

# **Studies on Time: Time in Philosophy and in History**

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## **TEXTS**

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# TIME IN PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY

## INTRODUCTION

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When we analyze the issues of time, the limitations that distinguish the scientific specialties, as well as their specific conceptual apparatus, they cannot serve as a single classification criteria. The notions of physical time, biological time, social time, time lived, focused on by distinct scientific disciplines qualify different temporality dimensions and allow the fundamental perception of the interpenetration between “nature” and “society”.

The word time can be understood as a symbol of the relationship established by a human group between two or more processes, among which one is taken as a frame of reference or measurement of the others. Considering that these processes alter themselves, consequently the relationships that they maintain among themselves, we can affirm that the experience of events by men is not static: there were in the past, and there are still in the present alterations in their meaning.

On the one hand it is determined that the idea of time is always relational, and on the other, that time would not exist in a world where there were no men and living beings.

The discussion of Time in Philosophy and in History approaches this as different social disciplines and faces the difficulties this issue presents.

José Carlos Bruni, tracking the history of philosophy, analyses time as one of the central dimensions of thought, in modern and contemporary philosophy; on the other hand, his reflection leads us to determine that it hasn't always been so: the centrality of time, as we know it, is, in itself, a historic issue.

Raquel Glezer shows how time, in history, appears as an element which organizes the past of humanity and includes, mandatorily, the past, the present and the future; besides this, she distinguishes temporalities built by historians: a brief time (which makes possible the approximation of everyday life), a medium time (which propitiates conjunction analysis) and a long time (which allows the historical-structural limitation).

Finally, Milton Santos points to the differentiation of temporal rhythms present in urban life and affirms the existence of hegemonic rhythms for objects, which are imposed on society and end in dominating men; at the same time the material existence of the city arises, in his speech, as a fundamental data for comprehending space, as a presence of time gone by and which stays as forms and objects.

M.H.O. AUGUSTO : The table is open to the public. With the floor, Professor José Carlos Bruni, who will speak on TIME IN PHILOSOPHY.

J.C. BRUNI: To speak of TIME IN PHILOSOPHY in twenty minutes is absolutely impossible. So much that I was tempted to do what someone else did, according to a philosophical report from philosopher Hegel. In certain occasion, a speaker reached a town to give a lecture on vegetables. And, facing the audience, affirmed: vegetables are – vegetables! The audience was extremely disappointed with the conference, but the speaker was rigorously correct, and his speech was absolutely true. I was tempted to do the same here. However, if I only said that time is time! I would take only two seconds and not twenty minutes. Therefore you will forgive the precariousness of the exposition; due to

this limitation I hope that later, during the debate, the confusing issues, or those that allow for discussion will be brought up again through your intervention. Initially I did not even concern myself with establishing something precise around our theme, time in philosophy, but as I thought and read about the theme, a certain conducting thread appeared spontaneously, without deliberation or preparation. Thus, maybe the notion that will stay from these twenty minutes will be connected to the idea of eternity, the idea of time itself. I would also not want to return to Greece. In any case, to point to things, more than to develop an issue, we will glance at the history of philosophy, somewhat look at what the philosophers raised regarding the issue of time. In Greece, the first formulations that were more elaborate regarding time, we will find the philosophy of Plato. This does not mean that in philosophers before Plato there were not extremely poignant indications of the issue of temporality. Plato, in his work *Timeo*, gives an extremely interesting definition of time. In this dialogue, the philosopher relates the history of the creation of the world. The demiurge, meaning the supreme artificer (demiurge means artificer), contemplating as a model the eternal forms, the eternal truths, the eternal essences, will create or build the world. The demiurge also had the idea of forming a kind of mobile image of eternity and while organizing the heaven, he forms, according to the unchangeable eternity of its unit, an image of the eternal unfolding, with a numbered rhythm. This is what we call time. We have, therefore, time itself contrasting with the idea of eternity. We have, therefore, in the intelligible world, the eternal, necessary, unchangeable truths, and in the sensible world, the world dominated by time. Eternity is not a form of time; in Plato, eternity appears as the denial of time. Time exists in the sensitive world as a place of passage, a place for what does not last, a place for generation and corruption, as a place to appear and disappear, as a place where nothing is permanent, where everything is submitted to an absolutely perpetual flow. And against this idea of time, linked to the sensible world, which is the world of appearances, Plato will contrast the image of eternity as the denial of time. Thus, for the first time, time appears as disqualified; eternity imposes itself as an investigative object, at least as an ideal goal for the determination of truth and contemplation by the philosopher. This world of what is to come, of change, of transformation, this world of movement, appears as disqualified, and also, it is a world of error, of deceit, of illusion and evil. This first moment of the appearance of the issue of time in philosophy can be placed as the moment in which time is extremely without prestige. Against time there is the task of the philosopher to find eternal truths and the contemplation of eternity. In Aristotle, this somehow continues, since he also thinks of the world as divided in below the moon and above the moon. The below the moon, meaning that which is between the moon and the earth, is also the world of movement, the world of passage, the world of generation and corruption, the world in which nothing is permanent. In the world above the moon we have the world of permanent spheres, the world of stability, of eternity, the world of God, which is precisely God and entirely out of the sphere of time. In God there is no change, for if there were change in the divine essence we would have something that was not God, something of matter. This means that the world under the moon is the world of matter, of imperfect things that need something else which determines their form; and the world above the moon is the world of forms. Therefore, the initial division by Plato stands, and in Aristotle this disqualification of time and movement suffers a relative attenuation, since movement will be the object of science itself. Movement, which manifests more visibly in the issue of temporality, will be submitted to a rational analysis and this earthly, below the moon time will receive from Aristotle an extremely powerful analysis, since the entire structure of the successive, the idea of succession will receive, for the first time, a more rational treatment. I could also note that, among the stoic, the idea of time will receive more sophistication, since in stoicism we will distinguish between three types of time. The Greek words that designate these types of temporality are: Cronos, Aion and Kairos. Cronos, is, let's say, already pointed to for the first time in Plato, this time of passage, of change, where

nothing remains, all is consumed, where there is life and death, this time that is disqualified as a place of truth or good. Aion is the time that designates the present itself as is. Cronos, this time that consumes all and could more or less be characterized as past, present and future, receives, in the idea of Aion, a present, meaning that the emphasis will fall on the present. It is not about thinking, for example, of a scar as a past wound, but as a present mark: you do not connect the present and the past, and do not think of the link of the present with the future; it's as if everything that exists only exists in the present. There are very beautiful pages in the book by Deleuze, called the Logic of Sense, where he rekindled the stoic distinction and proposed a new reading on the idea of something happening. It is with the stoics, then, that we find something that anticipates modernity in this issue of having two types of temporality: the present as such, on the one hand, and on the other, the temporality that is linked to the past and the future, in which the present is properly evanescent, meaning an instant always divided between a past that ends and a future that begins. Thus, temporality could be placed as an issue with the permanent tension between an idea of time that is divided between past and future and an idea of time that gives preference and establishes itself in the present. This will have an enormous development in this century's philosophy, with Husserl and phenomenology, an entire idea founded on the Theory of the Present Field. In the end there is also the idea of Kairos, which is extremely important for ethics and politics. Kairos will designate the appropriate time, the privileged time in which the politician has to make a decision, the doctor has to deliberate, the instant in which all opportunities must be thought and the decision must be made. See, then, that somehow, even if all emphasis falls on the idea of eternity, in the world that is human the issue of temporality has to be faced, and not only disqualified. In the idea of Aion, of the present, in the idea of Kairos, as a privileged instant for action and deliberation, we have the precise placement of analytical lines that will develop later. For a long time the ideas of Plato and Aristotle prevailed, as a conception of the division between two worlds, a world above and a world below, a world of ideas and a world of matter, an intelligible world and a sensitive world. They form the general environment of the culture of Christianity, in which the world of matter is thought of as the world of death, of limitation, of finite, and the world of God, the celestial world is thought of as the world of eternity, the final destination of the souls which practiced good on earth. However, a very complicated thing is to which point this is no longer part of our culture. I read in a recent translation of the book *The Imitation of Christ*, written in 1441, the following passage: "Nature takes care of the temporal goods, rejoices itself in small gain, is saddened with loss and becomes irritated with an injurious word. Grace, therefore, takes care of eternal things, does not cling to the temporal, is not perturbed with its loss, is not offended by harsh words, for it has placed its treasure and glory in heaven, where nothing perishes"\* (It is a very good book to study one of the most extreme consequences of the idea of mortification of the flesh and body due to the precariousness of the time of life on earth; a psychoanalytic analysis of this absolute mortification idea would be very interesting). Observe the resonance with the text from Plato, where in heaven we have a more or less adequate image of time, a mobile time, an image of eternity; here, eternity is placed directly in heaven, but is perfectly compatible with Plato's text. We could also remember, associated with this idea of temporal good, the extremely common expression in the Middle Ages, which is the temporal power contrasting with the spiritual power. The spiritual power, which would be concentrated on the church, which would govern the souls, govern the spirit, govern the morality of men and temporal power, the one connected to the smaller and pettier issues of politics and economy, totally fragmented, without unity, which would deal with absolutely unimportant things, like the material survival of the bodies of men. Pay attention to the distinction Thomas a Kempis did between nature and grace – it corresponds to the sensitive world and the intelligible world, the world under the moon and above the moon – it raises a very important issue: if, on the one hand, we have nature with all its

evilness, all is precariousness, all its pettiness, and on the other hand, grace, with its spiritual elevation, and man being nature and, at the same time, having a divine spark in itself, immediately there is the issue of the passage from nature to grace. Man is born an animal and spiritualizes and becomes divine through time. If, at first, we have again the disqualification of time, later we have the need to reflect on time as a condition of spirituality itself and salvation of man, for the passage from animal instincts to a properly divine dimension of man would only be possible through a path where man dematerializes, becomes growingly spiritual. This reflection is the basis for all of Saint Augustine's philosophy in century IV d.c., much before Thomas a Kempis. In Saint Augustine we have, for the first time in Christianity, the idea that time isn't so execrable, as a vulgar Christianity might say. The Imitation of Christ is a book written for simple people. In the philosophy of Saint Augustine we see the first moment in which time is qualified, in Christian philosophy, not only in the asceticism of each individual, in the path that progressively frees man from his animal instincts, but also in time in a cosmic scale. What is time for Christianity, mentioned for the first time by Saint Augustine? It is the time in which we highlight the idea of the fall, the original sin, and then redemption, the coming of Christ, and the Final Judgment. What do we have during all this time? We have a moment of God's glory – where God only contemplated himself – a moment of fall – the moment of original sin – a moment of decadence, and then another future time in which humanity will, little by little, through the inspiration of the image of Christ, reclaim its properly divine nature. Thus it is necessary to have a properly historical time for the moral enhancement of the human gender. We have, therefore, not only the need to think of individual enhancement, of the passage from nature to grace, but also the need to think of the time of salvation of humanity, in all its history. In other words, I am saying that in Saint Augustine (this may sound strange for those who are not very familiar with philosophy) we have a pre-figuration of the secular and modern idea of progress, the conception that the human species will unperceptively, gradually, little by little go from a worse to a better state, from a simple state to a more complex, from a less developed state to a more developed one. I am quickly presenting an issue that is extremely discussed among philosophy historians, which is: in century XVIII or in century XIX, when the idea of progress was reclaimed and theorized, was there really a filiation to Saint Augustine? Some think that yes, others think no, and others think that more or less, but I have the impression that in Saint Augustine there is an idea of time that is very close to that which the philosophies of modern history formulate, starting in century XVIII. In this, the idea of progress, the idea of moral, intellectual and material improvement of humanity, the idea of civilization appears in a completely clear manner. We start with this disqualification of time and now we see that in Christianity, through Saint Augustine, time started to have a positive connotation. This will return during Renaissance, when the thought was that the past, the origins, the more ancient civilizations (Greek and Roman) were the place of the beginning of truth, and the present was a moment to recover the truth. At this moment, different from Christianity, redemption is not the future, but the past, as a place of research and recovery of the truth, which is valued. While Christianity pointed to the future as a possibility to spiritualize and save the soul, the renaissance humanism conceives in the return to the past the recovery of the truth that was interrupted by the night of a thousand years, the medieval darkness. Then we will see that during the period of classic reason, centuries XVI and XVII, the idea of time was quarantined, because the idea of reason is extremely strong during that time, presented as immanent criteria for truth, truth that is more or less regardless of time. This means that the construction of reason is the development of the internal order of reason itself; it is what allows us to establish the truth about the world, about nature, and time does not count for much. This will change in century XVII, ever more intensively. We can even read the philosophy of Hume, as a philosophy that sits clear and totally on a very precise idea of temporality. All the critique Hume will make on the idea of causality, meaning the

necessary connection between two events that follow in time, the destruction of this idea, is linked to the idea of time. What is time for Hume? It is the succession of instants, of discreet elements which overlap in a line. Events succeed each other in a completely empty, completely neutral time; this means that time is a succession of events. Since in time we will distinguish instants that do not have an internal connection with each other, all the material of knowledge appears completely disconnected and the connection that can be done is established by habit, by memory. In this sense, knowledge is completely dependent on a temporal category. What you know is what you believe you see always connected in a temporal sequence, meaning that we have heat and flame, we have snow and cold, we have a body in the air and the fall of a body, meaning impressions that succeed each other in time. The idea of succession marks the entire formulation of the human theory of knowledge and the destruction of a classic category, which comes since Aristotle, the category of causality. Here we have something a little different: the introduction of the issue of temporality inside the issue of knowledge. This will be clear, extremely clear, in Kant's philosophy. In Kant, many things are celebrated, among which is the placement of a primacy of time over space: time will become one of the central dimensions of thought in modern and contemporary philosophy, specifically from its formulations. For him, time is not something that is in things: it is not the image of heaven that allows us to think of time due to movement of the stars, the sun, the moon, and by the division in years, days, seasons, etc... Time does not come from this objectivity; time comes from unifying the qualification the subject has of knowledge. The analysis of Kant, therefore, shows this: before there are events, we need to have time previous to these events. There can only be things which succeed each other under the condition that time exists. This means that before there are events that come from time, there must be time itself: For event A to succeed event B, I need time, as a condition for possibility. On the other hand, time is not a concept, because a concept, for Kant, is the result of the existence of several similar species, from which common characteristics are collected with which a general idea is reached. This means I have a concept of man, of leaf, of book, because there are several examples; I compare one with the other and gather the common characteristics. Thus, for Kant, time is not a concept, because there are not several times: there is one time, one single time, where thousands of things happen. Time is unique. Exactly because it is not a concept, time will be seen as a form: a priori it is a form of sensibility, which unites it to the theory of knowledge. This means that men are constituted in a way that they can only receive things external to them through time and space, which is another dimension of knowledge. Time and space are a priori forms of sensibility. Time is more important than space because for space to exist, meaning, to remain as space, it must be inside time. Due to this, time has primacy in Kant. The issue of time is no longer to be in the future, to be in the past; it is no longer about the possibility of spiritual elevation of man, of moral enhancement. Time is located in the knowledge of nature, in the knowledge of the world, besides time not only being an a priori form of sensibility, but also a general form of the internal meaning of man. Thus, in Kant it is not only a vision of the world that needs time as a characteristic of the subject: the issue of time is deeper because it is through time that history itself can be thought. The novelty in Kant is that history can be thought of rationally, meaning that there are laws in history. This is prepared for by a series of other philosophers in century XVIII, which speak of progress and related themes. But the idea of a rationality in history, a place where we can find laws, is, for the first time, formulated by Kant. I will read a page by Kant that shows exactly this! See what he says: "From a metaphysical point of view, whichever the concept you have of free will, its manifestations – the human actions – as well as all other natural events are determined by natural, universal laws. The history that occupies itself with the narrative of these manifestations, however deeply they may be buried in their causes, allows us to expect that, with their observation, in their general lines, in the game of freedom of human will, it may discover there a regular

course, this way, what seems confused and irregular in the individual subjects may be recognized, in the whole of the species, as a continually progressive development, although slow, of their original dispositions. (...) Men, as individuals and even entire peoples, barely realize that, as they seek private purposes, each one seeking his own gain and frequently one against the other, inadvertently follow, as a conducting line, the purpose of the nature that is unknown to them, and work for its fulfillment, and even if they knew such purpose, they would not care!\*\* He finishes by saying that we need to find a Kepler or Newton that will proceed with the historic world the same way Kepler proceeded with the world of astronomy and Newton with the world of physics. This is to say, that they discover laws that rule universal history. Time, thus, does not restrict itself to a consideration of the past and the future, or to a consideration about knowledge, time will inhabit in a rational manner the center of the history of the human species. All the great philosophies of century XIX can be read, then, as heroic attempts to try to discover the laws of history. Marx is in this record. Hegel is in this record. Augusto Comte is in this record. Herbert Spencer is in this record! All of them will try to discover the being of man in history, in a very precise way, in the stages of the evolution of humanity. Thus, I am trying to suggest that we have in the course of the history of philosophy – this is how the history of philosophy can be read, there is absolutely nothing new in what I am saying, and there is not the idea of the history of philosophy in itself, but a way that history could be read, and regarding the issue of time maybe this line could be followed – of an increasing internalization of time in the human world in a way that the title of Heidegger book, *Being and Time*, has some meaning to us. Heidegger speaks of being and time, meaning the being he will speak of is basically the human reality, *Dasein*, the being of man that is in time. Time will no longer have this external characteristic, physical, somewhat spatial, where things happen “out there”, a disqualified category because associated to the world of corruption, of generation, of death and something somewhat linked to sin, to internalize more and more and start to mean the essence of man itself. Now, since my time is up, we can later resume the debate of the ideas thrown here quickly. I am sorry the lecture was so precarious.

\* Thomás de Kempis, **Imitação de Cristo**, tr. by Frei Tomás Borgmeier. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1982, p. 201.

\*\* Immanuel Kant, **Idéia de uma História Universal de um Ponto de Vista Cosmopolita**. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1986, p. 9-10.

M.H.O.AUGUSTO: I now hand the floor to Raquel Glezer, who will speak of TIME IN HISTORY.

R.GLEZER: Although I did not discuss with Bruni where I would start, I can only start from when the Philosophy of History separates from History, and what we call History as a form of knowledge, a form of apprehending reality, became possible for the human being, regardless of Divine Providence, regardless of divine will, regardless of something transcendent to men, to nature, and to history itself. The secularization of thought allowed for the existence of History and it comes with two mandatory variables: space and time. Time in history, when it is structured as knowledge, is a time we call tripartite. It is time that comes from Christianity, secularized, but the link to the future remained strong and marked. Time in history includes, mandatorily, past, present and future. This future, be it the ideal of progress, the ideal of freedom or the ideal of reason, it is always linked to the idea of intellectual and material progress, of development, of the submission of nature to human strength, human actions and human will. The separation of philosophy and history allowed for the creation of History, the formulation of the historic thought, made



time, in history, be seen as absolute, at least at that moment. The issue of time was not discussed because time is the organizing element of the past of humanity, it allows the organization and comparison of several societies, allows the articulation of apparently disconnected elements. If for philosophy, as Bruni said, there is the issue of the material world being degraded, for history, when after separating Philosophy and History you formulate the explanation for all that the human being did, does or will do, it was once given by divine transcendence or any other explanation for the human acts, the element of time came as an articulation element, as a causal, primary, extremely elementary connection. The facts were aggregated due to proximity, but it is time that allows man to explain facts, regardless of divine will. Time will also allow the creation of periods, of temporal cuts, and it is strange that as History is separated from the Philosophy of History, it maintains elements of the Philosophy of History. It maintains, for example, the idea of a universal history, a catholic history. This universal history, this secular history, will maintain periods in ages. Of course the origin of ages as we know them, through a Europe centered view, quite Mediterranean, is linked to Renaissance. It is a separation of periods that is quite criticized by historians, because when you seek a universal division of periods, the history of non-Mediterranean peoples only goes through this universal history when it bumps into the history of the Mediterranean people. Therefore, this Europe centered concept that presided the entire development of historic knowledge, resists bravely to the criticism that has been done since the fifties, since the beginning of the process of decolonization of the African and Asian peoples. Even the European authors, since the sixties, have criticized this division of periods in defined, structured universal ages which are the same for the whole world. However, it is still a reference, it is a cut, it allows for time to be divided and in the division of time the historic explanations are articulated. Beside the periods of universal history we find the periods of the means of production, which today are as criticized and attacked as the universal periods. To those that follow the discussion of the field, from the criticism of the homogenized periods we get the idea that time has become an unnecessary element, it has ceased being important, a foundation for the explanation work. However, regardless of the historian working with causal explanations which are very simple, very connected to chronology, to a direct time, or whether he works with temporalities, he is always tied to time. Since the end of the fifties historians work with a decomposed time, depending on the type of History they are making, the material available, depending on the concept of History. They can work with a brief, a medium and a long time. Usually people think that historians work with time in a tied chronologic sequence. In practice, time for the historian is entirely gapped. The ties are done by the narrative, by the construction. There is not the possibility of the historian reconstructing, in his explanation, everything that happened. He works with random residues of the past, and his work with these residues depends on the moment he lives in, what society allows him to think, allows him to use as instrumental and defines as the objective of knowledge. The historian uses the temporal gaps as if they didn't exist. He knows they exist, knows they are an integral part of the narrative, and they are not simply ignored. The characteristic of the normal historic narrative is that it is a linear narrative, and the people who read it never find the temporal gaps. The impression it gives is that everything happened in a direct, organized and chronological order, and obviously that is what happened. The set-up of gaps, the set-up of the narrative, the selection of the material is the work of the historian. The historian can choose with which time he will work, with which material and with which duration period. When we speak of a brief time narrative, we speak of a History that has been called factual history, the traditional history. A History that ties itself to the historic fact, the narrative considered a dramatic narrative, which has a productive characteristic that today we call immediate history – history that is being written as it happens. This factual history is a history that is assembled according to a selection of happenings from everyday life. It is assembled on the dramatic. Traditionally politic history has been considered as

the history of the brief time, of the quick events. Historians, in the first half of the twentieth century, discussed deeply how to destroy this political history and put another history in the place of the history of kings, of heroes, of wars, of treaties. In a certain way, in the decomposition of the historic time, they do this. And they do this creating other forms of history. Another way of looking at time in History is through the average time, the time of conjuncture, the time of the economic and social history. It is a concept of time that history takes from economy: it literally takes the economic cycle and transports the idea to its quantitative history, creating different circles, according to the phenomenon studied. Sometimes laymen think that a history of conjuncture mandatorily has a defined duration. This does not happen. It has the duration defined by the historian, due to the issue he chooses as a theme for the research and the material chosen. Thus, we have conjuncture history that lasts from ten to one hundred years, and sometimes two hundred year conjuncture history. Depending on the material selected, what was recovered, what was articulated, we have very different histories from what was traditionally conceived as history, which is short term history. We have the history of techniques, of political institutions, the history of sciences, the history of civilizations, and conjuncture histories. The third phase of the temporal decomposition is called the structural history, the long term history, the long duration history. This long duration history made historians work with phenomenon with extremely long persistence. Fundamentally the work was with the history of culture, the geohistory, when it began. In the years that followed there was an attempt to go to the history of mentalities. When the historian speaks of structure, at this moment, he is not thinking of the anthropological structure, or the structure in a Marxist sense; he is thinking of the realities that exist inside time. He cannot give another name other than structure, but will define it as the reality that time takes too long to move, agitate and wear out. It is a time historians define as almost immobile. The three speeds of time added to the criticism of periods and made the contemporary historic production become fragmented. Many times it is not the specialty which defines temporality. We will find simultaneously history from the imaginary short, medium and long term. We will find history of the family in long term stories, but also short term family history. The fragmentation becomes so complex that the discussion about time no longer appears in the historic narrative, closing itself in the restrict field of Theory of History. And the historic narrative continues being done as if time, in its use and decomposition, had not been altered. Rarely will the historian place a warning on his work saying the narrative is a long duration history, leaving the discussion for another kind of work, making a separation, a cut. This provokes on the reader the idea that time, for the historian, is always continuity, always a continuous time, with a direct causal connection and that all explanation is structured on continuity. In reality, whatever the time chosen, the historian works with discontinuity, with gaps and with a time of difficult apprehension and difficult capture. Except this does not show in the narrative; the narrative is always structured as a sequence. The fragmentation of the concepts of time, the periods, appears in the choice of objects. The fragmentation appears as a consequence of the time of the capital, the multidimensional perception and conscious flow of thoughts that characterize contemporary society.

M.H.O.AUGUSTO: Now Professor Milton Santos will speak of TIME IN THE CITIES.

M.SANTOS: I would like to start apologizing for being late, I had to participate in a tribute to a colleague, Professor Kátia Matoso, a distinguished historian, and this delayed our arrival at this event. I apologize! Secondly, I would like to thank those who organized this series of events, especially my old friend Menna-Barreto, with whom I had the opportunity to work with a few years ago, on this very theme. I bring nothing finished to this meeting. I will proceed as if on a seminar. In reality, what I will bring here is an outline of an old ambition I was never able to accomplish (I

still hope to), which is to offer a post graduate course on time. Although I am not a philosopher, I am a geographer, and I come from the idea that Geography is a philosophy of techniques, considering the technique as a possibility to do history, to change history, of visibility for these gaps to which Professor Glezer referred to. Geography intends to use as one of its fields of work, or one of the possible geographies, that which concerns itself with the apprehension of the context of the current and different moments, what makes it, somehow, the history of successive every day. The integration between technique and History allows for the understanding of what happened, what happens and eventually what will happen, when the techniques become a unified and single set, moved by a unique motor, which allows a visibility of the future. Time can be seen in many ways; I repeat that since I am not a philosopher I will take some philosophers as a starting point, to aid in my talk. I would remember, for instance, what I read in Baillard, when he divides time in three types: the cosmic time, the historic time and the existential time. The cosmic time, of nature, objective, subject to mathematical calculations; historic time, objective, because history testifies it, but there is a censure due to its deep human charge; and the existential time, the intimate, interiorized time, not externalized as an extension, or objective, it is the time of the world of subjectivity, not objectivity. But all these times communicate among themselves because time is social. Paraphrasing Heidegger, to whom without man there is not time, it is this time of man, the continuous and discontinuous social time, which does not flow in a uniform manner, this is what we need to address. This is how you see these several types of time converge and diverge. They converge in the human experience and diverge in analysis. From the mathematical time, the cosmic time, the clock time, the historical time, there is an evolution that can be seen in history. The clock is discovered in a specific moment in history and rediscovered in this century with Taylor and then Ford; a time that is measured by the clock, if we do not fill it with this social substance. The individual time, the time lived, dreamt, sold and bought, symbolic time, mystical, the time of sensations, but with limited meaning, it is not susceptible to evaluation if not referred to this historic time, time of succession, social time, yesterday, today, tomorrow. These sequences give us the changes that do history, create periods, meaning differences in meaning. Now I would like to refer to a Latin American philosopher, Sérgio Bagú, who distinguishes between time as a sequence – the course – time as a ray of operations – space – and time is the speed of change, the richness of operations. There you see that time appears as a succession, permitting periods; then appears as a ray of operations, meaning that time is concomitant, our contemporary or contemporary to another generation, and these two acceptations of time allow us to work not only with the geographical space as a whole, but the specific city. There is an order of time that pertains to periods, which allows us to think of urban generations, cities that succeeded each other in history, and that were built in different ways, with different materials and according to different ideologies. In the current city, this idea of periods is still present; it is present in the cities we find in history, because each of them is born with unique characteristics, linked to the needs and possibilities of the time, and is present in the present, since the space is formed by at least two elements: materiality and social relations. Materiality is the sum of the past and the present, because it is present in front of us, but brings the past through the forms: walk around a city, any city, and in its landscape we stumble upon aspects that were created, that were established in moments that are no longer present, which were present in the past, and were current in the past, and in the present present, in the buildings that are finished, this present escapes our hands. In reality, the landscape is entirely past, because the present which escapes our hands is already past also. The city, then, brings us through its materiality, which is a fundamental data to understand space, this presence of the times that have gone and remain through the shapes and objects which are also representations of techniques. In this sense I speak of technique as a synonym for time: each technique represents a moment of the possibilities of human accomplishment and for this

reason techniques have such an important role in the concern for the historic interpretation of space. These techniques bring us the periods, allow us to reconstruct as that palimpsest, which is the landscape, the sum of unequal times, the urban landscape, as it reaches us, allows us to go from the juxtaposed times to the superposed times. If we consider the history of space and time in history, we see that it is the passing of moments that were juxtaposed, meaning that each society which created its time through its techniques, through its space, through its social relations elaborated through language, created also in times that are no longer juxtaposed, that are superposed, meaning the moment in which capitalism gains a throne, when there is the internationalization of everything and this will fully come to pass in the time where we are contemporaries, where there is a true globalization. This moment in which we live, to repeat Chesnaux, is a synchronic society, integral, in which man lives with the obsession of time, a society which is, at the same time, chronophagic. In this chronophagic society, to which time gives in, we will find the city as described by Baillard, in his Cronópolis: he said that, in its splendor, this city was like a fantastically complex organism. To transport every day fifteen million employees to offices, to maintain electricity, water and television services, to manage our population, all this depends on a single factor: time! This organism could not survive if not strictly synchronizing each step, each meal, each call. Then, there was the need to decongest the times, according to the city zone. The cars had different colored plates, according to the time when they could circulate, and then the system became generic. One could only turn on the washing machine, post a letter or take a bath during a specific time frame. A system with colored letters and a series of frames published every day, just like television shows, allowed each person to have his location in that time frame. If not, the fuses would break and the system recovery would be too expensive. In the building which used to be the greatest parliaments in the world, where laws used to be made, in this décor, with a perpendicular gothic style, a species of ministry of time was slowly being constituted, around a gigantic clock. The programmers were, in fact, the absolute lords of the city. The totality of each person's existence was printed in monthly reports given by the ministry of time. In a portrait of a work driven to the future, we see the picture of the cities in which we live. The São Paulo I knew when young had clocks, but they were only to show modernity. São Paulo was not a big city, but imitated the large centers to seem like a big city. In this interim the clocks disappeared from São Paulo, and reappear now, when São Paulo becomes cronópolis. São Paulo becomes cronópolis like any other big city in the world, at the same time that the asynchrony, the dyssynchrony establishes itself. The empire of time is great over us, but it is established in a different manner for us. We, men, do not have the same command of time in the city; the firms do not have it, as well as the institutions do not have it. This means that parallel to a time of succession, we have time in time, time contained in time, a time that is commanded by space. In this moment when time appears as having dissolved space, and some describe it like this, the reality is the exact opposite. Space stops time from being dissolved and qualifies it in an extremely diverse manner for each party. It is true that Kant also wrote that space appears as a structure to coordinate these different times. Time allows people, institutions and firms with different temporalities to work in the same city, not harmoniously, in harmony. It also attributes to each individual, to each social class, to each firm, to each type of firm, to each institution, to each type of institution, the particular forms of command and use of time, specific forms of command and use of space. If it were not so the city would not allow, as São Paulo allows, the conviviality of poor and rich people, powerful firms and weak firms, dominant institutions and dominated institutions. This is possible because there is a time in time, meaning a sequential cut of time; we have another cut, the one that appears as space. This practical temporality appears, as Althusser had suggested, in the contexts, it is what interests us geographers as object of study – the contexts, the succession of contexts where time, in Einstein's image, is confused with space, is space. Space is time, which is only

possible through this empirical work which is admissible to us, conceiving technique as time, including among techniques not only the techniques of material life, but those of social life, which will allow the interpretation of successive contexts. This way space appears as a coordinator of these several organizations of time, which consequently allows in this diverse space (in this space that being global is also monadic, since each point has a specific meaning in the world, a part of the world that is also world, for each point in space is also world, and this point, the image of points, events suggested by many philosophers) these temporalities that cohabit in the same historic moment. This is the research I would like to do, I don't know if I will be able to, I am bringing it to discussion here in this work seminar to sense if there is viability. This way we would not only have, as Fernand Braudel, our master, founder of the School of History and Geography in USP, the notions of short and long time; I modestly propose that beside the short and long times we speak of the quick and slow times. The city is a stage for the most diverse actors: men, firms, institutions which work in it together. Some move according to quick times, others according to slow times, in a way that materiality may seem to have a single indication, but in reality does not, for this materiality is crossed by several actors, by these people, according to times that are quick or slow. The quick time is the time of firms, of individuals and hegemonic institutions and the slow time is the time of institutions, firms and men that are homogenized. The poor economy works in the areas where the speeds are slow. The ones who need high speeds are the hegemonic economy, the hegemonic forms, for which the meaning of a Bandeirantes Avenue, or a road like Bandeirantes or Anhanguera, which are roads which mainly interest the hegemonic agents and the rich people who use them best, from their point of view, these roads... From the airport to the city center it is very quick, there are material conditions for the time spent in travel to be short. But in between neighborhoods it is slower, in the sense that there is no materiality that favors the quick time. Here materiality imposes a slow time. This means that the poor live in the city under slow times. They are concomitant and convergent times that are based on the fact that objects also have temporality, objects impose time on men. From the moment I create objects, deposit them somewhere, they start to conform to that place, and give it its look, these objects impose on society some rhythms, temporal forms of use, from which man cannot hide and that end up dominating them. Not in the sense Maffesoli reported, when he said objects cease being obedient and start to command us. Objects command us in a way, but this command of objects over time consecrates, in my point of view, this union between space and time, as we geographers see it (evidently not the space and time of philosophers tout court). This is what I had to say, requesting aid and suggestions for a research project.

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