Time is experienced along with the coming and going, and the change of things. No matter whether they are outer world phenomena or the representation of consciousness, time is experienced along with the change of things. There is no empty time experience. If we think of time objectively, identifying it with the coming and going of things, then time will be identified with the succession of now points, which appear and disappear instantly. The now as the only reality will appear from the future and instantly disappear into the past. Time, then, is only because it is tending not to be. Time thus falls into the paradox of self-denial.

As it is well known, St. Augustinus tried to solve this paradox of time, understanding time as a distention of man's soul (distentio animi. XI, 26, 33).

If time is a flux from the future through now into the past and at the same time a standing now (nunc stans), which contains both the not yet existing future and the no more existing past in itself, then a continuity of now will be constructed which flows containing both future and past. In this way, the paradox of time will be solved. For Augustinus the distention of the soul was such a time. In order to discover this nature of time, he returns from the outer world where objective time rules, into the human soul and analyzes the experience of time.

According to Augustinus, however, time-experience is not only that of time, but it also includes an experience of Eternity. Time-experience as an experience of the creature created by God together with other things, is at the same time an experience of Eternity. Therefore, time experienced in
this way indicates Eternity beyond itself.

Time as a distention of the soul is expected to solve the paradox of time itself. But this time cannot be self-contained, because, as creature, it intends to Eternity transcending itself. Thus time indicates that it will be completed only in Eternity.

Following St. Augustinus on this way, I shall try to interpret how he discovered the nature of time in relation to Eternity in Book XI of “Confessions.”

When one asks, What is time? he has to decide what attitude he takes toward Eternity. Whether he connects time to Eternity and understands time as a cycle of eternal return, or understands time from Eternity, distinguishing time from Eternity, or understands time from time itself, detaching time from Eternity, the direction of asking the nature of time will be decided according to the attitude one takes toward Eternity. Augustinus relates the question of time with that of Eternity and tried to understand the nature of time as creature.

Before Augustinus, there was an attempt to interpret time from Eternity. According to Platon, time was created as a moving image of Eternity to make the world most similar to the archetype. He emphasized the similarity between time and Eternity, rather than the contrast. Time is not Eternity, but it has a real similarity with Eternity.(1) The demiurgos, the creator of time, created the world out of Fire, Earth, Water and Air, giving it a form, but he did not create it out of nothing.(2) According to Platon, the creation of the world by demiurgos intermediates between time and Eternity.

Following Platon, Plotinus indicated that “time must be set in relation to Eternity.” (J. F. Callahan, Four Views of Time in Ancient Philosophy, New York, rep., 1968, p.95). According to Plotinus, time was born falling from Eternity. Eternity is a completed perpetual movement, satisfied desire and completed perpetual equilibrium. Plotinus tried to explain and overcome the paradox of time, introducing the slightest instability into the center of this intelligible being (Eternity). If a minimum gap will divide the desire and its fulfillment, or there appears a minimum “chute” (falling down, ek-plant) and disturbs this equilibrium, then the order of this intelligible being (Eternity) will be disturbed. This disturbance of Eternity is the birth of
time. Time thus born is an image of Eternity, just as this world is an image of an intelligible world. Plotinus understood time from Eternity. The intermediary between time and Eternity is an "écart" (gap) or "chute," which suddenly happened in the cosmic soul, itself lying in the perfect eternal equilibrium.\(^{(3)}\)

Augustinus, however, intermediates time and Eternity by the creation out of nothing. In this way, he inquires into the nature of time in relation to Eternity, differently from Platon and Plotinus.

According to Augustinus, time and the world were created together by God.\(^{(4)}\) God is eternal and unchangeable. He "is" (est). He "is" before "was" (erat) and transcends "will be" (erit). He is perpetually standing Eternity (semper stans aeternitas). His magnificence surpasses comparison with ever-changing time. Time passes along only with the successive changes of movement. In Eternity nothing passes, but the whole is present, "whereas no time is all at once present. All time past is driven on by time to come and all to come follows upon the past." (XI, 11, 13, trans. by E. B. Pusey).

The past and the future are created by and follow out of that which is ever present (omne praeteritum ac futurum ab eo, quod semper est praesens, creari et excurrere. XI, 11, 13, edited by J. Gibb and W. Montgomery, Cambridge, 1927). "Eternity ever still standing, neither past nor to come, utterth the times past and to come." (XI, 11, 13).\(^{(5)}\) Therefore the people who ask, "What was God doing before He made heaven and earth?" (XI, 10, 12),\(^{(6)}\) do not understand "how the things be made, which by Thee, and in Thee are made." (XI, 11, 13). They strive to comprehend the Eternal, while their hearts flutter between the motions of things. As time created by God, time did not pass, before it was created. There was no time before the heaven and the earth. Therefore anyone cannot ask what God was making then (tunc). Where there was no time, there was no "then" (XI, 13, 15). They confound the creator with the creature, Eternity with time. Yet they strive to understand Eternity with their empty hearts fluttering between the motions of things. God precedes all time. "Thou precedest all things past, by the sublimity of an ever-present Eternity, and surpassest all future..." (XI, 13, 16).

All time is future and when it comes, it will be past. But "Thou art the same, and Thy years have no end." (Ps. 102:27). God's years neither come nor go, whereas ours both come and go that they all may come. "Thy
years stand together, because they do stand; nor are the departing thrust out by coming years, for they pass not away. Thy years are one day; and Thy day is not daily, but today, seeing Thy today gives not place to tomorrow, for neither doth it replace yesterday." (XI, 13, 16). God's today is Eternity; before all times, He is.

God's ever-present Eternity transcends time, which incessantly flows from future through present to past. "No times are coeternal with Thee, because Thou abidest." (XI, 14, 17). If time abides, it will not be time. Time is time, not Eternity, while Eternity transcends time. However, as time was created by God, both Eternity and time are related to each other as creator and creature. Accordingly, time should be inquired in the relationship between Eternity and time. Through this premeditation on time and Eternity, the place where time shall properly be inquired, is discovered.

Augustinus begins his inquiry into time with Confessions, XI, 14, 17. "What is time? Who can readily and briefly explain this?... But what in discourse do we mention more familiarly and knowingly, than time? And, we understand, when we speak of it; we understand also, when we hear it spoken of by another. What then is time? If no one asks me, I know: if I wish to explain it to one that asks, I know not." (XI, 14, 17). Time, then, becomes the most intricate enigma. Augustinus must solve this enigma in order to discover what time is. The method Augustinus used in this case was to discover the meaning of time-experience which is most manifest and ordinary, but also deeply hidden and the discovery of it is new (Cf. XI, 22, 28).

Time is experienced along the change and motion of things. The time to come, the time present, and the time past are conceived in relation to things to come, things present, and things past. Thus we experience three phases of time. But the time past is no more and the time to come is not yet. How, then, are these two times? We experience the future and the past. Yet they seem not to be. "Not yet is" (nondum est) is some secret place from where time appears and becomes present. "No more is" (iam non est) is the secret place wherein the present retires.
When we stand “here” of now and try to comprehend the existence of the future and the past as Præ-existenz and Post-existenz, the Præ- and Post-become a secret place whereto the light of “here-present” (Da) does not reach. Then, what is it with the present? This century, this year, today and now cannot be called present. As far as they have a space (spatia), they, as a whole, cannot be present. They are necessarily divided by the present-moment into the future and the past.(9) It is the same with the shortest interval of time. “If an instant of time be conceived, which cannot be divided into the smallest particles of moments, that alone is it, which may be called present, which yet flies with such speed from future to past, as not to be lengthened out with the least stay.” (quod...ita raptim a futuro in praeteritum transvolat, ut nulla morula extendatur. XI, 15, 20). The present has no space (XI, 15, 20).(10) “One asks the present, but he cannot find it out, because the present has no extension. It is only transition from future to past.” (De civitate Dei, XIII, 11). The present is the dividing boundary of future and past, being itself neither future nor past. Accordingly, the cause of present is that it is tending not to be (cui [sc. praesenti] causa, ut sit, illa est, quia non erit. XI, 14, 17). Therefore we can say that “time is but because it is tending not to be.” (...non tempus esse, nisi quia tendit non esse. XI, 14, 17). Time is itself a paradox. It exists only because it tends not to be.

On the other hand, “to feel and measure length of time” belongs to our daily experience (XI, 15, 19). We say the length of time with regard to the time to come or the time passed. For instance, we say a hundred years before the far past, a hundred years after the far future, or ten days before the near past, ten days after the near future. But how could we say long or short, far or near about the time which does not exist? Still, we say about the time past, “it was long,” and about the time to come, “it will be long.” But when we say that the time past was long, does it mean that it was long when it was yet present? “For then might it be long, when there was, what could be long.” (XI, 15, 18). Time was no more. So, that which was not, could not be long. Then, instead of saying that the time past was long, let us say that present was long, as the time was long when it was present. Because the time was not passed then, so there was that which could be long. However, it ceased to be when it was passed, so it ceased to be long at the same time. So “let us not then say, ‘time past has been long.’” (XI, 15, 18).

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Then, how about the present time? Can it be long? As we have seen already, the present time has no length. If it had any length, it could be divided into future and past ad infinitum. Accordingly, time present which conceivably could only be long, cannot be long.

Lastly, let us think of the future. In this case, that which can be long is not yet, so one cannot say it is long. Then, let one say that it will be long. But when “will it be long?” As long as it is future, that which can be long is not yet. So it cannot be long. “Shall it then be long, when from future which as yet is not, it shall begin now to be, and have become present?” (XI, 15, 20). At this moment, however, future time becomes present already, and time present, having no length, cannot be long.

In this way the future, the past and the present have no length and cannot be measured. Yet still, we perceive the intervals of time and compare them, and say, some are shorter, and others longer. How, then, could the paradox be solved between the time being non-existent and the daily experience of measuring time?

However, as it is the fact of our experience that we perceive the intervals of time and measure them, there must be time which can make this experience possible. Somewhere there must be the time past and the time future to be measured. That which exists is only the present. Therefore, if the time past and the time future be, they must exist as present. Accordingly, the present must have some extension and three times, i.e. past, present, future, construct a present continuity, flowing and standing at the same time. The time which makes the experience of measuring time possible must be of such nature.

What Augustinus observed was that time is flux that flows from non-being of the future through non-being of the present into that of the past, so that the nature of time was passing away. Accordingly, time contradicts with the experience of measuring it. Thus time itself becomes the most complicated enigma (implicatissimum aenigma. XI, 22, 28).

The reason why time became such an enigma was that time was conceived objectively as the flux and change of things. Rather, man might solve this enigma by subjectifying time and reducing it to the soul or consciousness. As a matter of fact, Augustinus chose this way.

Then how did Augustinus subjectify time? He begins the task with
asking the place, where the past and the future be. In order to measure time, both the past which is no more, and the future which is not yet, must be somewhere. "For if times past and to come be, I would know where they be. Which yet if I cannot, yet I know, wherever they be, they are not there as future, or past, but present. For if there also they be future, they are not yet there; if there also they be past, they are no longer there. Wheresoever then whatsoever is, it is only as present." (XI, 18, 23).

Let us consider where the past is. When we relate past things as true, past things themselves were not drawn out of the memory, "but words which, conceived by the images of the things, they, in passing, have through the senses left as traces (vestigia) in the mind (in animo)." (XI, 18, 23).(11) Then, where is the future? "This ... I know, that we generally think before on our future actions, and that that forethinking (praemeditatio) is present, but the action whereof we forethink is not yet, because it is to come. Which, when we have set upon, and have begun to do what we were forethinking, then shall that action be; because then it is no longer future, but present. Which way soever then this secret fore-perceiving (arcana praesensio) of things to come be, that only can be seen, which is." (XI, 18, 23–24). That which is, is not future, but present. Accordingly, when we say that we see things to come, we do not see future things themselves, but already present causes or signs (causa vel signa). These causes or signs are not future, but are present. Foreseeing those causes or signs, we foretell future things. So we foretell the future seeing the preconception in ourselves. "What now is clear and plain is, that neither things to come nor past are. Nor is it properly said, 'there be three times, past, present, and to come:' yet perchance it might be properly said, 'there be three times; a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future.' For these three do exist in some sort, in the soul (in anima), but otherwhere do I not see them; present of things past, memory (memoria); present of things present, sight (contuitus); present of things future, expectation (expectatio)." (XI, 20, 26).

The place where the future, the present and the past are, is the soul. Three phases of time, of which nature is to pass, are given a veritable and persistent existence (une existante veritable et persistente)(12) by the activity of the soul. Augustinus discovered the place, where time is (ubi esse).
Time is an inner time (expectation, intuition, memory) constituted by the soul. Three phases of time have real existence in the soul. In order to measure time, however, time must have extension or space (spatia). Having discovered “where be” (ubi esse) of time in the soul, Augustinus further inquires about the nature of time (quid esse) in the soul. Confessions XI, 21, 27–XI, 28, 37 are dedicated to this inquiry.

He begins his inquiry again with the analysis of the experience of measuring time. We measure time and say that this time is twice as long as that time or this time is just as long as that time. However, in order to be able to measure time, time must have space (spatia). Then what space is it, when we measure time as it passes? Is it in the future time, wherefrom time appears and passes? But we cannot measure time which is not yet. Or is it the present, through which time passes? But we cannot measure time which has no space. Or is it in the past, into which time passes? But we cannot measure time which now is not (Cf. XI, 21, 27).

But, in spite of that, we measure time. As a matter of fact, we talk of time. “How long a time is it since he said this?,” “for how long a time he did this,” etc. “These words we speak, and these we hear, and are understood, and understand. Most manifest and ordinary they are, and the selfsame things again are but too deeply hidden, and the discovery of them is new.” (manifestissima et usitatissima sunt, et eadem rursus nimis latent et nova est inventio eorum.) (XI, 22, 28).

If that is the case, what then is the force and nature of time (vis naturaque temporis)? Here Augustinus criticizes the view that the motions of the sun, moon and stars are time. Rather, he says that the motions of heavenly bodies are the signs signifying time, but not the time itself. That which measures time, is time. Because, for example, “when at the prayer of one, the sun had stood still, till he could achieve his victorious battle, the sun stood still, but time went on.” (XI, 23, 30. Cf. Joshua, 10: 12–13). Time is not the motion of the sun, but that through which the process of the battle was measured, while the sun was stopped. Accordingly, Augustinus perceives that time as such a measure seems to be a certain extention (quae dam distentio. XI, 23, 30).
Time is not the motion of heavenly bodies, nor that of bodies in general. 

"... the motion of a body is one thing, that by which we measure how long it is, another." (XI, 24, 31). Because, "if a body be sometimes moved, sometimes stands still, then we measure, not his motion only, but his standing still too by time." (XI, 24, 31). Seeing that time is one thing and the motion of a body is another thing, we cannot, as Chrysippus did, identify time as a certain extension with the interval of the movement of cosmos (diastēma tēs tou kosmou kinēseōs). Rather, time is that by which we measure the interval of movement.

We measure the motion by time. But do we not measure time itself? If we do not measure time within which a body moved, we cannot measure how long a time a body took to move from a place to another place. But how do we measure time itself? Do we measure a longer time by a shorter time? Because we measure a long syllable by a short syllable and say that this one is twice as long as that one. "Thus measure we the spaces of stanzas (spatia carminum), by the spaces of the verses, and the spaces of the verses, by the spaces of the feet, and the spaces of the feet, by the spaces of the syllables, ... not measuring by pages, but when we utter the words and they pass by, and we say, 'It is a long stanza, because composed of so many verses...’ But neither do we in this way obtain any certain measure of time; because it may be, that a shorter verse, pronounced more fully, may take up more time than a longer, pronounced hurriedly... Whence it seemed to me, that time is nothing else than protraction; but of what, I know not; and I marvel, if it not be of the mind itself (inde mihi visum est nihil esse aliud tempus quam distentionem: sed cuius rei, nescio, et mirum, si non ipsius animi. XI, 26, 33).

If time were a distention (or protraction) of man’s soul (or mind), in measuring the length of sound or stanza, we might not measure the length of real sound or stanza, but measure it in our soul. "Suppose, now, the voice of a body begins to sound, and does sound, and sounds on, and list, it ceases; it is silence now, and that voice is past, and is no more a voice. Before it sounded, it was to come, and could not be measured, because as yet it was not, and now it cannot, because it is no longer. Then therefore while it sounded, it might; because there then was what might be measured. But yet even then it was not at a stay; for it was passing on, and passing away. Could it be measured the rather, for that? For while passing, it was
being extended into some space of time, so that it might be measured, since
the present hath no space." (XI, 27, 34).

Augustinus continues the analysis of the experience of measuring time.
He takes up the first verse of Ambrosius’ well-known hymn: Deus creator
omnium. This verse consists of eight syllables alternately short and long.
Four short syllables, that is, the first, the third, the fifth and the seventh
alternate with the long syllable, that is, the second, the fourth, the sixth
and the eighth. Every one of these to every one of those has double length.
Augustinus pronounces them, and finds it so, as one’s plain sense (sensu
manifesto) perceives.

So far as the hearing sense is reliable, he measures a long syllable
by a short one and finds it twice as long. “And that very long one do I
measure as present, seeing I measure it not till it be ended? Now his ending
is his passing away. What then is it I measure? where is the short syllable
by which I measure? where the long which I measure? Both have sounded,
have flown, passed away, are no more; and yet I measure, and confidently
answer... that as to space of time this syllable is but single, that double.”
(XI, 27, 35). From this observation, Augustinus reaches the conclusion:
“It is not themselves, which now are not, that I measure, but something
in my memory, which there remains fixed.” (XI, 27, 35).

Inquiring “where be” (ubi esse) of time, Augustinus discovered three
phases of time in the activities of the soul, i.e. expectation, intuition and
memory. By this procedure he transferred objective time to subjective
time. But thus far, he discovered three times being persistently in the soul,
but not that three times constitute the simultaneous continuity. Accordingly,
the problem left is to show what is the distention of the soul and how it
is constituted.

“In thee (soul) I measure times; the impression, which things as they
pass by cause in thee, remains even when they are gone; this it is which
still present, I measure, not the things which pass by to make this impres-
sion.” (XI, 27, 36). Then Augustinus asks, if so “what when we measure
silence, and say that this silence has held as long a time as did that voice?”
(XI, 27, 36). So he tries to clarify the act of measuring time analyzing
the experience of measuring silence. To measure time is to measure it
in the soul and this means that the soul measures its own distention in
itself. Therefore, the act of measuring time is itself the constitution of
time; i.e., of the distention of the soul. Consequently, when we succeed to discover the act of measuring time, then shall be clarified how the time is constituted.

As Augustinus describes, in the case of measuring silence, "do we not stretch out our thought (cogitatio) to the measure of a voice, as if it sounded so that we may be able to report of the intervals of silence in a given space of time? For though both voice and tongue be still, yet in thought we go over poems, and verses, and any other discourse... and report as to the spaces of times, how much this is in respect of that, no otherwise than if vocally we did pronounce them." (XI, 27, 36).

Duhem explains this as follows. When a merchant wants to sell a certain quantity of wine, he takes a vessel of certain quantity and pours wine until the vessel is filled up. According to Duhem, Augustinus tries to show that our attention acts in the same way as in the case of this merchant. The attention can make by itself a measure of certain duration, or a certain frame (cadre), and then fills up this frame with things passing by. In this way our attention realizes the change or motion which continues for a certain duration of time. When we recite a poem or verse in our soul without voice, we constitute such a measure. By means of this measure, we do measure the length of silence, or that of a real voice. "If a man would utter a lengthened sound, and had settled in thought how long it should be, he has in silence already gone through a space of time (egit... iste spatium temporis in silentio), and committing it to memory, begins to utter that speech, which sounds on, until it be brought unto the end proposed." (XI, 27, 36). Thus, this man utters the voice of a certain predetermined duration in his soul in silence, and constitutes a measure of certain time space. Then uttering the voice fills up the predetermined frame. Before uttering the voice, this measure committed to memory lies in the future. Because this measure, filled up with the preconception of the voice to be uttered, is nothing else than the length of the expectation of the voice to be uttered. When he utters with voice, a part of this measure will be conveyed over into the past, being filled up with the real voice at the point of the present. The part of the voice that was filled up with the real voice is the past, while the part not yet filled up is the future. As the uttering approaches the end, the filled up part becomes longer and the part not yet filled up, although filled up with preconception, becomes shorter. At the
instant, when the end of the measure passes the present, the uttering of
the voice of predetermined length reaches the end. That which conveys
over the future into the past is the action of present attention (praesens
intentio). (18) ... "for so much of it as is finished, has sounded already, and
the rest will sound. And thus passes it on, until the present attention conveys
over the future into the past; the past increasing by the diminution of the
future, until by the consumption of the future, all is past." (XI, 27, 36).

How is it possible that the future, which is not yet, gradually diminishes,
while the past, which is no more, increases? That is because expectation,
attention and memory—activities of the soul—act, so that the things
expected pass before the light of attention and are committed to the memory.
Thus the present attention, which conveys over future into past, tends to
the future by the expectation, and at the same time, tends to the past (tendere
... in) by the memory. Attention continues, through which that which shall
be present proceeds to become absent (sed tamen perdurat attentio, per quam
pergat absesse quod aberit. XI, 28, 37). By the act of continual present attention
the continuity of time, which flows from future through present into past,
is constituted. "Thus the attentive glance of active consciousness of the
present (der achtsame Blick des aktiven Gegenwartsbewusstseins), which seems
to be focused only on the point of the present, constitutes the continuity
of time experience. This glance alone forms the extension (Erstreckung),
expansion (Ausdehnung), and the space of time (spatium der Zeit) by its
own continual duration (Hindurchdauern—perdurare) and so forms time
as a measurable duration. This glance first makes the future a flowing
transition without instantly jumping into the past." (19)

This attention as expectation stretches (tendere) to the things to come,
while as memory stretches to the things past, and thus stretching in both
directions (distendere ... in) constitutes present distention (distentio). As
present intuition, it also conveys the things to come into the past and in
this way, forms a flowing continuity. By these three activities the attention
constitutes the continuity of flowing time at the place of the present. "I
am about to repeat a Psalm that I know. Before I begin, my expectation
is extended over the whole; but when I have begun, how much soever of
it I shall separate off into the past, is extended along my memory; thus
the life of this action of mine is divided between my memory as to what
I have repeated, and expectation as to what I am about to repeat; but
'consideration' [attention] (attentio) is present with me, that through it, what was future, may be conveyed over, so as to become past.” (XI, 28, 38).

Herewith Augustinus’ inquiry into the nature of time reaches its conclusion. Time as distention of the soul is constituted by the activity of attention. However, there is one point to be clarified. When Augustinus subjectified time, he said that the presence of present things is intuition (contuitus). Hereafter, he does not say that the present activity of the soul is intuition, but attention (attentio). Intuition is the activity of seeing (contueor) the present things. It is not the same with attention as “intending ... to,” “intend mind ... to” (attendere). Did Augustinus use both terms, intuition and attention, synonymously? Or did he assign different activities to each of them? Let us try to answer this question.

In De musica Augustinus discusses the formation of sense perception as follows. With regard to sense perception, i.e. hearing, when we pronounce any short syllable, the beginning and ending of it are different. However short the syllable may be, it continues for some time. It passes from the beginning through the middle to the end. In this way both time and space are divisible ad infinitum. Accordingly, even the shortest syllable might not be heard if the impression is not left in the soul by memory. As the eye brings together objects and multiple points scattered in space, so memory as the light of the time spaces (lumen temporalium spatiorum) brings the succession of instants to coexistence, under the glance of consciousness. Without this activity, instances will be dispersed. By this activity of memory, instantly heard multiple sounds will be brought to the sense perception of syllables. The active cause of sense perception is the light of memory. However, this light is not that which can be seen by the eyes, but is the inner-light of the soul by which the eye can see.(20)

With regard to time-consciousness, Augustinus discovered this light of the soul in attention. The light of attention constitutes the space of time. Attention is the glance of consciousness, which, by the activities of expectation, intuition and memory, constitute the space of time. “The attentive glance of active consciousness of the present” (A. Faust, op. cit., p. 50) is an intuition of the present, which instantly passes into the past. But at the same time, it stretches toward the future, which is expected, and the past which is memorized, and combines the past and future. Attention, on the one hand, is intuition, but on the other hand, is apperception, which includes
expectation, intuition and memory as the "eternal now." Attention is the glance of thinking which constitutes the continuity of time, looking over the flux of time from future through now into the past. The light of attention brings the darkness of the future and of the past to the light of the present, illuminating time appearing from the secret place of the future through the present and disappearing into the secret place of the past. Time passes on the place of now of attention. Augustinus discovered time as the distention of the soul, distinguishing it from motions of heavenly bodies and other things. It is apperception as the function of attention, which constitutes this distention.

However, time is not constituted by the activity of attention alone. Attention is the effective cause (causa efficiens) of time, but not the one and only cause. In order to constitute time, the activity of apperception of attention needs the multiplicity of impressions as the matter upon which attention works. In XI, 27, 36 Augustinus states that the impressions of the soul are time. These impressions of the soul (affectiones animi) are impressed on the soul by passing things and are held by the memory. Therefore, the impressions are the multiplicity affected by the activity of the memory. For Augustinus, time is the impressions flowing on the plane of consciousness. Therefore the impression is a matter given a form. In other words, time is the moving image of eternity, as the flowing impressions illuminated by the light of attention. Or it may be said, that time is a shadow of flowing multiple matters on the surface of the mirror of consciousness—the mirror being constituted by the attention through expectation, intuition and memory. Thus we find a relationship between Platon’s Timaeus, Plotinus and Augustinus with regard to the understanding of time.

According to Augustinus, the present is merely a point through which time flows from future into past. As soon as the now appears from the non-being of future, it sinks into the non-being of the past. The present appears and disappears in each moment. Time is to be in order not to be. This self-denial is the paradox of time. But, on the other hand, it is our daily experience to measure time. We cannot deny this fact of experience. However, in order to measure time, three phases of time must be constituted
as present-simultaneous continuity. Thus the paradox of time itself seems to be amplified through the experience of measuring time. What Augustinus encountered in his inquiry into the nature of time was this paradox. In order to solve this paradox, he returned from the outer world into the inner world of himself and discovered that time is a distention of the soul constituted by attention. Time flows from future through now into past on the one hand, and a standing now on the other.

But this discovery was not the final solution of the paradox. Because the constitution of time as a flowing-standing continuity itself contains a problem. What problem is it? The now of attention implies the eternal now, but is not the eternal now itself. Attention extends from now toward future and past. Attention is one as the now, but it stretches apart (distendere) in two directions. The now of attention is the one including many, stretching apart into future and past. In the Eternity of God all time is now and does not flow. In the now of attention, on the contrary, time flows from future to past. The now of attention is not the Eternal now of God. It is the image of God’s Eternal now. Time flows on the plane of now of attention, as the image of God’s Eternal now.

Time flows on this plane of now of attention, appearing out of the darkness of future through now into the darkness of past. Thus the light of now of attention is shadowed by the darkness of future and past. Expression of this structure of the soul’s time is anxiety. This anxiety is born out of the soul which is temporal and participates in God’s Eternity at the same time. According to Plotinus, the soul temporalized itself by anxiety, which was caused by the fall of the soul from the Eternal being. (21) Differently from Plotinus, Augustinus perceived anxiety as being born out of the nature of the created soul. Anxiety permeates the soul through and through, and discloses the fact of the soul’s being in the world. The soul cannot free itself from anxiety as long as it is in the world.

Driven by anxiety, the soul endeavors to reach Eternity. Augustinus quotes a passage of St. Paul’s Letter to the Philippians, which reads as follows: “Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (3: 13-14, Revised Standard Version).

He interprets this passage in his own way. He takes “what is behind”
as all temporal things and says "... to follow the One, forgetting what is behind, and not distended (distentus) but extended (extentus), not to things which shall be and shall pass away, but to those things which are before, not distractedly but intently (non secundum distentionem, sed secundum intentionem), I follow on for the prize of my heavenly calling." (XI, 29, 39).

The soul's distentio—toward future and past—follows after the things temporal and is tortured by the disruption in two directions. But the self-transcending extension (extension) and concentrating intention (intention) pursue the things which transcend time, and the Unity.

According to Augustinus, this Unity could not be reached by the way of the immediate union (henosis) as in the case of Plotinus, but by the way of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of man, the mediator between God as the One and us as many (ecce distentio est vita mea, et me suscepit dextra tua in domino meo, meditatore filio hominis inter te unum et nos multos. XI, 29, 39).

This way goes through the now of attention of the soul and Jesus Christ, the mediator between the Eternity of God as the One and men as many toward the Eternal now. According to Augustinus, what finally solves the paradox of time is the Eternity of God. "Tu excitas, ut laudare te delectet, quia fecisti nos ad te et inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te." (Confessiones, I, 1, 1).

Notes

(2) Timaeus, 32 c 5ff.
(4) De civitate Dei, XI, 6.
(5) God's utterance or dictation (dictare) is creation.
(9) Time and space can be divided ad infinitum. "Ita ratio invenit tam localia
quam temporalia spatio infinitam divisionem recipere" (De musica, VI, 8, 21).

(10) Augustinus describes this in various expressions, e.g. "sentire moras" (XI, 15, 19); "nulla morula extendatur" (XI, 15, 20); "nullum habet spatium" (XI, 15, 20); "longum se esse non posse" (XI, 15, 20).


(12) P. Duhem, op. cit., p. 475.


(16) J. Gibb and W. Montgomery translate "cogitatio" as "the effort of attention" and describe: "From what follows A.'s meaning appears to be not merely that the sensation of expectant attention giving us something to measure, but that we go on fitting imaginary notes into the interval of silence until it is ended." The Confessions of St. Augustine, ed. by J. Gibb and W. Montgomery, Cambridge, 1927, p. 360, note. Cf. K. Flasch, op. cit., p. 387: "Wir könnten sie (cogitatio) daher Einbildungskraft nennen."

(17) P. Duhem, op. cit., p. 477.


(19) A. Faust, op. cit., 1933, p. 50.

(20) De musica, IV, 8, 21.


(23) E. P. Meijering, op. cit., p. 103: "Der distentio (die Zerrissenheit des menschlichen Daseins) wird die intentio entgegengestellt. Intentio wurde von Augustin auch (abgewechselt mit attentio) gebraucht für die Bezogenheit der Seele auf die Gegenwart. Da Gottes Ewigkeit die ewige Gegenwart ist, geziemt sich für die Bezogenheit auf die Ewigkeit eben nur das Wort intentio, diese intentio soll nicht durch zeitlich Vergangenes und zeitlich Zukünftiges abgelenkt werden."

(24) Cf. Enneades, III, 7, 12, 19ff.: "If, then, the Soul withdrew, sinking itself again into its primal unity, Time would disappear: the origin of Time, clearly, is to be traced to the first stir of the Soul's tendency towards the production of the sensible Universe with the consecutive act ensuing." (Trans. by S. MacKenna, 3rd ed., Oxford, 1962, p. 236).


(26) This article is a revised version of the article with the same title published in 1967, in the writer's book Faith and History (in Japanese), Tokyo.