

Show Me The Money – If You Have The Time

We all use and abuse it. We all ignore it, when it suits. But, we're all slave to it, regardless of what we do. Yet, we cannot see it, touch it, taste it or smell it. However, although we can hear Time tick away our lives, Time is probably "our greatest illusion".

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*"...what we cannot talk about
we must pass over in silence."*

Ludwig Wittgenstein
Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus

Recently, I listened to a BBC forum discussion on the topic of Cosmic Time and the time that we all moan about not having enough of.

It was an interesting discussion that included an astrophysics professor, a classical philosopher, a world renowned author and, of course, the BBC moderator. (You can still listen to the broadcast at [this link](#). Together, they covered many of the issues that impinge upon our understanding of what time is all about. Understandably, there was general agreement that we are all 'prisoners' of time (and Time) because it's just *there*, but it's totally beyond our control: it goes only One Way and we can't change it – so we're told.

I've already treated the topic of time in a flippant fashion (See [The Time of My Life](#)) where I show just how little time we have for ourselves. Having now heard that BBC program, though, and done some more research, I'd like to now give the idea of time more serious consideration. Sort of....

Some online digging produced quite a few sites where you can read about different ways of recording and understanding time: [Enlightenment and Time](#); [Backs to the Future](#); [Analysis of Meyen's Typological Concept of Time](#); and [Who Dreamed Up Our Concept of Time?](#). There are many others, and many links within those articles; so you have a lot of reading matter, should you wish.

Significantly, however, a quick scan of just those links confirmed for me that they, and the BBC program I listened to, failed to mention two important aspects:

1. The most common usage of time, perhaps, is to equate it with money; and
2. There is no categorical proof that time (including Time) exists.

I'll admit that the first point borders on the frivolous, but it's *not* to be sneezed at, as many would agree, I'm sure. On this planet, time *is* money but only because we have allowed that idea to prevail in a commercial world. For truly serious discussion about the nature of time, however, it's about as useful as ants in your pants, a roomful of elephants, or whatever. So, having noted its constant synonymy with money, let's pass over it for the *more* interesting second point.

Although I have no link to it, I recall seeing a quote from Einstein **that time is our greatest illusion**. For me, it's a comforting assertion because, for many years now, I've held the view that time just doesn't exist. Most would probably disagree with that despite the fact that I know of nobody who has a clear and unequivocal definition of time. If I ask somebody to give me their time, for example, what is get is that person. **I never see the time**. You may accuse me of quibbling, but I think that's a fundamental point.

On this planet, of course, time has a pervasive, instrumental use: it ticks away the seconds, the ones we invented using various mechanics, crystals and atoms to arrive at a greater precision for recording its own passage as our mortal enemy. To that extent, I suppose, time exists for this planet. But, it's just a label for something that we don't truly understand. The label, of course, doesn't matter – it's the essence we're after.

You could argue, I suppose, that for other intelligent life in this universe, there may be other time constructs existent. Hence, *because* I must admit that other intelligent life is *possible*, then I must also admit to the possibility of other time constructs. Both are *only* possibilities, however.

Imagine, on the other hand, if there were no intelligent life in the universe; indeed, since the Big Bang, that's been true for many billions of our constructed years. From that perspective, therefore, what need is there for time? With no life in the early universe, why the need to postulate the beginning of a thing that serves no purpose? Why would proto-galaxies, and such like, need time? Why does science insist that the *present* universe implicitly and explicitly needs time? Could it be only because we humans are here? Only relatively recently did we humans arrive on the scene; and then it took us a few million of our years to think about our situation and finally wonder about this nebulous thing we *decided* to call time.

Science is full of failed or incorrect theories, notably the one **about phlogiston** in the 18th century; or the **hoax about cold fusion** of barely two decades ago; and many more. And, just quietly, I'm waiting – with bated breath – for the resolution of **The God Particle** conundrum...

But, as we know, time is a theoretical construct, even Cosmic Time. Most people take it all for granted. For half my life, I did the same. So, why this continued acceptance for a thing for which there is no proof? Maybe all of the doubts and argument would disappear if we just used its synonym, money, instead? To wit:

- Excuse me, do you have the money, please?
- Hey, where's all my money gone today?
- Shoot, gotta go – we're outta money!

- Lookit, I just don't have the money, okay! And so on....

I can hold money; I can see it; I can spend it; I can lend it; I can waste it. So, it works to a point, no?

In truth, however, time is just a feel-good and much abused abstraction that helps us to make sense of what's going on around us, every day; and keep track of where we've been, where we are, and maybe where we are going, we hope.

However, the truly important constant is not time: **it is change**. The universe is on the move, constantly changing. We observe change within ourselves and all around, every day. Change confirms that we are still alive and kicking – even *if* it's all a dream.

So, why do I need time to show me what I already know? The so-called time we use merely marks the changes as they occur. It's useful to that extent, and no more. Beyond that, it has no reality for me. Hence, it's an empty concept – a bystander in the course of universal history.

And the greatest irony is that, in the final analysis, whether I regard time as real or imaginary, it makes absolutely no difference to what's happening, anywhere. So, *whatever* I believe about time and its factual basis is of no consequence. Which would seem to reduce the whole discussion about time to the same level as the debate about the number of angels that can fit on a pinhead.

Hence, as I don't believe in angels, I see no reason why I should believe in time; one less thing to think about, if nothing else.

But – I'm prepared to change my mind if someone can *show* me either of them.

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