

Discussion paper presented at a Seminar Washington D.C. 2010

On Time. What is time?

This has been a central question in philosophy from time immemorial. And even to describe that long period, we have no other term to use but 'time'. We find it discussed at some length by Aristotle, touched on somewhat by Augustine in his Confessions to be taken up by Aquinas and expounded later on by Immanuel Kant. Against this background we find another way of seeing it, not naming it perhaps but despising its fleetness. Hence, Africa declares, 'In Africa there is no hurry'.

People talk of "saving time", or of "whiling away the hours", or of 'killing time'. Thus if time can be saved, killed or whiled away, it must be something burdensome; something weighty, something which, therefore, can both be used and recycled for further use. In this I make reflections on time based on the value that authors, both profane and sacred have given it and why.