

Time Passing Time.

By Russell Rose 2023
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At some indeterminable moment in ancient times, day and night emerge distinct
in the awareness of the observing minds that now discern them.

Time begins to take shape.

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Some take to their sleep at night whilst others come alive in the darkness and, within the dome of
an unpolluted sky, stars and planets are seen to track a path that brings them forever back to
where they began. Time is movement and time is change.

Time is cyclical. Time is astronomical.

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On bone these movements are marked, and science is born.

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Horticultural and agricultural consciousness arrives in The Fertile Crescent, bringing seasonal-
time to our senses. We flourish in this harvested knowledge, and abundance is invented.

The stockpiling of food unifies the three eras of past, present and future,
as today's anticipation of famine arises from its memory.

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In a field in Scotland the oldest calendar known is found in the form of a monument with 12 pits
that depict the 12 phases of the moon. The number 12 vibrates with significance. There are 12
months to the year, hours on a clock, inches to the foot, ribs to the average human, animals in the

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Chinese calendar, gates to Jerusalem, labours of Hercules, days of Christmas, members of a jury, and disciples to Jesus. The Hittites had 12 Gods, as did Olympus, and the Alaouite 12 Immans. Jacob had 12 sons, the ancestors of the 12 tribes of Israel. The EU flag has 12 stars, and there are of course 12 signs of the zodiac.

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Greek Mythology personifies chronological time with Chronos, who is ironically un-ageing, and the quality of time with Kairos. Kairos is the most opportune moment. Rooted in the art of archery, it indicates the perfect second within which to release the penetrative arrow.

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The emancipating duende of the flamenco, the dance of the matador, the timing of the comic, the grace of Zidane, the poetry of Lorca, the inflections of Billie Holliday - the moment that puts the hair on end is an intuitive alignment with time.

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Many religions sanctify chronological time; with the birth of the earth and its ultimate demise, with the tales of the mortal life from crib to grave finding sequel in the judgements of the afterlife.

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Chronological time is measured with sundials and shadows,
water, mechanics, pendulums, and sand.

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Church bells ring at noon, when the sun is at its highest in the sky.

But highest-in-the-sky in one town is not necessarily highest-in-the-sky in another. Time transpires to be variable. However, the success of the railroad legislates against this fact, with timetables demanding time-zones with a generalised consent as to when is now.

Time is nailed down, kidnapped and caged;
bent out of shape and forced to comply.

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And then time became relative: whereby for two people witnessing the same event from different positions, time passes at varying speeds. Imagine a person standing in the centre of a carriage of a fast-moving train, blasting a pulse-light to either side that would, for him, reach each end of the carriage simultaneously. However, to the observing person on the adjacent embankment, whom the train is moving past at speed, the rear end of the carriage is moving towards one light beam, and the front end of the carriage is moving away from the other. For this embankment-observer of the passing train, these two light beams do not have to travel the same distance, and the one heading for the rear of the carriage will arrive before the one heading for the front of the carriage. Simultaneous for one observer is consecutive for another.

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When it comes to the passing of time,
no exact truth is more truthful than any other exact truth,
however apparently distinct from agreement they may seem to be.

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As the speed of light is constant, it must be time and distance that change relative to motion, and so *space-time* is born, each no longer separate but unified, and each no longer static, rigid and mechanical, but bendable, dynamic and fluid.

*

At the behest of Time Dilation, time now moves faster at height and slower at speed. A person in motion and a person on the ground have more time than a person stationary or up a mountain. An ankle has more time than a wrist, a nose more time than a forehead. However, these differences are minuscule, measurable only with exceptional equipment, and will make no difference to any person's experience of life. It's a question of nanoseconds, and the number of nanoseconds in a second more or less correlates with the number of seconds in thirty years.

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There's a Here-and-Now, but not a Now. There's a different time for every point in space, with no two points sharing the exact same time. From across the road, the light of that person's now takes nanoseconds to reach me, and our respective nows therefore appear to be identical, but the further into space(time) we go the more distinct and apparent our nows become. If our telescopes could see Alien folk going about their day on a distant planet, we would be seeing them in our now, but in their then. Their now wouldn't reach us for quite some time.

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Chronological, mechanistic and mathematical time are disembowelled by the (re-)emergence of Time-Duration: the lived experience of the flow of Time rather than the punctuated abstraction that breaks it down into chronological segments, cutting off its limbs, castrating it, sucking it dry of *elan vital*.

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We might well say that time is 13.8 billion years old, but only because a rate of universal expansion is mathematically deduced to have started at somewhere called The Big Bang. No one really knows, just as no one really knows from where time emerged, nor into where it's expanding.

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Jean Gebser tells us that the origins are ever-present, that what has been remains with us, transcended perhaps but also subsumed. The cultural psyche is everything that it has ever been, and the notion of a clearly distinct past and present is hereby radically challenged.

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Time invades the modern human, dominates our experience,
and from our worship and our anxiety metaphors are born.

Time is of the essence. A stitch in time saves nine, in the nick of time. We're running out of time, we have no time, we do time, it waits for no-one. Time flies, and drags, and stands still. Time is money, an arrow, a river. We live on borrowed time, spend time. We take it, can't spare it, save it, waste it, lose it, and run out of it. It's on our side, catches up with us, and heals our wounds.

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Everything that I have ever been is with me in every moment of my life, enfolded within the seams of my psyche. Where else might it all be? I cannot leave it behind, or put it in a box. No. I carry it all with me wherever I go.

But, as with culture so with the individual:
if the past is present, then how exactly is it past?

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Plato's Eternal Ideas, Jung's Collective Unconscious and Sheldrake's Morpho-genetic Field imply the presence in the present of the emergent patterns and the archetypes of history.

Again, the past is present.

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PTSD illustrates how our present is felt to be the past, Enactment how our present is the past, Inter-generational Dynamics how it is that our present may be formed by the characteristics, experiences, and relationships of those dead long before we were even born.

The psyche breaks all of the rules of the chronological time that it is guilty of obsessively demanding our compliance to.

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Personally:

I wonder if time is an organism; and

I'm often noticing these days that the past has come to feel enfolded in the second in which I'm conscious, as though it's the only second in which I've ever been conscious. These intense seconds pass, of course, though I've been noticing also that my childhood is vanishing along with the first decades of my adulthood. I can find moments when I look for them, but they're lighthouses on a distant shore, photographs whose image I dimly recall but whose captured-moment has been stripped of its senses, sterilised perforations in the fabric through which I steal an occasional glimpse of what has been.

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Something's happening in me. I feel that the life that I've led is melting into itself. I don't really remember who I was and I don't really know who I am. As with Time, I'm not a moment but a movement, a never-ending brush-stroke that ends and begins again with the death that I'm now preparing for.