

Crystals of Time: Hasty, Deleuze, and the Dimensions of the Present

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In his book *Meter as Rhythm*, Christopher Hasty embraces a radical form of empiricism similar in many respects to the Post-Structuralist philosophy of Gilles Deleuze. Despite the different gambits of their projects, their common concern with process, temporality, immanence, and multiplicity yields many points of contact, not only in general philosophical approach, but in theoretic construction as well. Both Hasty and Deleuze embrace a world of becoming (or a musical “world in resonance,” as Jean-Luc Nancy puts it),¹ rather than contenting themselves with the limitations of conventional philosophical (or musical) paradigms.

In this paper I focus on a particular similarity with regard to the nature of time, and in particular the way in which the *present* (the “now”) is situated in relation to past and future. Both Hasty and Deleuze regard the present as a temporal complex or multiplicity on the edge of chaos. The *consistency* or intelligibility of the present is not given in advance, but comes about (consists) only by way of a continuous process of redrawing and reconstituting itself. The past and future relate fundamentally to the present (or the present-process), to the point where the present itself becomes inseparable from a presence of the past and a presence of a future incorporated within it. THE past (the historical past or the past in general) is of little importance in the sense that its abstract nature cannot sustain any dynamic presence within *this* present, a present that is lived. Neither is there any importance given to a specific past event or circumstance with a *causal* claim or relation to the present. What interests Hasty and Deleuze is

not how one event may have precipitated or caused another, but rather *how multiple events, both past and yet to come*, constitute *coextensive dimensions* of a present becoming. For them, this is the nexus of real, lived time.

In such a configuration, past-present-future cannot be regarded as materially the same only “located” differently. Rather, each dimension designates distinct conditions which despite the infinite variability of content, casts or modulates (portrays, projects) that content according to a unique nature and function within the overall temporal circuit. Events thus present themselves always in *aspect*: non-exchangeable facets which change in nature as they circulate through the dimensions.² However, this process of circulation is not an abstract or external phenomenon (absolute time): it belongs fully to a *lived* present, a present that is always becoming (as opposed to an abstract or theoretical present that is not explicitly bound up in a perceptual act³). Consider the similarities between these two statements:

“The past and the future do not designate instants distinct from a supposed present instant, but rather the dimensions of the present itself insofar as it is a contraction of instants...the living present goes...from the particulars which it envelops by contraction to the general which it develops in the field of its expectation...”

Gilles Deleuze *Difference & Repetition*, pg. 71

“...now might be conceived as a definite perspective on the past and future, and a perspective without which there is no past and no future...If what is now is ‘present,’ then past and future can in this sense be conceived as ‘present.’”

Chris Hasty *Meter as Rhythm*, pg. 77

Both quotations refer to a tripartite structure of time where past and future are bound up with and *simultaneous* to the present (arising as “dimensions” in Deleuze’s case, “perspectives” in Hasty’s). Past and future are conceived not as independent, equivalent points along a time line (distinguished only by location or order), but as irreducible and non-exchangeable components of the present. In other words, past and future are “present” to the present; they are indivisible