



Talk of time

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Maybe, before we speak of time, or maybe whilst we are speaking of time, or maybe after we have spoken of time, in the various modes of time's insistence to exist, one should give time to the talk of time. There are various different modes of time's insistence to exist, such as quantum physics in conversation with relativity theory where time is constructed as a fourth dimension of space. Or there are the modes of time in history, religion, psychology and philosophy, and each of these modes is composed, and composes its own specific object called time, and a particular subject who understands and interprets time in that particular mode. Yet, before, whilst or after these modes of time's insistence to exist, one should maybe give time to time's insistence: the talk of time. Give time for the various times to articulate themselves in the various modes of existence, thereby creating both a whole plurality of differing subjects, as well as plurality of differing objects, all called 'time'. Once time has been given time to talk its talk, to articulate itself within the various modes, it will be interrupted by the articulations of time in various modes of time still to come. These disruptions of time by time always still to come opens the door for a theological narrative – a narrative on time, but created by the coming of messianic times, interpreted in the mode of hope but also in the mode of a promise from the past.

The insistence of time

Why talk of time; has there not been enough talk of time over the centuries from the early Greek philosophers to the church fathers to modern physicists to contemporary philosophers and theologians? It seems that one cannot get enough of talking about time, maybe because time as such is elusive, as Saint Augustine confesses in Book XI of his confessions: 'And I confess to Thee, O Lord, that I yet know not what time is ...' (Saint Augustine 401:535 of 693). This confession comes after numerous pages of reflections and mediations on multiple possibilities of interpreting and understanding time. This raises the question, if there truly is anything new that can be said on the subject of time, or has all been said already? In this article, I confess with Saint Augustine, that I know not what time is. Yet, do I confess this because of the elusive 'nature' of time, or is this confession rather a consequence of the grammatology of talking about time, in the sense that Lacan argues, that communication always fails because of the structure of language (Verhaeghe 1995)? Is it because of this failure of communication that we continue to talk? If Lacan is correct then we will continue talking about everything forever and never come to any final conclusions.

Time insists on existing in our talk of time, although there are those who would argue that time as such does not exist, as it only exists as past remembered and future expected, but the instant now does not exist as such.¹ Yet, it insists on being there in our language, otherwise there would not be much point in having this conversation at this symposium. We talk of time all the time. Together with narrative, it is what gives meaning to existence, according to Ricoeur.² We talk of time in so many different modes. One talks of time when one plans one's day and fills the diary with events and appointments. One talks of time in history as one remembers and reflects on past events, the relevance of past events for today, and the hope or disillusionment they inspire for tomorrow. One talks of time in psychoanalysis and psychology when one recalls and remembers what has been forgotten or repressed. One talks of time in physics, mathematics and philosophy. These are all different modes³ of the insistence of time, seeking existence in these different mediations or language worlds. But does time, as a *Ding-an-sich*, exist? Perhaps it does and maybe physics

1. This is as Heidegger describes it as the vulgar interpretation of time that has existed together with an understanding of traditional ontology from Aristotle all the way to Bergson (see Derrida 1982b:31ff.). 'The aporetic is an exoteric. It is open and closed on this dead end: time is that which "is not", or which "is barely, and scarcely". Now how is it to be thought that time is what is not? By giving into the obvious, that time is, that time has as its essence, the *nunc*, which is most often translated as *instant*, but which functions in Greek like our word "now". The *nun* is the form from which time cannot ever depart, the form in which it cannot not be given; and yet the *nunc*, in a certain sense, is not. If one thinks time on the basis of the now, one must conclude that it is not. The now is given simultaneously as that which is *no longer* and as that which is *not yet*. It is what it is not, and is not what it is' (Derrida 1982b:39).

2. See Ricoeur's reflection on time and narrative in his first volume of the three volumes on Time and Narrative (Ricoeur 1984:5ff.).

3. For further reflection on the different modes of existence see Bruno Latour (2013).

and mathematics are trying their utmost to prove that it does or to capture time *an sich*. Or should I rather say, physics and mathematics actualise time on the plane of reference⁴ through various mathematical and scientific functions (see Deleuze & Guattari 2013).

In an attempt to capture time *an sich*, to actualise time on the plane of reference, one can highlight three theories that have had a tremendous influence on Western thought concerning time; three theories actualising time on the plane of reference through different functions of mathematics and physics. I will only mention them, as I do not intend to explain or elucidate the different theories as that would be beyond the scope of this article, as I confessed earlier, I know nothing of time. The first theorist who comes to mind is Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727) in his *Philosophia Naturalis Principia Mathematica* ([1687] 2009), he develops his law of gravity and as part of this development he also reflects on time by distinguishing between absolute or mathematical time and relative time (see Buitendag 2008:332). For Newton space was the starting point of his physics, for Einstein (1779–1955) on the other hand, time was the starting point (Buitendag 2008:333). Einstein rejected the idea of absolute time as he developed his theory of relativity and later his general theory of relativity. Lastly, I would like to mention the idea that time is indeterminable as actualised in quantum physics. I will not go into the details of these various theories, but rather understand them as different modes seeking to actualise time, as time *an sich*, on a plane of reference. These modes are certainly highly complex and so much needs to be in place to actualise time *an sich*, as is done by the mathematicians, physicists and quantum physicists. So many theories and the long tradition of theories, together with experiments and laboratories, equations and theorems, results written and then published in established reputable journals, as the research outcomes of acclaimed scientific institutions seeking higher international ranking, funded by national research foundations in accordance with national political agendas on education. All these mediations,⁵ this whole actor network (see Latour 2005), is necessary to *create* (not find) or actualise time *an sich* on the plane of reference. So much is necessary for time *an sich* to insist, to exist in this mediation network, but it always exists as time *für mich*. In these different modes of the insistence of time to exist, time is created (*poiesis*) for someone (*für mich*), who is either a physicist or a mathematician, poet, philosopher, psychologist or historian. Time created for someone, where the *mich* is created together with the *represented* time *an sich*, as the subject of that particular naming (*representation*) of time. So much is necessary for time to be made present (*re-presented*) *für mich* as if it was time *an sich*. All these actors in the network are necessary so that time can be mediated to one, but it is always mediated as time *für mich*.

Is that what time *an sich* is? Would it be that, without all that is necessary for it to be revealed (unconcealed) actualised

4. Philosophy proceeds with a plane of immanence or consistency; science with a plane of reference (Deleuze & Guattari 2013:118).

5. It is because of so many mediations that they are able to be so objectively true' (Latour 2010:75).

on the plane of reference? That is not my concern today. My concern is that time insists on being. It insists on being as fourth dimension, but also as history or memory or as a way to fill our days with events and activities. It exists as a way of structuring lives, so as to be able to narrate who we are to others.

It insists on being and it does that in different modes of mediation, so as to become time *für mich*.

It becomes time *für mich* in different modes or on different planes. For the philosopher it is the concept of time that becomes time *für* the philosopher in the plane of immanence. For the scientist it becomes time *für* the scientist as either time actualised on the plane of reference or time as function or part of a function to actualise something else on the plane of reference. For the artist time becomes time *für* the artist as a sensation on the plane of composition (see Deleuze & Guattari 2013:197). For the religious person time becomes time *für* the religious person as a figure on the plane of transcendence, as eschatological time, kairos or eternity. These are four different planes in which time *an sich* (if such a thing exists) is figured, conceptualised, functionalised or composed differently as time *für mich*.

Time *für mich*

What fascinates me about this conversation today is not the search for time as such, or for time *an sich*, but what happens when these different modes or planes converse with each other, whilst respecting each other, maybe in a transversal conversation (see Schrag 1992; Van Huyssteen 1997; Welsch 2008). In other words, when the search for time *an sich* is given up and we share the different modes of time *für mich* with each other. Then there is time for time-*für-uns* to talk about time as we reflect on how time has created us differently according to the different modes of time *für mich* on the different planes. It is time for the talk of time, the articulation of time as it articulates itself in each mode, thereby *representing* (un-concealing) itself together with the subject that receives this particular *present* (gift and/or present moment), the un-concealing or *presentation* of time. In each mode, time is revealed (unconcealed) within the concealment of that particular mode (language) as a thing – a thing that is part of a world of similar and different things, which not only populates that world, but also *carries out* that world, just as that world grants the things, which include time, a place within that world (see Heidegger 1971:203–206; Meylahn 2013:72f). The subject is part of that carried-out-world as the subject is a being (thing) of that world, as the subject is there (*Da*) in that world (*Dasein*).

Therefore time, as seconds, minutes and hours, populates the world with ticking clocks by which one pedantically lives, and this understanding of time in turn creates subjects as slaves of time in a clock-time-structured-world. Time, as historical time, creates historical subjects. Thus each unconcealment (*representation*) of time, or articulation of time, or moment of time, in the concealment of that particular



language mode (mediation), creates its own subject of time in response to that particular time *für mich*. That is to say, in that particular gift of time, or *representation* of time. Thus one can say that time is always relative to its modes of existence, articulation within a specific world or on a specific plane. This might sound somewhat similar to what Einstein was saying with this theory of relativity,⁶ namely that motion is always to be understood relative to another object and that therefore there is no absolute motion. This idea presumes that the two objects that belong to the same world (mode of existence), are actualised on the same plane of reference. One can compare table tennis being played in a train with a person standing on the platform at the station through which the train is moving, but such a comparison is possible because all the various objects (train, station, table tennis etc.) all belong to the same world (i.e. 'physical reality' on the plane of reference). They belong to this world actualised by various functions of physics and mathematics onto a plane of reference. In that sense time is relative to the objects studied, but it is also relative to the worlds in which these objects are found, and relative to the planes. The person standing on the platform might have been reading a historical narrative whilst the train was entering and leaving the station. The time of the table tennis ball is relative to the time of the moving train, which in turn is relative to the time in the novel which might be spanning centuries depending on what kind of novel it is. Quantum physics in turn argues, that one can only observe what is in relation to one specific point of view or specific theory, for example from the point of view of wave theory or particle theory (see Buitendag 2002:942, 2008:335).

Narrative composition of time, in fiction, is different to the actualised time in physics. So time makes sense to the physicist in the scientific world just as time makes sense to the author and reader in the world of literature. These are different modes of existence (literature and physics) in which time (*an sich*) is mediated differently (*für mich*), thereby creating in its mediation either a physicist or an author and/or reader and/or character. Can one mix these different modes of existence? Can one compare time on these different planes? Yes, one can, as long as one remains aware of the different reasoning strategies that these different planes use.

Maybe it is not that different and yet it is very different, as physics and quantum physics still work with the idea that they are dealing with measurable entities that can be measured differently depending on the choice of the observer, but all the objects measured belong to the same world – the observable world (plane of reference), what one sees is dependent on (relative to) the functions used to actualise objects on the plane of reference.

6.'The name "theory of relativity" is connected with the fact that motion from the point of view of possible experience always appears as the relative motion of one object with respect to another (e.g., of a car with respect to the ground, or the earth with respect to the sun and the fixed stars). Motion is never observable as "motion with respect to space" or, as it has been expressed, as "absolute motion". The "principle of relativity" in its widest sense is contained in the statement: The totality of physical phenomena is of such a character that it gives no basis for the introduction of the concept of "absolute motion"; or shorter but less precise: there is no absolute motion' (Einstein 1976:41).

Heidegger would say that all these objects (things) carry out a world of science and within that mode of existence it makes sense to speak of relativity and quantum physics. Maybe even think of these two together and thereby develop the idea of time as the fourth dimension. Could literary time and a theological understanding of time be added to this? Can all the planes (transcendence, immanence, reference, composition) be brought together and would the result be a comprehensive understanding of time? I argue that it will not necessarily lead to a more comprehensive view of time, as that would presume that there was time *an sich*. Deleuze and Guattari (2013:198) argue that these are just different routes and each one is as direct as the others, 'and they are distinguished by the nature of the plane and by what occupies it.' It is different forms of thinking on different planes:

Thinking is thought through concepts, or functions, or sensations and no one of these thoughts is better than another, or more fully, completely, or synthetically 'thought'. The frames of art are no more scientific coordinates than sensations are concepts, or vice versa. (Deleuze & Guattari 2013:198)

They (Deleuze & Guattari 2013) conclude by arguing:

The three thoughts intersect and intertwine but without synthesis or identification. With its concepts, philosophy brings forth events. Art erects monuments with its sensations. Science constructs states of affairs with its functions. (pp. 189–199)

What can be established is a rich tissue of correspondence between the planes.⁷

What has been argued is that space and time are created or constructed, as a time-play-space (*Zeit-Spiel-Raum*). This time-play-space is the habitat for both the observer and what she or he observes as they share a created world (plane), or mode of existence. The scientists share a mode of existence and share a certain language game that makes sense to them and creates their world for them. All these different modes of existence are limited.

Physics and mathematics therefore like all other modes of existence come to their limits and realise that there are more uncertainties than certainties, more chaos than order and it is with this realisation that they often turn to theologians. Polkinghorne and Welker (2000:7) suggest that it is exactly with these questions of time and space in physics that they need to engage with theology, as they believe such a conversation can be a very fruitful. Why do they think that? Can theology provide answers in the world of physics and mathematics? Can theology complement what science has discovered or created?

7.'But the network has its culminating points, where sensation itself becomes sensation of concept or function, where the concept becomes concept of function or of sensation, and where the function becomes function of sensation or concept. And none of these elements can appear without the other being still to come, still indeterminate or unknown. Each created element on a plane calls on other heterogeneous elements, which are still to be created on other planes: thought as heterogenesis. It is true that these culminating points contain two extreme dangers: either leading us back to the opinion from which we wanted to escape or precipitating us into the chaos that we wanted to confront' (Deleuze & Guattari 2013:199).



Is theology then still just a theology of the gaps, which comes to the rescue when science has reached its current limits? Or is it truly a fruitful conversation? I would rather think of theology not of the gaps, but of the cracks. Theology not trying to offer metaphors (figures for the plane of transcendence) for what is beyond scientific knowledge, or at the limits of scientific knowledge, or to give meaning to science's uncertainties, but rather a theology of the cracks not to discover what is beyond the cracks, but to learn to live with the cracks in all the different modes of existence, or the cracks in the different planes. Theology might offer a way to learn to live with the failures of communication in all the modes of existence and in that sense it is a universal discipline.

Before we understand theology's role in conversation with these different thought paths, it might be important to understand what these different thought paths (philosophy, science, art) are trying to do:

What defines thought in its three great forms – art, science, and philosophy – is always confronting chaos, laying out a plane, throwing a plane over chaos. But philosophy wants to save the infinite by giving it consistency: it lays out a plane of immanence that, through the action of conceptual personae, takes events or consistent concepts to infinity. Science, on the other hand, relinquishes the infinite in order to gain reference: it lays out a plane of simply undefined coordinates that each time, through the action of partial observers, defines states of affairs, functions, or referential propositions. Art wants to create the finite that restores the infinite: it lays out a plane of composition that, in turn through the action of aesthetic figures, bears monuments or composite sensations. (Deleuze & Guattari 2013:197)

Each of these thought paths struggles with chaos or the infinite and seeks to come to terms (come to language) in different ways. In the next section I will seek to unpack what this coming to terms (coming to language) might mean and then try and understand theology's role, not as another plane or world or mode of existence, but providing us with a narrative (a figure but not on the plane of transcendence, but on the plane of immanence) to make sense of the different coming-to-terms with chaos or the infinite on the different planes (transcendence, immanence, reference, composition). Does theology then not become philosophy that creates concepts of sensations of art or concepts of the functions of science? In a certain sense it does, but only if theology becomes atheist⁸ and enters the plane of immanence.

As Deleuze and Guattari (2013:92) say that the problems only begin, 'when the atheism of the concept has been attained.'

The problem begins when the death of the concept – and one can add the death of the function – and sensation that have been attained and all that is left is the figure, an empty fabulation. Or, stated differently, when all that is left are

8: 'Perhaps Christianity does not produce concepts except through its atheism, through the atheism that it, more than any other religion, secretes. Atheism is not a problem for philosophers or the death of God. Problems begin only afterward, when the atheism of the concept has been attained. ... It is amazing that so many philosophers still take the death of God as tragic. Atheism is not a drama but the philosopher's serenity and philosophy's achievement. ... There is always an atheism to be extracted from a religion' (Deleuze & Guattari 2013:92).

ghosts as empty concepts, functions, sensations that haunt the planes. That is where theology begins with the death of concepts, functions, sensations, which is not at the limits or boundaries of these different thought paths, seeking to place a plane of transcendence over chaos or the infinite, but it is at their heart: in the functions that actualise on the plane of reference; sensations that compose on a plane of composition; concepts that construct a plane of immanence and figures that create a plane of transcendence.

Haunted time

However, something disturbs or interrupts, cracks open, these different articulations, constructions, planes of thinking (talking) of time. Is it time *an sich* that interrupts? Perhaps, who knows? But, maybe it is rather the haunting of the trace of time in these articulations. The trace is found in all articulations as in all writing. What is the trace of time? It is the emptiness, the nothingness, the death and therefore maybe the ghost, maybe it is the murdered ghost of Socrates, which invariably haunts all mediation. It is the ghosts of the dead, murdered by poison, but not always premeditated murder, as the poison was intended also as medicine: writing, mediation as *pharmakon* (see Derrida 1981:99).

The ghost of the stillborn or murdered or never present *an sich* in the *für mich*, haunts all articulations. It is the gift of time that is always also the *Gift* [poison] of time (see Derrida 1992:1ff). This haunting disturbs and interrupts these articulations. By what or for what are these articulations interrupted? They are disrupted by nothing, only a ghost, or as Derrida says, a trace (Derrida 1982a:11ff.): a past never fully remembered and a future that is always still to come. This reminds one of the *aporia* of the 'now' all the way from Aristotle to Hegel, namely that the now is not. The now of time is always disrupted into non-being by the future (the not yet) or the past (already gone).

The focus here is not on the impossibility of the being of now, but the haunting of articulation on the being or non-being of now or anything else for that matter. The haunting of articulation, or of writing, which is the haunting of *différance* (see Derrida 1982a:11–27). A past never fully remembered and a future always still to come haunts the representations (articulations) of time.

The ghost of time *an sich* in time *für mich* creates time as past, future and fleeting present. The non-being (death) of time creates time as past, present and future, but one still has not moved from Aristotle's *aporia*. There is a difference, as the focus is not on the non-being of the now or present, but the non-being of time-*an-sich* in time-*für-mich*, the non-being of time or the death of time in the mediations of or meditations on time. The non-being of time in the talk of time, as Lacan, mentioned at the beginning, all communication fails. Language is a *pharmakon*, a gift as well as a *Gift* [poison]. The failure of concepts, functions, sensations and figures to capture anything as they are, are always both medicine and poison: *pharmakon*. The time that is created by the ghost of

time in time *für mich* (in mediated time) is filled with memory and promise of the trace: A past never fully remembered and a future always still to come.

Time for theology

Time for theology starts when seeking to meditate on an infinitely inaccessible other, who or what insists on being, at least in the articulations or mediations of its being: in the Word; who insists on being by revealing him or her or itself in mediation. Such a story sounds somehow strangely familiar to the religious ear. It sounds like the story of God revealing himself in the mediator, Christ. Yet, the story goes on when that particular revelation was crucified. It is a broken (crucified) mediation, but it is believed to be the *an sich* given (mediated) *für mich*. It is therefore the Christian mode that might help us to live with haunted mediations of the different modes of existence. It is here that I would like to situate theology. Theology helps with living with the failure of communication and thus to live with haunted mediations. I am not sure how useful theology is to offer new insights into the understanding of time *an sich*. It offers maybe a theological view of time *für mich* (i.e. time for the Christian). There have been numerous theologians who have done exactly that, created a time *für mich* as a time for theology (for example: Moltmann 1985:140; Pannenberg 1993:595;⁹ Buitendag 2002, 2003, 2008).

The problem starts when figures become concepts or figures become functions,¹⁰ or when sensations become concepts, which is different from developing a concept for functions or a concept for sensations. It is not a problem when Christian theology develops concepts, after the death of God, but what if Christian figures or concepts become functions that try to actualise something on the plane of reference? Can figures like eschatology, which after the death of God might be understood as realised eschatology or kairos, be developed into functions that actualise something on the plane of reference? I believe not. Theology after the death of God might become philosophy but certainly not science. Science, especially quantum mechanics, might work with uncertainty and probabilities including much that still seems mysterious, but it works (functions) very effectively with the mysterious and the uncertain. Uncertainty is integrated into a function so as to predict and determine the probability of states of affairs on the plane of reference. If these different planes and reasoning strategies are respected, they can certainly enter into conversation, but keeping in mind that they are creating or constructing on two different planes.

9. Pannenberg tries to interpret time from the perspective of eternity in his understanding of eschatology, 'The relation between time and eternity is the crucial problem in eschatology, and its solution has implication for all parts of Christian doctrine.'

10. 'And if it is true that figures tend towards concepts in this way, the converse is equally true, and philosophical concepts reproduce figures whenever immanence is attributed to something' (Deleuze & Guattari 2013:92). 'The three figures of philosophy are objectality of contemplation, subject of reflection, and intersubjectivity of communication. It should be noted that religions do not arrive at the concept without denying themselves, just as philosophies do not arrive at the figure without betraying themselves' (Deleuze & Guattari 1913:92).

Laruelle (2012:21) argues: 'Philosophy itself plays the role of mediation between science and theology (yes, theology as the crowning moment of philosophy).' How does Laruelle understand these relationships? He argues: 'Theology comments on philosophy globally, and then philosophy comments on science and then there are other smaller local hierarchies within each level' (Laruelle 2012:21–22).

That was the traditional understanding of the relationships between these three thought paths, which changed with the *Aufklärung* and theology was taken out of the equation, but philosophy still understood its role as seeking to understand science by developing a philosophy of science. Laruelle wants to move away from any form of hierarchical thinking towards a purely horizontal thinking and relationship between these disciplines.¹¹ For this purpose Laruelle introduces the idea of the generic,¹² as a theory of the lived experiences of knowledges *qua materiel*.¹³ Lived experience not in Husserl's sense of *Erlebnis*, which is still the *Erlebnis* of a certain particular consciousness, but lived experience as something neutral fused with idempotence. One could say a fusion of the plane of consistency (immanence) as lived experience with quantum mechanics, probability on the plane of reference via the algebraic idea of idempotence. It is not a philosophical concept nor a scientific function nor a psychological concept or artistic sensation, but a generic given, but without givenness through the fusion of probability (quantum mechanics) and consistency (idempotence). Laruelle wants to move away from any form of hierarchy

11. 'There is no longer a hierarchy of science in relation to philosophy, no "philosophy of science". Philosophy, or a theology of philosophy, a theology of science. So I reduce in a certain way the extremes, and I attribute to this reduced sphere the term generic' (Laruelle 2012:22).

12. 'Why generic? Because it is a reduction to the genus of knowledge. Knowledges are animated, propelled, by a desire of philosophy, a transcendental or even speculative desire. Knowledges surpass themselves because of this desire. Experience surpasses itself toward science, and science toward philosophy. But in the generic, there is no longer this vertical surpassing (from experience toward God). There is a different kind of surpassing, a purely horizontal surpassing. I call generic the usages of knowledge in so far as they are destined for man – made for man, for humans. Knowledges are not free of themselves, they are always taken up again by philosophy, by its sense of excess towards a theological dimension. On the contrary, *qua generic* these knowledges form a new sphere of reality or of the real that is at once philosophical and scientific. There is no longer a philosophy of science, nor a science of philosophy, in the sense of one being object, the other subject. A generic knowledge is one that is turned toward or quasi-finalised by humanity. Not by God, not by pure, completely autonomous technology or pure scientificity. But it is oriented toward humanity' (Laruelle 2012:22).

13. 'I distinguish the materiel from materiality. Max Scheler speaks of *Materiel-Value-Ethics [materiale Wertethik]*. It's a difficult word because it is usually translated, in most languages, as "material". But materiel is a content, something continuous that needs a form or a syntax, an articulation: it is for me, essentially lived experience that is materiel – the phenomenological hyle, you could say. This is not a materialism, because a materialism is a thought where there is a philosophical positing of matter as being, in the sense of being or human being. For me, generic man is that which replaces – although not with the same site, or function – the subject. One can speak of a subject, but one must speak of a non-individual, generic subject – one can only qualify it as individual under condition of the philosophical. The device of materiality, which is scientific or algebraic, must at the same time be something human. Generic man is not traced from psychological man, even psychoanalytic man. It is rather the reverse that is true. Everything we call human is understood ultimately, perhaps better, through physical nature, through a (quantum-) physical-type procedure or event. The idea of a superposition permits the fabrication of a non-individual generic. It allows us to fuse contraries into a quasi-identity, not a logical identity but an algebraic identity: $A+A=A$. This is what I call a strongly analytic but weakly synthetic relation. We remain in idempotence. ... So obviously, there is no subject in the psychological sense, no consciousness in the reflexive sense anymore, one has evacuated this with algebra, with the formula of idempotence. And the lived experience, the 'materiel-ity' that goes with this idempotence is no longer psychological. It is a neutralized lived experience, Husserl's *Erlebnis* – only in Husserl, lived experience is a lived experience of consciousness, whereas in my work it is one of idempotence. An algebraic lived experience – it is fused here with algebra, not a form of objectivity – $A+A=A$ is not objective, but a certified algebraic knowledge. Generic man is a fusion of idempotence and lived experience' (Laruelle 2012:24).



between the different disciplines, where all the disciplines are equal, but not only on a plane of immanence because a plane of immanence would still be a philosophical concept, thus giving philosophy priority over the other disciplines. What is left when philosophical concepts, scientific functions, artistic sensations and religious figures are all cracked and haunted by their own ghosts? What does one have to hand, what is before one's eyes, what is the material we are in, to be, to think? That is the problem, because material is already a loaded philosophical concept and therefore Laruelle suggests *materiel* in which one finds oneself without again transforming that materiel into *Dasein* or *différance* via some or other philosophical concept or decision? One finds oneself in lived experience. But lived experience has a philosophical tradition (Husserl) and therefore lived experience needs to be thought non-philosophically, which is impossible. It is not possible to think outside metaphysics or physics, one is always thinking in some or other plane of either reference or immanence or transcendence or composition. Laruelle with his idea of generic tries to think from that which is naively given. Maybe a second naiveté? Lived experience as that which is given, but not given to something, but a given without givenness. Not given to consciousness, that is the mistake of philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari (2013) tell us, as philosophers always think immanence to something else. Therefore it is not a given in *Dasein* of some or other sending of Being nor a given in writing and therefore characterised by *différance*, but just a given without givenness.¹⁴ In a certain sense science on the plane of reference naively accepts this given without givenness.¹⁵ The moment you have the philosophy of science then this given is given within a particular paradigm (classical mechanics or quantum mechanics etc.). The generic is that which is just given, the 'materiel': lived experience but un-thought.

Moltmann (1985) has attempted to bring science and theology together in a comprehensive multi-mode understanding of time. In his multi-mode understanding of time he has indicated how the different disciplines view time. He has also shown where the points of contact are.

My focus is not on theology's view of time or anything else for that matter, but how the story of Christ, in its Trinitarian implication including eschatology, can be useful not with regard to understanding time or anything else for that matter, but for understanding *understanding* or understanding epistemology or understanding thinking. How the story of Christ can help in developing a science of philosophy. How the narrative is useful in understanding the generic oriented not towards God or pure thought or pure scientificity, but

14.'There is no point in renewing or even deconstructing metaphysics. What is necessary is to change the paradigm of thinking; to pass out of the philosophical paradigm (which ranges from Being to Difference, from Same to the Other) to a paradigm that we call *minoritarian* or *individual*, and which is founded on a *transcendental but finite experience of the One as distinct from Being, the World, and their attributes*' (Laruelle 2012:46).

15.'... they *confuse two heterogeneous modes of phenomenalisation of the real*: the philosophical, which implies Decision or Transcendence as its major operator; and the scientific, which excludes from its essence such Decision, and phenomenally the real by retaining it in its most realist and most immediate "naivety"; in its immanence most deprived of any exteriority whatsoever' (Laruelle 2012:95).

towards the human. It is a much more fundamental question concerning not what we understand about the world, but how the world, or rather worlds, the various modes or planes, are created or actualised or composed.

I do not understand theology, as Pannenberg does, as one more attempt to understand reality or the world (Pannenberg 1991:24). I believe that theology is not a world view or an alternative science of understanding time and space. It does not offer a particular *Zeit-Spiel-Raum*,¹⁶ which could complement the *Zeit-Spiel-Raum* of science or the *Zeit-Spiel-Raum* of art or philosophy. It is, I suggest, maybe a questioning of all *Zeit-Spiel-Räume*. A questioning of these various *Zeit-Spiel-Räume* not from a transcendental or external position of truth or with a particular, more correct, alternative view of reality or the world, but by exposing how these *Zeit-Spiel-Räume* are created by the Words of various deities (figures) or ultimate principles (concepts or sensations), or points of view (functions). How *Zeit-Spiel-Räume* are created by these Divine Words (figures, concepts, functions, sensations). Is that not what Genesis tells us, how God created the world, through his Word? Can the story of Christ help religion or science or philosophy or art? Yes, but not by offering a particular interpretation of reality or offering a particular sense or meaning of life.

Christianity can be interpreted as not focusing on the problematic of what is far and far removed in outer space as often suspected, but it focuses on that which is as near to one as oneself and the problem of mediation between the Other and/or other and oneself. It is the Christian mode that focuses on mediation. The mediation of the unknowable, the great beyond (chaos or infinite), the one who cannot be named, who cannot be nominated, who is beyond language, beyond the grasp of language, and yet who has entered language, entered human story or history and therein has revealed himself. Yet that revelation, as it entered the brokenness, entered the sinfulness, the *différance*, was crucified and died. Christianity as a figure of the death of mediation, death of the Transcendent, death of the concept, death of the function, death of sensation and therefore the emptiness or the desertedness of the various planes (transcendence, immanence, reference, composition). Christ as the generic human.

The story does not end with the crucifixion of mediation, but it begins anew with Resurrection and the new life of Easter, after the crucifixion, and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. The Easter message is the proclamation of a divine yes, *Heiliges Ja sagen*,¹⁷ to the cross, the cross, but more importantly to the creation of new life through the cross. It is not a denial of the cross, but the yes to the cross, and in the yes to the cross is a yes to the impossible possibility of the

16.'Différance opens (not actively nor passively) the time-space or what Caputo referring to Heidegger might refer to as the *Zeit-Spiel-Raum*' (Caputo 1993:30). '*Zeit-Spiel-Raum* that captures something of the time-space, but also the play in that time-space between meaning and non-meaning, absence and presence, et cetera' (Meylahn 2013:201).

17.See Nietzsche's final *Verwandlung* to the child from *Also sprach Zarathustra* (Nietzsche 2000).

creation of new life, the *poiesis* of new life, liberated from the metaphysical chains. God is dead, the wholly Other who is every other (see Derrida 1995:76) is dead; at least in mediation he is dead as all things are poisoned by the *pharmakon*, but it is simultaneously the only way to be alive and present.

It is a proclaimed yes of faith to being alive (present), as those who have died (absent). It is a holy yes to those who are alive although they are dead. It is not a yes to zombies, the living dead, but the truly living unchained from metaphysical suns (see Nietzsche 1974:181–182). Alive, free and born again like a child. A child who is alive and free in the time that remains, in the ruins of broken time. A yes to life that is proclaimed into existence, prayed into existence, through the proclamation of Christ incarnate, crucified and resurrected as crucified.

The theological story, articulation, tells the story not only of God the wholly Other, but every other is wholly other (*tout autreest tout ature* [Derrida 1995:76]), even time *an sich*. Which poses the question: What do we do with the time that remains? The time that remains is the time after the crucifixion and the resurrection, a time of grace before any final and conclusive judgments can be made. The time that remains is messianic time filled with hope and expectancy inspired (inspired or haunted by the [Holy] Ghost[s]) by memory. It is a time of grace that gifts (presents) both time and the beings of time, *Sein und Zeit*,¹⁸ and the time-space in which to be,¹⁹ a *Zeit-Spiel-Raum* in which time *für mich* freed from time *an sich* plays. It plays a creative play as the Holy Ghost, the trace, within crucified time *für mich* calls or prays out of *différance* and into *différance*, both time together with the subjects of time-*für-mich* as well as the world of such a time-*für-mich*, into existence. It is a playful and prayerful dance of the Holy Ghost with the Holy Ghost in the time that remains, creating and praying new possible worlds into existence.

What do we do with the remainder of times given *für mich*? One is invited to say 'yes' to it. Yes to the crucified, remainder of time that is broken *für mich*. The time given as present (gift) is broken (*Gift*), as it is haunted by the Holy Ghost of the wholly other, like the body broken and shared in the Eucharist is haunted or incarnate with the presence of the Other as mediation. So one is given broken time for the forgiveness of sins (the desire to know or be like the Other through knowledge of good and evil with which to pre-empt the final judgement).

Yes, you are forgiven! Take this gift of life, this gift of time to play and pray, use the time, fill the time with dance, play and prayer. It has been unchained from its physics and metaphysics like the world from its sun, and therefore it is poetic time, *für-mich*-time. The question that remains is not what is time, but what can time be for one today, and more importantly tomorrow? That question haunts time *für mich*,

18. '... the dimension opens up where *there is* gift – and even where *there is* period, for example time, where *it gives* being and time (*es gibt das Sein* or *es gibt die Zeit*, ...' (Derrida 1982a:10).

19. Derrida argues that *différance* can be described as the becoming-time of space and the becoming space of time (Derrida 1982a:8).

but simultaneously invites such political gatherings as this, called together by the question of time, to think, reflect and together create (*poiesis*) time *für uns* tomorrow. A political gathering like this, called into existence by the talk of time: the question of time.

The question of time

What to do with the time that remains is the question of the church, because it is the time of the church (the time between Pentecost and the final judgement). It is a question that one from the Theological Faculty cannot avoid, as it haunts and inspires this time. It is a question that calls out, prays in the midst of time, calling one into the *Zeit-Spiel-Raum* of the time that remains.

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