

Love as the element that transcends space and time in Interstellar

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Abstract:

It is thus essentially faith as a gift- a gift of love that drives Cooper to sacrifice himself by throwing himself into Gargantuan and thus reach the tesseract constructed by future humans who exist in five dimensions who will allow him to communicate across space and time to Murph who will eventually save humanity with the equation that will allow them to transport existing humanity across time and space with gravity to another habitable planet in the galaxy. For all its science thus Interstellar remains a story of love and sacrifice. What will eventually save humanity from itself is love.

Keywords: Nolan; Interstellar; Love; Sacrifice; Faith

Christopher Nolan posits love as the element that transcends space and time and is able to flow across universes and galaxies to bind humanity together as a race. Specifically in Interstellar it is the love between astronaut Cooper and his daughter Murph that will eventually save humanity as they- humanity's future descendants who have evolved beyond 3 dimensions to 5 dimensional beings will allow Murph and Cooper to communicate through the Tesseract- a construction in which space and time functions in the 5th dimension to be infinite and allow communication across time and space through a bookshelf which Cooper as a ghost who communicates to Murph having deserted her for his mission to save humanity will eventually

communicate with her via morse the missing elements of Dr Brand's equation for gravitational time travel across worm holes and black holes and eventually be able to transport doomed humanity off Earth into more habitable planets in other galaxies.

Hence for all the science that the film explores including complex explanations of how worm holes and black holes work the film remains at heart a tribute to the central element that makes us human- the ability to love. In the film it is love that drives Dr Brand to seek Dr Miller her old flame across galaxies to rescue humanity. It is Cooper's love for Murph and his son that drives him to seek to travel across galaxies to save the planet Earth. It is eventually Cooper's love for Amelia Brand that will drive him to travel across galaxies again to initiate Plan B of the rescue mission- planting a human colony on a habitable planet.

Cooper in such a context may be viewed as a Christ figure when he sacrifices himself to travel into the black hole Gargantuan knowing it might entail his death. It is love for humanity and specifically Murph that leads Cooper to make this sacrifice, much like Christ died on the cross to save humanity from sin and out of love for his father God. Love does not feature as prominently in other religions but in the religion of Christianity, it is the fundamental core that drives the religion. Christianity defines God as love and commands believers to love their neighbours as their self. Hence while this is not explicitly stated by the film, I would infer that at the heart of

film's message- the command to love – is an implicit Christian message that it is love which will save us from ourselves- from polluting the planet to global warming till it is no longer inhabitable to saving ourselves from destruction through savior figures like Cooper Brand and Murph who risk their lives in space travel in order to save us from ourselves- driven fundamentally by love more than anything else. Hence while *Interstellar* is known as a science fiction film- its philosophical premise – that love will save humanity from itself – sounds more like something Christ would expouse.

Derrida writes in *The Gift of Death* that faith is constituted by sacrifice and aporia. Everyday is a living sacrifice, in which I encounter God and make my gift of death like Abraham- a choice between fidelity to the mysterious tremendum and wholly Other that is God or betrayal of God and fidelity to one's kin. Abraham, in choosing to be faithful to God, betrays his own son and makes the gift of death to God as his living sacrifice. Faith is thus constituted by the aporia of simultaneous faith and betrayal, fidelity to the sacred and treachery to the worldly or ties of kinship. Faith is constituted by hatred, a hatred of one's own kinship that enables one to make the gift of death towards God. Faith is a double gesture of love of God as wholly other and hatred of one's own kin that enables one to make a gift of death towards God. Faith is thus a double gesture of love and betrayal. One has to betray in order to be faithful, to make a gift of death as a living sacrifice, to die to world and self in order to display fidelity and duty towards God.

Abraham thus makes a sacrifice that is both responsible and irresponsible – it is absolute duty to God but irresponsibility and a betrayal of his son. It is a duty that transcends human law- devotion to God demands sacrifice and treachery towards the human. Faith is thus paradoxically both love and betrayal. Derrida writes that responsibility is constituted by an aporia as well, it is simultaneously being held accountable to a

general law and a unique and singular act of personal decision. It is thus simultaneously the submission to general ethics and a singular act of personal decision, both being subsumed by a general purpose and a singular decision that exceeds the general.

Abraham as a knight of faith acts out of duty to God and yet makes the personal decision to make a living sacrifice of his son, thus dying to the self and acting singularly on the other hand. As an act of faith this constitutes a simultaneous death to self and singularity of decision, it is both submission to a general law and duty and a singular choice and decision, thus constituting a paradox.

Responsibility is thus both accountability to a general law and a unique singularity of purpose, it is paradoxically a dying to self and a taking up of a singular purpose. In the opening chapter of the book, Derrida deconstructs the relation between the sacred and the demonic. Religion defines itself by what it is not – the demonic, and thus only exists in a differential relation between the sacred and the demonic. Religion can only be defined in opposition of a mysterious tremendum to a demonic other, and thus can only exist in a relation to this demonic Other, the animal as opposed to Spirit. Religion is only encountered once the demonic secret has been surpassed into the secrecy of the Sacred. Religion thus proceeds by negation – defining itself in opposition to the demonic and thrives on the existence of this opposition to maintain its life and integrity.

Faith is thus constituted by paradox- it is a double gesture of love and betrayal, a dying to the self and a singular purpose, it exists only in negation of what it is not- the demonic. In the final chapters of the book Derrida writes of a central paradox that Jesus elucidates- to love your enemies and those that persecute you. It is thus asymmetrical and exceeds economy. Faith is a gift-

to love those that do evil to you and thus exceed the bounds of utility and reciprocity.

Faith is a gift that surpasses rationality and exchange. Derrida thus captures the essence of Christianity in his characterization of faith as a gift- a gift of love and a gift of death, it has to exceed reciprocity and to exceed self and world, towards the wholly Other and mysterious *tremendum* that is God.

It is thus essentially faith as a gift- a gift of love that drives Cooper to sacrifice himself by throwing himself into Gargantuan and thus reach the tesseract constructed by future humans who exist in five dimensions who will allow him to

communicate across space and time to Murph who will eventually save humanity with the equation that will allow them to transport existing humanity across time and space with gravity to another habitable planet in the galaxy. For all its science thus *Interstellar* remains a story of love and sacrifice. What will eventually save humanity from itself is love.

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