beginning would be subjected in the middle of a temporal line that is larger and that cannot be explained by such a beginning. Everything prior to the beginnings would have to be placed beyond all times (in the metaphysics). The idea of the beginnings of time is more identifiable due to the idea of principle or foundation (metaphysics) of time. Therefore, for the Greek thought, time is not found within the bounds of a reality (material, concrete); it is rather found in an intangible plane where only the eternal is true and only it is real (Ruíz, 1996).

For the Greek, what was definitely important was the concept of a permanent cycle that reproduces itself endlessly, in a process of degradation, moving away from the



genuine being; in other words, the ideal consisted in escaping oneself away from time or cancelling it by remaking it backwards (Ruíz, 1996). Consequently, the Greek tried to justify itself in front of those who, in one way or another, rejected their cyclical conception of time, which was conceived as a circular constant that restarts all the time. It is a reappearing of essentially identical events, based on the periodic impulses of Nature (Capella, 1990), where "what was, will be again, what has been done, will be done again, and there is nothing new under the sun!" (Ecclesiastes 1:9) (Bible of Jerusalem). This determines the Theory of the Eternal Return, in which time and world are eternal, where all that has happened, still happens and will happen again; it is something that was pre-determined without ability to come about in a different way, other than the way it repeatedly continues to happen:

"If one were to believe the Pythagoreans, the same way things that are identical in number; then, I will speak again, holding this staff in my hand and you will be seated as you are now, and all other things will behave the same way; and one has to think that the time is the same. Since, movement being also one itself, similarly, of many things that are the same, the one that came prior, and the one that will successively come, will be one and identical, and so will be its number; all things the same, including time also." (Eudemus, Physics II, 3.fr.51; cited by Mondolfo, 2003).

Therefore, one can assert that: "a cyclic conception of time corresponds to a conception of evasion (...) because within the circle there's nothing other than the eternal recurrence of the same, like a wheel that turns in empty space; withdrawing itself to a process that, since it comes from nowhere, leads nowhere" (Ruíz, 1996). Hence, the Greek thought does not acknowledge the perspective of creation, for "the world must be eternal, regarding eternity as duration without beginning nor end: perpetual duration in both ways" (Reinares, 2004); that is, time and eternity.

Definitely, for the Greek thought, time and eternity are intertwined in such a way that they may produce two possible durations of the same kind, that may even allow for a quantitative difference, but not a qualitative one. These are durations that oscillate in parallel, nonetheless marked by the difference where eternity runs along the horizon of their existential extensions while experiencing no change, which is impossible for time which is constantly involved in the process of change.

This view allows, in part, the Greek thought, and in particular Aristotle, to associate time and movement as phenomena that take place simultaneously. For the philosopher, time is movement in itself, or something that is related to movement; for, even in the case of movement not perceived at all, it suffices to notice that one's mind moves to realize that time is passing (Mora, 2004). Henceforth, if there is movement, and it is eternal, there is the transition of one's reality from one thing to another.

Therefore, if movement is seen as the passing from one point to another, marked by a measurement of distance, it is unavoidable that a process of transitioning between a before and an after will occur. These are fundamental facts for the existence of time. Thus, for Aristotle "time is the number (measure) of movement along a before and an after (the



previous, and the post). Time is not a number, but a kind of number because it can be measured, and measures can only be expressed numerically.” (Mora, 2004).

Following in the same Greek thought on temporal-eternal duration, Plotinus takes a step forward with respect to the problem on the beginning of the world and the immutability of God. He starts by accepting Aristotle’s point of view that time is given the concept of an enumerating reality; that is, the soul or internal consciousness of time. He continues ahead in his reflection to state that time cannot be a number only, or a mere measurement of movement, because it must have its own reality with respect to that movement. This is because time is not a category of what is sensible in the face of the eternity of what is intelligible; it is what one could call –although Plotinus himself did not use this expression– an intimate category (Mora, 2004). Therefore, time is in reality an apparent moving image of eternity, subject to eternity. The time of the soul is born from the most intimate of oneself; that is, from “intelligence”. In other words, for Plotinus, time is the “successive prolonging of the life of the soul” (Mora, 2004, p. 3497).

What has been presented thus far leads one to think that both positions specifically propose the same system –circular–, but with different approaches in their conceptual structure. The ancient Greek proposed a concept of an eternity that is temporalized; whereas, Plotinus proposes a concept of time that is eternalized (Reinares, 2004).

Across the Greek conception there is the Judaic view, which determines a particular way of understanding time, based on the biblical paradigm of temporality as a straight line that is extending. This conception sees the world as having a beginning and an end. Its movement comes from a starting point and continues to an arriving point with limited duration. From there, it presents the scene for a story, which involves the history of salvation, through a finalized process, teleologically oriented where the beginning is a function of the end (Ruíz, 1996). The concept is identified by a continuous transiting through the road that begins with Creation, passing through the long journey of human history until it arrives at the messianic times.

Nonetheless, within Judaism, cyclic movement is also present since the reoccurring of history within history is a constant for the Jew. This determines that the Jewish time is identified by a continuous return to the past; not as a successive return over the same, but as a periodicity that is seen in the story of Creation (Genesis 1:1-2-4 y 2:4-24) (Bible of Jerusalem); the exit from Egypt with its important festivities and happenings (Exodus 34:10-28) (Bible of Jerusalem), where the Jews recall these events not as simple memories, but as actual returns to lived experiences which they are called to relive in the current time, in accordance with what is revealed by God itself to their ancestors: “Yahweh spoke to Moses and said: ‘Speak to the Israelites and say: The solemn festivals of Yahweh to which you will summon them are my sacred assemblies. These are my solemn festivals:” (Leviticus 23:1) (Bible of Jerusalem).

What this determines is the experience of a life lived by an individual, which must occur regularly and which is expressed in the cycles of exile and redemption; in other words, spiritual experiences of a life lived continually in a parallel system, whereby the processes

of slavery and redemption, slavery and freedom are repeated, and one's transit through the history of salvation made a reality.

The general idea in the conception of time in Judaism involves two orientations that merge momentarily: the periodicity of the cyclic system and a growing straight line or the straight line of progress in which the world moves towards an ultimate goal, and the future will be essentially different from all times past. This marks a difference with respect to the Greek conception and its approach of eternalizing time, in which everything perpetually goes back to itself, as in a divine sphere; diversely, the Judaic conception proposes another approach for temporality which circles around humankind, but is driven by a straight line which gives structure to its environment.

The above means that the human being does not walk returning over itself in a continuous repetition of actions, but moves forward to a specific point in the horizon in search for something that gives meaning to its existence every day of its life. The human being is not interested in the process of repeating its actions, but in exercising new actions that make it more knowledgeable of its reality and closer to the truth, helping it to break away from known horizons and to get into new horizons.

Therefore, the Jewish conception is structured by the movement of horizons around humankind, since the horizon "corresponds to the limiting circle, the line where seemingly earth and heaven meet. This line is the limit of one's own field of vision. When one moves forward, the line moves back in front of ourselves and closes behind us, in such a way that, depending on the various places where one may be, there are different horizons" (Lonergan, 1994). There is a continuous return to the past, but as a search for a continuous experience of the present life.

However, it is the future that takes the main focus, because "linear time is essentially a time for waiting. A wait that extends between two scatological happenings" (Capella, 1990): to be in God and to meet God. Therefore, one must understand this linear process from the description of a world created by God; because for the Judaic conception "time exists since and because the world exists, for more than in time, the world has been created with time" (Ruiz, 1996).

Furthermore,

"(...) the world is God's creation, and not generation (pantheism) or degeneration (dualism) of the divine. The relentless distance that mediates between the being of the creator (sic) and the being of the creature projects itself inevitably in a way that it persists in the being of both, in its respective duration. The duration of the creator (sic) is eternity; that of the creature is time" (Ruiz, 1996).

Hence, in this same linear process there is an approach that goes beyond itself in relation to time. It accepts everything that had been proposed until then, but it places sight towards the future from a new optic; for the fundamental expectation for the Jew is interrupted by the presence of who made history in History: the coming of Jesus. With it, a new direction begins for time, where the growing straight line is now marked by this new



historical fact that is determined as a time for now, but not yet; for there is a time in which the world is still not (Proverbs 8: 22-31) (Bible of Jerusalem).

With the person of Jesus Christ, the time for waiting determined by the Judaic conception will be abolished by the presence of the Messiah who has arrived now. Jesus of Nazareth comes to confirm that the hour of salvation has arrived because it is not the hour of the return of a prophet, it is not the hour of an exceptional event: it is only an ordinary hour. When he is proclaimed the saving Messiah, the end of the time for waiting – the fundamental wait for the Judaic tradition– is established, and the time for acting begins (Capella, 1990) and, therefore, a new possibility of understanding time is established; for He is “the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and End” (Revelation 22: 13) (Bible of Jerusalem).

This new idea of time is supported by both ways of conceiving time; in other words, on one side it completely assumes the fact of eternity, because God, author of creation exists; and on the other side, that related to temporality, because the world exists, for it is real and distinct from God (Ruíz, 1996). Therefore, the essential points that straighten time, making it an ascending line, assuming and transcending its cyclic and ebbing straight-line representations are: the beginning of creation, the apogee of the incarnation and the term of consummation (Ruíz, 1996).

This defines a new way of conceiving time; that is, the time of the Judaic-Christian conception proper, or the ascending-growing-straight-line time, which is a constant in the history of salvation. To walk horizontally in search for an answer to existence, drives man to start the vertical road of his transcendence, producing the encounter with himself through his neighbours, and promoting his approaching to God.

THE APOGEE OF INTERNALIZED TIME

Having discussed the historical conceptions of time, it is now time to enter specifically in the very centre of the topic of the meaning of time; beginning with particular conceptions offered by certain authors with answers-definitions to the question that now glimpse in this path of reflection.

As discussed, the fundamental ways of conceiving time –Greek and Judaic– do not lose direction when faced against each other; otherwise, they make possible –when considered together– to promote the perception of the diversity seen in the Christian view. In other words, not because of the linking of the two the Christian is originated; rather, their structural aspects provide fundamental structure that edifies the Christian conception – eternity and temporality–.

The author that will guide the topic in this section is Agustín of Hippo (San Agustín), who offers a perspective of unsurpassable depth. In particular, he assumes as a way of thought what is defined by the Judaic-Christian straight line; that is, starting with the concept of creation, according to which the world is originated in the hands of the Creator in a determined time, together with time. Conceptions that are related, though distinct, each with planes specifically diverse (Reinares, 2004): one towards eternity, the Creator;



the other towards temporality, the creature. This idea challenges the Pre-Christian Greek conception which “conceives time as in the same line of eternity; rather, eternity in the line of time” (Reinares, 2004). It also surpasses the Judaic view, since in addition to following in the plan of hope it also proposes the opening of humans to the plan of transcending towards themselves and beyond themselves, to the divine, finding the way to the real meaning of their existence.

To this respect, San Agustín enables a radical change to the conceptual structure of what is presented by the Greek thought; since for him, time and eternity are two durations specifically diverse, of intimate relationships with realities essentially distinct: being mutable and being immutable, given that “there is a straight distinction between eternity and time, for time does not exist without successive mutability, and in eternity there isn’t mutability at all” (San Agustín, 2007).

Eternity is that which does not entail beginning, nor end; that which determines an infinite being proper: God, in his existence or continuous and simultaneous duration, which is not mutable at all; where nothing is past, –it would almost not exist; where nothing is future, –as if it wouldn’t exist yet. There is nothing. Is. For in eternity there is no ‘was’, nor is there ‘will be’; because what was, it is not anymore; and that what will be, it is not yet. But whatever it is, nothing is mutable in it (San Agustín, 1998). Time, with beginning and end, of fragmented existence, and of a reality that is and is not is created, finite, and accidental; with a trajectory towards perfection, passing through the mutable process of existence of the creature; for the “cause or reason for being is in not being anymore, such that we cannot truly say that time exists if not when it tends to not be” (San Agustín, 2005, p. 479).

Consequently, eternity and time are two dimensions which are totally diverse that can never be equated. For one part, there is God, Supreme Being and Creator, immutable, eternal, infinite, who does not stop being his own being and, because of that, does not depend on the duration of the world. For the other, the world, which is not eternal but dependent on his being –the Creator (González, 2002)– is constituted from the free will of God’s creation and therefore “has the virtue of linking the world with God without leaving God subordinated to the world” (Reinares, 2004, p. 310). Thus, the world, characterized by the presence of all that has been created, which indeed has a duration, is in a constant stage of change; change that makes time coincide with the movement that conducts the existence of creatures, but where the proceedings of one and the other happen in God.

Now, being God eternal and creator of all things, it is evident that time is the duration proper of all creatures, and consequently that time is something created. With this, it is acknowledged the creative power of God and of its temporal consequences; it is an answer to the question that the Greek thinkers could not resolve because their conception of an eternalized world; the ultimate sense of temporality present in all beings (González, 2002).

The fact of being creature means that there was a principle for the action of creating, which gives meaning to the existence of something that is new, no yet perceived until the time of its present reality; presupposing then that it has started to be at a specific time. But



at the same time that the creature has begun to be, together with it, with its existence – mutually–, a particular mode of duration is given; that is, time. This existence of time is correlated in parallel with the durable existence of the creature, so committedly that “the existence of time is dependent on the existence of the creature” (González, 2002, p. 210), for where there is no “single creature, whose successive movements do not generate time, there can never exist any time” (Agustín, 2007, p. 788).

Thus, time and world are so intimately related and committed to one another that it is not possible to conceive their existence in a time that is not the same instant in which they were created, simultaneously; in other words, there wasn't the one before the other, for nothing existed before creation. Given this, one can say that the world was not conceived in time, but it was indeed conceived together with time (San Agustín, 2007). Because, what is produced in time, is produced after and before certain time, or after the past and before the future; but there could not be a past because there was not a creature through whose movements change would have been enacted.

The world and time belong to Creation; independent in their creatural essence, but both necessary to each other in their existence, for things in themselves are constituted by shapeless and shaped matter which produces, on shapeless matter, sequential change that determines the presence of time in such things. However, all species sensitive to the mutation of time, once reduced and consumed, leaves only the shapeless, through which things change and return, from species to species, disallowing the occurrence of the vicissitudes of times, because without variety of movements there are no times, and where there is absolutely no shape, neither is there variety at all.

Nonetheless, San Agustín, when asked about what time is, does not doubt to say that if nobody asks him the question, he knows the answer; but if he wants to explain it to someone who asks, he won't know what to say. Moreover, he does not hesitate to state “if nothing happened, there wouldn't be a past time; and if nothing occurred, there wouldn't be a future time; and if nothing existed, there wouldn't be a present time” (San Agustín, 2005, p. 478). Here one can find the expression of three qualifications on time: past, future and present which are to be observed in their singularities, for this doesn't mean that there are strictly three times in one same reality.

It is warranted to note that the determining presence of the three times is found in the temporal reality, but where past and future, if identified with something real, must be explained as present; for past and future do not exist. The past is a was, not an is anymore. It exists as a memory. The future is a will be, it isn't an is yet; it exists as plan or desire. The present is an ephemeral is, so sudden that when explained it is not present anymore, rather a past or a future, for “the present doesn't have a space at all” (Agustín, 2005, p. 481). The past fades away while the future is yet to be. They only meet in the present time, as memories or as hope.

Therefore, only one time exists: the present. That of things past, memories; that of things present: attention (*attentio*); and that of things in the future: expectations; because these are three things that somehow exist in the soul (San Agustín, 1979), and outside of it, they don't exist. Moreover, one should not think that the present is a time that lasts and



stays extending to receive the realities of past and future; for if it were, it wouldn't be the present time anymore, but eternity.

Furthermore, being time a reality present without physical extension, one may deduce that a temporal extension is something strictly of the soul, for time is nothing else than an extension; but an extension of what? I don't know; it would be surprising if it wasn't an extension of the soul itself (San Agustín, 2005). This determines that the present –which exists in the soul– is given as open to a constant and permanent relationship by extending itself forwards and backwards; for, “the present time, in the mind, unfolds or projects, –distentio–, towards the past and towards the future, incorporating both” (Reinares, 2004, p. 315).

In summary, this process fared by San Agustín promotes the intellection that there is a dictation of the mind where the temporal reality is comprehended: the soul. This reality comprises interchangeable times among events not yet lived that are instilled in the mind as projects to be completed –the future–, and those that once were and that now remain integrated as memories –the past–; but that concretize in the present, the meeting point of both kinds of events. Thus, this change from one time to the other, which exists in the present, is governed by a measure of the movement that arouses –implicit of the mind– which conceives the permanence of the being that was and the one that is yet to be in one and the same realm, but without letting them affect their own structures, remaining intact, keeping each element belonging to the past, and anticipating the ones belonging to the future.

From this intertwining of temporal categories is that San Agustín arrives to the notion of time, stating that it is a distension of the soul, for only the soul has the capacity to assume and promote simultaneously the three dimensions of time; from a single existential movement in the consecutive participation of events of past, as well as those events that are yet to happen.

THE DAILY FACTUALITY OF TIME

Upon journeying these historical lines of thought and reasoning on their various dimensions and conceptual particularities on the term time, a stimulus is generated –from interpretation and reflection– to immerse oneself in its nucleus which is the human being; with that, I intent to merge toward a line of thought that allows to extend and connect the presence of the temporal reality of the intellectual analysis with the field of the factual. The guiding light in this section is the approach by Martin Heidegger (1999) and his conception of time.

Specifically, in his work *Being and Time*, Heidegger's (2009) concern is to answer the question of ‘what is the being?’ in its strict sense, which is the sense that provides that the being comes to identify itself as a being, to understand itself as such, and to comprehend the reason for the existence of all things that exist. But, Heidegger warns that such question is dictated in all western traditions, and that its interpreting background involves certain misconception, because:



“(…) it has always been thought about the being as of something that is ahead, as a constant presence, and thus it has been thought from a temporal fashion, beginning from the present time, bringing conclusions about the meaning of the being within the scope of the temporal, without questioning if this is even possible, discarding from that meaning of the being the experience of accomplishment of the life of any human being, which is not a mere present, but rather a factual-historical experience, existence proper, a continuous projecting of oneself towards the future from the past, a continuous making of plans and attempting to realize them” (Lozano, 2006, p. 49).

Martin Heidegger's goal is to arrive at an answer that justifies the existence of time in a dimensional field. In a way that enables, in itself, the opening of horizons of understanding the Being, and discovering if, fundamentally, the Being must realize itself in time. There is also the intent of explaining that such investigation around the temporal sense of the Being is only possible from the clarification of the real presence of the human being, who actually conceives the existence of the Being (Lozano, 2006).

Now, for the author the human being –which is identified as the being-there– is who exclusively may be able to comprehend the Being, since it perceives the presence of this Being in its own existence and that this Being somehow concerns its own existence. As opposed to the inability of other beings which only are there existing as such, unable to transcend over their state of existence, for they are mere presence in the present time. Meanwhile, there are two aspects between Being and being-there; on one side, there is a distinction between the two due to the way the being-there exists; on the other side, there is a relationship between Being and being-there, for

“(…) the being-there is not the human being per se; it is the human being while it relates to the Being, which is found in the comprehension of the Being. Comprehension that serves as a link between the question of the Being and the intrinsic finitude of the human being who is prone to it. More than a mere synonym of human being, the being-there is a ‘happening’ or a ‘headed to’ that takes place in the human being” (Lozano, 2006).

It is through this realization in the human being that Heidegger's thought starts to go deeper and closer towards the centre of the current question; in other words, the being-there which is no longer just any being now takes a specific place in its mood of being of the being-there; that is, it is the being-in-the-world. This presence means that it is not an isolated subject, closed in its existential axis; it is rather open to a constant relationship with the other beings or things that transit around it, enabling the identification of its own particular events, but that only achieves relevance as long as it is involved from the thinking of, or paying attention to it; for, “the being-there must be seen (...) in the set of intentions, meanings and things with which it relates to; and things or beings must not be taken as things in themselves, but instead as related to the being-there” (Lozano, 2006). This means that “the being-there, or human being, can only live referring to the beings around it. No human being may, even for an instant, stop thinking of anything or not paying attention to something” (Lozano, 2006).

Now,



“(…) the relationship with the Being that characterizes the human being is not a simple faculty or essential attribute, but the highlighting of its specificity, for its acts or properties are ways of being. The essence of the human being is at the same time its existence. What the human being is, is at the same time its way of being or existing; its way of being-there, of temporalizing. It is not about remaining in inactivity or contemplation; but rather living drawing possibilities, taking risks, existing.” (Lozano, 2006).

This leads to the comprehension that the being-there is not just any being as all others that are around it. The truth is it cannot be accepted as being really a being, but instead an existing; that is, a reality whose being carries its being (Mora, 2004). And it is in this reality that Heidegger starts to demonstrate the presence of a mutable existence that, from its particular movements, spatial replacements, due to the movement from one point to the other –physically or intellectually– produces a series of events that model a new structure around it. A fact really occurs inasmuch as a more intimate relationship develops between the being-there and the beings that surround it. This relationship allows to discover that there is an encounter between these two distinct realities, but belonging to a reciprocal and existential experience in a temporal instant that enables the acknowledging the very existence of the being-there, not only as being-in-the-world, but as a being-with-the-other-in-the-world.

Now, “the being of ones with the others in the world, the jointly sharing, has an outstanding ontological determination. The world’s fundamental mode of being-there that ones and others share together is speech” (Heidegger, 1999); and, this speech is what enables the intimate encounter of one with the other, providing language for expression out of presential interpretation from the relationship that develops, thus offering a sudden dialogue or one of longer duration from the perspective of ‘I am with the other’, and ‘the others being equally with others’ (Heidegger, 1999). Therefore, this ‘being open to the other’ who is different from my own self, since what is heard, told, assumed, confronted or ignored is what allows discovering the own reality of the being that is in the being-there, in other words, the one that one is.

The reality that surrounds the being-there-with-the-other is a realizable concrete fact belonging to a factual, temporal dimension that makes the being-there find the beings, producing a day-to-day life lived through mutual relationships. In this day-to-day life, according to Heidegger, “the being-there is not the being that I am; rather, the day-to-day life of the being-there is the being that one is. And in accordance with it, the being-there is the time that one is with others: the time of the one” (Heidegger, 1999). Thus, it is possible to understand that the being-there is time proper, for it is the central nucleus of the existence of the being with respect to the possibility of identifying the temporal presence of all things that exist. This being is the only one able to intellectualize such presence and at the same time confirm the mutation of all other beings that move around it.

All this movement takes place in the sphere of the day-to-day; for it is there that the process of displacement occurs between mutable beings, configuring their particular processes of a now-present, a no-longer-present and a not-yet-present; that is, the time as present, the past as irreversible, and the future as undetermined; but where all that occurs



flows from an undetermined future to a static past, only existing in the present. And it is in the present time that existential reality occurs in the day-to-day life of the being-there. But, “day-to-day can only be understood as the determined temporality that escapes from the genuine future, if it is confronted with the time proper of the future being of the have been. What the being-there says about time, says it from the day-to-day life” (Heidegger, 1999); that is, from the temporality that understands that which was, and expects that which is to come.

Thus, all this development around the concept of time that is provided in the essence of the being-there and conjugated in the existence of the same being-there with the other beings, and that is realized in the realm of the day-to-day, Heidegger presents it in his conference *The Concept of Time*, affirming:

“(…) the being-there is always in the mode of its possible temporal being. The being-there is time, time is temporal. The being-there is not the time, but temporality. Therefore, the fundamental assertion that time is temporal is the most adequate definition, without falling into tautology; because the being of the temporality means an unequal reality. The being-there is its have been, is its possibility in its heading towards this past. In this ‘heading to’ I am time itself, I have time. While time is in each case mine, there are many times. Time has no meaning: time is temporal” (Heidegger, 1999).

Therefore, in Heidegger’s conception, time is the temporalization of temporality, where preoccupation is given structure. Temporality is essentially static and its temporalization primarily originates from the perspective of a future that is immersed in a time that is finite. This finitude is marked by the Dasein’s projecting of itself towards the future; where, in anticipating its possibilities of being, it faces death, hence realizing its own finitude. Thus, the Dasein achieves authentic temporality as a projection or anticipation of the future; for the original, authentic temporality constitutes the future (Andrade, 1971).

FINAL REFLECTIONS

These historical roads with the sight placed in the field of the research and reflection over the term time, allow achieving a better comprehension and possible answers to the proposed question, together with an inquiry over its relationship with day-to-day life. This day-to-day life is the exceptional meeting point for all creature; particularly, the human being who gives specific meaning to temporal existence. And it is this regency of the meaning by man what gives the possibility of continuity that occurs at all times, expressed by the signs that implement its real character, bringing the possibility of visibly and perceptibly learning of events.

These events are presented through what the Vatican Council II called: the signs of times, which according to Argentinian theologian Gera (2005), must be differentiated in two instances that interact in the said formula. The first refers to the events, demands and expectations of the era; i.e. they belong to an epochal time, to the dimensions of sciences, or temporality. The other, is precisely theological in that it has to arrive at the comprehension of the signs of the presence of God in such events, demands and



expectations sociologically evident, signs of the action of the Holy Spirit; that is, the Supreme Being who intervenes from eternity in the temporal dimension through his act of creation where world and time are simultaneous.

Now, the affirmation of the events from the growing linear conception does not restrict the validity of the cyclic conception; for in the day-to-day life of its presence, it is adequate to integrate the existence of human beings and all that is found in their environment; because the world preserves the structure of its progressive cycles, for in the individual lives, circular rhythms are conjugated –based on repetition (day and night, seasons, etc.)– With the direction of the linear time, where events are unique and non-repeatable (Reichmann, 2003). This leads to identify a conception of time of linear-cyclic-spiral nature, where the line grows horizontally-vertically, in cyclic movements that expand in a spiral fashion, encompassing every experience lived by the human being, day after day, in it and with other human beings.

Therefore, this movement that persists constantly in the temporal happenings is what provides the ability to notice the presence of time in the temporal realm proper, being it visible or not, for what truly causes this identification is the duration of such movements which must be sensed by the simple movement of the human conscience. Here is possible to elucidate the factual existence of the perception and conception of time proposed by San Agustín on one side, and by Martin Heidegger on the other side.

For Agustín, the existential presence of time is given in the field of the realm of the soul (conscience); that is, it is the only one with the unique ability of conceiving that real existence of the three dimensions: future, past and present simultaneously. The concrete existence of something real belonging to the future or the past is only realized from the present time, where conscience extends itself to reach the three places, without having a destructive displacement between them; instead, a constant living of them in which they communicate, intertwining their own characteristics at the centre which is determined as the present, with all things past and future.

With Martin Heidegger, who adopts the Augustinian conception of the real presence of the temporal dimension in the human's interior, edified by his intellect; now he puts it outwards, in the field of the visible, as a communication structure that interrelates with the other beings, given that the presence of time is found in the being-there, or human being, the only one capable of comprehending the Being, and from its own existence comes to admit the presence of the Being as participant of its existence. The being-there-in-the-world is who in its day-to-day life, from a necessary relating with others, allows the stemming of the real presence of time; that is, it is man himself cause of his time, it is he the time that makes viable the time of one and of the other things that exist in his environment. Where there is the presence of human beings, there is the presence of time; since "time is a dimension exclusively of man, since it is the only temporal being that lives the time while living in it." (Muñoz, 1958).

Now, the human being, beyond its own physical structure, needs something that allows to identify it as such; that is, it must convey the ability of being a being endowed of understanding, and this ability is what allows it to separate itself from all other existing



things; a separation made for itself as if it was outside of itself. This coefficient of reasoning exists in the human conscience, and it is responsible for what it comes to realize and identify its existence of being in the being-there; for “man, to be man, needs the presence of himself, the consciousness of himself. (Muñoz, 1958).

Consequently, the fact that man comes to be conscious of himself comes from the process of recognizing his own self, which is only possible due to his being in time. But a time that is present, for:

“It is what gives man the ability to have been and to continue to be himself. Man summarizes in each irreplaceable and unrepeatable present not only the past but also the future. For future is a creation of the present time. And the present time implies what is a positive non-temporal: eternity.” (Muñoz, 1958).

With that, one can say that time belongs to the human being, the being-there; but as a being that acts from its soul, its conscience. Therefore, time characterizes in humans the transferring of the relentlessness that marks the regency of their existence, in the day-to-day sphere towards a concrete interpretation of the existence of their own being in history. For it is man a historical being who opens up to questions and reflections, finding answers out of his ability to interpret his being in the time that is his own.

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