

TROM

consuming a year



Author: Tio

Review: Ray

Proofread: Ray

Design: Tio

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Summary:

When I was 12 or so, I started to realize something very weird about the world: it repeats itself year after year. I realized that each year is almost identical to the year before it, and will be basically identical to the year that follows it.

The same things happen: school, work, weekends, holidays, new year, Christmas, Easter, birthdays, halloween, and so on, all on a repeating loop year after year after year. The same structures, same traditions, same kind of life occurs at all stages. Indeed, if I watch my parents life closely enough, I will probably know how mine will look over the next 30-40 years.







I started to question this deeper, as it seemed so dull to me to do the same things every year. I started to ask: what is a 'year', what are 'days' and 'holidays', what is 'school' or 'work'. Even more to the point, why is it that no one seems to be overly bothered by all of the mind-numbing repetition, or at least wondering about it out loud?





The more I learned about the world, the more I realized that underneath all of the yearly 'spectacle' lurks a hidden, yet not mysterious, 'secret', that not only supports this repetitious state, but perpetuates and demands it, and may even have invented certain aspects of it. I am talking about the 'monetary system' game itself.

As I will try to show you, the way we 'dance' through all of our lives is almost completely shaped by the monetary system / consumerism. It is something that many do not even question, but once you do that, you will find a striking pattern.



SHALL WE BEGIN?



FIRST, WHAT IS A YEAR, A DAY, A MINUTE AND A SECOND

We all seem to agree that this is 2014, somewhere in December by the time of this article's publication. But what are these date-based concepts accounting for?

If we analyze fossils, rocks, or the overall world around us, with scientific precision, we will see that the universe came into existence some **13.8 billion** years ago.



Earth formed around **4.6 billion** years ago

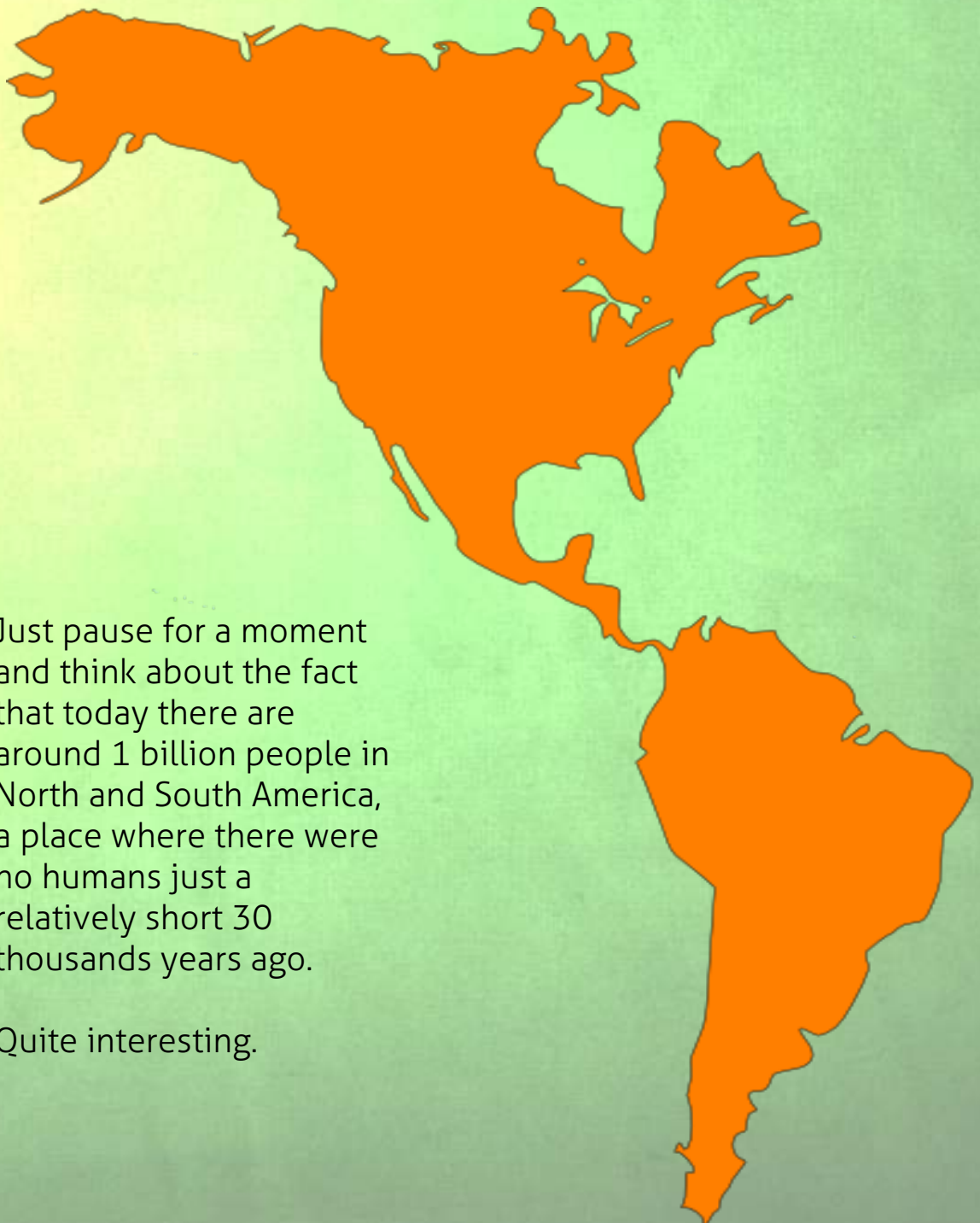


Complex life around **500 million** years ago



Anatomically modern humans around **200 thousand** years ago.

50-30 thousand years ago, humans migrated to the Americas, Australia, Asia, and other parts of the world.



Just pause for a moment and think about the fact that today there are around 1 billion people in North and South America, a place where there were no humans just a relatively short 30 thousands years ago.

Quite interesting.





11 thousand or so years ago, the first complex societies started to develop. From that point on, humans have tried to make sense of the world more seriously, mainly for their own benefit. In order for them to have control over their lives, they first had to understand how the environment works. They noticed some patterns in the weather and the sky. Tracking the Moon, stars and some planets (that they also thought to be stars at that time), they could begin to predict the weather. That has proven to be a major advantage. Think about the fact that they could now establish a far better agricultural system and better prepare for the times to come.

This entire 'obsession' with tracking time has turned into the days, months, years and clocks that most of us still 'respect' to this day.

To delve into how calendars came into existence is quite a challenge, and you can read the entire history here to see the many ways humans thought of counting the days and making sense of different patterns in nature. However, it seems that when there was no internet connection, as it was for those living 8,000 years ago, this was not that hard. I will briefly mention though that at various times there were 10 months to a year, or 5 - 10 days to a week, or no weeks at all. They were all 'invented' by observing the celestial bodies and fine tuned over millennia, sometimes to fit a religious 'agenda' or just a societal acceptance, or just to be practical enough to be able to help predict the future.



An interesting thing happened around 1500 years ago when someone decided to 'reset' time to start with the birth of Christ, a very well-known figure that had influenced many religions at that time.

Basically, if we look at today's year, it tells us that Christ was born 2014 years ago, and this is how we (or the vast majority of us) came to use this notation today. So, we say this is the year 2014, and is also why some have found themselves confused with AD or BC extended notations.

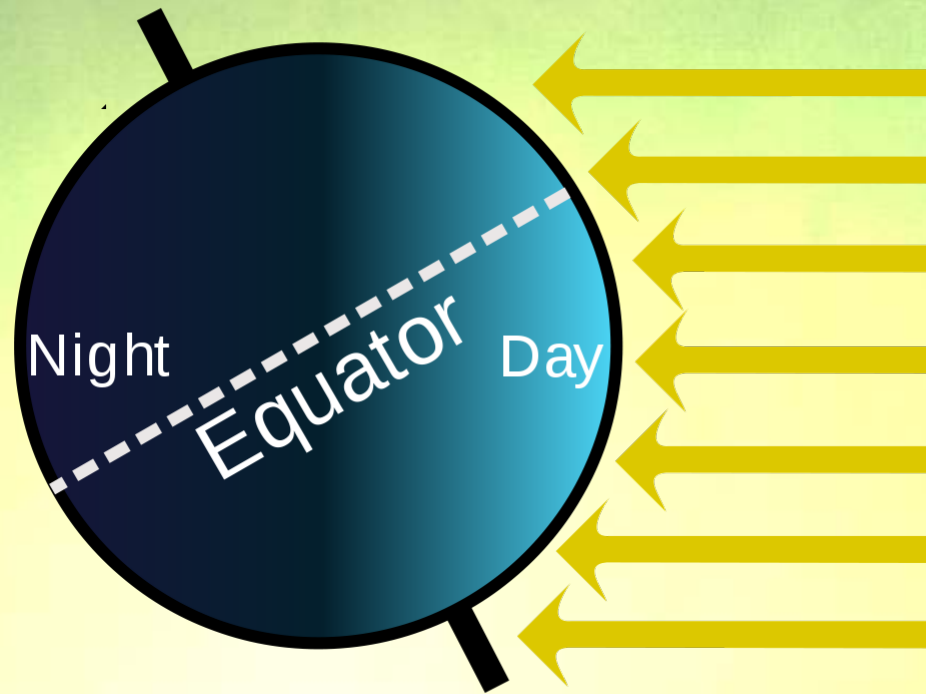
BC simply means 'Before Christ', as a reference to the years before this figure was born (including the time of the dinosaurs and single cell organisms, as well :)), while AD stands for "Anno Domini", a Latin phrase meaning "in the year of our Lord", referring to the year of Christ's birth.(source)

These are religious marks that have remained with us to the present, although using such notations shamefully hides the immensity and importance of the billions of years in which trillions of trillions of stars have fusion-ignited, planets have formed and life has evolved.

If we were to take one truly important moment to start our notation of years for human societies, I suggest it should be either 3.6 billion (around the time when Earth's first living cells came into existence), or maybe the moment humans begin wandering from Africa toward other parts of the world, the event that has led to the societies and the development we see today.

In any case, I think there are far more important moments to mark the year notation and give it a truly scientific importance.



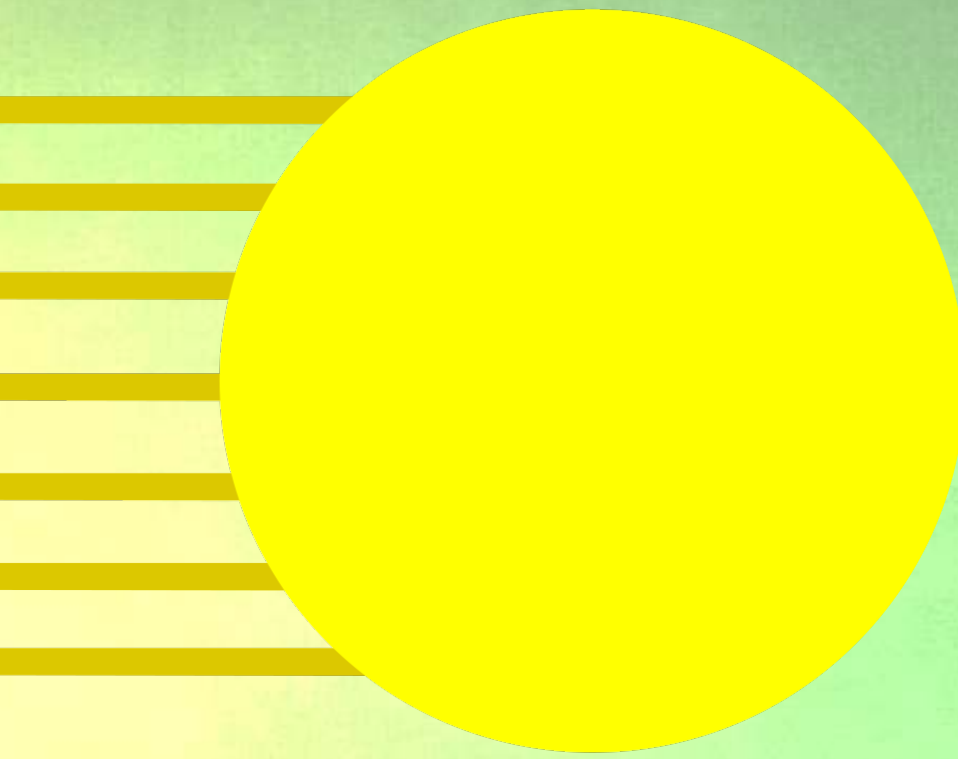


As silly as this might sound to you, years, months, weeks, days, etc. are just human inventions that only some people consider 'normal' and, although useful for certain scientific domains and certain periods of time, may no longer be as meaningful or useful as it used to be.

But first, what is a day?

From a scientific perspective, it's nothing exact. While Earth spins around its own axis and orbits around its closest star (the Sun), various wavelengths of light from the star reach our planet. Since Earth has a spherical shape, only about one half of the planet is inundated with different wavelengths of light from the Sun, while at the same time, the other half is only slightly inundated by wavelengths from other stars and planets further away.

A small band of these wavelengths are detectable by our eyes (visible light). We 'see' because some of this visible light reflects off of mountains, flowers, walls, other people, etc., and enters our eyes. We call this 'daytime'.



On the dark side of Earth (what we call 'nighttime'), we see much less clearly, since the light from other stars is much weaker due to the light sources (stars) on that side of the planet being many light years away. When there is a full moon, however, more 'Sun' light reflects off of the Moon and back to the dark side of Earth, allowing us to see much better.

If our eyes were able to detect other wavelengths, day and night might not be any different to us, or the difference would be much less detectable, or different in a completely new way. This is one of the reasons why the notion of a 'day' is mostly a human concept that relies on some imprecise patterns in reality (Earth's rotation around its axis and its orbit around the Sun are not that exact).

Since these patterns (day-night) are based directly on the light we are able to see, it's important to recognize that they are made important only because we 'inject' importance into them. There are many other patterns in nature that we do not use (magnetic fields, climate variance, star positions, sun spots, etc.), either because we just 'do not use them' (simple as that), or because they may not be useful for our perceived needs in today's society and/or for us as individuals, perhaps because they are not as easily detectable for us, or not 'regular' enough.



A year is an imperfect orbit of Earth around the Sun, and a day is an imperfect rotation of Earth around its own axis. Both can be very useful in certain domains, however the way we interpret them at a societal level may be far too obsessive.

A 'day' is also broken up into hours, minutes, seconds, and even smaller units, tick-tocking regular motions within a certain popular mechanism. These units have been 'perfected' to keep the 'tick-tock' less influenced upon by external factors such as movement, pressure, and gravity.

Until 4,000 years ago, people did not have any notion of minutes or hours. Can you imagine that? Are you able to imagine going through a day without its smaller divisions (hours, minutes and seconds)? Interesting...

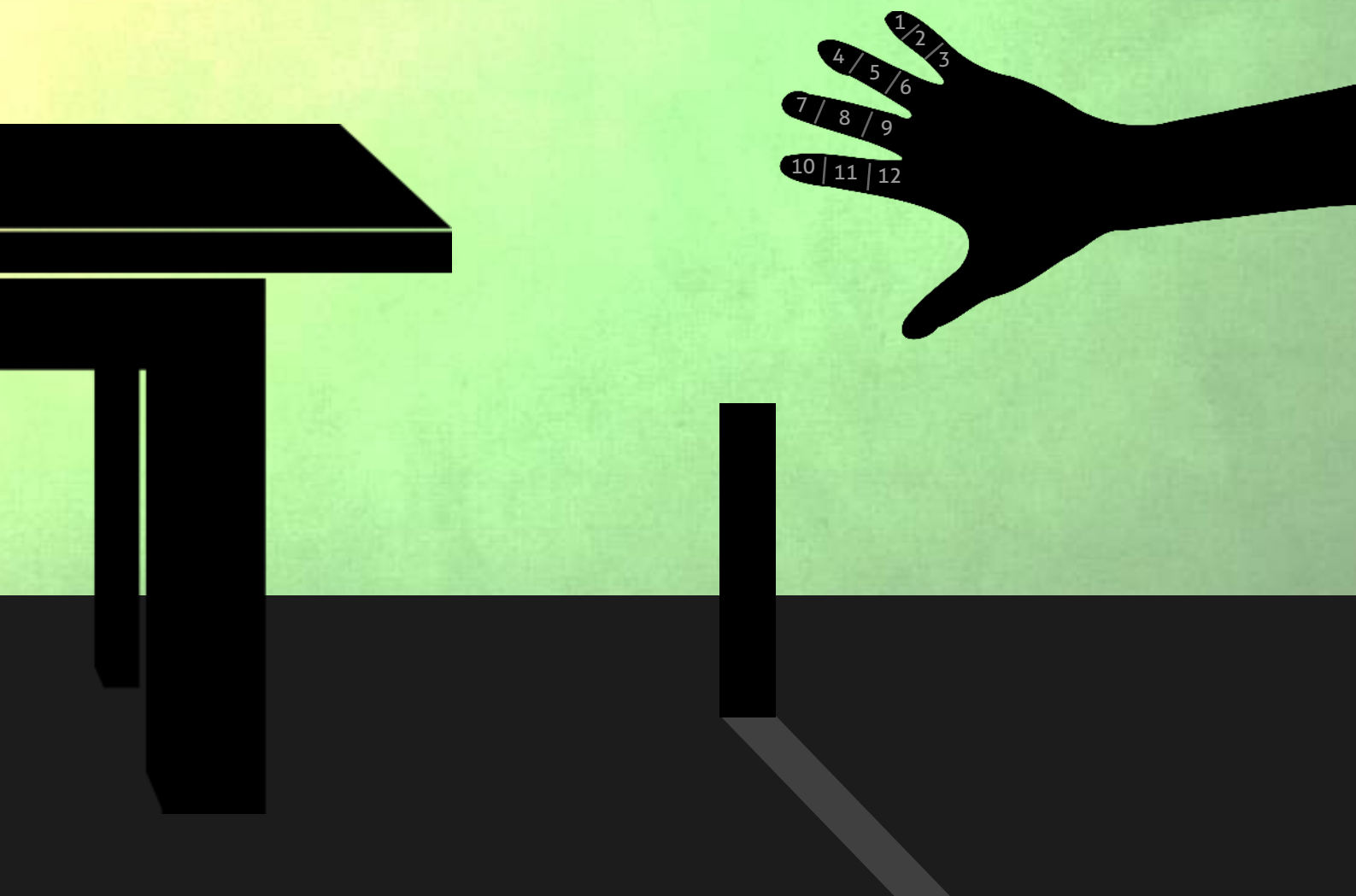


A very simple method was used to divide the day into smaller parts. They basically put a stick in the ground and calculated how the shadow casted by the stick moved at daytime.

At one point, they decided to divide a day into 12 equal parts. This division reflected Egypt's use of the duodecimal system, where the importance of the number 12 is typically attributed either to the fact that it equals the number of lunar cycles in a year, or the number of finger joints on each hand (three in each of the four fingers, excluding the thumb), making it possible to count to 12 with the thumb.

Since they didn't have artificial light readily available, they regarded night as completely separate from day, and the length of their day's hours were different from one weather period to another (summer hours were made longer than winter). At one point they started to measure time in the nighttime using stars, and it just happened to be that they used 12 stars to mark this.

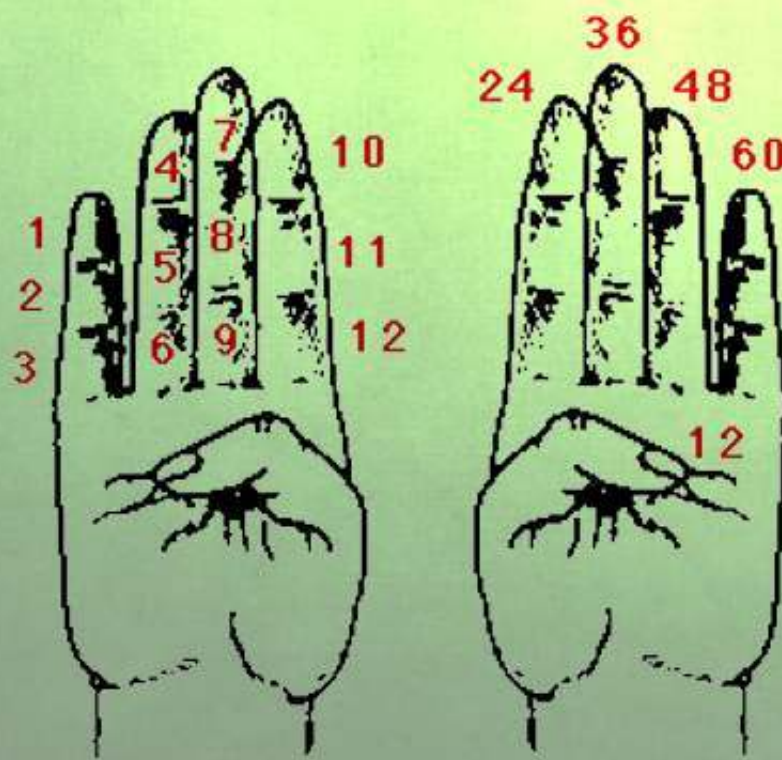
So, 12 divisions for the day, plus 12 more for the night, provided us with a 24-hour day.

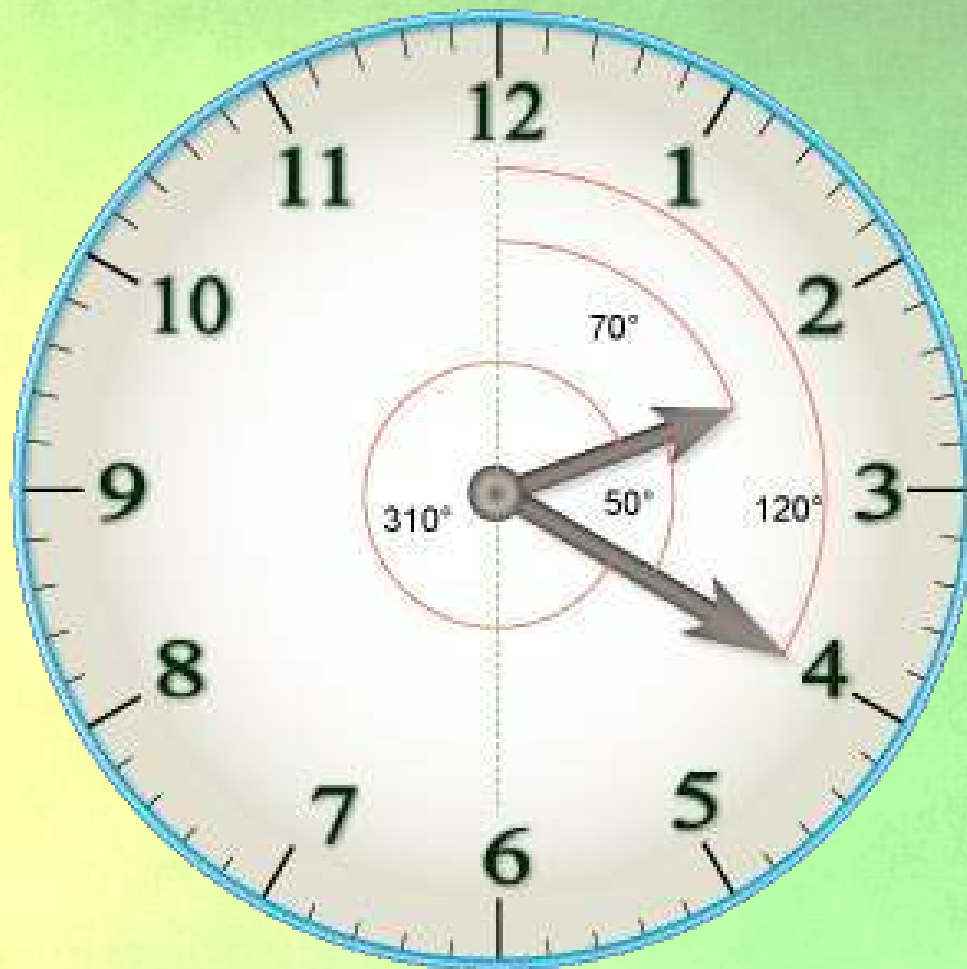


For thousands of years, hours did not have the same length. It's only recently (600 years ago) that hours were widely adjusted and accepted to have a fixed length.[\(source\)](#)

The 24-hour day became the most adopted system, although there were other system in use back then that could have been used to create the global concept of 'hours'. However, some of those other systems were used to develop minutes and seconds. One such system was the sexagesimal (base 60) system. 60 is a well-suited number for dividing time into smaller units.

For example, one hour can then be divided evenly into sections of 30 minutes, 20 minutes, 15 minutes, 12 minutes, 10 minutes, 6 minutes, 5 minutes, 4 minutes, 3 minutes, 2 minutes, and 1 minute. 60 is the smallest number that is divisible by every number from 1 to 6; that is, it is the lowest common multiple of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.[\(source\)](#)





As mentioned earlier, they had no internet back then (meaning no facebook), so they could spend time playing with mathematics and trying to find patterns in nature.

Some 2,000 years ago while developing the system for longitude and latitude to map Earth, people used the same sexagesimal system to build it and while dividing the longitude parts into smaller parts for better accuracy (using 60 smaller parts, then dividing each such part into 60 other parts again) they happened to call the first division of longitude lines as "partes minutae primae" and the second one as "partes minutae secundae". Now others got inspired to use the same notation for keeping time and divided each of the 24 hours into 60 more parts calling them "minutes", and then these new parts into 60 others calling them "seconds".

That's how minutes and seconds got invented, as a notation inspired from mapping the Earth with lines, all in sexagesimal system.

Remember that this was 2,000 years ago when people could not use 'hours' as a fix timescale throughout all periods of the year. To add even more to the point, the concepts of minutes & seconds (inspired by the 'crazy circle division') were not well-adopted until around 400 years ago.

Before that, various clock displays only divided hours into halves, thirds, quarters, and sometimes 12 parts, but never by 60.

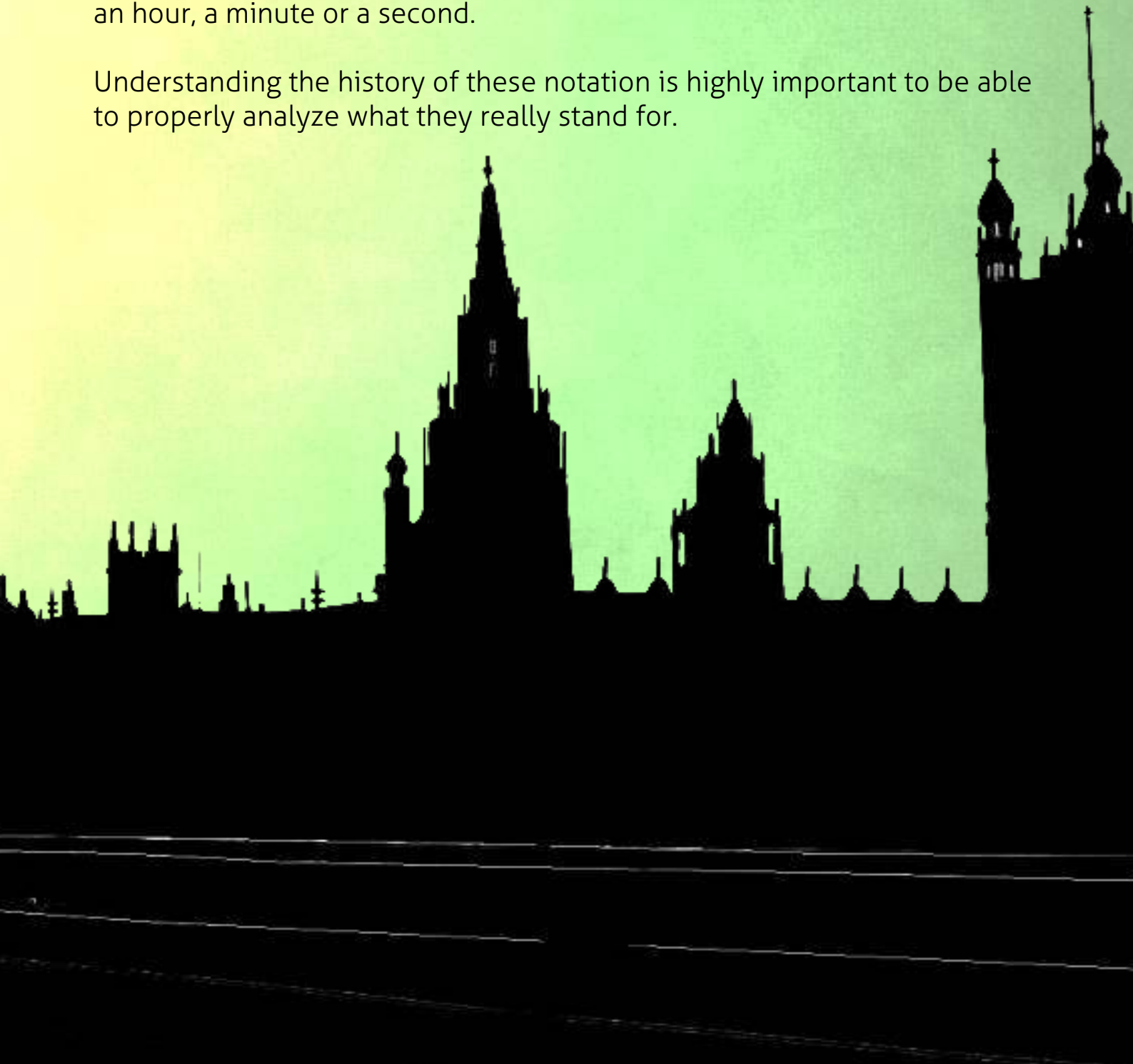
In fact, an hour was not commonly understood to be the duration of 60 minutes. It was not practical for the general public to consider minutes until mechanical clocks that actually displayed minutes first appeared, some 200-300 years ago.



What is interesting is that we are still using these old notions to keep track of time and, often, humans have struggled to adapt these old notions to fit our modern scientific instruments and knowledge. For instance, in 1967, the 'second' was redefined as the duration of 9,192,631,770 energy transitions of a cesium atom. Get that? Me neither. Apparently, in order to keep atomic time (a better tick-tock from nature) in agreement with astronomical time, 'leap seconds' must occasionally be added. Thus, not all minutes contain 60 seconds. Some rare minutes, occurring at a rate of about eight per decade, actually must contain 61.[\(source\)](#)

So, over the past 8,000 years or so, 'random' ideas that have mutated through inspiration, need, mathematical 'beauty', or religious and societal context, have turned into what we now call a year, a month, a week, a day, an hour, a minute or a second.

Understanding the history of these notation is highly important to be able to properly analyze what they really stand for.



Today, these tick-tock notions seem to have grown into something completely and utterly crucial to us all. We do not control them, they control us.

When we sleep and for how long, when and how often we eat, when we relax or when we are productive, are no longer casual, emergent events, but instead have been turned into very carefully scheduled ones.





It's true that the 'tick-tock' we currently use has exhibited tremendous power in predicting future events, even billions or trillions of years from now, and with such great accuracy that we can predict future solar eclipses within a one second margin of error.

But why are we so obsessed with tracking time for our 'daily' lives, and what is the benefit?

"Eight hours' labour, Eight hours' recreation, Eight hours' rest"

is something that one person with quite a lot of power in society said some 200 years ago, and his model is still widely adopted today.

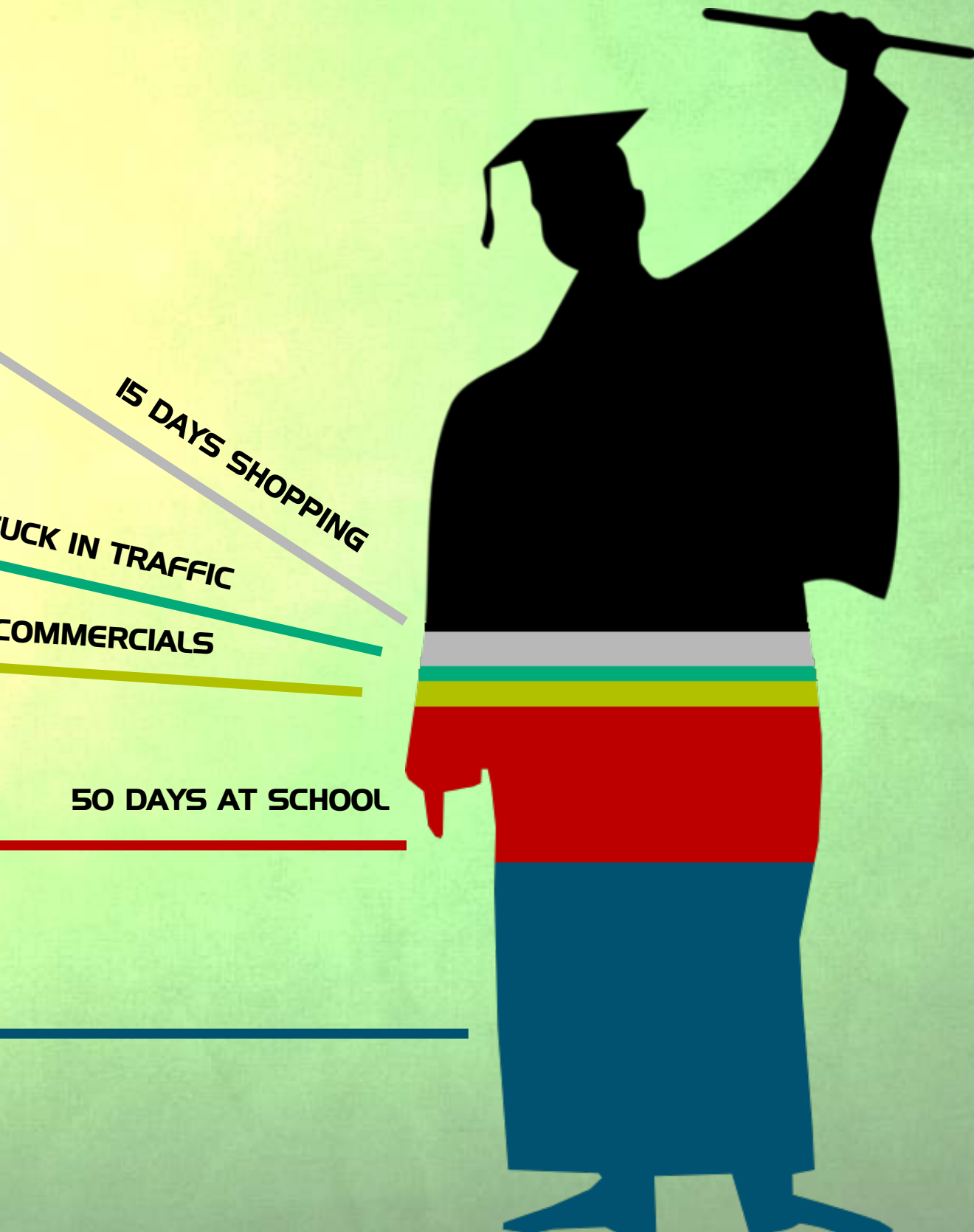
HOW MOST PEOPLE SPEND EACH YEAR

(THESE REPRESENT FULL, CONTINUOUS DAYS -- NO TIME OFF --)



So, for workers, on average, 256 out of 365 days are fully dedicated to either sleep, work, cooking, cleaning, shopping or traffic. For students, it's around 200 out of 365 busy days.

Again, the above is showing "compressed, fully dedicated time"! No breaks!



Now think about the fact that these are rough estimates of how you spend your time each year. The numbers can go significantly higher if we also calculate the time you spend waiting in lines or for buses, extra hours at school, overtime at your job, waiting for a package or for your kids to arrive home from school before you can leave the house, and plenty of other 'small things' directly related to the monetary system lifestyle.





Imagine how much of the all of the above would change if you were not obliged to a job or forced to attend an educational system that is completely obsolete; or if the transportation system was efficient and automated so you can enjoy the ride rather than fight traffic; or if you didn't have to spend so much time shopping, cleaning or cooking (or be subjected to any obnoxious commercials, ever).

Let's analyze this more closely now and see how relevant structures like school or work are, and how 'time' has become more than a ruler - it has become the rule.

We discussed the educational system in a previous [article](#) and recommend them for further understanding, but in short, the typical school schedule is a pure invention, driven by the culture's need to create workers. I was in school for 15 years and spent a lot of time doing nothing, not even paying attention to the obsolete classes. I would just sit there in the classroom, waiting for the class to end. That happened to everyone I know, with no exceptions.

We were punished if we arrived late, and we were not allowed to leave the classroom early, even if the teacher had finished the course. On occasions when the teacher could not be there, we were still obliged to stay in the classroom for the full duration (40-50 minutes).



The teachers were also forced to fully present their curriculum by the clock (as we were forced to listen to it), as if 40-50 minutes is enough to significantly teach or learn any kind of subject, including the sports team classes that lasted the same amount of time.

Was there any special 'reason' why? No! That was the schedule and we all had to respect it. If we didn't, the consequences would be financial for the teachers and a plethora of negative impacts on students (lower school grades, disciplinary measures - things that would create a backlash and tension / stress for both the student and their parents, all out of fear that the student might not finish school or graduate with good grades, jeopardizing his future workplace (job) and thus endangering his life within the monetary system). So, maybe there 'was' a special reason.

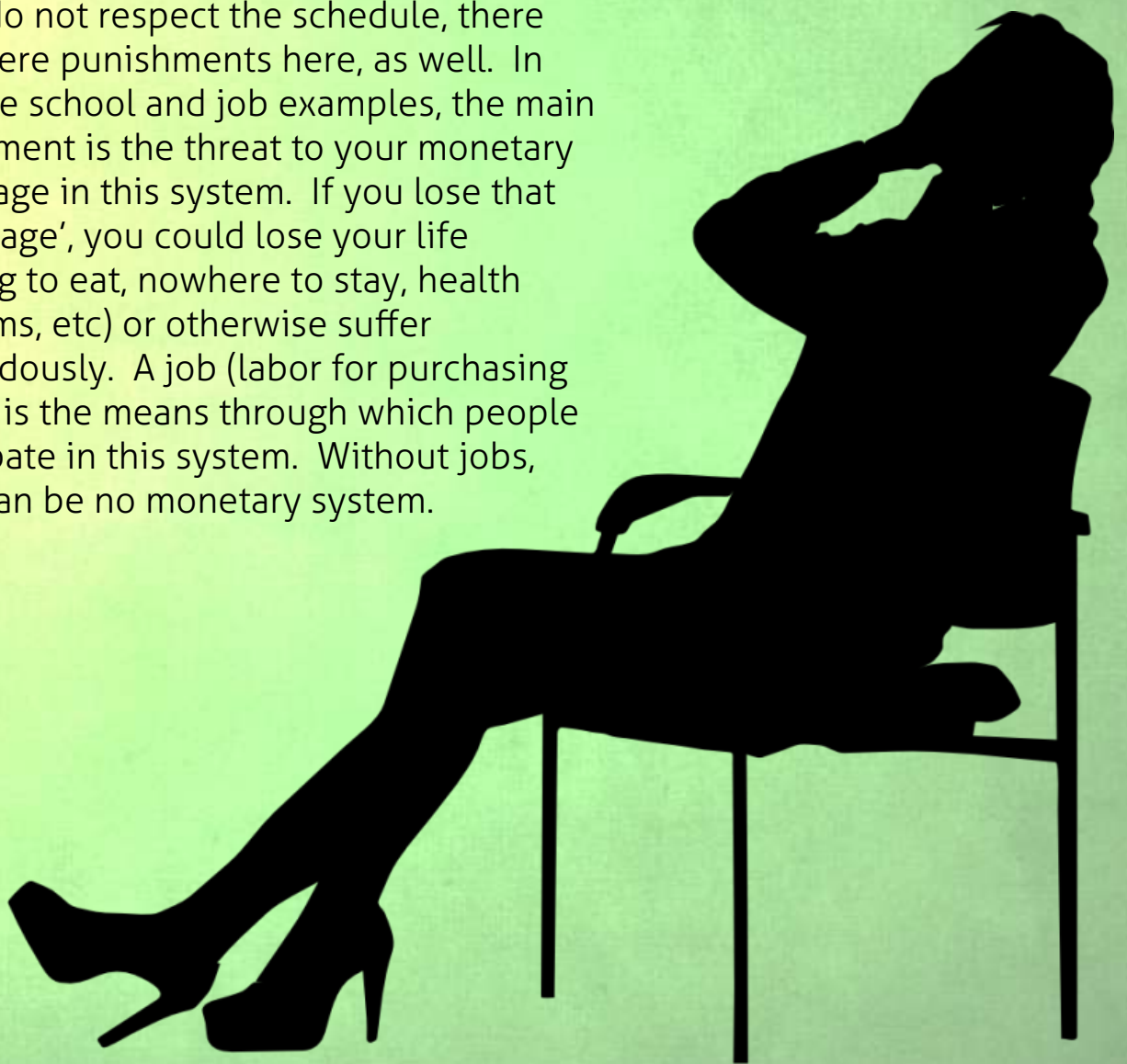


Jobs are another must in today's world and the amount of time we spend at a job is not measured by progress or efficiency, but is a fix program measured in money.



All of the people I know spend some amount of time almost every day at their job doing absolutely nothing; just waiting for the time to pass by and finish their 'on-the-clock duty'. That is such a loss of personal time and only happens because we are ruled by the ruler (time), and money. If the job says you have to work 8 hours a day, but you finish your work in 6 hours, you still have to stay 8 hours.

If you do not respect the schedule, there are severe punishments here, as well. In both the school and job examples, the main punishment is the threat to your monetary advantage in this system. If you lose that 'advantage', you could lose your life (nothing to eat, nowhere to stay, health problems, etc) or otherwise suffer tremendously. A job (labor for purchasing power) is the means through which people participate in this system. Without jobs, there can be no monetary system.



Bus, taxi, subway, and train schedules are synchronized mostly with these two major 'musts' (school and work), reinforcing the system to remain as it is. If work or school hours were to be reduced, transport companies would lose a substantial amount of money.

Even television programs and most store schedules are designed to fit this system. If you want to buy something on a Sunday, you might not find the store open. On a related note, you can probably find a casino open at 1am, but not a pharmacy to 'access' a needy medicine. These kinds of schedules are dictated primarily by money: casinos make more money at that hour, so they are open.



Have you ever noticed that the vast majority of movies or documentaries tend to fall within a specific 'running time'? Well, in order to be considered for public broadcasting, they have to fit a 'marketed' theatrical or TV station's schedule. These programs are driven by advertising and other profit-motives, which is why the news, movies, documentaries, etc., often have to 'fill' time with 'whatever' (often nonsense) just to stretch it out to a certain length.

Considering news broadcasts, shouldn't the actual news that needs reporting dictate the amount of presentation time? Why is it other way around today?



Sleeping hours and the division of the day is also completely reinforced mainly by these two sectors (work and school). We may think that is natural to sleep 6-8 hours-a-day and at nighttime. Not so fast, monetary system! Many studies have been conducted and the conclusion is that there is no 'normal' way to sleep. Some people sleep multiple times a day for 2-4 hours each; some people prefer daytime sleep, or a single set time per day but for just 3-4 hours. In today's monetary system controlled world, the all-at-once, 6-8 hours-a-day sleep pattern is not much of a choice.

I've always had a very different sleeping pattern from the 'norm'; going to sleep at 4-5am and waking up at 1-2pm when I didn't have school. When I went to school, my sleeping pattern caused me a lot of stress and I was forced to adapt, many times going to school very tired. Simply put, I was forced to comply. From this perspective, if I weren't 'working' for TROM, I would not be able to 'hold' a job. Every time I've had to work (side jobs), I arrived at work so tired that I wasn't able to do much work anyway. I am sure many of you are also going through this, forced to adapt to your institution's schedule (and perhaps not well).



Although some think that we live in modern tribes and have such a great life, even the most basic things, like sleep, are dictated by our 'smart' and 'caring' society. Many times, people have to force themselves to go to sleep at 10pm, not because they are sleepy, but only because they have to wake up at 6am to be 'on schedule' the next day.

Maybe there would be no such thing as 'tomorrow' if we weren't obliged to wake up to get to school or work 'on time'.



WEEKENDS, VACATIONS AND HOLIDAYS

These are the breaks from the obligatory school and work institutionalized schedules, but even they are carefully organized and 'properly shaped' by the monetary system.

Weekends are often reserved by people for getting some rest after a week's-worth of hard days at work/school, so even if 2 days are 'free' every week, they might not be so productive for much more than getting some rest, in preparation for the week to follow.

On a related note, because school/work has become such a huge focus in their lives, some people I know have no idea what to do with their free time on the weekends. Believe it or not, they get stressed over it. School/work is so ingrained into their lives that they have no significant life outside of that.





Weekends are also a time for shopping; when workers race out to spend the money they worked for that past week. So, a big part of weekends is also attributed to shopping.

Shopping is a crucial part of the monetary system, without which there could be no monetary system in place. People must be made to buy and consume in order to keep the cycle of money spinning.

Vacations are another aspect that have become very consumer-driven. People on vacation tend to buy and use even more stuff. Perhaps it's the mental 'orgasm' they get from it after long periods of working or learning 5 days every week. Of course, this is a huge opportunity for companies to sell even more stuff.

Numerous multi-billion dollar businesses completely rely on these long breaks, although they are not really long at all, compared to how much people are expected to work/study throughout a year.



Many people book summer vacation trips many months in advance, often 'hypnotized' by 'special offerings', while others feel the need to use that 'break time' to work supplementary hours to make more money.

Similar things apply for 'winter' or similar breaks, where people try to schedule them to make sure they 'get the most out of it', and their schedule is often influenced by advertising and artificial discounts.



Religious and other types of holidays have been reduced to decorations and 'holiday sales' on supermarket shelves and agendas/promotions in most business marketing campaigns.

Valentine's Day, Christmas, New Years Eve (and day), Thanksgiving Day, Halloween, Easter, national tribal days, people's birthdays, anniversaries, and others have all become more recognized in what is 'supposed to be' consumed. They have become more and more associated with the food that should be served in great (expensive and wasteful) quantities at these particular events, or the gifts, decorations, and other objects surrounding the christmas tree or at someone's birthday.

Months before a new years 'celebration', people start talking about the new location where they will celebrate. If you live here, you should go there, and if you live there, you should come here for the celebration. Weeks before, people's primary preoccupation is with what fancy clothes to wear, which jewelry, how much money to spend and what restaurant to choose, what car to use to go there and how else to appear 'better' and/or look wealthier than the others who show up there.



Restaurants compete for our business with exotic dishes, new-age interior designs and 'the best music in town', all wanting to sell as much as possible.

Expensive to make and dangerous to handle, 'out of this world' fireworks shows make people look 'up' (a rare activity for most), only to see artificially made colorful explosions for a few minutes. A waste of resources? You decide.

Come one - come all! The expensive drinks and dresses, uncomfortable clothes and fake smiles, are not to be missed.

Sure, this does not happen all over the world, but celebrating such events is definitely influenced in one way or another by money that gives birth to social statuses fancified through objects. Even when it is just your birthday, you expect the cake and definitely some presents.

Clubs and restaurants rely completely on consumption as well, and most parties are associated with food and alcohol in most parts of the world. Perhaps it's no wonder why many people prefer to get themselves drugged up after a hard week at work or a stressful week at school...

All in all, because we live in a world of forced perpetual consumption and social stratification based on wealth and access, many annual events have become consumption events: from the christmas tree to gifts, from the more expensive clothes you buy to the alcohol you consume, all of it is projected by culture as 'normal', just so they can continuously market their products to make a buck, with little regards for human concern. We are not implying that this is a conspiracy between companies to force us to spend more. Much more simply, it's just a part of how the monetary system works.

As you probably realize by now, every aspect of your life: when and how much you sleep, when and how much you have to work or learn, when you can relax or get some fun, and overall, how you spend most of your life's 'time', is dictated by an uncaring, wasteful, thoughtless system that is based primarily on perpetual consumption and coercive rules.

We consume every year, watching the clock and scrounging for money, all so we can do it all again the next year.

Now recall the real value of years, months, weeks, days, minutes and seconds. Can you now see how we have been 'trained' into becoming so obsessed with these measures today? We have been robotized for profit.

If I give you \$1440 a day, more than likely you will try to spend all of it, day after day, to maximize every penny.

Well, 1440 is also the number of minutes you live in a day. What if our time could become the "currency" that we strive to spend wisely instead?



In a trade-free society (abundant society for all), where there would be no trace of the monetary system's rules and perceptions, people will become able to value others for what they are, rather than what they wear. Perhaps the new 'holidays', events where people gather to celebrate a common purpose, will be when we land spacecraft on other worlds, when a solar eclipse occurs, and when other amazing natural events unravel.

Maybe such future holidays will be more than a moment to celebrate. They could be both a moment to celebrate, as well as a moment for all of us to learn more about the world and ourselves.

More than that, perhaps in such a humane system, people will not feel the need to be so obsessed with tracking 'the time'.

Maybe a year, a month, a week, an hour, a minute, or a second would not exist anymore, at least in the way they run our lives today.

Maybe we will just live, discover, enjoy, relax, be creative and explore.





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