

What is Time Like?

The Relation Between Self-Consciousness and Time

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ABSTRACT In this paper, which is situated in the broad stream of the confluence between analytic philosophy and phenomenology, I shall attempt to articulate the relation between self-consciousness and time consciousness. I shall show that the primary meaning of time entails a self-conscious being, and that time and change are related, but in an analogous way. Different forms of life—with concomitant different forms of self-consciousness—are qualitatively different in their capability of experiencing the flow of time. In making this claim, I shall discuss Husserl's distinction between pre-reflective or tacit self-awareness (inner-consciousness) and reflective self-consciousness (inner perception), and I shall show that this view is similar to Augustine's distinction between *nosse* and *cogitare* and Aquinas' distinction between "habitual" and "actual" self-knowledge. It will also be intimated that simultaneity is associated with empathy.

KEYWORDS Aquinas, Thomas; Aristotle; Augustine; self-consciousness; time

Time has always been seen as a mysterious, yet ever-present, part of our lives. This paper will examine how inner time-consciousness is an intimate aspect of self-consciousness, and the manner in which a different, though related, conception of time is associated with self-knowledge. Through a rich dialogue between analytic philosophy and phenomenology, this paper will also seek to show that inner time-consciousness is necessarily present in our capacity for empathy and other forms of personal relationships. Any reflection on time does well to commence with Augustine's well-known dictum that he knew what "time" was only until someone asked him (*Confessions*, xi, 14). It is perhaps less notable that Aristotle too, seven centuries before Augustine had written his immortal line, had mused whether "[time] either does not exist at all or barely, and in an obscure way" (*Physics*, iv, 217b 32–3). Certainly, time has always been a slippery, mysterious and intimate part of our experience and one which has exercised the efforts of many thinkers throughout the ages. It also must be said that our normal consciousness of time appears to be one of the distinguishing features of our lives as humans, and one of the aspects that separates us from other forms of life.

We humans recite poems, listen to music we know well and anticipate notes, follow arguments, and, more prosaically, work against deadlines. In all such experiences, in different ways, we experience the flow of time. Indeed, it appears that we are continuously experiencing, in some way, the flow of time. In addition, it also seems clear that no agglomeration of non-temporal points could constitute our experience of the flow of time. For the flow of time is just the temporal horizon where the meaning of what we perceive or understand is influenced both by what went on just before and which is still somehow present in its very absence, and by anticipation of what is to be possibly expected. This is clear in music, in poetry, in science, and even in a simple conversation. To state this in a different way, our experience of time is not punctual—we do not experience a *nunc stans*—but is a field in which the present is given, together with the past and the future, in a gestalt manner.

Concomitantly, we know, mainly through science, that time appears to have some kind of correlative outside our consciousnesses: we experience different physical processes as bearing consistent proto-temporal relations. Indeed, we use physical processes to tell the time.

In this light, one great and obvious question, which took on particular importance during the era of modern philosophy, was the query whether time exists independently, or whether its existence is dependant on our minds as we seek to sequence and compare events. This question, which was

very much in vogue in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is related to another question which took on particular importance last century: the question as to whether reality is fundamentally tensed or tenseless.

Such questions, which are very much related to modern and contemporary science are, in an important sense, ancient ones. Plato, in the fourth century BC, considered time to be the periodic motion of the heavenly bodies. For Plato, time exists independently, both of the physical changes we experience in our everyday life, and of human souls. This view is rather similar to the modern realist viewpoint, championed by Sir Isaac Newton, who considered time as existing independently of any object or, indeed, of any perceiver, progressing universally at a constant pace in a completely imperceptible manner, and as being understandable solely through mathematical means.¹ This view holds that time would exist without humans, and even without living forms. Pushed to its limits (which would take us beyond Plato's view), the modern realist view would hold that time would exist even if the universe were empty.

Conversely, Aristotle saw time as an abstraction from change; as something that is not autonomous but exists in a manner relative to the changes of all—including ordinary—things. Indeed, for Aristotle, change itself, while necessary, is not sufficient. In *Physics* IV,10–4, Aristotle averred that time is not change, even if it is dependent on change. After all, a change may occur faster or slower while it is meaningless to speak of a varying rate of time-passage: the “now” is continuously moving, yet it makes no sense to ask how fast it is moving. He defined time as the “number of change” with respect to the ‘before’ and ‘after’; “that in virtue of which change is numerable” (*Physics* 219b, 1–3). He thus argued that time is a kind of ordering through which changes relate to one other. This means that time needs a soul able to “number” the changes which are apprehended: indeed, time depends for its existence on the soul. Hence, even though time and change are intimately connected, they relate differently to the soul: time *cannot* exist in the absence of beings that are able to count but change is independent of such beings.² This is close to, though also distinct from, the modern anti-realist view of time, championed by Leibniz, that sees time as

1. It must be added that Isaac Newton held that we, being mere limited humans, are only able to perceive ‘relative time’; we are only able to measure the movement of objects such as the Moon or the Sun and, through such measurements, infer the passage of absolute time.

2. Conversely, time is dependent on change since there is time when the soul is aware that the instants of time are two—even if between two instants of time there can always be another instant of time seeing that time is continuous. But this can only be the case because change occurs. Hence, the before and after in time depends upon the before and after in

an intellectual concept that allow us to sequence and relate events with one another. Time or space would not exist at all if there were no substances in the universe. Time and, indeed, space are but our representations of events; they do not exist in themselves. Clearly, this modern anti-realist view does not necessarily bring out the differences between time and space.

It is interesting that Augustine also held that time depends on the mind but it is normally held that Augustine's view is very different from, if not practically opposed to, Aristotle's. Aristotle had already asked a significant question: if time is curious in that it comprises two different kinds of "nothing" (the "not yet", and the "no longer") separated by a non-existent instant which is the "now", how then can time exist at all?³ Augustine answered that time does not really exist outside the mind but only exists as an experience within the mind's self-awareness. Here Augustine makes no reference at all to change. He sees time as a distension of the soul primarily through the faculty of memory:

perhaps it might be said rightly that there are three times: a time present of things past; a time present of things present; and a time present of things future. For these three do coexist somehow in the soul, for otherwise I could not see them. The time present of things past is memory; the time present of things present is direct experience; the time present of things future is expectation. (*Confessions*, xi, 20)

It appears to many that he would disagree with the Aristotelian view explained above that time has to do with change: he averred that, if a body remains immobile at one point, one can estimate the time of its immobility. Thus, the motion which time measures is one thing and the time which time itself measures is another (*Confessions*, xi, 24).⁴ For Augustine, time is wholly in the human mind.

This "subjectivist" view, expressed by Augustine, was taken up, centuries later, by Husserl who asserted that we are only able to perceive the immediate present together with some past memory and some future expectation which, together, provide the immediate present with its context. Husserl went on to say, similarly to Augustine, that time has an intentional

change. This means that, for Aristotle, for different reasons, there is no change without time and there is no time without change.

3. "Nothing exists of time except the present which is indivisible" (Aristotle, *Physics* IV, 10).

4. Curiously, this is a point which Aristotle also had made in *Physics* IV, 12.

protention–primal impression–retention structure which means that self-consciousness is also inner time-consciousness (Husserl 1962, 202).

How to link what Aristotle held with what Augustine (and Husserl) are saying? Are their positions contrary to one another? And are Aristotle and—to the contemporary mind, even more so—Augustine really anti-realists? To answer this question, we need to say something about the nature of self-knowledge.

Of course, Augustine is, perhaps, the best known ancient advocate of the position that self-awareness is autonomous, holding that the soul is simply present to itself and thereby is aware of itself (*On the Trinity*, x, 3. 5; x, 7. 10; x, 9. 2; x, 10. 16; x, 8. 1). So the soul's self-awareness is in no need of seeing itself reflected in the eyes of another. For Augustine, soliloquy is prior to discourse with another⁵ and self-awareness is prior to any awareness. In the case of self-knowledge, any possible errors are due solely to the soul's knowing itself as another through some kind of image or trace (*On the Trinity*, x, 3. 5; x, 5. 7–10, 6. 8; x, 10. 16). Self-awareness is different and more intimate than could ever be the case with any images or descriptions of the self (Sultana 2015, 436–46).⁶

Augustine, in fact, holds that there are two levels of self-consciousness: *nosse* or *notitia*, and *cogitare*. The former is implicit and non-cognitive, and present continuously throughout one's life. *Cogitare* has to do with thinking about oneself; it requires a consideration of oneself as another. *Nosse* has nothing to do with thinking: a person is aware of himself in this manner even when he is not thinking of himself (*On the Trinity*, xiv, 6. 8–9; x, 4. 6); indeed, in this sense, Augustine holds that one's soul is always present to itself, even in the case of an infant. Conversely, *cogitare* has to do with the soul's "thinking itself, not as across a space but by an incorporeal conversion" (*On the Trinity*, xiv, 6. 8–9). Augustine explains that the relation between *nosse* and *cogitare* can be understood as follows:

When by thinking the mind views itself as understood, it does not generate that knowledge it has as if it had previously been unknown to itself. Rather, it was customarily known to itself in the way that things are known that are contained by memory, even if they are not thought. (*On the Trinity*, xiv, 6. 8–9)

5. This same position is shared by Husserl in his later writings.

6. In parts of this present article, I am using and reworking points I had made in this previous article on Augustine's, Aristotle's and Thomas Aquinas's views of the "self" in order to apply them to the present consideration of the phenomenon of time.

For Augustine, therefore, one is continuously and essentially present to oneself. One does not need others to become *aware* of oneself; one needs others and a process of self-reflection to come to *know* oneself.

This distinction between self-awareness and self-knowledge is also articulated by Thomas Aquinas, who speaks of self-awareness through the phrase *hic homo (singularis) intelligit* (*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 76, a. 1; I, q. 87, a. 1; *De Veritate* x, 8). He describes this experience by averring: “For each one of us experiences himself to be the one who understands” (*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 76, a. 1).⁷ He then goes on to make a distinction between two manners in which the soul is aware of itself: one is particular, the other universal. The universal type involves what Aquinas identifies as “diligent and subtle inquiry” which has to do with judgement and knowledge. Conversely, the particular kind refers to self-awareness as an act “according to which Socrates or Plato perceives himself to have an intellectual soul, from the fact that he perceives himself to understand (*percipit se intelligere*).” In the case of this simple kind of awareness, “the presence itself of the mind (*ipsa mentis praesentia*), which is the principle of the act by which the mind perceives itself, suffices” (*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 87, a. 1). This resembles somewhat his earlier distinction between actual and habitual self-knowledge where the former is an awareness that the soul have of some activity of itself where “to understand something is prior to understanding that one understands” (*De Veritate* x, 8) while the latter involves a more direct and intimate kind of knowledge: “But as for habitual knowledge, I say this, that the soul sees itself through its essence, that is, from the fact that its essence is present to itself, it is able to enter into the act of knowing itself” (*De Veritate* x, 8).

What Augustine makes clear in a way that Aquinas does not, however, is that both what he calls *nosse* and what he terms *cogitare* are essentially temporal. Most unlike Descartes, Augustine holds that self-consciousness comes along with time. For Augustine, one cannot be conscious of oneself except as a temporal being: there is no possible punctual experience of oneself; one cannot be conscious of oneself without a temporal horizon.

Here one cannot but recall what Husserl wrote, sixteen centuries later:

The latter [the life of consciousness] is not only a lived-experiencing continually streaming along; at the same time, as it streams along, it is also immediately the consciousness of this streaming. This consciousness is self-perceiving, although it is a thematically executed awareness on the part of the ego

7. *experitur enim unusquisque seipsum esse qui intelligit.*

only in exceptional circumstances. Belonging to the latter is a reflection that is possible at any time. This perceiving that presents all lived-experiencing to consciousness is the so-called inner consciousness or inner perceiving. (Husserl 1966, 320)

This is Husserl's clear call for a distinction between tacit self-awareness and "thematically executed awareness." Every human act of consciousness has a subjective or first-personal "givenness" that is a mode of being of the conscious experience itself. Conversely, one's acts of reflection are grounded in that they rely on prior, tacit forms of self-consciousness:

whenever I reflect, I find myself "in relation to" something as affected or active. That to which I am related is experientially conscious, it is already there for me as a "lived-experience" in order for me to be able to relate myself to it. (Husserl 1956, 196)

Hence:

The flow of the consciousness that constitutes immanent time not only *exists* but is so remarkably and yet intelligibly fashioned that a self-appearance of the flow necessarily exists in it, and therefore the flow itself must necessarily be apprehensible in the flowing. The self-appearance of the flow does not require a second flow; on the contrary, it constitutes itself as a phenomenon in itself. (Husserl 1969, 83)

To cross over to Aristotle's side in this argument, he often appears to hold the contrary view that self-consciousness depends on one's knowledge of one's friends. However, what he says is far subtler. Aristotle also famously thinks that "as the good man is related to himself, so he is related to his friend, for the friend is another self" (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1170a29-b14), where it seems that he has a different view: the person's relation with his friend appears to be dependent upon his awareness of his own activities. Aristotle goes on to say:

He needs, therefore, to be conscious of the existence of his friend as well. And this will be realised in their living together and sharing of discussion and thought; for this is what living together would seem to mean in the case of man, and not, as in the case of cattle, feeding in the same place (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1170b13-4).

In this passage, Aristotle seems to be referring to what has more recently been called joint attention between friends where each is aware of the same thing as the other, and each is also simultaneously conscious that his friend is experiencing the same. Broadly speaking, this shared perception means that each person is aware of something that is present to all those involved in such a manner that each is aware that both he and the others are attending to the same object. Interestingly, this common phenomenon presupposes both each person's self-perception and each person's self-consciousness (Eilan 2005, 5): Aristotle also holds that "life in society is perception and knowledge in common. And self-perception and self-knowledge is most desirable to every one" (*Eudemian Ethics* 1244b24–5). Thus, while friendships, especially between the virtuous, greatly enrich self-consciousness, the latter appears to be necessary for shared perception to be possible. Aristotle confirms this in implying that one is always somewhat self-conscious, in the present, of one's gazing, listening, imagining, believing and existing and, indeed, of all one's activities. This means that he appears to be in closer agreement, than at first glance, with Augustine on the soul's continual awareness of itself in terms of its own activities.⁸ For Aristotle too, it seems that, to an important degree, one's self-consciousness is implied in one's knowledge.

That Aristotle may be referring to the phenomenon which has been called "shared" or "joint" attention is significant. As far as we know, this is a uniquely human capability and is clearly discernible from around the ninth month. At this point in its development, the infant not only looks attentively at things, but also often seeks the attention and the alignment of the carer's gaze with its own, and takes pleasure when this indeed takes place.⁹ A similar phenomenon is "social referencing" in which the infant shows its desire for approval by its carer (Feinman 1982, 445–70; Sorabji

8. It is interesting to note that Aristotle holds that self-awareness is involved in one's ability to judge that the two different perceptions of white and sweet are both of a single body. He believes that such a judgement involves a tacit recognition of the simultaneity of these perceptions, while also involving a discrimination between the two senses involved which are both rendering different kinds of perception of the same object, both of which perceptions are one's own (See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1170a29–30; See also *Sense and Sensibilia* 437a27–9; *On the Soul* 425b12–25; *On Memory* 452b26–8). Hence, it appears that Aristotle holds that what is involved here is not only the activity of perceiving, but also self-perception.

9. (Tomasello 1993, 174–84). Infants for example, respond very differently to a mechanical claw and to a human hand in action (Woodward 2005, 113). Furthermore, they show a remarkable capacity to differentiate between human beings and other things in their surroundings. A.N. Meltzoff and M.K. Moore (1977, 75–8) show that a new-born is almost immediately able to recognize that it is before the face of a person and also has a remarkable ability to imitate facial expressions. It has been shown that chimpanzees too are able to follow the gaze of

2006, 26). This implies that the infant is somewhat aware of itself and of its desires and feelings and it is significant that such awareness takes place within a concrete relationship. Contrary to Descartes' view, it seems clear that the infant is *not* inferring that its carer is conscious by interpreting its carer's behaviour and clothing; nor can one separate the experiences of the infant's consciousness of its carer and its own self-awareness: self-awareness and awareness are intertwined in one and the same experience where the infant is primitively conscious of both the distinctness and the sameness in its experience of its own attention and its carer's responsiveness. This phenomenon of second-person joint attention consciousness is a kind of proto-empathy and appears to involve a primordial experience of simultaneity.¹⁰

Here, it is important to consider that perceptual content does not need conceptual resources. Christopher Peacocke famously shows that one could have no idea or concept of a certain puckered shape and yet perceive a mountainside with this very idiosyncratic profile (Peacocke 1986, 1–17).¹¹ Perhaps one could say, with José Luis Bermúdez (1998, 54–8), that infants are able to perceive objects even if they have no conceptual framework; and this could well hold for the infant's self-awareness of its own body. Bermúdez wants to say that a primordial form of self-consciousness is present already, since birth:

If the pick-up of self-specifying information starts at the very beginning of life, then there ceases to be so much of a problem about how entry into the first-person perspective is achieved. In a very important sense, infants are born into the first-person perspective. It is not something that they have to acquire *ab initio*. (Bermúdez 1998, 128)

Therefore, the infant does not require any concepts, say of pleasure, thirst or hunger, for it to experience a rudimentary form of self-awareness. Moreover, in the light of our knowledge, it seems likely that the infant's coming to speak is the fruit of its experiences of shared attention. That is, the infant

a human person indicating an object but then perform rather badly in picking out the correct object being indicated by the person (Call and Tomasello 2005, 45–6).

10. Here it is significant that physicists speak of the inevitability of a vicious circle in the attempt to determine the simultaneity of two distinct events. To do so, one must know the velocity of light between them (in a single direction) but, to come to such knowledge, it is necessary to know that the two events are simultaneous. This vicious circle does not even commence in the empathic relationship.

11. Gareth Evans would agree (1982, 229).

learns to speak through its own experiences of itself, its significant others, and its environment all being present in shared attention (Tomasello 1993, 174–84; Sorabji 2006, 28). Such second-person joint attention experiences could be experienced as both meaningful and intrinsically temporal even if they do not involve any conceptual structure. In all this, it seems clear that one’s experiencing or coping with the world cannot be had without some kind of engagement in terms of indexicals such as “I”, “now”, “present” and “here.” Such indexicals are irreplaceable and are not intrinsically conceptual (Prior 1959, 17). Indeed, it is practically self-evident that an intrinsic characteristic of all our experiences is a subjective “feel” or phenomenal quality which can be articulated as “what it is like for me” (Nagel 1974, 436; Searle 1992, 131–2). This is the case for bodily sensations such as pleasure and sleepiness and also for perceptual experiences, passions and memories, and also for the experience of the flow of time. There is something it is like to listen to Beethoven’s *Fifth*, or to feel happy or hopeful, or to expect a friend. Naturally, one is speaking of the same intentional object of one’s perceptions, passions, imaginings, hopes or beliefs: the intentional object is, in this sense, public. Different people could feel the same pleasure, listen to the same piece of music, or expect the same friend. However, each one’s perceptions, feelings, imaginings, hopes and beliefs are associated with a non-inferential characterisation which indicates them as “mine.” They have, associated with them, an immediate first-personal tinge. Of course, this attendant “I” awareness need not come to the fore of one’s consciousness; it need not be explicit. Self-consciousness is often athematic and implicit, concomitant yet pre-conscious; it is silently present even when one is not reflecting upon oneself. And, it is always, at least, tacitly temporal.

In this light, it seems clear that self-consciousness is prior to object-identification and cannot be explained in terms of the latter: it is primordial and cannot rely on any external grounds. This is manifest in our “immunity to error through misidentification” whenever we make any first-personal self-ascriptions (Shoemaker 1968, 562–3). And, of course, this must also be the case in identification of the temporal present.

In effect, self-knowledge is a verbalised and reflective development of this continuously present self-consciousness. It is developed throughout one’s life through dialogue with others and reflection upon oneself. It involves one’s capacities to introspect and to remember. It involves one’s intentionality being directed towards oneself, seeing oneself as *another*, often through narrative. This way of considering one’s self as a developing narrative whole, with the concomitant risk of mistakes due to faulty memories and misleading interpretations amongst others, and with a subsequent

ever-present need for accompaniment by others, clearly provides a vital contribution towards one's understanding of the meaning of one's life, but it cannot be had without the concomitant pre-reflective presence of self-consciousness.¹² In the light of the distinction made earlier,

we can speak of the first immediate and implicit self-consciousness in terms of self-awareness and the second, derived, explicit, reflective, and often objectifying, conceptual and narrative form of self-consciousness in terms of self-knowledge. (Sultana 2015, 444–5)

Self-awareness is reflected in Augustine's notion of *se nosse* whereas self-knowledge has to do with his use of the verb *se cogitare*; one expresses immediacy to oneself while the other speaks about reflection upon oneself. *Se nosse* indicates one's presence to oneself in a subjective and non-intentional manner. *Se cogitare*, involves reflection on oneself as another; it involves an intentional act whereby one considers oneself "from a distance" (Hölscher 1986, particularly the third chapter).

Hence, I can only thematise myself because I am already self-conscious; I am only able to speak of time because I am already inner time-conscious. Articulated, explicit and thematic self-consciousness which takes oneself as an object is different from implicit self-awareness which simply characterises all our experiences; similarly, we are conscious both of temporally-extended objects and of our own temporally-unified stream of consciousness. However, while we are conscious of objects, we are not primarily conscious of ourselves as objects; we are not primarily conscious of our own acts by taking these acts as objects, neither are we primarily aware of time by making the experience of the flow of time an object of inner consciousness. That would, of course, lead to an infinite regress and also seems clearly wrong in the light of our own self-experience. Inner experience and, in particular, inner time-consciousness are given, not objectively, but rather as deeply subjective experiences intrinsically linked together; it is only through "subsequent" reflection that we attend to them and consider them as objects.

This is indeed shown both in our common routine experiences of self-consciousness and in our experiences of empathy. Both would be

12. Indeed, this means that one cannot explain self-consciousness in terms of any higher-order representational theory (Zahavi 2007, 65). Of course, a higher-order representational theory can serve to illumine "objective" self-consciousness but it cannot replace the first-person perspective (Zahavi 1999, 19–21).

impossible if they involved directedness towards an object. When we live our everyday experiences, we are simply immersed in them and we do not observe them from a distance. When we empathise with someone, we are not relating with someone who stands opposite us: we are aware both of our own experiences, and the experiences of another in the first person, in an immediate, non-objectifying manner. Such first-personal experiences are, as it were, characterised by a certain self-luminosity. Here, our self-consciousness is also given temporally: our inner consciousness is inner time-consciousness, and our empathy is also temporally given. We can aver that our personal streams of self-consciousness are intrinsically and luminously temporal: we are intrinsically time-conscious beings and we are such primarily in a non-objectifying, pre-reflective manner. Then, through subsequent reflection, we can distance ourselves from experiences and articulate them as objects.

Thus, whereas the time of our experiences can be measured through clocks it is very doubtful whether such a developed form of temporal experience does justice to our experience of lived time. We should here consider normal human experiences such as hope, anxiety, joy, and restlessness. We can easily distinguish experiences where we have empathised with someone from experiences where we have considered someone. Similarly, clocks do measure something and, of course our experiences can be somehow translated into clock time, but it seems clear that this serial form of temporality is objectified and reductive, and somehow depends upon our subjective inner time-consciousness.

My conclusion is that self-awareness is really different from, and indeed primordial to, self-knowledge: the implicit first-personal “givenness” involved in self-awareness cannot be reduced to, or explained by, any number of third-person accounts even if it can be somehow richly articulated through such accounts. This also applies to our experience of the flow of time and our practice of telling the time. Of course, our self-knowledge, which is the fruit of our experiences in the world and our being with others, is connected with our self-awareness and greatly enhances our immediate self-consciousness. Even in the case of time, we do learn much through the study of physics—that is, by examining changes and measuring them by comparing them to one another. Indeed, our knowledge of time is developed precisely through our reflection on different experiences of change. However, our experiences of time do not only involve the activity of, and reflection on, our perception of change, but also, and primarily, involve our self-consciousness. Even for Aristotle, after all, it seems clear that time implies not only numbering change but includes self-consciousness. For

him, any continuum of change is essentially *one* where parts only exist potentially, and these can be brought into actuality only by some event like the act of counting them. In a similar fashion, duration of change has no parts; “nows” can only be brought to actual existence by minds. For Aristotle, time is actualised by the mind. Yet, I want to stress that time can only be brought to actuality by a mind which somehow already experiences the flow of time: indeed, I believe that I am here in agreement with Aristotle who averred that one fundamental kind of change involves the state of one’s own mind (*Physics* 218b 21–3). He held that it is only those who are asleep in a deep (and fabled) manner who are not conscious of time; for the rest,

we perceive movement and time together: for even when it is dark and we are not being affected through the body, if any movement takes place in the mind we at once suppose that some time also has elapsed; and not only that but also, when some time is thought to have passed, some movement also along with it seems to have taken place. (*Physics* 219a 3–8)¹³

Here, it needs to be added that, for Augustine, an awareness of time also, and inevitably, involves personal relationships. Augustine gives us an understanding of friendships which primarily underscores the personal and ongoing relationship of each person with God. This relationship with God constitutes the person and underlies all personal growth: when this disintegrates, through sin or wilful ignorance, the self becomes but a shell of itself; conversely, when this grows and develops through love—where this is grace; for Augustine, all is gift—the person becomes more and more himself. Hence, self-consciousness implies an ongoing relationship with God. For Augustine, the person’s relationship with God is the primary relationship and friendship the person enjoys and makes possible both self-consciousness and those relationships the person has within society, within any other smaller group, and even within his family. The person is continuously related to God. This means that, even if the individual is only dimly aware of this, the human person is a coherent and unified self with an intrinsic worth and enters any personal relationship as such. Such would be *nosse*. Augustine held that such friendships are lived temporally and are to imply a growth in holiness and grace which is to lead to an eternal

13. Conversely, “the non-realization of the existence of time happens to us when we do not distinguish any change, but the soul seems to stay in one indivisible state” (Aristotle, *Physics* 218b 29–219a 1).

beatitude with God (Wadell 2002, 83). Now, time itself, for Augustine has to do with the presence of God to the person and God, who is present to every friendship, cements such friendships so that, as friends, we can help one another grow in the life of grace (Burt 1999, 66). God, who is present to the persons in every of their “presents,” is the one who gifts friendships to friends—a gift which unfolds and matures in time and which can be reflected upon and narrated as Augustine himself does in the *Confessions* with respect to his relationship with his friends (*Confessions*, iv, 4–9) but particularly with respect to his relationship with God. And such reflection and narration is *cogitare*.

Perhaps, it could be said that time is analogous in such a way that it exists qualitatively differently in different forms of life: from the non-conceptual sense of the passage of time in my dog’s life,¹⁴ to the flow of time which is the context for meaning in my life and, one could say, to God’s supertemporality and absolute vitality ... one would go on to say that time exists as “change” in the inanimate world. The prime analogate would be human time and this is what Augustine was speaking of. To be more precise, Augustine was primarily addressing the human *nosse* experience of time; Aristotle, conversely, was attempting to articulate (and therefore speaks on the level of *cogitare*) the real connection between our understanding of change and time—and, therefore, the relation between inanimate “time” and human time. In so doing, he explicates the scientific articulation of time even while, somewhat implicitly, acknowledging that it involves inner time-consciousness.

14. I have not dealt with the question of animals’ sense of time in this paper but an account can be extrapolated from what I maintain here. Animals without self-consciousness in the narrow sense of self-knowledge could be able to experience time even if they do not have a concept of time. As in our case, their circadian rhythm regulates body processes and can be sensed. In the case of dogs, it seems clear that, while they do not have self-consciousness in the narrow sense aforementioned, they appear to manifest some kind of experience of time. For example, a dog could wait for its master more or less at the same time daily, or might even miss its master more and more—even if it is not in need of food—as time passes. One theory is that the dog perceives the decreasing odour of its master as time passes and can remember the intensity of body odour still present at the point when the owner is due to come. Indeed, in this light, perhaps one could clarify animals’ experience of time by speaking of three levels of self-consciousness (of which I have focussed, for the purposes of this paper, on the first and the third). I have spoken extensively of implicit self-awareness which is the tacit self-relatedness of the stream of experience. Then, one could speak of self-consciousness in a broad sense which we share with at least some higher-level animals who do have a vague and unreflective sense of “self” (such as bonobos who can recognize themselves in a mirror and who appear to have some sense of themselves as acting agents). Finally, in this paper, I have referred to explicit, autobiographical, reflective self-consciousness as self-knowledge. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for the occasion to offer this clarification.

In this paper, my intention was to show that time is both subjectively experiential and real; it is an essential characteristic of consciousness and is involved in the possibility of self-awareness, self-knowledge, and of empathic consciousness and knowledge of others. Inner time-consciousness is not dependent upon a prior distinction between oneself and one's experience of the world, neither does it have to do with a conceptual distinction between oneself and others; it rather makes such distinctions possible. I wanted to show that time primarily has to do with the prior, tacit form of self-consciousness which lies at the basis of our form of life. And I wanted to intimate that "proto-simultaneity" is given along with "proto-empathy," a proto-empathy which is primordially present in our continuous—even if unknown—personal relationship with God and which is also present in the personal connections which are gifted to us ever since our infancy.

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