

## LOCAL ANTHROPOGENIES - ONTOLOGY

## THE PHILOSOPHIES OF TIME

## FUNCTIONNINGS AND PRESENCES

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## FUNCTIONNINGS AND PRESENCES

*In 1977, within the framework of his thesis on thermodynamics, Nobel Prize Ilya Prigogine drew the attention of the public to time as irreversibility. Such fervour encouraged Michel Baudon to organize an itinerating exhibition on Time and Art – at least since the Renaissance. He wanted the limited ensemble to stand out from a more general overview, and asked an author whom he knew had an anthropogenic vision.*

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At first glance, the task is apparently innocent: looking over the philosophies of time as the background for a visual art exhibition focusing on time.

We shall not say that the matter escapes us for its abundance. There are few philosophies, and they take very little place, at the opposite of morals, which are inevitably nuanced. A philosophy is a game of divides and vectors that allow the signed animals that we are to distribute the universe according to our tools and signs, images and languages. These sharings and attractions can be summed up in a few words, which are substantives, verbs, or logical particles depending on the case: matter / idea; matter / form; matter / conscience; thesis / antithesis / synthesis; yin / yang; X / X as X; X / non-X in the privative Indian sense; X / non-X in the Chinese complementary sense; X / Ø / X' in the sense of the Japanese interval, etc.

The true difficulty lies in the fact that philosophers expressed themselves on our subject in an implicit, occasional, derived manner. Even when one of them, such as Bergson, chooses time as a theme, taking it as far away from space as possible, in its concrete duration, it is not certain that he should not surreptitiously attribute it spatial properties. This should not surprise us. If philosophies are orientated sharings, they must tend to spatialize.

Hence, we are going to attempt an unusual sharing. It was not elaborated for the occasion but will be verified, or so we hope. Like all philosophies, it can be summarized in a few lines.

Let us then divide like this: in a last resort, the universe is divided in *functionnings* and *presences*. Presences go hand in hand with particular functionnings that we shall call presential. These presential functionnings are the anticipations and centrations (multiple, mobile, discontinuous) that some cerebrated beings are capable of (animal and men), where the Latin languages stress that there is con-science: scire con, knowing simultaneously. In animals, presential functionnings (con-sciences) articulate according to the stable liaisons of stimuli-

signals; in men, they articulate according to the very metastable liaisons of tools and signs, both analogical and digital. The importance is to see that, in this divide, presences are neither the causes nor the effects of presential fonctionnings, or they would themselves be fonctionnings. They can only be conditioning and conditioned to themselves, like when they are themes of languages and of aim. To the contrary, presential fonctionnings are in no way presentifying.

This should be enough for us to situate traditional philosophies, in particular their options regarding time. Indeed, there can be seven simple relations between presences (P) and fonctionnings (F), resulting in seven fundamental types of time.

$$F \rightarrow P ; F \leftarrow P ; F \supset P ; F \subset P ; F - \emptyset ; \emptyset - P ; F / P$$

Let us follow them in their order of historical prevalence.

## 1. Time of pure presence: $\emptyset$ - P

It is remarkable that the human being, who became reflexive because of planetary social and semiotic circumstances from 500 BC, should have first privileged occurrences where presences are exalted to the extent that they deny existence – or at least any value – to fonctionnings.

In China, this extreme position is established with Taoism, in India with Buddhism and the Upanishads, and in the West, it is established with Parmenides and Heraclites. Presences – and ultimately the *presence* – are the only ones that truly matter. Fonctionnings are a Maya (an appearance), a doxa (an opinion), an antamoibé (equivalence of contraries producing an exchange without referential). In particular, functional time is an illusion as an anterior-posterior (Heraclites), as a journey (Parmenides, Xenon), as a desire (Buddha), or as a project (Lao-Tse, Tchouand-tse). You, inspired disciple, also function as little as possible, and for this you should stay within the non-successiveness of meditation (dhyana). Or still, you could function, but not functioning (prajna of the Great Vehicle). Or still, function as functioning, but without any expectation (tchan or zen). These clear views inspired many policies. Aristocrats with Heraclites or Lao-Tse: Oh prince, oh caste, for your serenity control the imbecile rush of the masses. Sentimental, like everything else in India, in the lineage of Buddha: Oh prince, oh caste, take pity, of the sort of pity where everything drowns and confounds...

What was then the only true time? That of conversion, conceived as an instantaneous overbalance by which fonctionnings topple over into presences, and presences into the presence, which is infinitely massive, earth, rock, or infinitely diffuse, water, air or fire. Atman, the individual oneself, is Brahman, the universal one (it is still a one?) say the Upanishads. This subversion does not necessarily take on the violent form of a rapt, satori, wu, boddhi, not even for the greatest saint. It holds in an uncontrollable, indescribable modification of existence. Tao, the path-principle that we can name is not the true Tao. Hence, the imperial tense of the verb is neither the future nor the past, but the present. The presence and the present do not have to go

back in themselves. Their coming out of themselves is already an illusion, a wandering of Time in times.

The West remained as if dumbfounded by this grasping, which did not discourage its political and artistic expertise, but turned it away from ever developing a science and a mathematic in the strict sense. In this context, a functioning was particularly suspect, probably because it was presential, and thereby mimed the presence as closely as possible: con-science, banned from the nirvana and from every western wisdom.

## 2. The time of interiorisation : F → P

From Parmenides ‘the being is, the non-being is not’ to Heraclites ‘everything can be traded according to the symmetrical equivalence of opposites’, the Greek – these sailors who traded on a difficult yet sailable sea and who spoke an indo-European language, hence a language with accords and roots – will keep (rather than the magnificence of the presence) the two correlative principles of the excluded middle and causality. The propositions p and non-p could not be simultaneously true. There could not be more in the effects than in their causes. This logical heroism and technical intransigence made the basic judgements of the Hellenic cities. It is true *or* false, good *or* evil, beautiful *or* ugly. Tenons and mortises hold *or* do not hold. The opinions and rights of a ship-owner are as good as another’s, democratically. Of course, thinks the Greek, there are presences: I see them in a strong body; I hear them in a strong voice. But precisely, the brilliance of the word and of the bodies, shady and especially luminous, warns me that, to grasp these polytheist presences, I should not depreciate the fonctionnings. Therefore, one must make discourses where fonctionnings and presences cohabit without contradiction. For this, two models of time will impose – during centuries – to the technician and logician West, and even to Islam one day: Plato’s and Aristotle’s.

In order to assume fonctionnings in presences, even in the presence, Plato takes them from the top, from their mathematical structures according to which they participate to the eternal. The spirals of the world are not of the non-being, we shall even pursue technical and political reforming ends, but they could not be the true being, to ontôs on (the being being). Let us practice them, but by going back to their source, to their anteriority (a priori) towards *relations* (the greatest / the smallest, the curve / the angular, true / false, the multiple / one, the other / the same), of which they are merely projections and interferences in the passive receptacle (female) of the matter. The path, the method? Let us dialogue without forgivingness, until cruelty, until laughter. The dialogue is the reasonable word per se; the logos where, from dichotomy to dichotomy, the person gives birth to the universal, the successive to the unchanging. Hence, fundamental time is not the project but the *reminiscence*, this passage to an instantaneous, intuitive anteriority where the copy that the cosmos represents is read from its eternal models.

Plato, who was more technician and logician – hence more western – dared to take fonctionnings from lower than his master: from the very bottom, from the concrete *movement* of minerals, the living, the spirits that he brings to the presences, to the presence, by envisaging

them as active operations that themselves depend from active faculties which themselves depend from active, substantial forms: humanity of man, horsiness of the horse, phosphorous of the phosphor. Hence, the intelligible essences of things are no longer obtained by reminiscence, but by poetic abstraction (constructive) from the concrete observation of operating substances. We understand the love of realistic Marx for Aristotle throughout the entire *The Capital*. Then, time does not have its own being. Like space, it is a simple quality of movements, which are themselves operations of substances. And we hear the famous sentence that crossed centuries ‘time is the number of moments according to the anterior and the posterior’. Is this not losing *the* presences? No, because the number of the movement is only time if it is number, accounted, conscious, hence presential (Kant will compare time and the number in the internal sense). Is it not losing *the* presence? No, because the time number enjoys the same degrees as the movements that it counts: down here, the devouring impermanence of Chronos; higher up, the permanence (aiôn, aevum) of celestial bodies; finally, the divine immutability. This ascent of effects into ever more embarrassing causes is abstractive *contemplation*, the safest of pleasures, insists Aristotle. For the latter, a substantialist Westerner, pleasure is good by nature. Let us not despise the past of history and the future of ethics, but let us cherish the contemplative present, where everything is stirred in a mineral manner, animates in a vegetal manner, is felt in an animal manner, and is intelligible with mental ambitions.

Yet, in this Greek compromise, has presence itself not become functioning? Already with Plato, the One is worked by the Other without which – he tells us – nothing would occur. With Aristotle, the last principle is the immobile motor (kinei or kinoumenon), albeit a motor. It is the thought of a thought (noësis noseôs), hence a thought without an external object, albeit a thought. This is how – for the irrepressibly technician West – the amalgam between presential (consciences) fonctionnings and presences that will find its confirmation in the Latin and Christian ‘conscience’ begins.

### 3. Time of divine expression : F ← P

Christianity keeps the Platonic and Aristotelian arrow of fundamental time but changes its direction around. It is not that it ceases to go back from the fonctionnings to the presences, to the presence, to remember and to contemplate. But this movement now becomes the return, the re-cession of a first inverted movement, the *pro-cession* by which the presence creates the fonctionnings of the world, ex-presses (pushes outside) its glory, continuously. Aristotle did not have to describe a procession because for him, specific matter and forms were permanent. And when Plato spoke of a demiurge that had built the cosmos by conforming matter to the model of eternal ideas-relations, or still, when he described the palingenesic origin of reminiscent souls, he stressed that it was there a case of myths, meaning of tales describing – by temporal successions – what was an ontological, logical, structural, exemplarist subordination, that of the a posteriori and a priori.

However, along with Christianity (particularly roman) and its God that truly incarnates without any Docetism, the West technicizes and logicizes increasingly. Henceforth, we shall not only want to articulate fonctionnings and presences, but we shall want to link them with a

*perfect causality*. And what better way to do this than by supposing that presence creates (create is the active of *crescere*, grow) functionings from nothing, *ex nihilo*? We win on both sides. Functionings become absolutely dependent from presence, because nothing in them escapes it. In turn, presence becomes absolutely present, intact, transcendent, unmoved by anything else that its glory, assuredly internal. A free creation without any emanatism. Emanatism will remain the basic heresy for Roman Catholicism, and its whiff will be just about tolerated in the effervescence of the mystics, those lovers of pure presence, and always suspicious. For a time, in order to protect transcendence, we went as far as to practice a negative theology in the manner of the Bhagavat Gita, where presence was non-X. It was *not* finished, *not* false, *not* true, *not* good, etc. of course, a technician and logician civilisation did not bear very long that presence should be non-true, non-good, non-active and especially non-conscious. We only kept In-finite and Ab-solute (untied) and, for the rest, we elaborated the doctrine of transcendentals, where presence is said to be one, true, good, active, *eminently* conscious, creatures being so *by participation*.

However, to be able to create the multiplicity and singularity of functionings in that way, and in particular those functionings of reasonable creature, it was essential that divine spontaneity had a structure of differentiation within itself. And the Christian God was conceived almost concomitantly as the creator and the trinity, the presence of presences, *communion* (not communication) where substance is unique but persons (the relations, Thomas Aquinas will say) are multiple. As Hegel will observe and partially adopt, the Same, the father, shares with the Other Same, the son, in the breath of the Communion Itself, spirit, *spiritus pneuma*, hence inaugurating a paradigm of western love. In the West, presence became presence-to-oneself and presence-to-the-other-self.

This way, time began proliferating and deepening in every direction. The Future was swollen by creation inviting the creature to the co-creation, which was particularly sensitive since year 1000. The Past took on a formidable weight, that of pro-vidence, for which everything is played in advance. The original presence eternally knows (present-past) if I will be damned or I will be saved (future) in the judgment that will be communicated to me (future-past). The Present is the most enormous, and we do not know if we should mainly mark the loving participation to a presence of eternal presences or the fact that Christian creation did not occur once and for all, but instead, that it renews itself from moment to moment, as spontaneous, free, and complete. In the seventeenth century still, Descartes will be the vigil overlooking of this stunning re-creating present.

However, in the temporal profusion that we shall call the *existence* (*sistere ex*), the aporia that the Greek signalled is undoubtedly accentuated. Is the trine presence – in view of its spontaneity, its will, its con-science, its internal love – not more contaminated by functionings than the Platonic and Aristotelian presence?

#### 4. Time of human freedom : $F \supset P$

The time of divine expression and liberty had barely found a sufficient formulation in the 325 Nicene Creed, that already a new figure of time, that of human freedom, started off with Augustine's *De Libro arbitrio* in around 390.

To the Greek's logician and technician intrepidity, Augustine joins the warmth, passion and substantialist sensuousness of the Latin and Judeo-Christians. Let us follow his rhetorical voluptuousness for a moment. God, presence of presence, hence love, creates everything. Consequently, everything is good, even matter, despite what Plotinus might say. Yet there is evil, and not only physical evil, which is not very problematic (since it is the unhappy encounter of series that are in themselves good), but of the true moral evil, which is too unsettling for Plotinus (as later Plotinus influenced Bergson) to dare look at it straight in the face. Since it cannot proceed directly from a divine will, evil can only be an indirect consequence residing in human will. When it is created, it is excellent, even though its excellence consists in a capacity of choosing, of choosing between itself – meaning of what depends of it and is therefore stable (as the Stoics used to say) – and what is not itself, meaning that does not depend from it, the unstable *libido*. Hence, man – capable of salvation – in return for grace, and damnation, in return of his choice (or non-choice), is radically *responsible* and *intimate*, God being the 'most interior' of this 'intimacy' (*Deus interior intimo meo*). The trinitary presence-to-oneself is now participated by the presence-to-oneself and the human presence-to-the-other-self that it enlightens. Then, Augustine founds the autobiography and provides, even more than Rousseau, the greatest monument. It does not hold in the simple retelling of a life's facts, but in the 'confession' (recognition), as we will find later with Sartre, of the global choice where an entire existence is played. Human freedom, hence con-science of presence, will make the relationship between present, past and the future even emptier. Yet, presence has become even more functioning, because it is now *deciding* of decisions on external functionings that come before it, and in which it re-intervenes afterwards, once its choices have been made.

From year 1000, with the beginning of a technique that henceforth envisages the co-creation and salvation as an assumption of the world, the deciding 'con-science' becomes secular. The choice between redemption and damnation becomes a choice between several terrestrial goods, in return for ever-increasing calculated calculations of interest. Since the fifteenth century in any case, the western man stares into the abstract monies of bank writings, symbol of all *convertibility*. Abstract money = neutral exchanger = freedom of choice = the right for everyone to do what he wants = free subject. Henceforth, there was an interior time for salvation and an accountable time for management, whose role considerably grew when, in the seventeenth century, begun the reign of the *t* variant (which can be eminently calculated) of Galilean mechanics and Colbertian economic statistics and previsions. Every western aptitude to rationalising mediations was required to reach cohabitation between these two heterogeneous temporalities. At the end of the eighteenth century, things went wrong. The two orders of time merged into American Puritanism. By reaction, they split a little too much in the distance that Kant established between an *empirical ego* – functional right to determinism – and a *transcendent ego* – presential right to interdeterminism. Another figure was called for around 1800.

## 5. Time of self-constitution : $F \subset P$

The Kantian separation of the two times was both so lucid as to the problem raised and so paradoxical by its solution that, in the shattering vanity of the first industrial revolution, the German romantic idealism risked a totalising weaving of concrete presences and fonctionnings according to a universalised dialectic of which Beethoven is the musical corresponding, but going back to some properties of the Christian trinity that had come down to the level of our acting (at the beginning there was the action, says Goethe at the same time). Let us follow Hegel by convenience, even if Fichte and Schelling would usefully confirm, and with him, let us put presence on the starting block, because if we do not, we will never reach any functioning. However, life always in the West, let us suppose that the presence has a minimal functioning, here by retaining in the Trinity not so much the positive love of the Same for the Same in the Same than the *negative objectivation* of the Same by the Same towards the Same made dialectic, in other words the thesis, the antithesis, the synthesis, which re-poses in a new these and antithesis, from loop to loop, from assumption into assumption (*Aufhebung*) hence recuperating the entire real, subjects and objects, regularities and singularities, abstractions and concretudes, into a single Ninth symphony, pan-logical and pan-tragic cry (Kierkegaard will invert these two terms) where every substance and every 'conscience' are equal in a 'I' and this a 'we' and a 'we' that is an 'I'. Assuredly, we are not ride of the aporia that is intent that western 'conscience' should always be a mixture of presence and of con-science where presence works. But by what minimal functioning! One that consists in the simple refuse of being oneself anything particular or objectal, in what it is objectified. This is denegation (*Verneinung*). For Freud incidentally, and for Lacan systematically, denegation will be the constitutive action of the subject, its neantisation as Sartre would say, its 'no' as Valéry frugally said.

And we would then have exhausted every possible conciliation if, a little before 1900, American Peirce and French Bergson had not, to simultaneously save presences and fonctionnings, attempted a final total movement that was almost the opposite to that of dialectic negativity, and where full and dense presence is so omnipresent that the mater is (as with Plotinus) a degraded, distended or mortified form (deadened). The Bergsonian *Creative Evolution* is then the immense story by which the spontaneity of presence seeks itself and progressively finds itself through the fillings of the matter to establish, according to the discontinuous stages, the human species, of ever increasingly indirect, differed fonctionnings, where the unpredictability of 'conscience' is ever less hindered, where it intensifies according to ever-increasingly vast compenetrations, which are close to the future-present-past of its concrete lengths, intuitionable and unwavering to the t time of nature sciences with their Einstenian simultaneity and succession. The current Princeton Gnosis, some of the ins of which, like Ruyer, were Bergsonian, confirms how, in this perspective, non-consciences are often recognised from the vegetable – sometimes even mineral – stage, giving us to think, in the confusion of con-science and 'conscience' to an original and universal presence. Metaphysician Lavelle spoke of the 'total presence' as early as 1936. However, Bergson and Peirce only conceived this *spontaneity* of the omnipresent presence because all around them, a new figure of time, from which every present was absent was starting to take shape.



## 6. Time of generalised functionalism : F - Ø

If we move to the Greek Cyrenaics, functionalism begins with seventeenth century Physics, late eighteenth century Chemistry, mid-nineteenth century physiology and finally, with the creation of experimental psychology around 1870. From 1900, the time of human *conduct* (with Janet, here again) is replaced by that of *behaviours*, the functioning defined by the stimulus-reaction cycle, then stimulus-organism-reaction, and then by all three on a background of environment, before being enriched by feedbacks in 1950, and even by special effects characterising sign systems, which are not reducible to the conditionings by stimuli-signals of the animal world. However, although it is also attentive to con-science, behaviourism unshakably disregarded presence, even – and especially – under its mixed form: western ‘conscience’. An Anglo-Saxon insult was invented to prevent any intrusion: mentalist, mentalism. What simple views! Yet, functionalist time gave way to a revolution dividing the twentieth century in two halves, the former more conservative, and the second more institutor.

It begun with very *stabilising* conceptions whose ideals was a strict – even reversible – causality of the classic mechanic. Especially so that there is not more in the effect than in the cause, in the status B than in the Status A of a system, except by an effect of combinatory emergence! There was one history, because we witnessed the conditioning of individuals, groups and species, but, along with a possible evolutionism (progressive, fluctuating, sporadic, continuous depending on the case), the time of the *Eternal Return of Combination* showed the permanence of elementary structure, and the rest was merely consequences. This mentality is well summarised in the *Bibliothèque de Babel*, and in all the other *Fictions* by Borges in 1940. It can also be found in the anhistorical spirit of the artistic ‘modernism’ – from 1914 to 1970 – which is on a quest for pictorial *primary elements*, whether architectural, theatrical or musical according to the programme of the Leibnizian Konbinatorik of the German Bauhaus of the twenties.

Yet, from Heisenberg’s relations of uncertainty in 1927, and from the biological and computer turn of 1950, functionalist time gave way to an *instituting* conception that we can sum up in a few cursive interrogations. And what if the universe was not parmenidian, what if it endlessly inaugurated true novelties, singularities that were not contained in preceding states? What if we had been too attentive to the regularities of the systems and not paid enough attention to their singularities, in particular those relating to thermodynamic systems (Bunge)? If we had to create weaker logics, for instance of the ‘fluent wholes’ of the type  $X_0 \xrightarrow{f} X_1$ , where  $f$  signals that between  $X_0$  and  $X_1$  something followed its course (Lawvere)? If some (dissipative) spending systems of energy had the property of elevating their level of information without the intervention of information, by the simple contribution of energy (Miller, Prigogine)... Could energy be conceived as minimal information (Thom)? If the unknown quantities, the no taken into consideration, the theoretically but not practically describable (Thom) was often so efficient (like for instance in the non-sense reserves of DNA-RNA) that there would be some sense in speaking of an odd-job of life (Jacobs) and of a fecundity of noise and redundancy (Atlan)? What if the physiological loops that are the passages from one living cell to another were so instituting of structures, that after having attempted to understand the history of life by structures, we now had to understand structures in unceasing institutions (or restructuring) by

the history of life (Jacob). If man's understanding as a signed animal constrained us to the same historical attitude in what concerns the endless odd-jobs that the aggregates where our analogical and digital signs endlessly write and speak of their local and transitory comptabilisations? If then, the 'theory of the general system' (meaning the exhaustive count of the most complicated systems, men and enterprises) required attention at the positions of restructuring faced to the past data of the memory, to the moving stimulations of environments, to the future imaginations by scenario (Le Moigne)? Finally, what if the sudden emergence of computers (analogical, digital, hybrid) further encouraged this historicity by suggesting the metaphor of fire (destructive) and emergences (constructive) of information, the latter running on silicon as it once did on carbon (Deken).

In any event, whether it is conservative or institutive, functionalist time has become the time that dominates both scientists and technicians, meaning men who represent the twentieth century. Reactions against it, in the name of presence, like the reactions of Peirce and Bergson that we considered earlier, the reactions of Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit* (1927) and Sartre in 1943's *L'être et le néant* were short-lived. Amongst all philosophers, Sartre had the merit of being the first and only one who dared to crudely question the *status of being of presence* (Husselr only described the modalities) that he defined after Valéry as a neantisation (which assured his movement with Hegel). Similarly, Sartre confounds presences and con-sciences in 'consciences' that are endowed with freedom of choice, of existential responsibility of anguish, of initiating project, of historical intervention in the exterior world, without even having the comfort of the Kantian '*transcendence of the ego*', to which he renounces in 1936. The difficulties of existential phenomenology where all the aporias of the western time converge, probably explain the philosopher's conversion into moralist and historian.

Does this mean that presence vanished with functionalism? We could be forgiven to think so if we follow the 'fluxes and divides' and Deleuze's connective, disjunctive and conjunctive synthesis, although the Bergsonism of this author should make any exclusion improbable. In any event, it is presence that activates, even if it is unnamed, through the differently of the writing of Derrida, just like it is presence that, following the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (1921), ostensibly remains quiet in the silences of Wittgenstein's 'language games'. We should even ask the question if fonctionnings, when they are con-scient without aiming to be presentifying, do not become presential by their very purity. The sounds and images of the film *Koyaanisqatsi*, which crosses canyons and cities in the same process, albeit slowed down and accelerated, would lead us to think so. Just like the fact that so many mathematicians, logicians, scientists and technicians who, over the past few years, have dedicated their time to strict fonctionnings, reconsidered with great interest the Buddhist, Taoist, pre-Socratic thought where, in a fascinating symmetry, presence rules alone or (in any event) without the mediating adjustments of western 'conscience'.

Let us come back to the divide that we proposed at the beginning of this text, the divide that splits the universe into fonctionnings and presences, where presences are not fonctionnings, or the fonctionnings presentifying, but are only presential and where both enjoy - at most - a relation of condition, for instance when presence is the theme of a language or of an aim. A human individual, a subject, it is then living, technical, semiotic, environmental fonctionnings and presences, because some of these fonctionnings are presential, or at least pulsatorily (the thought beats like the brain and the heart, Claudel noted) and sporadically, alongside numerous other fonctionnings that are unconscious and subconscious. This system, this subject, is none of these fonctionnings or presences in particular, but the way in which they circulate, whose

referential is given by cerebral centrations (multiple, mobile, discontinuous) that can take root in any portion of the whole, the limb of a body, a sign, an object, a constellation, the presences or the presence spoken or signed. Under the effect of circumstances and of a relatively constant global style.

What fundamental time is defined in this way? None of the six that we have just encountered, therefore none of their derived temporalities: cyclic, ascending, descending, proversive, nostalgic, extravagant, saver, etc. It would be more of a time of *oc-casions*, of *ac-cidents*, of *co-incidences*, of endless local and transitory *compatibilisation* between the regularities and singularities of fonctionnings and presences. Where metaphors and metonymies designating the fonctionnings would not be the combat, the subordination, or the mastery or the microcosm of the macrocosm, but the *relay* of relays. Where those designating presences would not be the principle, the origin, or the citadel of the mind (*arx mentis*), or the emptiness, or even the negativity, but the *halo*. Time where biography and autobiography would record the various words, images, gestures, and triggering that 'we' were with the same attachment and detachment than to just any event, only recognising a particular concentration and fervour to the event called man. Time that is more chemical and physiological than mechanical, where the thermogram is as expressive as the portrait. Time where, in the tense of the verb, does not dominate the romantic past or the existentialist future, but the present, not like an instant or as a length, but as an interval in the mode of the indicative and almost of the infinitive rather than the conditional or the optative. Time that, without daring to postulate *the* universal presence spreading to the vegetable – and even to the mineral – where philosophy probably becomes metaphysical, nevertheless *communicates* according to the fonctionnings of every reign, and *shares* over and above according to the presences of animals and men. Time where presences are no stranger to absences, to life and to death, the con-scious of our ten or twelve types of unconscious.

And it is not indifferent to evoke this oc-casional time at a time when experiences on the mass (or absence of neutrinos mass) absence are elaborated, and whose result could decide whether our universe is in an indefinite expansion *spatially*, or if is doomed to contraction, following a moment of extreme relaxation, to another big bang, for a new relaxation in an indefinite, *temporal* breathing. In that case, the state-moments that we are would not only become – like all other significant events (meaning events that are articulated around other events) – to a median phase between an initial too hot and final too cold, but, beyond this phase, to the Eternal Return of the Different Same. For other fonctionnings, with other presences and absences.

*Henri Van Lier*