

Fossils and tombs and how they haunt us

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Fossils and tombs in museums fascinate us and haunt us with their secrets. The discovery of the remains of *Homo naledi*, found, as argued by some, in an ancient burial chamber, promises to reveal secrets of an unremembered past, thus offering clues concerning our present-day humans and maybe influence our human future. The paper will not engage directly with what *Homo naledi* might contribute to the various science-religion and/or theology conversations but rather engage with the grammars of these conversations, by asking the question, why do tombs and fossils haunt us? This article will bring into the conversation Derrida's interpretation on tombs and fossils, his hauntology, as well as the fascination with secrets. It will not offer an interpretation of Naledi, but rather ask the question why she inspires (haunts) the belief that she has something to offer the science-religion conversation (which I believe she does), or why she inspires the belief that such discoveries make no difference to the religious views on creation, for example. Whichever way, the dead, and specifically those dead to human memory, when 'recalled', haunt us and disturb us with their secrets.

It is impossible to seek, in the world, among the dead, what comes from life – a single living being. (Henry 2015:85)

What a gift these prehistoric finds are, those that come to us from before time and place, that is from a time and place before emplotment into narrative, if it is possible that anything comes to us from such a place without being received as much as it arrives. Whatever it is that comes to us from before time and place can only be a gift, and as all gifts do, it brings about much excitement, as it did, for example, for Quentin Meillassoux (2008), who got all excited about fossils, but specifically 'arche-fossils'.¹

He got excited because such arche-fossils as well as fossils, or fossils of prehuman or preconscious existence, question the necessity for some form of transcendence for the world to be. But does, or do, such finds not also question the various forms of realism as well, be it dialogical realism, or critical realism or Meillassoux's own form of speculative realism? His basic argument is that arche-fossils are from a time before consciousness, and therefore question the Kantian and post-Kantian argument that phenomena can only be revealed, can only appear to some form of consciousness, for example: to Existence, to Life, to *Dasein*, which in turn provide the original condition for any form of manifestation of phenomena (see Brassier 2007:17).

He wants to challenge the various post-metaphysical philosophies of difference as Laruelle (2010) refers to them. Meillassoux argues that these various philosophies depend on some or other form of correlationism, the relation between thought and its correlate, even if that relation is, as Ray Brassier argues, a non-relation-relation (Brassier 2003:27). In correlationism, thoughts aim or intend mind-independent or language-independent realities and between these two there are various forms of difference and/or identity.

A find such as *Homo naledi* poses the question: Could *Homo naledi* as an early proto- or even preconscious form of hominin have existed without *Homo sapiens* thinking about it and asking these very questions that are being asked?

Meillassoux's argument is a critique of Kant and all post-Kantian philosophy and he specifically refers to Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, where Kant says the following:

Accordingly, all events which have taken place in the immense periods that have preceded my own existence really mean nothing but the possibility of extending the chain of experience from the present

1. The arche-fossil enjoins us to track thought by inviting us to discover the 'hidden passage' trodden by the latter in order to achieve what modern philosophy has been telling us for the past two centuries is impossibility itself: to get out of ourselves, to grasp the in-itself, to know what is whether we are or not (Meillassoux 2008:48). To distinguish an 'arch-fossil' from a fossil, one could say that a 'fossil is a material bearing the traces of pre-historic life, but an "arch-fossil" is a material indicating traces of "ancestral" phenomena anterior even to the emergence of life' (Brassier 2007:15).

perception back to the conditions which determine this perception in respect of time. (As quoted in Brassier 2007:21)

This seems to be true, whether we are thinking about *Homo naledi* and the burial chamber she was found in or if we are thinking about animals and the possibility or impossibility of animal consciousness, we project our own experience of perception and consciousness onto the past or onto animals. We even project our own emotions of what it must have been like to carry the dead into that dangerous dark space. We project the emotion of the pain of losing a loved one and then following through with that 'repetitive ritual' of placing the dead, 'burying' the dead in that inaccessible place.

Human and prehuman fossils are humanised, much as the animal kingdom is humanised, but the argument is that arche-fossils cannot be, as they come from a time prior to humans, and not only prior to consciousness, but even prior to perception of any form, even prior to the possibility of perception as they come from a time prior to any form of nervous system. Meillassoux's conclusion is that for Kant and all thinking that is influenced by Kant, the arche-fossil cannot be represented as existing in itself but only as connected to a possible experience. But as it is impossible to extend the:

chain of experience from our present time to the time of the accretion of the earth ... We cannot extend the chain of possible perception back prior to the emergence of nervous systems, which provide the material conditions for the possibility of perceptual experience. (Brassier 2007:21)

By the time of *Homo naledi*, there certainly was a nervous system and perception, but the question is: was there consciousness, maybe a kind of protoconsciousness? There might have already been early forms of language or primitive forms of communication?

Of course, the post-Kantians, the post-metaphysicians and the philosophers of difference responded to *After Finitude*, Meillassoux's book, and that debate will probably continue for some time.

I began with Meillassoux, as his question fascinates me – his question, reformulated in my own language (words): What comes before, prior to language? What is behind, prior, before correlation as he calls it? Or what is before Difference (*Austrag*) as Heidegger calls it (see Caputo 1982:151), or Difference as Deleuze and Guattari (2011) call it and maybe before *différance*, although Derrida never ventured into those spaces of origins, but rather stayed in the midst of things, always already in the middle of things (Bennington 1993:19), always already in the text without there being an outside text (there is no outside-text; *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*) (Derrida 1997:158).

Meillassoux focused on Arch-fossils and the topic in this paper is *Homo naledi*, who is old but not that old, and yet the question remains the same. We extend our experience to interpret and understand *Homo naledi* and the question

remains, who was she before our experience of ourselves is extended towards her?

These gifts could also be argued haunt what Alain Badiou calls body–language dualism, which he refers to as democratic materialism,² as such a dualism is maybe broken open by such a find, as it breaks into this dualism *as if* a truth has appeared.³ A truth in the form of a question, seeking a body and thus a language, seeking understanding.

A body, or at least the remains of many bodies, bones of various skeletons, appear from a time before language, maybe even a time before the physiological and anatomical possibility of language or maybe just the early beginnings of the evolution of such a possibility, and thereby questioning many of our assumptions about ourselves, our origins and maybe also our future.

It did not take long and this find, this gift, was emplotted and *Homo naledi* became part of our story, human or prehuman history. Fossils are unearthed and with them they bring hints, traces, cinders of secrets of other worlds, worlds that existed long before ours.

Yet, these prehistoric finds, these fossils, are more than messages of worlds long buried in an un-remembered past, as they soon become part of a remembered past as our experience is extended into their world. Yet, what fascinates us about these fossils and tombs is that they seem to come from that *Ort* before, prior to the speaking of language, and therefore before the possibility of history, in the true sense of the word: prehistory, before story and the possibility of story. This place-time from prehistory, before language, prior to language, Heidegger once pondered if this might be the place, from which a last God might signal (*Wink*) to us (Heidegger 1998:24). Maybe this last God is also the only God that might save us, as Heidegger also once said in the famous Spiegel interview (Heidegger 1976). This *Ort* might also be the *Ort* from which, for Badiou, a truth can appear and these truths can certainly bring about a revolution, that is, if enough faithful subjects become part of the truth procedure – in this case a truth procedure in science, but maybe it might influence politics and art and love as well? These four, science, politics, art and love, are the various truth procedures that Badiou refers to.

Naledi means star in Sotho, star, a message, the remains of a body, prior to language, from the stars, from the heavens, indeed a place for a last God. Naledi, a star from afar that twinkles, maybe like that last God twinkling from that *Ort* and thereby calling us, inviting us and we, as always, respond.

2. 'Today, natural belief is condensed in a single statement: *There are only bodies and languages*. ... This statement is the axiom of contemporary conviction. I propose to name this conviction *democratic materialism*' (Badiou 2009:1).

3. Badiou argues that there are only bodies and languages, except that there are truths as well (Badiou 2009:4). It is by adding truth and with truth, truth procedures in science, art, love and politics that he wants to counter democratic materialism with his understanding of *materialist dialectic* (Badiou 2009:3, 45).

If these finds are such gifts, the question might be posed, but who is it that gives this gift and who receives this gift? As gifts, to be understood as gifts, we need to have a giver and a receiver.

Who called Naledi, or did Naledi call from the silence of her secrets, hidden away in her ancient burial chamber, in which she was supposedly placed at great peril to her 'people', if one can call them people? Or did the scientists, the specialists, in their diverse fields of expertise call her? Or was there something else calling that inspired the search for such fossils, that inspired the search for her? Something about our past, or even something from before our past, that calls us, beckons us, maybe hinting at all sorts of promises, promises that such finds will unlock the secrets of our past, help us understand our present and maybe give indications concerning our future? Who or what called, called this search party into being, a team of scientists searching for missing information, some even call the find 'the missing link'. A missing link in the chain of development, the chain of evolution, others call it a secret, the secret of our past that has been uncovered. Whatever it is called, it is believed to answer many questions and solve mysteries long buried in a past beyond memory. The ambition of knowledge is to find such missing links, the link to the past, the link to the truth, the link to the real, the link that binds truths and facts beyond doubt and speculation, yet this is the ambition that drives all quests for knowledge, is it not?

Once we start asking such questions, or start concerning ourselves with that time and place before memory, are we not moving into the territory of the beginning, the origin, the creation, the ultimate calling into being of all that is? Or the giving of all that is, or the arrival of all that is, which needs to be received and therefore the receiving of all that is? Are we not in a sense asking Meillasoux's question, what is prior to correlation? Heidegger's question about what is prior to *Austrag*, what is prior to difference, Deleuze's question, what is prior to thought, is it to think the unthinkable?

Once we start with those questions, are we not asking the very fundamental questions of cosmology and ontology, about what is and how what is came into being – was it created, or did it develop and/or evolve? The question of what is all part of our world, the things of our cosmos and how did they come to be. Who or what called, who or what gave, everything that is and was into being, and that question cannot be separated from who or what is calling us, to receive, name, interpret, analyse and thereby understand, classify, categorise all what was, is and maybe is to come?

This reminds me of the story of Adam and Eve, which also goes back to the story of creation. Adam and Eve when they were still in the Garden of Eden. Shortly after the creation of all that is, they were given the task, by the creator of all things in whose image they, Adam and Eve were created, to give names and identities to all things so as to differentiate them. A task humanity has taken very seriously ever since. Today we still name things, but not only name, we date and place

things into history even if that history pre-dates our history. Who is this we, that speaks of *our* history and therefore can also speak of that which happened prior to our history? When did our history begin? It began with the species that survived all the other species, *Homo sapiens*. The species that survived the other species, maybe because it had the best physiological and anatomical ability to further develop language and with language, thinking or at least a new kind of thinking. A thinking that transformed the species hominin from a survivor of nature to a shaper and cultivator of nature, by naming nature and by naming developed the ability to understand and control and even create, cultivate and develop nature. *Homo sapiens*, the only surviving species, we are told, which had a brain large enough, and the physiological necessities for (among other things) such questions as we are pondering here today. Gazing into the stars at night, gazing at Naledi, and into the depths of the earth and pondering such profound questions as to our origin and/or our end.

Homo naledi certainly takes us back to these fundamental questions as they say, the questions of what is and why it is, which inevitably leads to the question who gave and who or what receives this ontology and history of being, that might be classified as natural history?

A gift always has a giver and a receiver and the two correlate, is there a beyond correlation?

In a different past, also distant past but not quite as distant as Naledi, a past that is well remembered and even well recorded in writing, there was a name given (we always give names) to that place, which is a place of receiving and giving, and it was called *khōra*. At least, that is the name that was given since the beginning of Western time and place (Western thought). It is *a*, or even maybe, *the* place of and/or for receiving and giving, or the place of taking place, *der Ort wo Stadt stattfindet*, a beautiful wordplay that just does not work in English (the place where city takes place). Plato in his *Timaeus* (Plato 2008) associates this place *of* and/or *for* taking place of cosmology and ontology with *khōra* (see also Derrida 1995a).

It is the place of all thinking of ontology and cosmology and therefore maybe this thinking and questioning about Naledi also takes place in this place, called *khōra*? It is perhaps *the* place of *Homo sapiens* – maybe not a place for *Homo naledi* as they did not have the capacity for such thinking yet, although perhaps the early beginnings thereof, the early links in the long journey towards that place, the place of *Homo sapiens*, the time-play-place (*Zeit-Spiel-Raum*) of *Homo sapiens*. *Khōra* itself has been given many names: the container, the receptacle, the nurse, the mother, maybe above all *khōra* is the mother, the place, receptacle of *Homo sapiens*?

Khōra, the place for the taking place of these questions and naming of the find, *Homo naledi*.

One could even argue that one of the species, namely *Homo sapiens*, has never left that place with these questions of ontology and cosmology. Have we ever left that place where

these questions take place or where these things take place or where these things are received? Can *Homo sapiens* ever leave that place, or are we always in that place, where all taking place takes place, which I argued above maybe is *the* place of and/or for *Homo sapiens*? Maybe it is the place that called *Homo sapiens* into being? A place that gave *Homo sapiens* or maybe the place that receives *Homo sapiens*? Or a place that only *Homo sapiens* could take place in? Are we not with these questions and thinking about Naledi, taking place in that place, as *Homo sapiens*? What about *Homo naledi*, is she not in that place? What about the animals and the trees do they not take place in that place? And what about Quentin Meillasoux's arche fossil – where does that take place?

Yes, they all take place there in that place of taking place, but they do because *Homo sapiens* takes place in that place. Would they take place in that place, without *Homo sapiens*? That is the question, is it not? But who can answer that?

Here we are in *Khōra*, the taking place of these questions. Could somebody maybe climb to the top of this receptacle and peer over the brim?

Who gives us Naledi? Who is entitled to receive her, place and date her maybe in both senses of that word date, as either place her in time and/or place her in relationship? Who is authorised to do that, who is specialised enough to know? Maybe those who named her, Naledi, *Homo naledi*, as a possible early find of the species Hominin. Yet, does she answer or respond to that name? Well, yes she has responded, as she is here now and her name, with or without her, is causing quite a stir, or a lot seems to be answering and responding to this name, yet is it her real name? Did they have real names then, way back then, maybe even before names? Naledi, sounds like a first name, did they have first names? What is a first name, it is a way to be addressed, and did they address each other? How did they call each other? These prehumans, those before language, how did they address each other? Did they address each other?

Prehuman, when was that? When did humans become humans? Well, way back then, very long ago the lineage was clearly established, the story has been written, the narrative emplotted, and *Homo naledi* has received her place within this plot, although some might dispute the exact time and place she has received, yet she is undisputedly part of this story.

Do we know today what a real name is? Who gives it, who receives it? Names seem to be about placing – placing people in families and in social-cultural and historical contexts, placing subjects and things in time, in relationship as well as placing her in a place, a kind of world. A world where there are names and responding and calling with or without names. Names are about time places. That is what language does: it places in time or it times in place; it is the *Zeit-Spiel-Raum* (see Caputo 1993:30). By naming her, we place her in time and place.

Once we have named her, what becomes more fascinating than she herself is the time-space that comes with her name; that comes with her and her name, maybe? Did it come with her, or did we give her this time-space? Or did we meet somewhere in the middle, in *khōra*, between receiving and giving this time place?

Some are not so happy with Naledi's time space, as they angrily respond: How dare you speak of Naledi being the missing link! God created the world in 7 days! Humans did not come from something prehuman! Did God create the world in 7 days? No, it was not God, it was us. We created, at least we created the story in which God creates creation. We gave God also a time and a place in which to create, just like we have given Naledi a time and a place. We give or we find (receive) time and place and with the time-place everything that populates that specific time and place, including God if you like, or evolution if you prefer. We create, well not really we, but language creates, narrative creates, the *Ereignis* of the silent speaking of language creates (see Heidegger 1971:202–203) that time-place-play.

We have very good reasons for some of our time-play-places, which we have named and dated. With scientific procedures of, for example, carbon dating and/or radiation, we believe we can very accurately date the time of that place in which Naledi lived, as well as all the other fossils that have been found, even arche-fossils, which can tell us the age of the earth.

Are we not back where we started? Naledi comes from a place and a time before the speaking of language, prior to *Ereignis*! But not prior to carbon dating or the other scientific procedures that beyond doubt can establish the exact time of her existence. That is a hard science! Hard science is science that is not influenced by the speaking of language. It has the ability to peer over the brim of *khōra*

Remind me, I seem to have forgotten, like the Greeks forget so much, because they didn't have writing, at least that is what the Egyptian priest seemed to think, because that is what he said to Solon in the *Timeaus* (Plato 2008: 290ff., see also Derrida 1995). Although that was also said a very long time ago, but not so far back or as long ago as Naledi. All these questions seem to point to that place, that place before all that? If we can only reach that place, we will be able to read the writing on a wall, to which only a qualified priest can testify – today only a qualified anthropologist or archaeologist can testify, only those who can read the chemical formulas, the carbon trace, the radiation, scientific procedures, only those who can read the bones, the fossils, only they can read the metaphorical writing on the wall.

In the story in the *Timeaus*, there was writing on the wall in Egypt, apparently about Athens, to which the Egyptian priest alluded when he spoke to Solon about the Greek *Unmündigkeit*, their remaining children because of their dependence on myth. Nobody wants to remain a child, nobody wants to remain *Unmündig*, so we are lucky that we have priests who

can read that writing on the wall, at least decipher the carbon remains, the carbon traces, the cinders, the ashes of the past.

Only these priests can read the writing on the wall, together with those who have been initiated into their brotherhood (priesthood), those initiated into formulas, equations and mathematical abstraction, or mathematical writing.

Yet, how will we ever know, as Bruno Latour asks, whether the scientist translates or betrays (Latour 1993:143)?

Do we trust them? Of course, I would never trust a priest. We have been warned about the priests of religion! Priests who keep society *Unmündig*, trapped in tradition and myths. But scientists, they are a different breed, one can trust them. Scientists are part of the *Aufklärung*, they are like Naledi, a star of light, dispelling the darkness of not knowing. Why would they betray anyone, besides some scientists on climate change, or the health risks of certain foods, or the side effects of psycho-pharmaceuticals, but about the really important stuff, like Naledi they would not betray us! Besides these few examples and some others, there is just not enough empirical evidence not to trust them. Our whole world is held together by these priests of science. Well, very much like the world of ancient Egypt was held together by their class of priests, and the middle ages by their priests. It seems every age is held together by some class of priests. Ours is held together by the class of specialists in their different fields. They are the priests of today. Where would we be without the professors and the faculties?

Forget the trustworthiness of priests. Let us return to the facts. There was or is writing on the wall, even if that writing is carbon traces, instead of graphic traces. This writing on the wall is believed to be before the speaking of language. Just as there was *Homo naledi* before humans could speak or write – *Homo sapiens*. No wonder fossils and tombs fascinate us! As one so often says, one takes one's secrets with one into the grave. The dead harbour so many secrets, if only we could unearth them, maybe we would discover the longed for truths. If only the dead could speak!

The silence of the secret becomes absolute with death. Death and the places of death are the best places for keeping secrets, specifically the secret of what is before or after the speaking of language, as the dead do not speak!

There must be something before the speaking of language, something more reliable, like the writing on the wall in Egypt, or the traces of carbon, or arche-fossils. There must be a way not only to reach that place before the speaking of language, by silencing the speaking of language so as to reach that place of truth, and death certainly silences the speaking of language.

Naledi is or is like the writing on the wall! The writing on the wall in the *Timaeus* was the secret truth about Athens, what Athens in truth is. We who are priests, I mean specialists, in ancient texts, who can read the writing of ancient texts even

in the original Greek, know that Athens is metaphoric for all human construction of place in which to live together. Athens stands for the human city, the human construction, the *Politeia*, life together, *Mit-sein*: civilisation. If one could read that writing on the wall in Egypt, one would discover the truth of humanity, human *Mit-sein* and with it culture, politics, science, art, etcetera.

Naledi is a bit like that writing on the wall in Egypt. Whoever can read her, will know the secrets long hidden from us:

There are no more naked truths, but there are no more naked citizens, either. The mediators have the whole space to themselves. The Enlightenment has a dwelling-place at last. Natures are present, but with their representatives, scientists who speak in their name. Societies are present, but with the objects that have been serving as their ballast from time immemorial. (Latour 1993:144)

Once one starts on such an important topic, one cannot talk alone, but multiple voices begin to join in and therefore the rest of this paper will be a conversation between various voices. Not characters as characters would be too distinct. These voices are not so distinct as to belong to specific characters. Just as I am never sure if I speak in my own voice. Do I have my own voice, is my voice not always an inherited voice? Plato often spoke (wrote) in many voices, but his voices had concrete characters. But for such an important topic, as our origin, these voices must remain body-less, but maybe it is good if they do not have bodies, all the more to haunt us, with their spectral presence or bodily absence.

Sorry, you seem to have confused two texts Naledi and the *Timaeus*.

You are right, I might have, but are they not about the same, namely cosmology and ontology? About what is and what was and what might come? In the *Timaeus* there is a priest who knows the secret, who has read the writing on the wall. Is there a priest in this house, who can read Naledi?

Who wrote? Who gave us Naledi? Was it Lee Berger who found her, did he give her? But who placed her there in that, what they say was a primitive form of grave, even a communal grave? Who placed her in that burial chamber, and why did they place her deep down in the earth, a place not easily accessible? Was it, maybe, to ponder the deep inaccessible questions of being? A place and a journey to that place, which was maybe like the journey of the mystics: 'go where you cannot go', *Geh hin, wo du nicht kannst: sih, wo du sihest nicht: Hör wo nichts schallt und klinget, so bistu wo Gott spricht (I:199)*⁴

A place to think the unthinkable. Is that not also our journey as we ponder these questions?

This is truly exciting stuff and should certainly interest the priests of theology and religion, because if those prehistoric humans buried their dead, they could only have done that if

4. See Derrida quoting from the Cherubic Wanderer (Derrida 1995:59).

they had some kind of sense of a transcendent reality. Not only prehuman, but with them come signs, 'writings on the walls', maybe on the walls of ancient burial chambers, on the communal tomb walls, offering indications of primitive forms of religion. If those prehistoric prehumans already believed in a transcendent reality, then there must be a God! God cannot be a construction, as those before construction already believed in some kind of Transcendence.

Told you, Naledi will reveal secrets to us that have long plagued us: There is a God! Not only a God, but also a sense of God (or transcendent) and that before a brain large enough for such questions about being or not being, Hamlet's question, or was it Shakespeare question?

Ok, let us not go there yet. As a pragmatist, let me be more realistic. All we know is that there probably was some form of burial ritual. Those who mourned her death, that is if they mourned, placed her there in that place for the dead. Who were they and why did they do that? And where did they, who placed her, come from?

You are starting again with these same questions of placing (giving) and receiving. I thought we had left Socrates and gone much further back in time?

It does not matter much if one goes forwards or backwards in time, one never leaves Socrates, at least not in this time and place (Western thought and Western Science) so influenced by the Greeks

Maybe Socrates should date Naledi. That might solve many of the contemporary issues we currently have with modern Western thought.

That is the very problem that one is trying to avoid, Socrates (Western thought) dates everything, identifies, names and places everything, especially the other, by naming the other as other. It is time that tables were turned, and the other names, places and dates Socrates.

But is that possible? Will that ever happen? Can that happen?

I do not know. It seems impossible, because dating and naming is such a Western thing to do, and by doing it, you become Western and therefore one would not have left Socrates nor Genesis for that matter.

These finds are always like stars, twinkling at us, like Heidegger's last god, twinkling at us from that place beyond, prior, before time and place, maybe promising answers, promising salvation, promising truth. Yet, we never reach that star, it only twinkles at us.

To turn the tables around, one would have to change the writing! What writing? The writing on the wall?

Yes, that too maybe. But I was thinking more of the writing in the book!

Which book? *The book*?

Yes, *the* book of Western thought!

Isn't that what Badiou (2009) argues truth procedures do, change the writing, the logics of the worlds?

So Naledi is a truth come to change our world?

Yes, she is if you want to place her into that kind of world, the world of truth procedures, a truth that will change the world. Or maybe only a truth to tell us we were right all along.

There are those reading her as a new truth come to change our world!

There are those reading her as a proof that they were right all along!

So she is an answer to those and a question to the others?

Yes, that is what she is, a secret revelation to the eyes of the beholder.

She will open a completely new world to you, or confirm the world you live in! Have fun, date her!

But remember, as with any relationship (never mind long distance, but with such a time difference, if that is important to you), will have problems, which disturb and haunt a relationship. However, you date her, she will haunt you!

Or maybe she is Naledi, a star, twinkling at us from afar. A twinkling that haunts us as we gaze up at the stars and ask the deep *Homo sapiens* questions about our being and the being of all that is stuck forever in *khōra*.

Did *Homo naledi* also gaze at stars with such questions?

Will we ever know? What we do know is that she will not tell us.

Like all the dead things that can never tell us a single thing about the living (Henry 2015).

The letter kills, or at least it condemns to death. The writing, be it on the wall or not, is a great gift, but also *Gift* (poison) (See Derrida 1981:67ff.).

Is this gift that came with *Homo sapiens*, the curse of *Homo sapiens* or the gift of our survival?

Blessed are *Homo naledi* before the curse of the gift, or the gift of the curse – perhaps?

Please forgive this *Gift*!

While asking for forgiveness, I pray with Badiou, although he probably does not pray, for many faithful subjects (Badiou

2009:47ff.) responding to the gift of *Homo naledi*, rather than obscure subjects (Badiou 2009:58ff.) or reactive subjects (Badiou 2009:54ff.). Faithful subjects responding to Naledi in truth procedures of science, art, politics and love and thereby breaking open the language-body dualism, which Badiou calls democratic materialism, with a kind of *materialist dialectic*, but as always, giving and receiving that dialectic in *khōra*.

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Competing interests

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