



[Theoretical Cosmology: Andreas Albrecht at TEDxUCDavis - YouTube](#)

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Reflections on Time in the COVID-19 Era

By Andreas Albrecht

In 2012, I produced this TEDx Talk. The topic (at least once you watch past the first two minutes) is the connection between destruction and the flow of time.

The flow of time can be likened to the flow of a river. The high position of the water at the source is being "destroyed" by the river's flow. In fact it is the action of the hot sun radiating into cold space, part of the flow of time I discuss in the video, that elevated the water to begin with (by driving the water cycle of terrestrial weather). The flow of a river is just another example of the flow of time.

Harnessing the flow of a river is one of the many ways we use the flow of time. We have used water power to mill grain, enable irrigation, saw lumber and generate electricity. The flow of water, and more generally of time, is a resource that allows us to do many wonderful things. But like with the river itself, we are never completely in control. Just as a river can flood and destroy our homes and farms, every aspect of the flow of time has the potential to do harm.

In the video I connect the flow of time with information, and the making of records. A virus hijacks the genetic information system of our cells and redirects it to a destructive mode, much as a flood can wreck the fields we had intended to irrigate. Our struggles with the destructive powers of nature are a big part of the human story, destructive powers that we also count on for the good things in our lives. The human spirit is forged in our struggles to navigate a constructive path, while harnessing potentially destructive forces. I am heartened to see this spirit shining through in many places as we face the momentous challenges of our times.

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