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Law, Love, Time

The relation between time and law should be considered in the sense that the former understood as objective, measured, partitioned, uniform time, as time of life, has its origins in the constitution of law and justice. Justice emerges from responsibility for the other. Responsibility for the other precedes justice. Justice derives from non-indifference, love, charity. Its origin lies in responsibility for the other, in listening, in giving time to the other, in nurturing the other. The same origin as semiotics. Our conception of sign derives from medical semeiotics, i. e from the medical idea of *semeion* as symptom, as emerges from the early phases of philosophy and intellectual culture in ancient Greece. The origins of semiotics as a discipline – the general science of signs – are also identifiable in ancient medical semeiotics or symptomatology, as Sebeok (1986, 1989, 1996) demonstrated. He extended the traditional boundaries of semiotics (or more correctly semiology, restrictively based on the verbal paradigm and vitiated by the *pars pro toto* error) both in historical terms as well as in the theoretical sense. This means that the origins of semiotics may be identified in care for the life of the other; which confirms that understanding starts from non-indifference for the other, from an ethical implication in the life of the other. But this is also the origin of justice and law, as Levinas demonstrated. We must also add that the idea of “natural law”, as “an order in the cosmos rooted in the nature of things” derives from law and justice, which derives, in turn, from the relation with the other in its otherness. The idea of objective time, of a temporal order in the cosmos, human life, history, is inconceivable without social laws. Justice calls for judgment and demands comparison among that which in principle is incomparable, unique. Comparison, equity, objectivity appear with justice. The search for natural laws and temporal division presupposes the existence of social laws regulating the relation with others, it presupposes a State which promulgates and enforces them. And social order, social laws and the State are founded on responsibility for other, on the implication of one’s own life in the life of one’s neighbour.