

Time and space through language and culture

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Chronos 15

How do we think about time? On the one hand, time is abstract: we cannot smell time, we cannot taste time, we cannot see it or touch it with our hands. On the other hand, time forms the very fabric of our experience; we can't experience anything outside of time. So how do we construct our understanding of this fundamental domain? And how do we even go beyond and invent fanciful notions like time-travel? I will show how languages and cultures allow us to build complex representations of time that go way beyond what we can experience. Because languages differ, humans around the world think about time in remarkably different ways, with culturally-based notions of time deeply embedded in the organization of our brains.