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## THE PROBLEM OF TIME IN AURELIUS AUGUSTINE'S CONFESSIONS

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**Annotation.** The present article discusses the formulation and attempts to solve the problem of time by Aurelius Augustine.

**Keywords:** temporality, Aurelius Augustine, Confession, medieval philosophy.

Each historical epoch gives rise to its own iconic figures, which largely determine the development of its spiritual and material intentions. Modern European culture in many ways continues to be a conglomerate of the creative processes of the past. The philosophical and scientific thought of the present is inextricably linked with the heritage of the great thinkers of the past. One of the giants of the intellectualism of

the Middle Ages, who retained his influence on the cultural development of all subsequent generations, was the bishop of Hippo-Regi, Aurelius Augustine, who lived in the 4th-5th centuries.

His work is vast and multifaceted. One of the most significant works of the great representative of Christian patristics was "Confession". In his monumental work, long before the appearance of the existential trend in world philosophy, he turned to the comprehension and comprehension of such inextricably linked essential foundations of the human personality as time and being.

In intellectual pursuits, he was far ahead of his era. Thus, another famous representative of the Aurelius family, to whom Augustine himself may have belonged, the Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher Mark, approached the problems of individual existence in a completely different way.

The world of inner life, the genesis of the human soul and the growth of the spirit are deprived of a time continuum in Marcus Aurelius. His reflections on "damned questions" do not allow us to trace how attempts and methods to solve these difficult problems change depending on the age of the person. These are, rather, "notes on the cuffs", pessimistic in relation to human nature and the human future.

Aurelius Augustine became the ancestor of the autobiographical confession in the Christian literary space of Western European civilization. This theologically narrative genre continued the ancient philosophical tradition of studying the microcosm - the inner world of a person and his cultural self-identification. However, the Bishop of Hippo-Regium, in his reflections, for the first time asked such questions that were not de facto considered within the boundaries of the ancient philosophical discourse.

In the creation "On the City of God", no less famous than the "Confession", Augustine was one of the first to draw attention to the extinction of the cultural paradigm of antiquity and its replacement with a new intellectual setting, which is based on the concept of an inseparable connection between the One God and the human person.

Augustine wrote his "Confession" at the turn of the 4th-5th centuries at the request of St. Paulinus, bishop of the Italian city of Nola. The Latin title of the book - "Confessiones" - literally translated as "Confessions" (the word is used in the plural). However, it would be a great simplification to reduce the "Confession" of Aurelius only to a presentation of the main milestones of his life path. The work itself is much broader and deeper. These are arguments and reflections about the meaning of human life, about the soul, about the phenomena of the surrounding world, reflected in philosophical categories. Therefore, the problems that Augustine poses in his work are as important and limitless as the person himself.

The Soviet and Russian culturologist Leonid Batkin, referring to the work of Augustine, and being under an indelible impression from him, remarked: "The world of confession is the only, total, value world in which the individual then dared to say: "I". The more frank (intimate) self-analysis is, the more confidently it passes right through the penitent "I" - and gets to the bottom of the impersonal in the individual, to the universal as such. Augustine's autobiography is not a goal, an unfulfilling interest, not a meaning, but an occasion and an approach to meaning. That which must be overcome" [5, p.73].

The entire text of the "Confession" is full of references to the main tenets of the Christian faith. Aurelius, as befits a deeply religious person, is unconditionally sure that a person can overcome internal dissonance and discord solely with the help of God and through boundless faith in his paternal love for people. Augustine emphasizes the presence of a special, inseparable, family connection between God and man, present throughout his life, starting from unconscious infancy.

Undertaken by the thinker in the first nine books of the Confessions, a thorough psychological analysis of the subjective motivation of a person is a topic unknown to either Antiquity or previous patristics. Augustine was able to express the whole complexity of the problem with just one phrase: "The great abyss is the man himself ... his hair is easier to count than his feelings and the movements of his heart" (IV 14, 22)

A clear realization of the impossibility of human existence outside of time prompted the Bishop of Hippo-Regi to devote the eleventh book of the Confessions to understanding this most difficult phenomenon to understand. The problem of time is one of the basic philosophical questions, the search for an answer to which has haunted thinkers and intellectuals for centuries. In the philosophical tradition of Antiquity, all originality and elusiveness for the explanation of temporality was metaphorically represented by a naked bald man running along the blade of a sword.

Turning to the problem of temporality, Augustine in his "Confessions" raised and tried to solve such questions as

- the relationship of time to being, thus ahead of Martin Heidegger by almost a millennium and a half;
- about the beginning of time;

- about the possibility to understand the essence of temporality;
- on the adequacy of measuring the time continuum.

In Chapter XIV of Book Eleven the problem is formulated as follows:

Quid est enim tempus?

What is time?

Quis hoc facile breviterque explicaverit?

Who can explain this easily and briefly?

Quis hoc ad verbum de illo proferendum vel cogitatione comprehenderit?

Who can express it in words or understand it in thoughts?

Quid autem familiarius et notius in loquendo commemoramus quam tempus?

What is just as familiar and ordinary in a conversation we mention as time?

The thinker subtly noted that time is the essence and main characteristic of all changes that happen to a person, all things - material and spiritual, and the world as a whole. Outside of time, only God exists.

The main difficulty that awaits the thinker in thinking about the phenomenon of temporality lies in the very nature of time. Time is not substantial; it is a pure accident of being. It is impossible to isolate time outside the genesis of the surrounding reality. This was beautifully shown by Augustine in the Confessions.

In search of answers to the questions posed, Aurelius comes to an obvious and at the same time paradoxical conclusion: "What is time? ...If no one asks me, I know; if I want to explain it to the questioner, I don't know."

If there were no heaven and earth, there would be no time, implied in the question: "What did You (Lord) do then?"

In what interval is time measured while it is running? In the future, where does it come from? What is not yet there, we cannot measure. In the present through which it goes? That which has no gap, we cannot measure. In the past, where does it go? That which no longer exists, we cannot measure" (Confession, XI, 27).

At the same time, says Augustine, we still measure time, highlighting more or less extended periods of time. Therefore, writes Aurelius, it is quite possible "... time is nothing but stretching. But what? Don't know. Maybe the soul itself.

"In you, my soul, I measure time," concludes Augustine" (Confession XI, 33-36).

According to the philosopher, three times exist in our soul only: the present of the past is memory; the present of the present is direct contemplation; the present of the future is its expectation. There is not and cannot be a separate future, present and past - they are triune, like God. "It turns out clearly: time is a certain extension, but it is not entirely clear what the extension of what. Maybe souls? [1, p. 208].

Augustine convincingly and consistently develops the idea that duration is inherent not in the temporal existence of the material world, but in the human soul. The temporary existence of the material world turns out to be illusory, untrue, and only God, who is the source and cause of all that exists, has true existence.

The thinker substantiates his position, relying on the indisputable authority of divine enlightenment, which later became an important argument for the correctness of reasoning: "I found that over my changeable thought there is an unchanging, real and eternal Truth" - (Confession book VII, 17). Augustine in his work, one way or another, constantly emphasizes the universal aspect of the development of his soul. L. Batkin reasonably noted: "Augustin does not judge himself horizontally, that is, in comparison of himself (special) with other (also special) people. But vertically: in motion from oneself as one of the small forces - towards the Creator" [5, p.65].

The phenomenon of the confessional word and its theoretical foundations reveal the essence of the philosophical and anthropological dimension of the modern worldview. Augustine's "Confession" is philosophizing based on Christian dogma and the experience of man's metaphysical vision. This word is realized only through the individual experience of a person and the intuitive openness of the evidence of his initial positions.

Based on the foregoing, it can be argued that the “Confession” of Aurelius Augustine became the basic foundation of the Christian worldview, which determines the place of a person in the “world of the earth” and the aspiration of his soul to the “world on high”. These installations have not lost their relevance to the present day. One can agree or disagree with the statement that to read Augustine's "Confession" means to be interested not in what Augustine is (it is only a help and a means), but in what we ourselves are [5, с.83].

Thus, it should be noted that Augustine in his "Confessions" proceeds from a special understanding and relationship of God, personality, and infinity, which, in his opinion, are inseparably and eternally interconnected.

The second important philosophical problem Augustine seeks to answer in the Confessions is the question: "What is time?" Based on the understanding and answer to this question, it is possible to classify the majority of civilizational and cultural archetypes (Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, Christian). Augustine is extremely honest with himself and his readers, ending his reasoning about time with the following conclusion: “I know what time is when they don’t ask about it, and when they ask, the more I think, the more I am perplexed and lost.”

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