



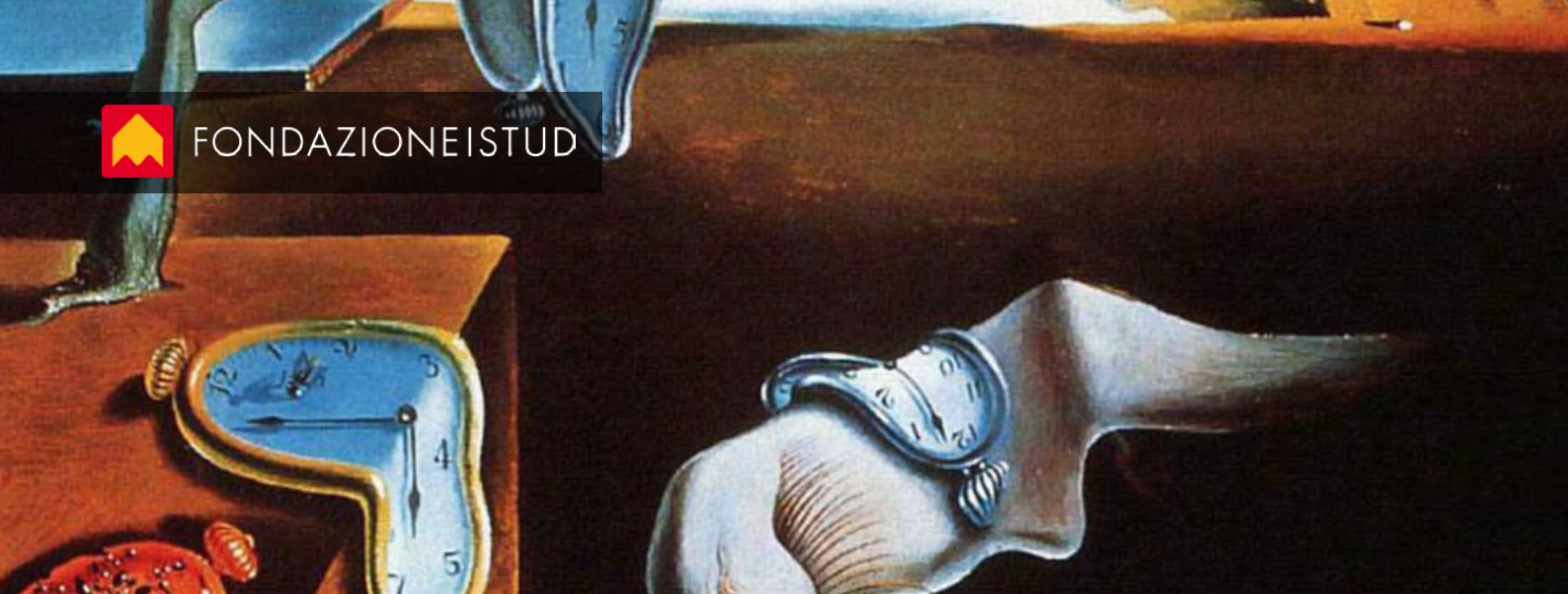
# Possibilities of time in care

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## Catch the moment. The secret for a good Narrative Medicine

*Time looks always finite: no matter what a healthcare team does, there are always 24 hours a day. Time is the constant mantra brought by healthcare professionals, physicians, nurses, psychotherapists, when a narrative approach is proposed in the carer-cured relationship. Or better, shortage of time, lack of time.*

Indeed, in this world seeking a struggle for better efficiency, time is gold. Shorter are visits, bigger is production. For a first visit, the physician must take maximum 20 or 30 minutes to take care of the patient. In the practice, visits might last up to 15 minutes.

*And if Narrative Medicine proposes the art of listening, the tools of reflective writing, the moving forward from disease to illness, giving each patient a central role and so right time, where to find this proper time?*

Is time finite? To answer this, we can go back to mythology, which might help us to find a possible way out from this dilemma. Ancient Greeks had two deities to define time: one was Chronos, an old man, who was eating his offspring: the past was eating the future, in a terrible sequential manner, and the way he was acting was absolutely linear. Time eats everything. We are finite. Time of visit between a physician and a patient is finite. However, there was a young deity, a little boy with

wing at his ankles, called Kairos, the little God of the opportunity. With this word, ancient Greeks considered the suspension of time, or better the right time in which good choices were picked up. In physics we might call it the quantum leap, the instantaneous infinitesimal time to get to a higher energetic level. In healthcare practice we might call it as another way which intuitively pops up in mind to establish a successful relationship with patients. It requires not extra time, but a different energetic level, it demands for a different perception, it looks for different questions and different answers.

To have good conversations inviting change, John Launer teaches us that 10 minutes could be enough if we know how to handle them, if we know the right questions to ask, and if we follow the path of the carer, without invading the field with our egos already filled in with the judgement and a priori diagnosis. Kairos is an invite to change perspective, not a request for an extra time for implementing Narrative Medicine: a part from the due time of education and training which was to be acknowledged, since only in few universities

Medical Humanities and Narrative Medicine are fundamental and not complementary subjects (New York, London, Milan, Rome, Paris, and probably some other few academies).

*Time is lost in the university where too much technology is taught, and therefore it must be invested after in regaining these competences before is too late to prevent the risk for de-humanising the medical and nursing practice.*

However, once we have invested the adequate time to empower narrative practice, it's quite simple to act it in each practice or hospital and it does not require the Chronos time, the tyrannus. Is it a tyrannus a five minutes of time spent to write a parallel chart, the written room of thoughts of doctor-patient encounter? And what about the wasted time in a waiting room where patients could write, if they wish, their narratives about their disease? And if we consider a time span of eight hours per day, why should we dedicate the same amount of time to each patient? Some may require 20 minutes, some 5 minutes, some 45 minutes, some 10 minutes: it depends from each individual, and **"right time" is not based on an objective perception, but on a subjective perception.**

However, we are yet in the Chronos sphere, accounting for wastes of time and time saving: here we are time keepers with a chronometer. No, Kairos, the little God with winged ankles, is able to fly, to be light in the sky and takes our hands so that we can learn to fly over time: if we listen carefully to some doctor-patient encounters, the "context" is stuffed by tests, investigations, remedies and drugs. "How do you feel?" is a tricky question, which can allow the expression of a qualitative adjective "bad", "better", "good" or the spreading out of the inner realm "With fear", "anger", "pain", or "joyfully". The first kind of answer brings back to physicians, in a sort of Pavlovian's reflex, to change therapy, prescribe new test, comment of the Haemoglobin level: no Kairos at all, Chronos is the winner with the productivity of investigations and therapies.

*Kairos would like that we, as free children could express out*

*emotions so that an authentic doctors-patient relationship can start. Kairos brings us to another way to practice our professions, of counselors, psychotherapists, nurses and doctors.*

Of course, Kairos is not replacing Chronos, but if we don't do anything to block our behavioural stereotype with patients, as defensive medicine, the defensive wall of Chronos will be reinforced, and daring new changes in healthcare context won't be possible. **Kairos is an act of bright courage.** It is picking up from patients' words, that sometimes are worried – for example – about losing their job. A Kairos approach wouldn't continue in talking about the disease but may ask: "What can I do in helping you to overcome the fear to lose your job?".

Defensive medicine is paralyzing the development of fresh and genuine doctor-patient relationship: it is an old conservative approach, like the old God with the beard eating his offspring – in this cases, eating thoughts and feelings of physicians, nurses and patients.

*Therefore, when we are questioned about how long does it require to do Narrative Medicine in practice, we answer quite in a provocative way: no more time. It's another way to take care of the people.*

Without allowing the phantoms of the terrible failure overwhelming the building of a positive encounters saving drugs, and tests and procedures.





## An apology of long time

*"I'm sick to death of this particular self. I want another" – Orlando, Virginia Woolf*

In Virginia Woolf's "Orlando", the protagonist passes through 400 years to transform and to conquer his/her real "essence". Indeed, he was born man during the realm of Elisabeth the First of England, and will live as a free woman at the starting of 20th century. He passes through two eras, two eons – the modern era and the contemporary one – to reach his/her metamorphosis. During centuries, Lord Orlando takes off his clothes of a rigid male and full of false gender absolutisms in which "every man is..." and "every woman is...", dictated in a life of honours of great values for others, but of no value for himself, for realizing the "other Self" desired by Woolf. Around 1610 – but this date is only a probability – the trigger factor of horror and compassion for a soldier dying next to him in war will make him fall asleep in an oriental non-lieu, to born again as Lady Orlando. From this moment, starts the struggle to affirm the "being woman" through the right of inclusion in conversation with male poets, such as Swift and Pope, who celebrate her beautifulness, but laugh at her female intelligence; or through the right of private property, from which she is excluded because she has no male heirs. The novel ends with the encounter with an adventurer come by horse and ready to leave again for non-specified ideals in the New Continent; here, in an act of extreme love with the restless cavalier, ends her metamorphosis, finally conquering freedom,

autonomy, and independence.

It is clear that Orlando is the manifesto of the dual nature of Virginia Woolf, and it will not be the object of these few lines. The Orlando's peculiarity is that in these two eras (more than four hundred years), in order to heal from experiences continuously affecting his/her most intimate parts and deathly grieving him/her, the protagonist falls into lethargy: nowadays, we would call it as "hypersomnia", which cannot be explained by doctors – and therefore by the rational and scientific thought. Every time Orlando – man or woman – wakes up, chooses to undertake the New. This is why the novel is extraordinary: **in order to make deep and not ephemeral changes, there must be two elements, Time and Sleep.**

The first element, **Time**, dilates in centuries, until becoming the age, the Aion – where history, as life phases, divides in centuries: for ancient Greeks, Aion is translated as the succession of historical ages, until recreate eternity. Aion is represented by an imaginary animal, with lion head on a winged human body rolled up by seven snake coils, symbolizing cosmos and its seven stellar orders transcending historicity. It is a mythological time that uses creatures even more ancient than the Greek-Roman Olympus, but harks back to the Sanskrit and Persian culture. While imagining

Orlando's immortality, alive until today even if we do not know if is Woman, Man, Androgynous, Hermaphrodite, or another human, animal, or divine possibility, Woolf conducts us to a eternally dynamic creature which continues to mutate during centuries.

**Sleep** – the other ingredient – represents almost a death, a rest without dreams, an oblivion, a long pause: it's equivalent with "not doing", retreating from worldliness, becoming a cocoon to give life to a new blooming, to reach maturity. Scientific and hard-working Western world – based on efficacy – cannot understand the transformation mystery that happens precisely through retirement, assimilating also Oriental ways of thinking.

*Yet I write about Narrative Medicine, and I ask you what has to do Orlando's story with illness narratives. We can look at patients and their familiar stories, which live with diseases that are not only "chronic" but also "eonic", almost eternal in their perception – a succession of eras, phases, and cycles.*

It is interesting to know that when Woolf started writing "Orlando" she was feeling bad, today we would say she was depressed: de facto she was facing the being a woman in a society hostile with an emancipated and free feminine. Woolf took care of herself during the writing of "Orlando", last almost for a year: she prescribed herself the therapy, a four hundreds year eon, and the willingness to read her life through lethargy (from Lethes, oblivion, and Argos, inertia), that is the inactivity in the resetting of memory. The protagonist is seesawing between happiness and unhappiness for almost the entire book, and yet – through his/her experience of young love, war, poetry, politics, society, and again adult love – he/she find his/her final happiness, open to the New. Virginia was "not normal" and "sick" for the society at that time, as she was in love with the woman to which the novel is dedicated: this is the occasion for passing again through this suffering of being victim of social constrictions in the ancient world of unequal opportunities, to arrive then in the modern world loving her diversity. **There are both the real time of writing and the long time necessary for metamorphosis.**

*Listening to "sick" people's narratives, we see that they want to be "normal" (exactly as Lord Orlando), at least initially, and they search for a key to be accepted by the Other: family, friends, workplace, external environment.*

This happens especially regarding to disabilities. Searching for Normality, yet, can be an idiot Chimera, if it becomes a useless obsession stealing time to the discovery of one's own real essence. To love ourselves, even if sick, and the world around, we must find our own style to live with our diversity, and to make what seems "fragility" a strong point: this, according to the lecture of the "wounded storyteller" made by Arthur Frank, the Narrative Medicine referee. We cannot obtain this in efficient and pacey times. It requires honesty, long time and lethargy between attempts, as taught by Virginia.

While previously I focused on the necessity of an instantaneous and quick time (Kairos) to realize and correct patients care pathways, here I affirm the importance to live with slow and long maturation time. According to the proverb, "haste makes waste", and Carl Gustav Jung wrote that the Soul – the undefined that defines our essential nature – has slower times than the Mind. Latins, as pragmatic spirits, conciliated both time dimensions with the paradox "Festina lente", "Make haste slowly".

*We must remember that our nature – above all, the suffering one – needs long times, next to the voracity of infinitesimal time. Decisions that may help us will be taken calmly, as choice we will take with who takes care of us. An exercise of juggling between velocity and slowness.*





## The importance of the cyclical time: the Hours

*Today, if we want to be considered “anti-reductionist” in care and medicine, medical sociology insists to move the attention from the sick organ, or from the disease, to the patient: or better, to the person integrated in his/her biological, psychological, and social context.*

This “bio-psycho-social” paradigm represents an openness that distances itself from the mechanistic model – well exemplified in the man-machine metaphor, according to which disease breaks the pieces a good mechanic-physician must repair or scrap – to reintegrate the living being in its social context, being the human (o Anthropos) – as Aristotle anticipated – a biologically living (bion) and social (politikon) being

***It was, and it is impossible divide our biological being from the local, relational, everyday-life twists. And to heal in a holistic way – another word today very inflated, where olos means whole – the bio-psycho-social model helps us.***

Still, in the search for a relationship between health, disease, and social context, is sufficient to talk about relationships, children, weddings, cohabitations, fertility, sexuality, and on, school, work, employment, unemployment, productivity, salary, and contract? Is enough for us a partial

compendium of everyday life, the pragmatism of the unrealized or the unfinished? And when a condition of fragility, insecurity or illness appears, forcing us to deal with the appraisal of our lives, does this paradigm satisfy us? To date, quality of life questionnaires concern the cited items, and as contemporary peak we register the question “How do you live your sexuality?”.

This question is embedded in the historical period we are living. In this way, even if narrated, it has that vague reductionist accent that will bring us to an oppositional qualification between good and evil. In short, we do not let breath the many facets of our life – inserted in biology, in the psyche, in more or less productive relationships – in our reflections, inquiries and researches, reducing them to a mere schedule home-work-hospital or other place

***If we are embedded in our time, is also true that we are embedded in a different time, the cosmic one. Yet we miss a cosmology: or better, we***

*miss our cosmic time – where  
“cosmic” means harmonious,  
beautiful, cyclical.*

We are still talking about Time. We have already analyzed the linear time (Chronos), the time-opportunity (Kairos), the eternal time (Aion), but we have not yet considered the circular time of the Hours (Orai): the seasons, phasing the cyclical rhythm of nature, the “eternal return”<sup>1</sup> – spring, summer, autumn, winter, and spring again. Time is cyclical not only for ancient Greeks, but also for oriental philosophies: Japanese poems, the haiku, are based on the seasonal rhythm. And rhythm itself, in its etymology, indicates the flowing: *Panta rei*, “Everything flows”, as Heraclitus stated. Everything flows, like Hours. Nature has its precise laws: the Earth is in aphelion, far from the Sun in summer, and in perihelion, near the Sun in winter, and – except some little realignments of the terrestrial axis or a catastrophic meteorite that destroyed dinosaurs – we have many statistical probabilities that the sun will rise tomorrow<sup>2</sup>, so we can serenely sleep.

Since childhood, we realize that something happens in nature and that yes, the sun will rise the day after, but in some seasons we have more hours of light, while in others night and cold rage... We wait for spring, through the memory of our childhood, the metabolism of our cells, or maybe for the collective subconscious<sup>3</sup>. So we strike the linear time, Chronos, that despot who inexorably proceeds during years: we may be thirty, fifty, or seventy years old, yet springtime comes back for our planet and for our body. A miraculous marvel. Here, in the cyclical time, the flowing rhythm triumphs, and we become immanently living in Nature: Jung was right, when he wondered on the birth of malaise in civilization. He situated it precisely in the loss of contact with seasons, agriculture, with the summer harvest, the autumn seeding, the winter wait, and the spring renaissance. *Primo vere*: Latins called this season the first version, the first twisting. In ancient Greek mythology, it was the first and the last of the Hours: Thallo, the blooming spring, Auxo, the summer luxuriance, and Carpo, the autumn harvest of fruits. The winter cold was not associated to a

woman, but to the male Cheimon, that means winter, bitter cold, snow: he was not a goddess, but – in a certain sense – the fall from goddess. The Hours were the young sisters of the three Moirai, women producing the warp of the cord of the linear time: they formed the strings, and they cut them at the end of life, and they were daughters of Zeus and Themis, the universal order. If the Moirai sign the rule of individually being born, growing, living and dying, the Hours bring the cosmic time, the cyclical laws always involving a new renaissance. It is the same tree regrowing, and teaching us that in the vegetal realm the cyclical time is sovereign, as for mammals in their different seasons of loves and reproduction.

According to more ancient civilizations, seasons were eight. If we reflect on the days we celebrate, we realized that they are linked to the astronomical movements of our planet: two solstices, two equinoxes, seasonal interludes. The human being understood the variations of time we may define climate – from *klima*, that is the inclination of the terrestrial axis – and he conveyed them in the mood. The eight seasons were of help in celebrating the moments linked to Gaea, the Earth, embedded in the universe and its constant mutations.

What remains us of this movement, in the bio-psycho-social model? Today no curiosity is permitted, linked to how we live seasons – on the contrary, we relegate this part, more ancestral and however always intrinsic to us, in the art exposed in museums, for which we pay the ticket, as if it were a luxury to reflect on nature.

*But we are Nature, and our cycle  
gives sense to life also at its  
end: the arrival of a new spring  
is its aim and a little, partial  
renaissance.*

Not only we are not allowed to feel our periodicity, but we have medicalized our mood alternation with the weather, in the seasons we are more tired and dull. The seasonal affective disorder has become a pathology inserted in the DSM of psychiatric disorders. If we read the definition of the winter one, it is a disorder characterized by “depression, lack of energies, sleepiness, weight gain, desire of carbohydrates”<sup>4</sup>. It is prevalent

1 Kim Ki Duk, producer of the film “Spring, summer, fall, winter, and spring”, 2003

2 David Hume

3 Carl Gustav Jung

4 <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/seasonal-affective-disorder/basics/symptoms/con-20021047>

in late autumn and in winter. According to the criteria of Western society, based on efficiency, this disorder must be treated with antidepressant drugs. If we examine what mammals do during this season, it is nearly similar to what is described as pathological in the DSM: but it is ordinarily physiological – that is, natural. Depression is nothing but willingness of closure, the search for a warm nest, the alcove: sleepiness slows down metabolism, and so favours survival, as walnuts and acorns are full of calories to resist the winter cold. The bio-psycho-social model does not permit hibernation. And in these modern times, à la Chaplin even if Internet replaced the old production line, is not contemplated the "sabbatical" winter period, the listening to our body that wants to conquest another spring.

*The Hours teach us we can insert this seasonal music in the other three times. And so, we construct a four-dimensions time: the eternal one, the instant one, that one that flows without return, and the one of the eternal return.*

Botticelli encloses his Venus' nakedness with a veil covered by flowers brought by the Spring Hour. And in his Spring, Botticelli does not paint a sensual and charming Venus, but a pregnant woman. Harmoniously, it happened what had to: the spring comes back with its Natura Naturans, an alchemical transformation where we pass from autumn and winter nigredo to a coloured rainbow. Spring arrives generous, summer bears fruits, while winter is a period of retention and avarice of earth.

There is another myth illustrating the alternation of the seasonal cycle: that one of Persephone, who in the six months she lives with the harvest goddess Demeter generates spring and summer, while in the six months she lives with her husband Hades, the god-king of the underworld, there are autumns and winters without harvests. And we learn to be wise and patient also from the alternation of clear and grey sky: to pass the difficulties of disease, and other traumas life brings us, seasons teach us the art of patience.

*Narrating disease and illness means having the possibility to join again the cosmic time,*

*the more ancestral, and giving again this cycle dignity and the necessary space: not for a matter of justice, but because joining our roots brings us to a blooming awareness.*

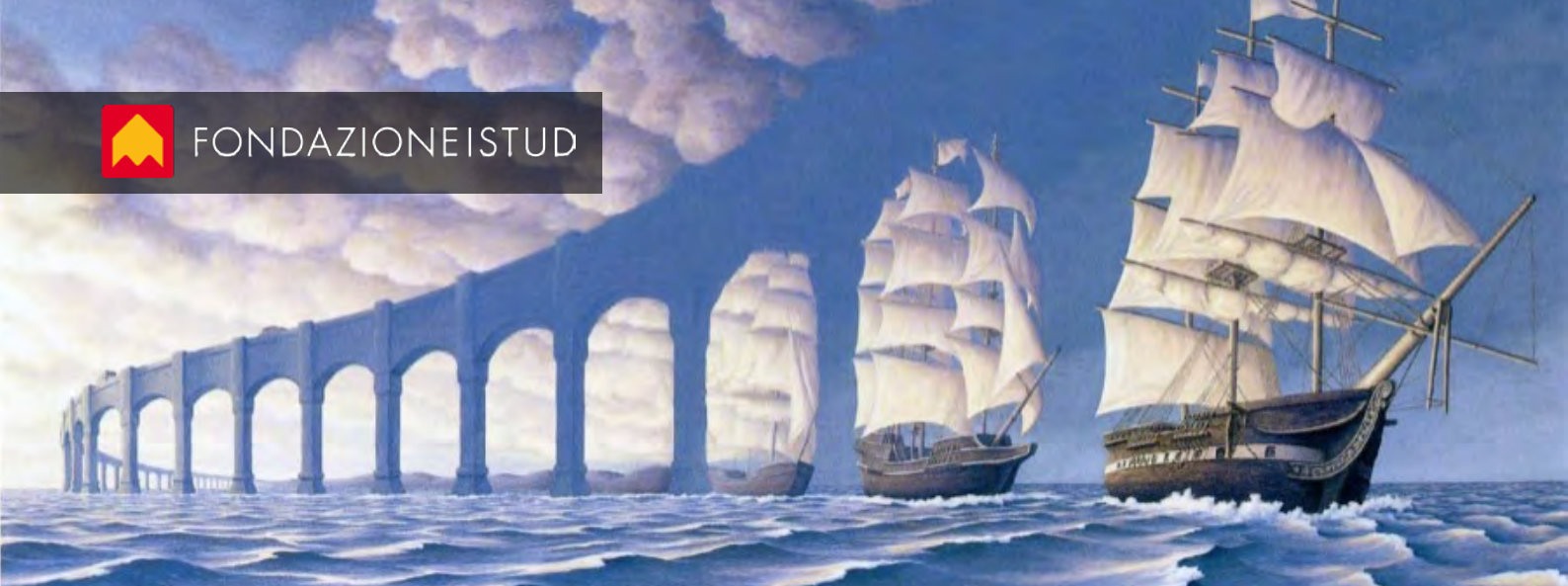
Maybe it distances us from materiality and totems, but it puts us in contact with a Zen spirituality. Japanese people not only stroll under blooming cherry-trees, but they contemplate petals in the wind. In the film of Kitano Hana Bi<sup>5</sup>, the policeman's wife living with cancer at end-stage asks her husband to bring her there: to see cherry-trees blooming, to assist to a pink renaissance, and to the estrangement, before the awareness of death. **The cosmic order is natural law:** alienation means being not able to feel the universe and the body embedded in the world.

*If we want to enlarge the horizon from the bio-psycho-social model, let's begin to give it again the cosmic and natural sense not allowed by our Western civilization, more and more standardized in places and in the continuous and identical in seasons productive necessity.*

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<sup>5</sup> Hana Bi, Fireworks, 1997





## Time perception: healthy and sick, young and elder people

*Time perception is one of the themes which philosophers and scientists have put into questioning, and more universally all individuals, possibly because it's a universal archetype: what is behind the sensation that time flies, or never passes? Is time course different between youth and old age? And what if we are sick or healthy? Moreover, are these phrases true, or a prejudice coming from a lack of knowledge about this phenomenon?*

The interesting thing is that we can give different answers to this question. Among commonplaces, or maybe through the convergence of a number of researches, we assume that "The perception of time for young and adult people follows almost opposite tracks, where for elder people time seems to pass faster"<sup>1</sup>. Neurosciences can help us to explain this phenomenon: different awareness of time can be linked to a different capability to memorize events, more developed in young people, thanks to the presence of chemical mediators which are implicated in the processes of cerebral plasticity.

### TIME, YOUNG AND ELDER PEOPLE

For adult people time flows faster than for young people. This phenomenon is defined as "telescope effect", which is the tendency to position the events inside the memory through a chronological order, so that recent events result more distant in time, and more remote events result nearer. Young people fix

far away the object that appears very close to the telescope, while elder people investigate closely also most distant things, getting lost in infinite details. We may call "short term memory" that one of young people, and "long term memory" that one persisting in elder people's thought, occupying space for new time.

*The temporal perception appears influenced by body and brain's biochemical conditions.*

In particular, dopamine is one of the main neurotransmitters involved, tending to produce the sensation that time passes faster. The same occurs when we assume substances as cocaine, which increases the effect of dopamine. On the contrary, neuroleptics – drugs used to treat diseases such as schizophrenia – inhibit the effect: the temporal perception is opposite, and time becomes longer. In addition, several cerebral zones are called to account these chemical mediators: in summary, according to this theory, time perception is intrinsic in our neuronal

<sup>1</sup> Angelo Gemignani, June 2015, [www.agsm-energyinlife.com/?p=1737](http://www.agsm-energyinlife.com/?p=1737)

system, and ages gradually, favouring the sense of "tempus fugit". Other researches in psychology confirm this telescopic effect of perception of time, with a little percentage of elders that escape from the temporal acceleration trap in 10% of cases<sup>2</sup>.

Was Chronos, described as the despot devouring his children faster and faster, right? So it seems, according to some confirmation by neurobiology. And so, we would put in the drawer our stream of thought, the "carpe diem", the eternal and the cosmic time. However, other external incentives can deny this time perception, and bring us back to believe other possible declinations of "time factor".

It's a fact that kids get bored at school when lessons seem endless and tedious: how many times did we look at the clock, while now kids look at the phone? On the other hand, with some teacher time flies. The discovery that time flies faster during holidays is almost rhetoric. We can add that "it depends" on the company, on the places, on the activities: there are people for whom holidays never pass, it's an empty space to be filled with the unknown, and it's better to seek refuge in an ordinary routine, revealing the necessity to not know the mystery of unpredictable time. Maybe, having too much time to think to ourselves brings shock and fear, and puts us in front of the extraordinary difficulty of "letting ourselves go, letting go".

Let's go back to science to find an anchor to believe that oldness is not so unavoidable, chased by a faster and faster time, and that there are several ways of aging: and maybe we will find some possible forms of human intervention. In a study conducted by two universities – a French one, the "Blaise Pascal", and an English one in Keele – results contradict Chronos' time, and the fact that the elder we are, faster time flies. Young and elder people were given a questionnaire on time perception: they received eight phone calls a day for five consecutive days<sup>3</sup>: with this methodology, participants were forced to stop for each call, and to talk "here and now" about their emotions, activities, and feelings about time.

This research, published in 2015, didn't show any

perceived difference in the speed of time between young and elder people: maybe it was the "experimental" effect keeping elders under pressure, in everyday life, without fearing the forward flight – in contemporaneity – and giving a particular sense of attention in a possible fragile moment, such as aging. This research may be the key of active aging: avoiding elders' discrimination, giving them an important role in their microcosm. This study may be a trailblazer for older age compared to the attention we give to elders, once more respected for their experience, in their world, apparently less dynamic – it gave value to their stories and so their capability to remember old story detail, the long-term memory.

Today, in this fast and furious world, it's hardly permitted to look back, and elders are seen as or active or inactive, heavy and useless. To "active" them, is it important to make them call eight times for days? Is it possible to balance between the request of being up with time, and the respect due for their single passed experiences? This is a link between time perception and concrete and realistic achievable behaviours.

*Therefore, the issue of time perception appears complex: from one side, neurosciences tell us we have an internal biological clock thanks to which our sensation of forward flight becomes stronger and stronger during years, from the other side it tells us we can fool our biological clock if we have a rich and stimulating everyday life, and if we are a focus point for someone – at least for researchers – whilst instead time is a function of emotionality, and participation we feel.*

## WHAT ABOUT PATIENTS' PERCEPTION OF TIME?

The word "patient" has an ancient etymology, from pathos ("suffering", "passion"), an ardent feeling. The patient is who suffers, is passion, while the Latin verb patior indicates only suffering. Ancient Greeks objectified strong passion, while Latins got rid of the several hints of pathos with just a consequence: suffering. Therefore, the sick person is patient, is suffering.

However, we can add to this meaning the sensation

2 Marc Wittmann and Sandra Lenhoff, 2005, Age Effects in Perception of Time, Psychological Reports: Volume 97, Issue , pp. 921-935, Ludwig-Maximilian University Munich

3 Droit-Volet S, Wearden JH, Acta Psychol (Amst). 2015 Mar;156:77-82. doi: 10.1016/j.actpsy.2015.01.006. Epub 2015 Feb 19, Experience Sampling Methodology reveals similarities in the experience of passage of time in young and elderly adults.



of time in a particular declination, that of patience. Patience is an interior quality and attitude of who accepts pain, difficulties, adversities, troubles, controversies, death, serenely and calmly, controlling emotions and persevering in actions. It's the necessary calm, resolution, application. The patient that pathologically (from pathos derives "pathology" too) "feels", has to deal with a never ending time: the time of being ill. However, from patients' narratives we notice an even longer and unbearable time than the one we live once the diagnosis is known, as if knowing the truth on our health was already a "little time accelerator" which drives us to not waste time. It's the time of uncertainty, such as waiting for the result of a test – a waiting time that objectively can last from a few hours apparently infinite to some weeks. In narratives, *"The waiting was unbearable, finally I knew, then..."* (the waiting for the result of a biopsy), *"Two weeks passed searching for a distraction"* (the waiting for the result of an amniocentesis).

*Carers must not underestimate this waiting time, which increases until it becomes a colloidal magma, and not minimizes the wait in front of people.*

Often physicians and medical operators minimize saying phrases such as *"What's the matter, only for two days"*, and don't understand anxiety given by those 48 hours of waiting. Maybe it would be more opportune to say, in an empathic way, *"These two days will be long, I guess, if you need, call me"*. It would be fantastic. We write this in hope that some professional will read this little rule of not abandoning the patient in such a difficult situation.

However, the adult patient should activate her/himself in dis-traction: a behaviour for which we were scolded at school, and instead is wonderful to apply waiting for what life reserves us. Instead of staying in a conscious patience, maybe other and funnier forms of entertainment can help us: such as music, which seems to accelerate time, independently from its emotional value.

In the study *"Time flies with music, whatever is its emotional nature"*<sup>4</sup>, researchers investigated if music influences time perception in a different way from a neutral stimulus, and if emotional values of musical stimulus (that is, sad music versus happy

music) modulate this effect. Music presented in a major note (happy) or minor key (sad) induces the listening person to say that the duration of a melody is shorter than that of a non-melodic stimulus of control, confirming so that "time flies" when we listen to music.

The singular thing that adds a little more complexity to time, is that is not always so true that time flies while listening to good music we love: if music is ours, and is that capable to distract us really, we can arrive also to a paradoxical effect, that is time seems stopping<sup>5</sup> toward a peaceful quiet – as if time itself were empty of significance, because it's the music itself stripping the perception of frivolous things, and therefore of *tempus fugit*.

**It's like we found the barycentre, the extreme stability in the middle of a vortex. In the eye of the storm, space and time converge in immobility and quietness.**

**"Exhausted I sought a country inn, but found wisteria in bloom" – Matsuo Basho, XVII century.**

4 Time flies with music whatever its emotional valence. Droit-Volet S, Bigand E, Ramos D, Bueno JL

5 The Experience of Time As a Function of Musical Loudness and Gender of Listener, James J. Kellaris, University of Cincinnati, Moses B. Altsech, Pennsylvania State University

