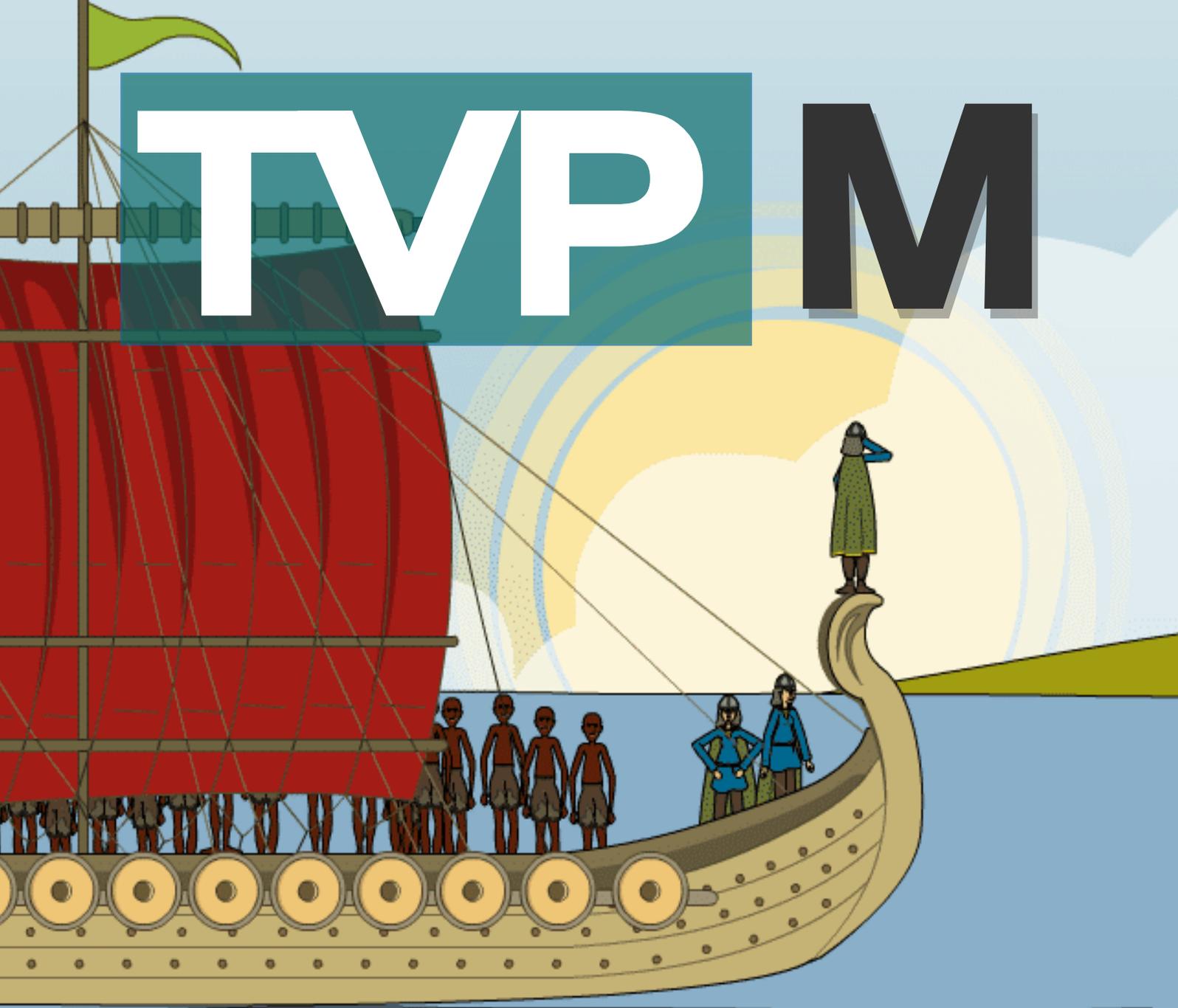


TVPM



■ THE MONEY GAME: MOVING STUFF AND PEOPLE AROUND

■ TVPM NEWS MODULE

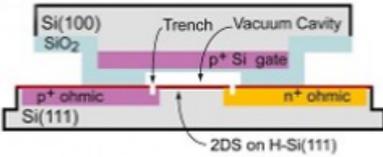
■ PERSPECTIVE:
PRIVATE MOUTHS

TVPM NEWS MODULE

by tio

WE ARE AGGREGATING AND FILTERING NEWS

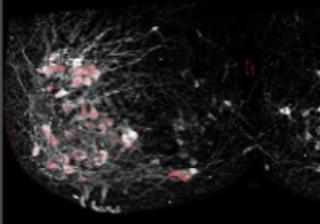
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THE FIRST TWO-WAY, 2-D, ULTRA-HIGH MOBILITY SI (111) TRANSISTOR

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SCIENCE X
26m ago



SCIENTISTS SEE M...
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REAL TIME

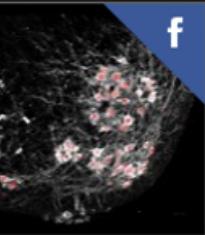
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MOTOR
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SMART STETHOSCOPE GETS FDA STAMP OF APPROVAL

Smart Stethoscope Gets FDA Stamp
of Approval -

TRANSCENDENT MAN

27m ago



Using the ol' TV to get the latest news is very limiting and hugely filtered. I remember 10 or so years ago (when I actually had a TV) that I had to wait until a certain time of day before the news would be 'delivered' to me. I also believed that what the news presented was the entire world. So if X happened, that event must be really important, so the entire world was being made aware of it. And, of course, there was no doubt that the news was showing me ALL of the important stuff around the entire world. :) I had no idea how big the world is, or how many advancements in science and technology were happening on a daily basis. My understanding of the universe was severely limited by a little news station in a tribe I lived in.



These news outlets: TV, radio, newspapers, represent only a tiny bit of the world around us, and that bit is ridiculously filtered. If one well-known news outlet picks up a story, more than likely, other news outlets will take that story, put a slightly different coat on it, and add it to their rotation. Since these news companies are driven by profit, they aim to make their news 'click-worthy'. Important science and technology news is twisted for the sake of sensationalism, which creates much confusion for those trying to understand the news. This applies to the digital form of most (if not all) news outlets, and we provided an example of that in this article.

So, we get twisted, sensational news so they can earn 'clicks', filtered news for the sake of censorship reflecting a primitive culture, and only news covering a tiny portion of what is happening around the world. But that's all 'yesterday's' news. Let's move past TV and relying on just a few limited sources, and try to make sense of our digital options.

Today, we have access to a digital world that comes in many, many flavors: social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Google+, etc.), video platforms (YouTube, Vimeo, etc.), all kinds of news websites, and even some like Reddit or Google News, who try to curate news. But they seem to fall short of coming up with a method of truly aggregating the best science and technology news sites in a 'neat' and scientific way. How then can we take all of those sources, curate them, and then present them in a single collection? After all, YouTube, Facebook, Reddit, Google News, and other websites can all be regarded as providing materials as news. Plus, news is not only composed of words (articles), but is often presented as videos or photos in the digital world. Well, this is what I've been testing for the past couple of months, and I've managed to create such a resource that is now part of TVP Magazine, and soon as part of the main TVP website.



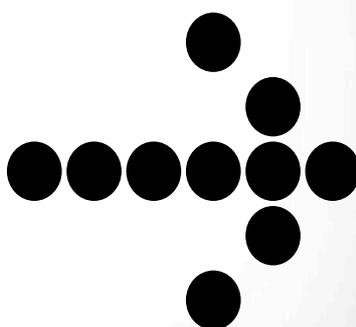
The new NEWS page pulls from over 100 sources of science and technology news, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and many RSS feeds, and brings them all together as a single stream. All of the items are then filtered to leave any BS (Bad Science) aside. It basically checks all of the sources every 20 minutes, pulls all the news items it finds, individually filters out any junk, and, then display the final results for all to enjoy. Now THAT'S automation! It's very simple, yet quite complex in terms of what sources to pick, what filters to add, and how the script should manage everything.

So, you can now go to tvpmagazine.com/news (or use the TVPM website's menu from anywhere on the site) to check it out for yourself. You can already sort the stream by sources (YouTube, Facebook, RSS, etc.), but we will soon add more complex filters such as videos, photos, articles, etc..



over 100
sources

BS FILTER



Similar to Facebook, all videos open up directly in a popup when clicked, so there's no need to go to YouTube, Facebook, or any other site to watch a video. Some articles work similarly by clicking their thumbnail image, either displaying as an image (for example, a photo with the latest exoplanet discovered), or by displaying text of the news. Some news sources do not allow the entire text to be displayed, so you'll need to click directly on the title of the news to open the full article in a new page. You'll quickly get used to it, especially if you are already familiar with Facebook posts that contain links.

You can also use the search feature to filter news. Let's say that a meteor recently hit Earth in a populated area, as happened not long ago in Russia. If you want to learn more about that event, simply type "meteor" or another relevant keyword for that event, and it will only display news that applies to that keyword. If nothing is displayed, click the "Show More" button to search for older news about your search term. You can also use search to filter by categories. So you might decide to search for automation, unemployment, graphene, climate change, etc.. Use your imagination!



This NEWS feature has great potential and is already working so well that it has become my own personal favorite website (page). I check it every day to see what's new in the world. Better yet, it also pulls news directly from TVP sources, so you can rely on this NEWS stream for that purpose, too.

GIVE IT A TRY. YOU MAY FALL IN LOVE WITH IT!

Use the form below to let us know what you think of it, or if you're aware of any really good science and technology news sources we've missed:

OTHER FEATURES AND IMPROVEMENTS THAT WE'VE DONE OVER THE PAST MONTH:

- We now have a new server! We previously relied on a very cheap server to help minimize costs for TVP Magazine, but have now moved to a much better one; perhaps 20x better. This will improve all of the website's features, including making the website and android app much faster.
- Added smart excerpts to the live search feature, so you can better understand the results of your search (what an article is about).





THE MONEY

GAME:

by Tio



Looking around the world, just about everyone uses money; coins and special shiny or pale papers, moving from hands to hands and now mostly moving from computer to computer in their digital, non-physical form, exchanging the limited ownership of goods, accessing services, indeed allowing (or not) individual people to survive, enslave, lie, promote, enhance, motivate, cheat, and feel happy or sad, holding families together or destroying them, modifying behaviors, changing notions and values, or the surface and the climate of Earth. Everything is connected with money. Without it, you may not be able to eat, sleep or, to put it bluntly, even shit.

Money can be both useful and detrimental, and to massive extremes. However, the balance currently seems to be heavily biased to one side and, throughout this TVPM series, we will present what side that may be. The journey that we will take here is not one of blame, but of more thoroughly understanding how the monetary system works, and what can be done to improve or change it. Without understanding its core weaknesses or looking at the past and present, with its many rules, rulers, systems, and cultures, we cannot possibly understand why we need a new kind of system, or what a new system could look like.



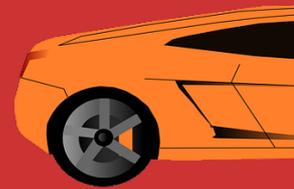
Proposing to replace the global monetary approach with a non-monetary system still seems out of this world, even ridiculous, to many people, but as we will show you in this series, there appears to be no other way forward, and the alternatives we will highlight just might prove to be far better, and very, very different from the world that we are used to today.

Since most articles about the monetary system are written for economists, not 'humans', I will strive to make this series completely non-boring, using uncomplicated words and many, many analogies to help put things in a much clearer perspective. I 'hope' I can do that.



THE

I recognize many dilemmas about the world we live in that I suspect many of you have, too.



For instance, why is there such a huge difference in price between these two cars? The \$10,000 car has four seats and more storage space than the other, which only has two. So why is the two-seater much, much more expensive than the other one?





\$450-



\$10,-

IS A BANANA MORE EXPENSIVE IN ONE TRIBE THAN ANOTHER ONE, EVEN WHEN IT COMES FROM THE SAME PLANTATION?



When I live in Spain, how come the internet is five times slower and five times more expensive than when I live in Romania? Why is stuff more expensive in one tribe than another?

HOW IS THIS PAINTING VALUED AS MUCH AS 1,000 OF THESE HUGE VILLAS?



= x1,000



Can monetary reward properly justify people's work? Who makes all these prices and what do they reflect? If you are as confused as I am about this worldwide money game, then you should take this journey with me, as I am going to try to find all these things out.

To understand all of this, we need to look at how money was invented. As you will see, it is not so much a story of money, as it is a story of moving stuff around: the trade.

FRAMES

Before embarking on this journey of monetary history, let's look at a map of the current landscape. The colors outline the separation of tribes in our present day, but these colors/borders have changed significantly over thousands of years. They expand, shrink, and are even sometimes eliminated by wars, famine, climate, and ideals (religion, nationalism, etc.). Imagine the changing of territorial borders over time as a movie, with each frame representing several years.

Watch this video to see how various tribe's regions have changed over the last 5,000 years:



A video player interface showing a world map with a play button and a QR code. The map is color-coded by region, similar to the map above. A large red play button is centered over the map. In the bottom right corner, there is a QR code. The video player has a dark red border. The map shows the distribution of tribes across all major continents, with a high density of tribes in North and South America.



These tribes (called countries today) are basically a bunch of people with similar values and interests, clustered together in small patches on planet Earth's surface. They are able to maintain their tribal status due to many different reasons: differential advantage from other tribes, ideas, ideals, resource availability, laws, military force, etc.. But it is very rarely due to: "Hey man, we seem to think alike. How about we bring all people like us together to make a tribe, so we can drink, joke, have sex and feel good together!?" More modern tribes have been composed of people who worked for the few who ruled them. In the Roman Empire (only about 2,000 years ago), 30-40% of the population were slaves (source), and that was true for nearly all tribes. Many people living there did not choose that, but instead were enslaved or otherwise coerced in one way or another to be part of the tribe. Many tribes conquered other tribes through war, and then those people forcefully became part of the new tribe.

This leads us to a very important point: the pixel in the frame.

History looks so simple: tribes with borders, tribes with new borders, leaders and regimes. But it's not at all like that. When you see a tribe outlined on a map, that tribe is not a 'thing'. It's a bunch of things: people with slightly different values, regional laws and different law enforcements, different kinds of coercions, businesses, infrastructure, and so on. All of that is spread out across different points (pixels) within that border. So if a tribe seems to be a 'thing' that is somehow significantly different from other tribes, it is nowhere near that simple and defined 'thing'. It's composed of multiple complex and ever-moving parts.

I was born into the Romanian tribe and sometimes people ask: "How is it in Romania?" But what can I really tell them about it? There are many stray dogs, many poor people (by whatever standards), some rich people (by some other standards), some people who are gay, some people who don't like gay people, people who scam other people, many laws that many are not aware of, many different ways of enforcing the same laws based on region and influence, many types of buildings, religions, corruption, kind people, thieves, saviors, and so much more. Then recognize that I extracted that from living in only two cities in Romania, for about 20 years.





It is not possible for me to accurately summarize what “Romania” is all about, because it is composed of a massive number of such variables, and you have to keep that in mind that when people talk about history and tribes and how life was in such tribes, they can also only talk about one or more tiny pixels within the much larger frames: small patches of populations and events within small moments of time, inside a tribe. Ancient Rome was not about Caesar and the Empire, but much more so about the struggle of the citizens with daily life, rapes, famine, different laws interpreted in different ways, thinkers, values, etc..



It is vital to properly understand all of that. All of the examples that you will ever hear, including within this series, are only about pixels inside of much larger frames, and they can only try to target a relatively small percentage of the frames that make up the huge complete movie.



Trying to accurately learn what shaped human civilizations over the years, even for today’s world, is very tough due to so many influencers, but we can group them into: resources and services, and values (religions, rituals, beliefs, and so on). We have already talked at length about values in our special article on Morality and Ethics, so we will focus here on resources and services, and especially trade, as trade is what moved resources from one part of the globe to another, from hand to hand. Trade is also one of the biggest influencer of societies, shaping borders, time zones, roads, as well as people’s values. The concept of trade then leads us to the monetary system, so understanding how it got here will provide with an educated view about the world today, and a more stable projection of what the future can become.

If you’d like to read more about why money cannot properly appraise the value of human ‘services’ or skills, read this TVPMag article, as we will not be addressing that aspect here.



Some of the references throughout this series are sourced from this lecture about the history of the world (see World History 1 and 2), and we recommend that you check them out. All other source reference links are provided as usual.

INVENTING

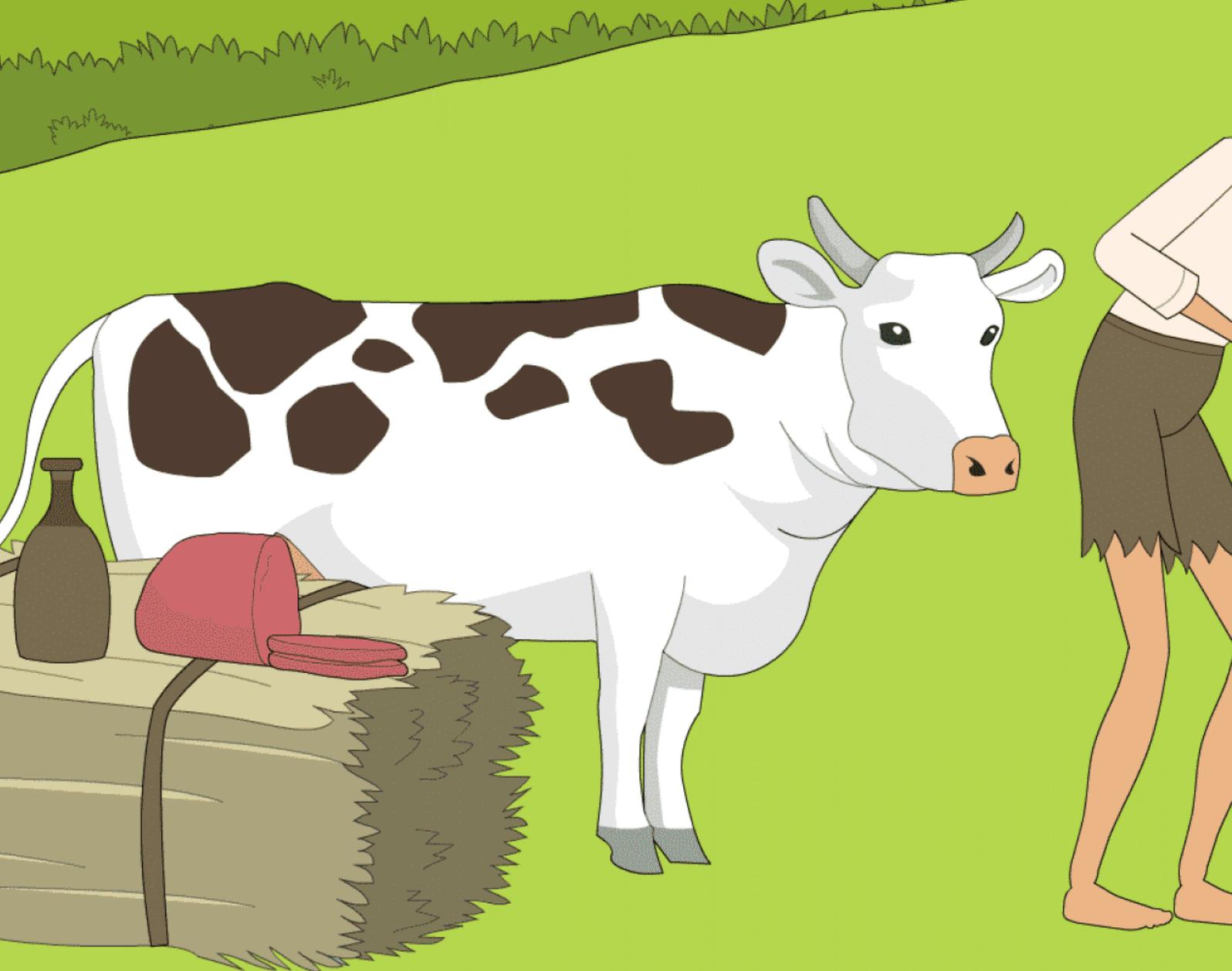


To say that the act of trade began at one point in time is very unrealistic, as people have likely exchanged goods and services for millennia. You have sheep and I can take care of them, then you can give me some sheep meat, or fur, for my service. You have cows and I make clothes, so I get some milk and you get some shoes. You get the point. It's important to mention though that the notion of property varied greatly from one cluster of people to the next. While we can't exactly pinpoint any specific one, there were many tribes who never thought of the land or animals that they farmed as theirs, but more as them simply being there, and being farmed, and all tribes enjoyed the advantages. If you were to ask them who owns the sheep, for example, they would not be able to understand the question.

12,000 YA



When american settlers got 'bossy' with indigenous indians and were attempting to take their land, they were confused as to the borders of the indian land, because the indians just grew their vegetables in open spaces, or farmed in open spaces, not regarding the land as theirs or anyone else's. There are also people who some call 'nomads', who travel all the time, never settling in one place. They view Earth as belonging to no one -it's just there- and they take advantage of it to feed, clothe, and protect themselves. Even today, there are tribes where the notion of property is foreign to them, and trade (if it exist) is unrecognizable. So keep that in mind, as 'trade' is not a 'naturally' occurring thing that applies to all clusters of people (cultures).



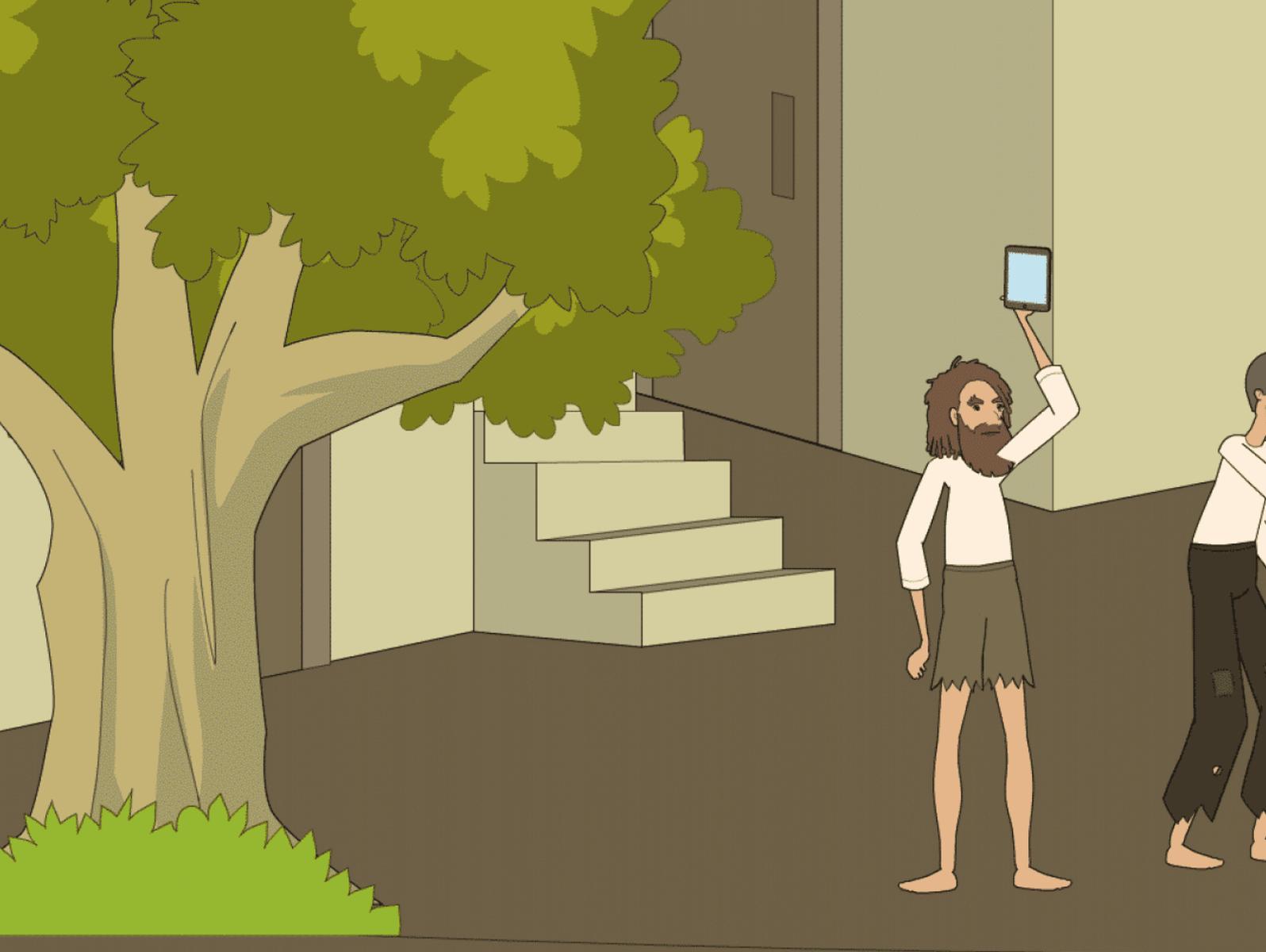
So let's go back to the people who were trading milk for shoes. They eventually invented a rule that we are very familiar with today, but it was "brand new" back then: currency. If I have a cow and want some shoes, it is impossible to quantify that cow for a pair of shoes, unless it is about milk (a cow by-product). If the guy who makes the shoes wants some cow meat in return, I can't just cut him off a cow's leg, give it to him, take my shoes and leave, because then the cow will die and I cannot value it anymore. I lost value.

So, what if we invent a sort of agreed upon 'thing' that we can use to value these goods. If the cow has 4 legs, and other parts that are edible, then it may value as much as 8 pair of shoes. So if the shoes are then valued at one 'thing', then the cow would be valued at eight of those 'things'. They used shells, grain, beads, and other such 'things' to equate for goods and services.



A question is to be asked: was the tribe's fisherman the one proposing that shells be used as currency? Think about that, because he might have had access to many more than anyone else. How in the world did these simple 'things' become currencies? Imagine someone coming to you and say: "Here, I have 17 shells. I want your boat." You are likely to reply back with, "Hell no, crazy guy! I can't do a thing with your shells... can't eat them, can't float on them to leave the island, can't make fire with them... Useless!". But hang on for a minute. Isn't it the same thing with money today? We'll come back to that later in this series, but let's focus on history for now.

So, learning who proposed the exchange currency may be a bit of a mystery, or perhaps it was something emergent from the culture: for instance, shells were used for other things like jewelry before that, so they may have adopted them for exchange because they were familiar with them.



The employment of shells, beads, or whatever 'things' they used for exchange seem to have emerged many thousands of years ago, and it worked only because of the trust people had among each other. You must be a bit nuts to give up your cow for just eight shells, right!? Well, this kind of trade initially worked because it started within groups of people who trusted each other, and it worked so well that it gradually expanded globally. It is interesting to know though that the way they valued goods and services was purely cultural-based. If you go back and try to sell your smartphone in those days, no one would give you a shell for it. People valued farming grains and livestock in those days, plus textiles (clothing mainly) and tools. Perhaps not in that order, but those were the important goods and services back then.



So a cow may have valued at eight shells and a pair of shoes at only one shell, but a smartphone or a piece of gold would be worth nothing to them. If there were more cows in an area and very little shoes, and people 'were into shoes' that time, then shoes would have become more valuable due to their scarcity and the fact that people wanted them. A person selling them could put a higher 'price' on it because the demand was greater, recognizing that people who owned cows could even afford to give two cows for one pair of shoes. It's important to note that all of that could be reflected in a currency system that they had just invented.

To make things more secure, the shells that were used for currency were shaped into beads through a laborious process (video), and making them was not so easy. So if you imagined going back into the past and just collecting some shells from the shores to buy yourself some pretty cows, a shiny pair of shoes and a boat, then you would be out of luck, as you would have to have some of those special shells in order to do that. It's similar to today, where you can't just make paper money very easily, and even if you manage to, you could face harsh punishments for 'faking' the trading 'things' (counterfeiting money).

From that moment on, it was just as simple as it is today: people would use these 'things' (the shell beads) without wondering where they came from or what their real value is. Of course, this entire trading system is what gave birth to the concept of rulers, and those who were ruled by them. Some would strive to control this 'currency', while others would end up controlled by it.



This kind of market system started with a few basic things that people needed and were able to trade: animals, vegetables, grains. As trade rules developed among tribe members, they were enforced by the tribal leaders and even more by their armies, and were eventually introduced to other surrounding tribes, whether by force (conquering and forcing other tribes to adopt this system) or by need (other tribes had to adapt to this new kind of market in order to exchange goods and services with them).

This entire idea emerged around 12,000 years ago, but it took a while for it to become widely adopted. The more specialized trades became, and the more specialized the people became in offering services, the better this system became (by 'better', I don't mean better for people, but more simply better for trading stuff).

Shell beads were later replaced by a variety of other currencies, such as custom made 'coins' made out of metals. They eventually came to favor coins made out of gold, a somewhat rare material, because replicating gold currency is similar to trying to replicate those earlier 'special shell beads', but only using specific rare kinds of shells. Since people were unable to easily replicate these gold coins, it gave even more power to the rulers. Since they already controlled the means for locating and extracting the gold used to make these custom coins, they could better control the currency.



So, imagine having an army of people, lots of gold, and a trading system that many accepted. You could now 'pay' people some gold coins to extract more gold for you (the ruler), and make far more coins out of those people's work. You are now 'in the business' of making more coins out of coins (and other people's labor). Having an army, you could also enforce rules (laws) upon people. So if you make it a 'no-no' (illegal) for people to replicate coins, you grow richer and richer, as you have control over the coins, the means to make them, the ability to buy whatever you need, including people, and with very little 'work', become more and more powerful, all on the labor of the people you are ruling over.

One incredible but predictable thing about earlier tribes is that if you look at the places where they thrived, you'll find it's often near the line where two or more of the planet's tectonic plates meet, where molecules of many shapes are most likely to rise to the surface by volcanic lava, and these molecules form materials that people need to build, feed, and otherwise survive. You would also find some near significant waters (rivers, lakes, along shorelines) for similar reasons, as well as easier opportunities for trading with other tribes. So, tribes clustered around places with significant resources and other advantages (like trade).

THE

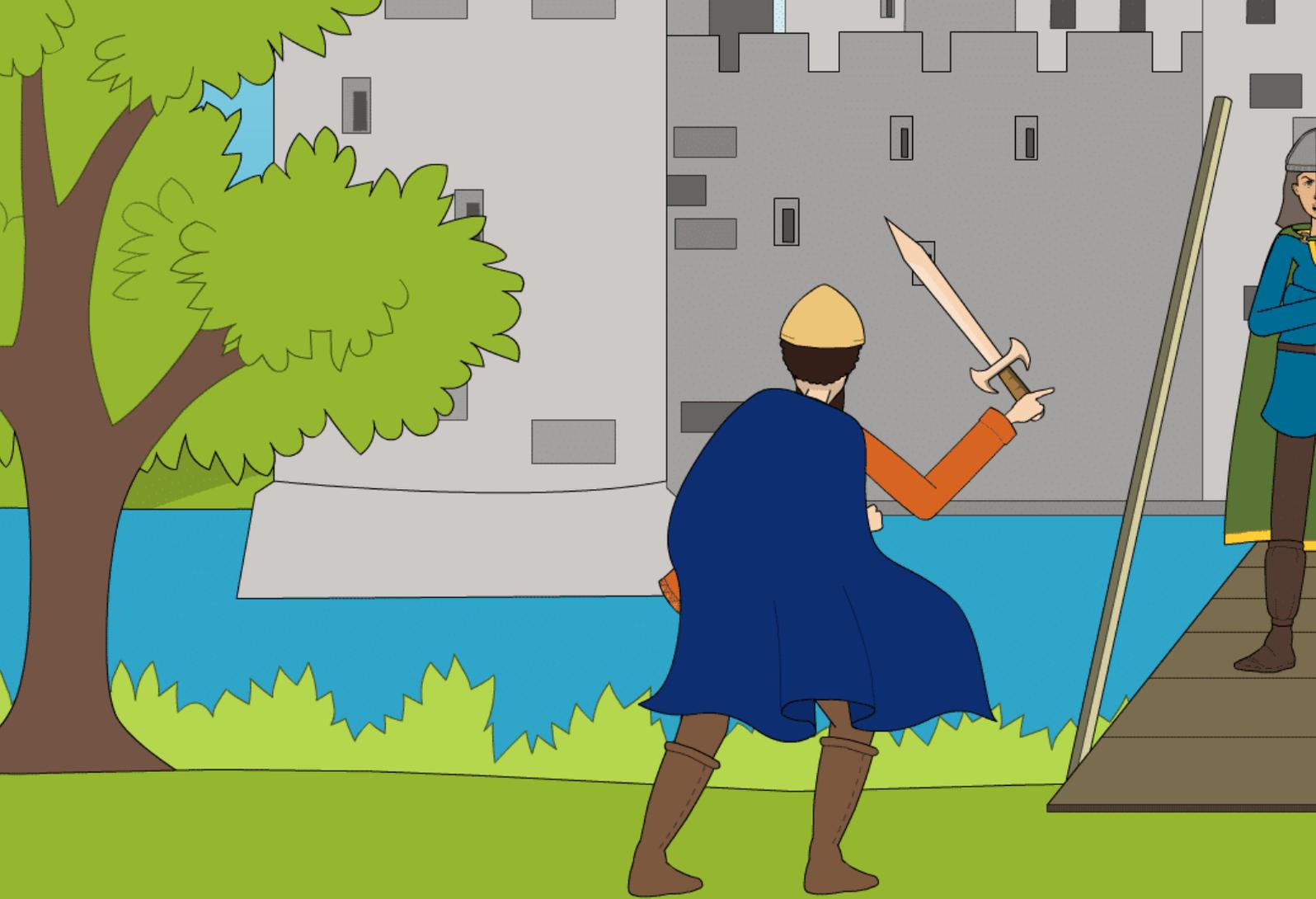


BY
LAND

3,000

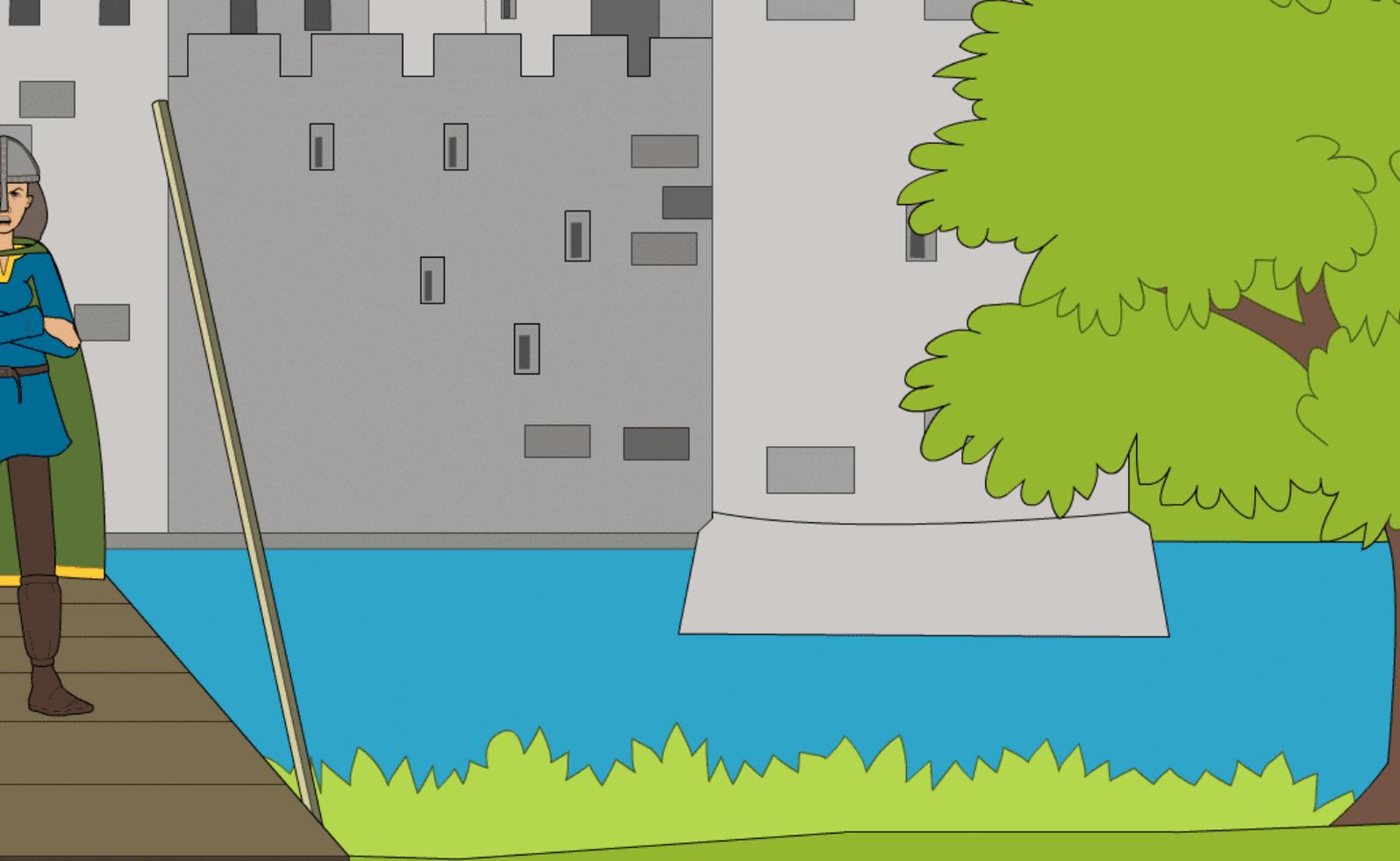
One of the popular routes/roads of trade that emerged was called "the silk road", which gained notoriety some 2,000 years ago, as it was specifically created for trading all sorts of stuff: animals, clothes, textiles, wood, vegetables, metals, etc. The route earned its name because 'silk' was a primary material that the Chinese used to create clothes, and it was a very useful material at that time. The Chinese discovered how to make 'silk' textiles some 5,000 years ago by 'milking' insects, but silk did not expand into global trade for another 3,000 years or so. The "Great Wall of China" was built as a protection measure for the growing 'silk road' trade 'system'. But there was a problem with using 'currency' for trading in this period of time: insecurity. It is one thing to use a currency within a single tribe, but it's a different story when you try to use it globally.





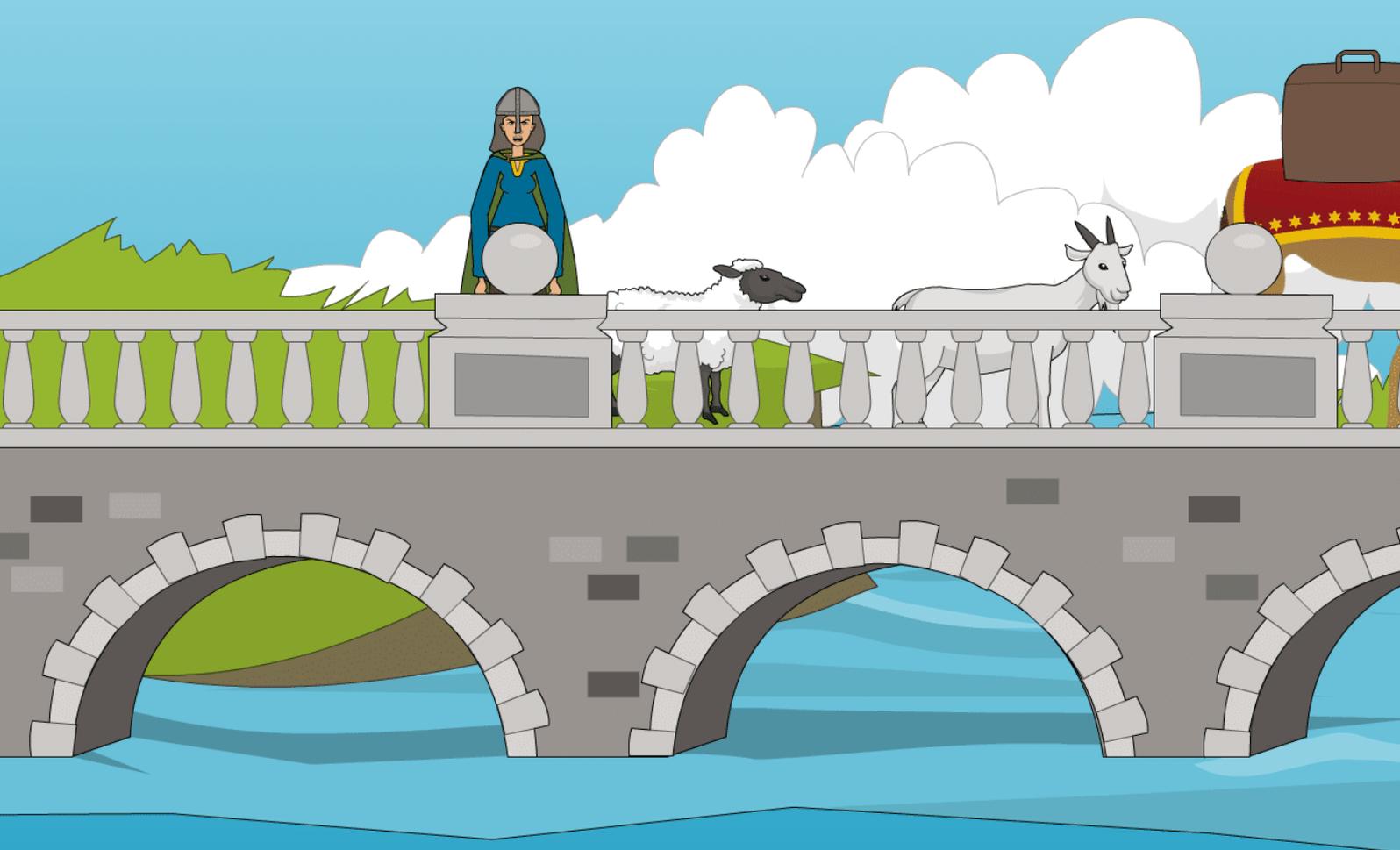
So imagine the scene: in our tribe we have many cows, while the other tribe has lots of silk. We need clothes, they need food. Both us us are unable to grow the 'other stuff' in our tribe due to differences in climate or maybe we simply do not know the technique for making good silk or have the right resources for growing healthy cows. In our tribe, we find it useless to raise more cows than we need unless we are sure that we can exchange these cows for silk with the other tribe. Once that is established and the other tribe says "I humbly swear upon my silk that we will trade with you bros'!", you can no longer store value in terms of cows alone.

Keep the phrase "stored value" in mind. All extra cows that your own tribe doesn't need become a stored value, which then means that you have that value available to your tribe to get other stuff, like silk. That stored value can also be reflected in some kind of agreed upon currency (we have X gold coins, which means we have stored value in those gold coins - and can 'buy' stuff with them). Both tribes then set up some sort of farms, with ours specialize in raising cows and theirs in making silk. As soon as the two tribes trust each other, they can store value in their tribe (cows, silk, or just gold coins).



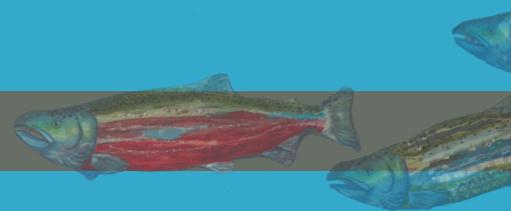
How did they come to trust each other, though? Fear. First of all, we made a deal. If you refuse to give us silk for our cows, then we may kick your ass with our army and just take your silk. But it wasn't just about this kind of fear. It also included the fear of losing the advantages that the other tribe was offering in return. When currency was used among tribes, then the mutual benefits kept them more 'trustful' of each other. When both tribes depended on each other's supplies and services, they had to respect each other or else risk losing that advantage.

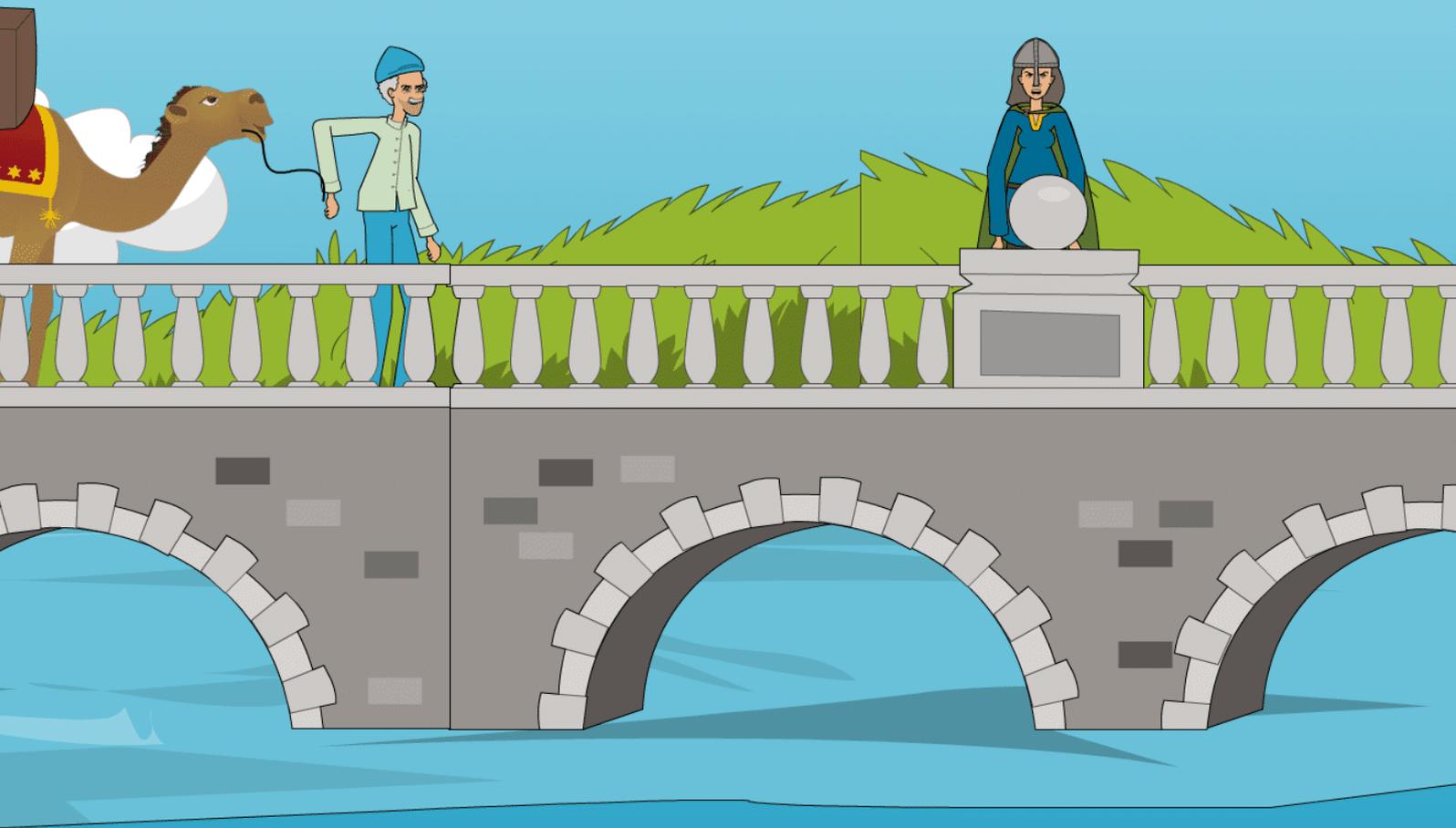
That worked, but not all of the time. If we have many trades where we provide food supplies and spices for your weapons and textiles, but we eventually 'feel' like it would be more advantageous for us to invade you with our purchased weapons, take your food supply and force your people to keep on making us clothes and weapons, then we might do that. Indeed, many have done exactly that, all throughout history.



So gold coins (and other types) began flying around the continents, followed by moving stuff (goods purchased with the coins) from tribe to tribe. The tribes with bigger armies and more coins were the ones with more advantage. But here's where trade had to 'evolve', not only the trust between tribes, but also the trust of physically moving 'stuff' around. If we are happy with the proposed trade agreement between our tribes, then we must make sure that the silk textiles that you send from China to Europe will reach us. If we send the cows to you, but the silk textiles are lost or stolen on their way here, that would mean disaster.

To help make this more secure, they added a security system to the silk road: armies/people who made sure the stuff would not be stolen, and this is how taxes were invented. If you want protection for your stuff to be moved around, pay us a percentage of your stored value (in coins) and we will protect you. The same thing applied to land. Around 1,500 years ago, half of Europe was not 'owned' by anyone, but then people with coins (and the power that gave them) had fences constructed around pieces of land, declared them as their own and then said to other people "Do you want to farm your cows safely where no one can steal them? Then you can use our protected and maintained land, but you first need to give us a percentage of your stored value (your cows or cow by-products)."





These taxes were a way of making trade safer and agriculture more useful. Once this “protection” became available, people could grow and produce more without fear of it being stolen. Back then, people were ‘stealing’ all sorts of things, and for basically the same reasons they do it today: lack of access to food, shelter, and other needs. Consider then how the notion of ‘stealing’ seems to apply only to some, but not to those who took land that did not belong to them, fenced it in and put a tax on it. Interesting...

Anyway, these taxes evolved as part of a provided service for protection, quality, safety, etc., but also as a mean of controlling people and society as a whole, in addition to making them more gold coins.

You can read in more details about the history of trade [here](#).



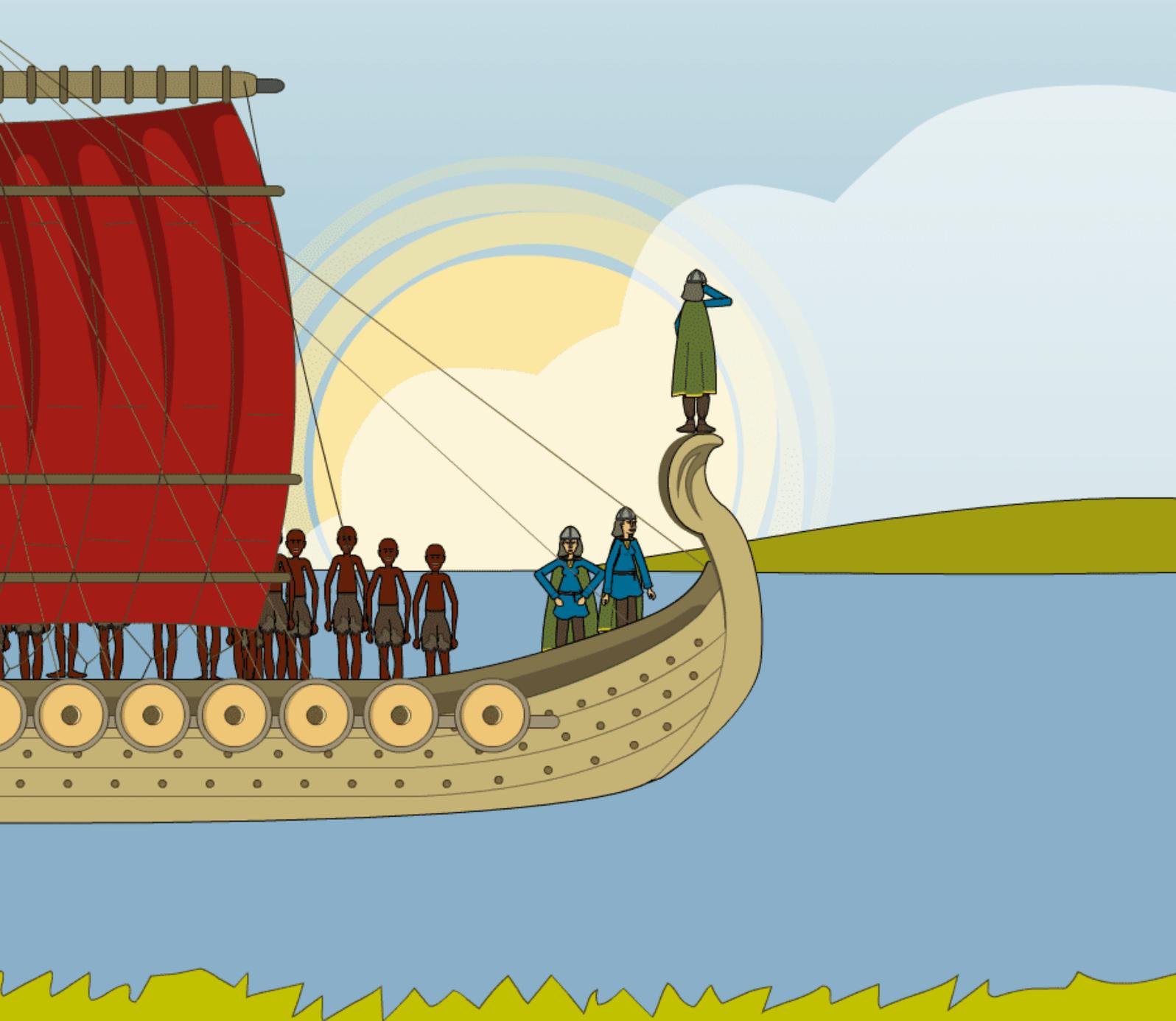
THE



The trading of goods and services gradually became a frenzy:

materials moved from Norway to Australia, foods grown in one part of the planet were moved to another corner, African elephants and giraffes were brought to China. As long as you had an acceptable currency and could pay for something to be done, it would probably be done. As a result, the primitive values of a relative few became able to spark worldwide disaster. Why? If King AssWhole the 3rd wanted a giraffe, four lions, 45 personal slaves, and 22 wives, then it was now easier than ever for him to get them, as he had the coins and others would agree to 'satisfy his wishes' in order to gain those coins for their own personal benefit.

1.000 YA



If King AssWhole the 4th later wanted a huge palace built in the shape of boobs, just because that's how he felt, then he could easily 'buy' 300 slaves to build it for him. Millions of slaves (mainly from Africa) were kidnapped into this trading system and sold to many kings and tribes. They became the 'pillars of creation', as they were worked to produce the stuff that tribes then used or traded.

As a further example of where this craziness could go, over 12 million people were brought from Africa to America to work as slaves to produce sugar, coffee, and tobacco, resources that are not necessary for anyone's survival, but important to the world wide trade frenzy (source). The thirst for 'consumerism' even made some slaves capture other slaves and sell them for money.



The trade of goods and services may have started as a reasonable means moving stuff around and providing greater access and abundance for more people, but it quickly escalated into an absurdly deranged world wide 'trade anything' system, changing nearly all people's values from working to survive and make a better life, to making more and more coins, to have more and more stuff. Billions of people and animals have died directly due to trade, often by being worked too hard to produce or carry stuff from one place to another, trying to protect stuff from others, their inability to 'afford' stuff that was priced too high, and many were tortured, raped, enslaved, coerced, and even executed in the name of this system.



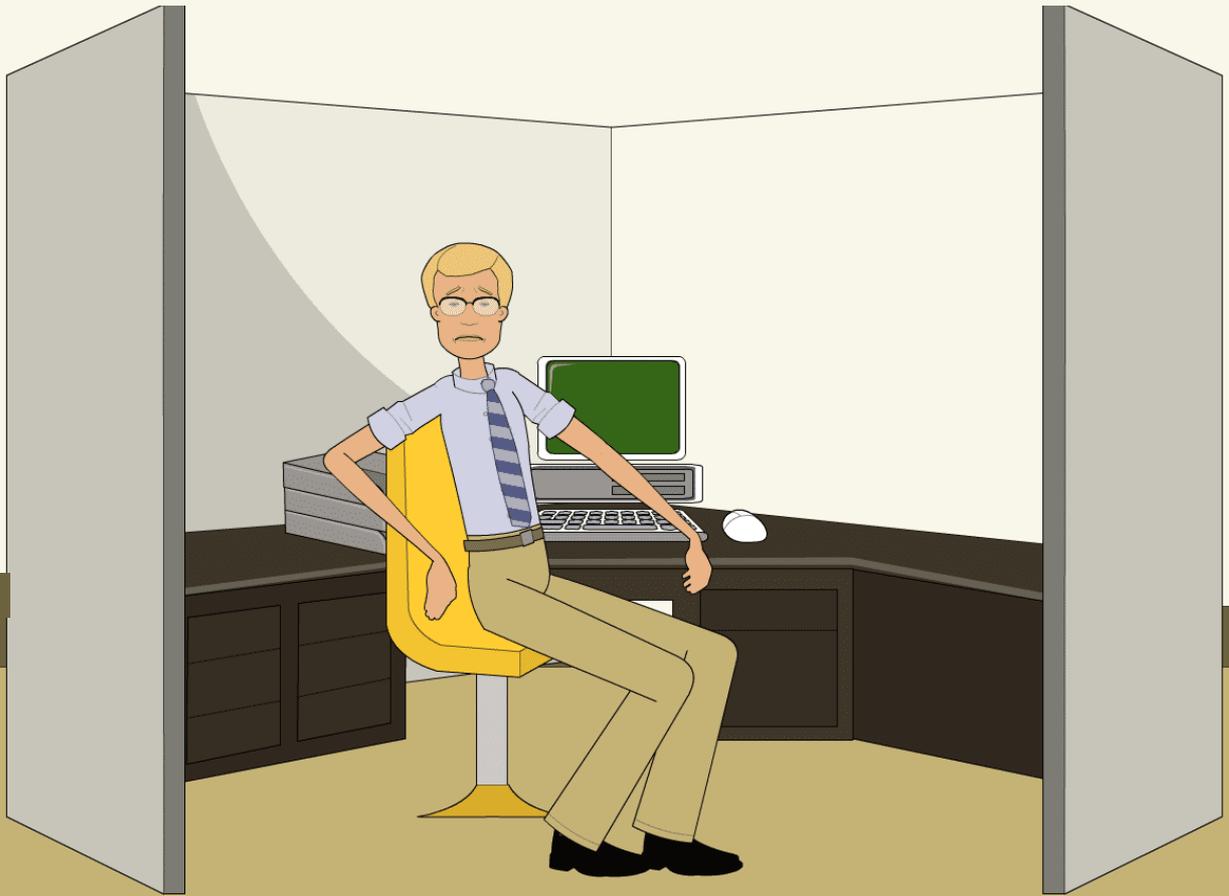
All of that, for little more than filling up the stomachs of some, and satisfying the body: food and comfort. By growing up within a primitive value system that says making more and more golden coins is 'the goal', people never thought to consider the impact of what they do. They just had that goal of making more and becoming more powerful.

Trading stuff became like a drug, and people quickly became addicted to it.

The trade system also created the notion of 'jobs' (as people had to sell their skills), and that led to the creation of 'schools' to train people for becoming workers.



School was made mandatory in some parts of the world, but not so much in others. However, the result of not attending school was to face social rejection, stigma, and, more importantly, to lose your advantage of being 'employable'. Schooling was later confused with 'education' by the public, with people starting to think that, ideally, the school system was there to teach them about the world, instead of preparing them for a job (source).



No matter how boring or hard jobs happened to be, it became the only way to make your way on planet Earth, as the resources and services were already owned and operated by those who were there before you. People had to work in order to access them or otherwise gain the privilege, as their very survival depended on it.

Of course, these interconnected self-serving systems still exist today.

19.5 MILLION PEOPLE WERE



Most wars (if not all) were about gaining resources to feed their tribe's crazy 'wants' and many of their needs. But when people were sent off to war, that meant that even more resources were needed to support their troops, while starving even more of their own 'civilians'. They fought for resources, but also realized that many died due to the further reduction of them induced by being in a state of war.



20 MILLION DIED OF STARVATION AS A

HUNGER KILLED MORE THAN THE WARFARE

When Hitler 'started' the war some 70 years ago, he also had a 'secret' plan for invading neighboring tribes to take their land and use it for agriculture (source). The Japanese were also considering this approach. So, huge wars are influenced by a lack of resources, and these conflicts are very recent. Smaller conflicts (compared to world wars) are continuously going on today for the same reasons.



Even more goods and services are produced with the rise of mechanization, which allows people with distorted values (the termite-consumer) to hoard and consume even more, as if the planet's resources are infinite. Since a hundred or so years ago, advertising has played a key role in this massive consumption. At its start, advertising looked something like "Very good coffee", plus some details about what it is made of, a subset of what you find on the back label of today's products. Today, however, advertising is about almost everything but the product, and it is so abundant that is nearly impossible for anyone (including you) to effectively escape it.

Roughly \$500 billion is spent on advertising - nothing more than promoting products - year after year after year (source). In contrast, only about \$200 billion is being invested on renewable energies each year, in a situation where experts say that if humans do not raise the investment to at least \$1 trillion per year by 2030, we are screwed by the accumulation of climate change effects brought about by our fanatic use of fossil fuels (source).

**WORLDWIDE:
VERTISING
ATE CHANGE**



In effect, moving stuff around became decoupled from reality long ago, with near zero concern for the environment or the people, but plenty for a functioning trade system.

We have been taught to call all of that 'the economy' (dictionary definition: careful management of resources to avoid unnecessary expenditure or waste), and it's something that we very much take for granted today. We give these systems far too little thought, mostly because so-called experts say that the way it works is very complicated. They are right, of course, because of the massive amount of rules that have been applied to this world wide trade system.

THE



In addition to the many taxes imposed (on land, safety, etc.), scenarios like this one began to emerge: My buddies and I provide armed security (protection) for a port where ships come and bring goods. Another group protects another port. To get more ships to 'park' at our port, we announce "Instead of ships paying the standard 12% tax for protection that other ports charge, we're only asking for an 11% protection tax." Out of this new practice, the mighty world of "business" was born: competition and differential advantage arising from playing around with the rules.

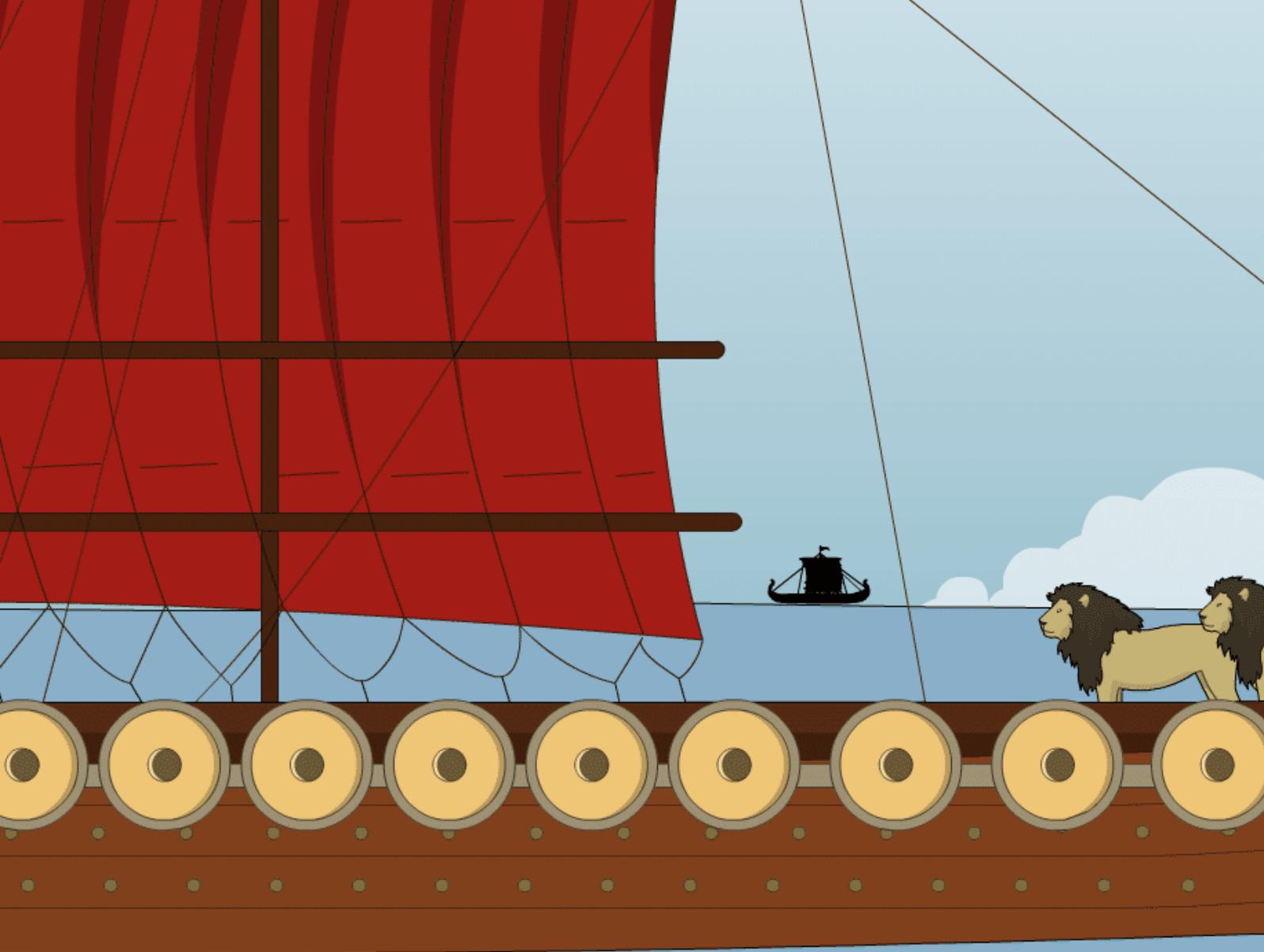
Now try to imagine how these rules quickly evolved, and in so many different directions. For example, we can heal you for only 3 coins, but we can only do it that cheaply because the tribe we are in offers protection for our services at only a 2% tax. Health providers tax the people, while the tribe taxes the health providers, but for different reasons. Some of these taxes became mandatory, some not, all so that they could use the collected taxes to afford more stuff to 'sell' to the tribe, or improve the army, or whatever. It basically evolved into taxes on taxes on taxes on taxes, applied to rules that applied to other rules that applied to yet other rules... and that maze was made by people or groups to create advantage for themselves.



That is still the idea behind taxes and businesses. These days, you may be paying for your health insurance as a tax (not as a service - which means 'mandatory'), where you are basically coerced to add coins to the tribe's master coin bag, a little bit each month, and from these coins the tribe can pay the health providers to get you healthier without you paying them directly, or the tribe may do something else with your tax money: build roads, different kinds of buildings, organize nonsensical sport events, 'ghostly' invest in themselves, and so on.

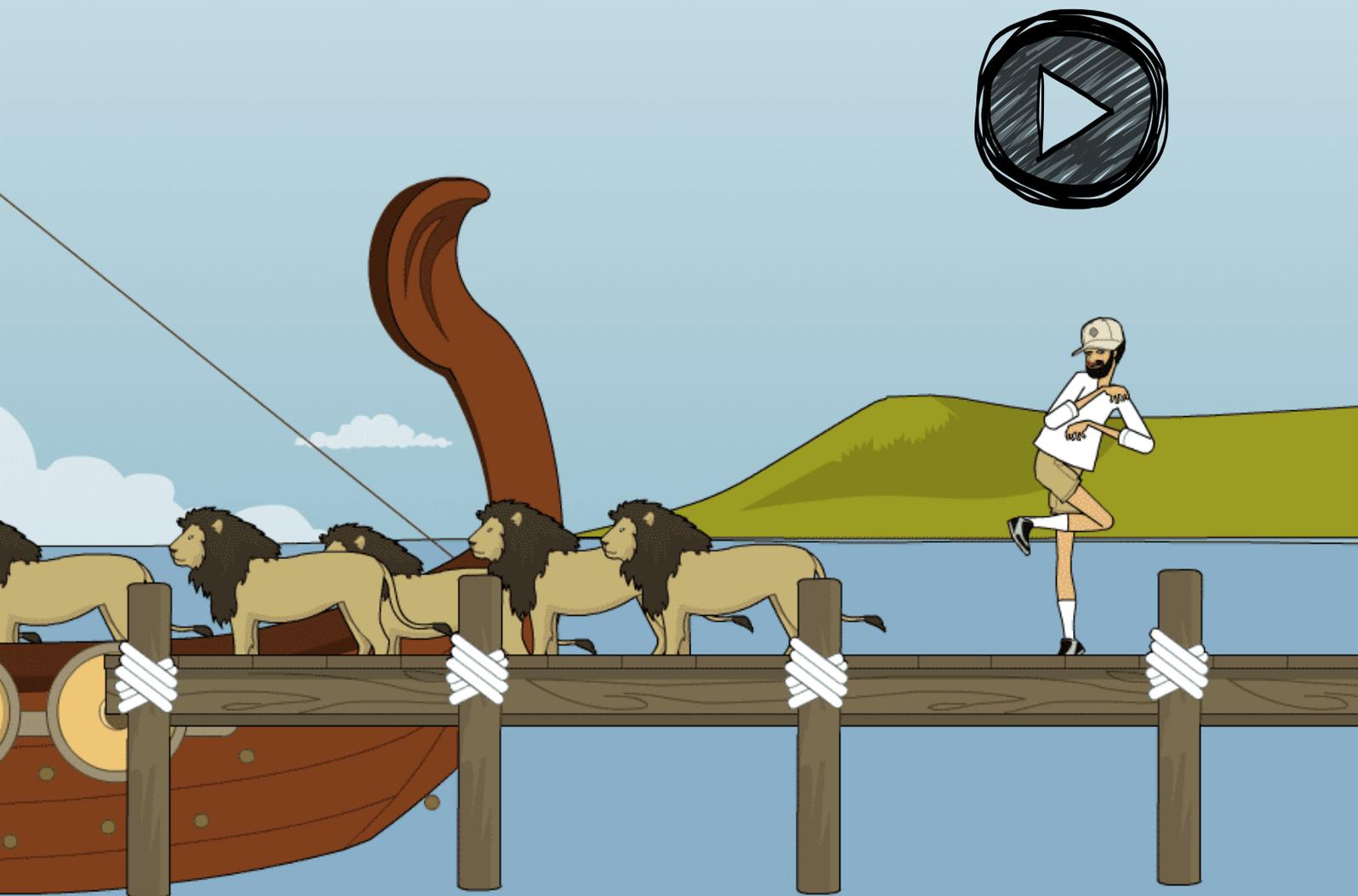
Interestingly, health providers also pay taxes to the tribe for using space that the tribe 'owns', equipment, etc., even if the tribe pays the health providers for servicing the tribe, so the tribe ends up regaining some of the money they pay to health provides, as more taxes. Don't get lost in the details, though. Just keep in mind that all of these complex taxes and rules have more to do with "how we can make more money" than anything else.





Investing is another example of 'business'. If a cargo ship transporting lions from Africa to China costs 5,000 coins (cost of building the ship, loading the lions, taking care of them, other services, etc.), then my buddies and I can invest a small percentage of our coins on the project, let's say 2% each. Then, we get a small percentage back for every profit the ship makes while delivering those lions to their destinations. If the ship sinks or otherwise fails, we lose a very small amount, which is much better than me paying for (and possibly losing) everything.

This allows us to 'invest' in many things worldwide, gaining investment returns while minimizing large risks.



That's what most people do today. If I have coins and I see some people making a new thing called Facebook, then I can invest 1% of my money into the business, controlled by certain rules that vary depending on how I invest. In one scenario, I can 'lend' my 1% to Facebook, which translates into FB owning me that 1% + interest. That's the simplified idea, and we call that a 'bond'. In another scenario, I can actually buy a part (a 'stock') of Facebook, and that allows me to partake into FB ownership, which means profits from the company will come to me as well (source).

This is what "Wall Street" does. Many people look at how monetarily valuable each company is (lots of graphs showing statistics from the worldwide market), and then buy or sell 'parts' of them or invest in them through bonds. This is how companies can grow, or even lose value. If a rumor is heard that Facebook's membership is declining and moving to another social network, then people may decide to invest less in Facebook, and possibly more in the new social network. The value of Facebook will drop when this happens.

COINS OUT



That leads us to the next point: making money out of money. We've already seen how people became decoupled from reality by taking this trade game too seriously, but making money out of money? Coins out of coins? How's that?

Say a guy called GoldBoss has a big safe and guards, and I'm not able to keep my gold coins safe at my house because others may steal them. GoldBoss tells me: "Hey, we can protect your gold coins in our safe, if you give us 3% of whatever you want to store there." This is similar to making money from offering protection for resources and services, but this time it's offering protection for money. They make money out of protecting money from being stolen (how does that sound? :)).

However, the interesting part is yet to come. GoldBoss now has lots of other people's gold coins in his safe, but those people generally hold out some of their money for short-term spending (not spending all that they have stored in the GoldBoss safe, so a good amount of gold coins will always be there). So, he invents a new business: what if I lend some of these gold coins to others who need them?



If I provide 400 gold coins to a person, with a tax stating that they must pay back 140% of what I gave them, I (GoldBoss) will make a profit. In other words, a poor guy takes the 400 golden coins, but then has to pay back 560 golden coins, all because of the rule GoldBoss just invented. GoldBoss relies on a 'trust' that the poor guy will be able to pay him the 560 golden coins within a previously agreed upon period of time. The agreement may have poor guy paying back 10 gold coins a month. So in 56 months, he will have paid back the loan (the 400 coins he took, plus the 140% interest).

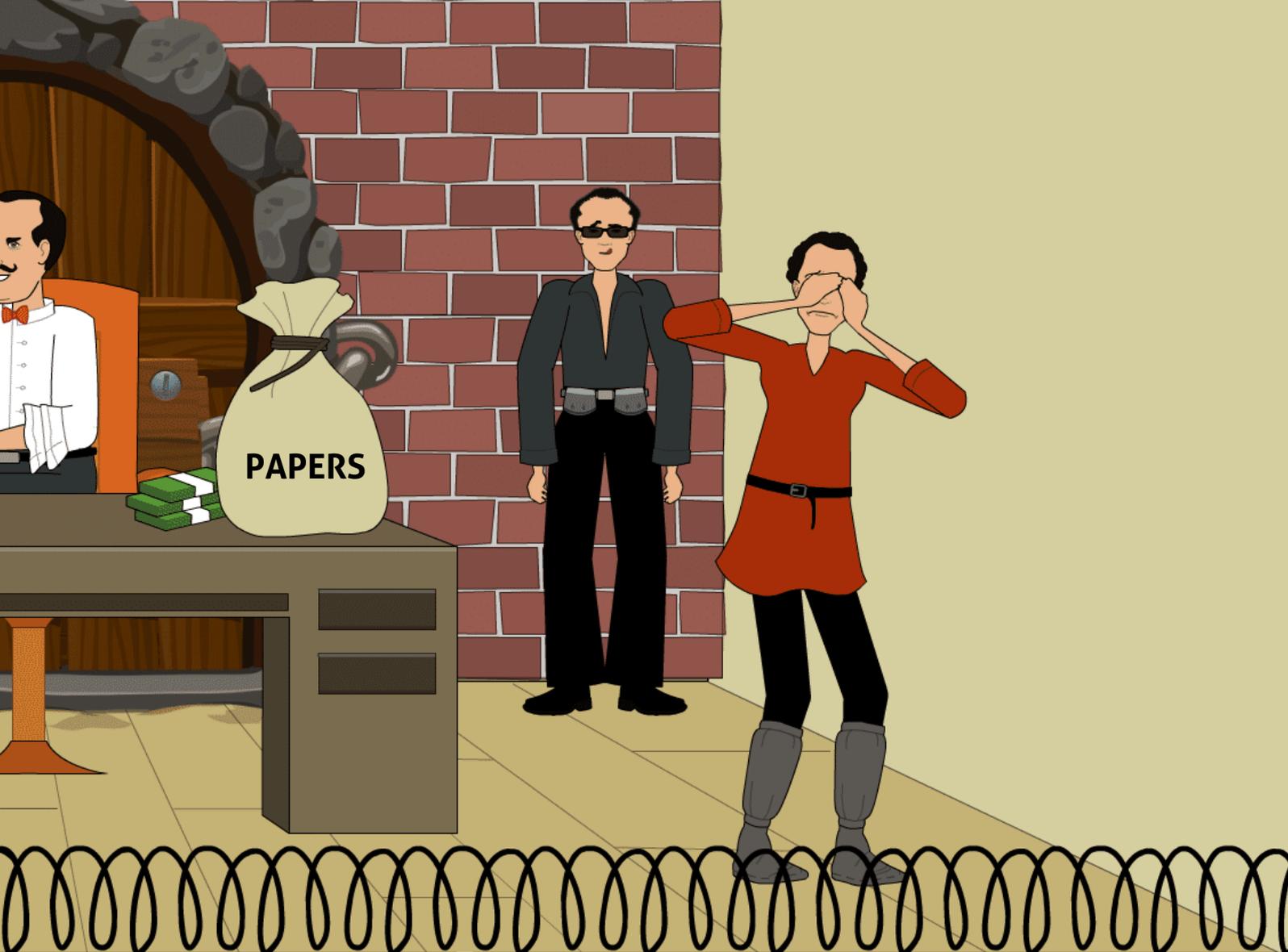
There are two huge issues with this way of taxing/making business:

1. As you may have noticed, GoldBoss never had any gold coins to start with. He is using other people's coins to start his business. Son of a bitch right there! :)
2. He asks for more coins than he lent, so he takes back more than what he had. Those gold coins that he accepts as 'interest' must come from somewhere. But from where?



Well, it's not hard to imagine GoldBoss making so many of these loans that he runs low on gold coins to keep his business growing. Making gold coins is really hard, especially since you need raw gold to even consider it. So, he invents a new type of 'official note' to represent multiple coins: paper money. Similar to how earlier people had invented special shells for currency, this guy invented paper currency, but this time it was not to represent real things (resources), but other currencies (paper to represent gold coins), using fancy, unique paper that no one could replicate easily, yet made of non-scarce materials so those who know how to make them can make as many as they want.

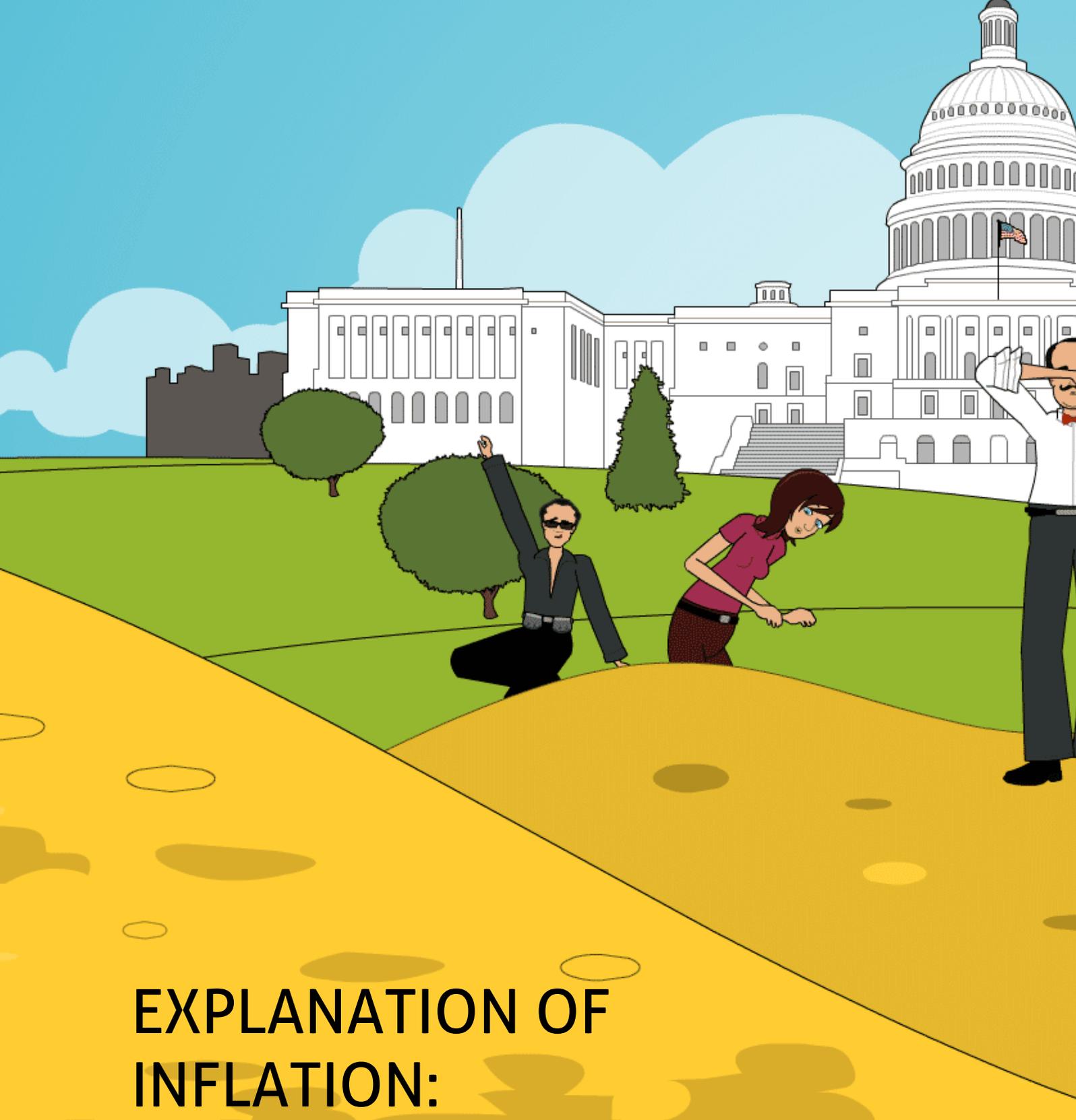
GoldBoss can now give some papers to people who need gold coins and says: "This paper is worth 400 golden coins. You use it the same way that you use gold coins, but without having to haul around all of that weight.". This way he no longer has to give out gold coins, but his safe still has to contain all of the coins that the papers represent, right? Right! He has a 'budget' within his safe that he now represents with these papers. It's not a big advantage for now, as he still relies on gold coins to represent his invented papers.



However, as soon as these papers become popular as a currency unit, he can pretty much print this paper without having the golden coins that he started with. Really? Really! And it's still being done this way today (source). Remember the first guy who deposited gold coins into GoldBoss' safe? He now wants them back, but they are physically spread around the world, and have even lost some of their value as there are now more paper currencies than the gold coins they supposedly represent. Give that guy some paper and let the party begin!

GoldBoss can now print papers and give them to people as debt (as he did before with coins), and people must give back even more papers (the interest - again, as he did before). The only difference is that GoldBoss can now print new currency whenever he needs more to lend.

It should be very easy to see that this is not a sustainable system, as it creates something that we call "inflation".



EXPLANATION OF INFLATION:

When gold (not necessarily gold coins) was used as a base for measuring value, and people discovered a new gold supply (perhaps deep within a cave), the additional gold made the already existing gold less valuable. The initial happiness of new gold discovery only lasted until they realized its devaluation effect. As Jacques has explained many times, *"If it were to rain gold for 40 days, people would be sweeping it out of their homes."*



If we had a printing machine right now that could print as much paper currency as we want, and everyone else in the world did that as well, we would no longer be able to properly use them, because their value would quickly decrease to zero. I might decide to buy 55 jets and 34 yachts, but if everyone else can also now afford that, there would not be enough for all. It's also probable that very few, if any, would report to their jobs, since they could all print their own currency. So, no one works, no new stuff is being produced, and no one would be able to buy anything with the now massively 'inflated' currency.

EXPLANATION OF INFLATION:

In ancient Rome, they used gold coins to pay their people. At one point, they wanted to build stuff more rapidly, but they didn't have enough gold coins to pay more people to make that happen. So, they melted down the gold coins already in use, and combined the molten gold with other metals so they could make many more coins with much less gold in them, but still representing the same 'stored value' (they were the 'gods' of coins, so if they said it had the same value, it did). In this way, they were able to 'inflate' their economy with more coins, allowing them to pay more to get their stuff built faster. However, they quickly realized that having a populous with more currency to spend was creating new challenges, and the people who were selling things were having a hard time with it.

For example, a guy who worked on building stuff for Rome, and was paid lots of new coins for that, could now go to the pasta store and buy up all of the pastas. Even if the pasta maker was temporarily happy to make all of those coins, when he later went to the woman who sells chickens, she said: "We have no more chickens, because some people who came before you bought them all." So, the Roman leaders realized that, because people suddenly had more coins to buy more and more stuff, they had dramatically affected the way that stuff moves around and there simply wasn't enough for all.

Supply could no longer satisfy demand.



The pasta maker says, "Damn! No more chickens! Now I can't buy food with all of the coins I made... pointless!" The gal growing chickens is also pissed off because she can't buy repairs for her barn. And so on. Eventually, one of the vendors thinks, "Aha, the demand for t-shirts with Caesar's portrait has increased much since people have gained so much coins. Instead of quickly selling out my entire stock to all of the demand, what if I raise the price of Caesar T-Shirts? With so much demand, I will still sell them all, but closer to the speed that I can make them, and with higher profit, too." (similar to the earlier shoe maker who could charge two cows for them, remember?). So, he raises his prices, and the chicken grower does the same, and the pasta maker does it as well, and so on. Eventually, everything will cost more, but since people now have a lot more currency, the effect of these higher prices will be almost like it was before the new coins came into existence. In other words, the market re-stabilizes. They have more currency to play with, but the stuff they can buy with it now costs more.

An important thing to consider here is that the workers who got their hands on the new coins before the 'inflation' were the ones who profited the most out of this (e.g. lots of pasta and chickens for them, all at the lower prices). Thus, at the start of any inflationary period, the ones who get their hands on the newly minted coins (or newly printed papers) first are the ones who profit the most.

Since today's governments, national banks, or both in cooperation are like the ancient Roman leaders and GoldBoss, and can create currency, they give rise to these inflationary periods that affect all of us, but mainly makes some rich people, even richer.



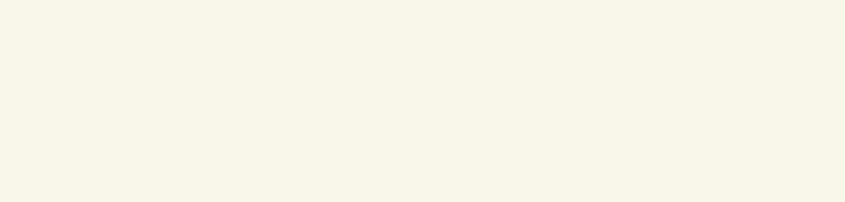
If we were to count the total coin, paper, and digital currency in the world, the number would be somewhere around \$5 trillion.

But that only represents less than 10% of the total money in the world.

Whaaat!?

**'IMAGINARY'
MONEY**

'REAL' MONEY

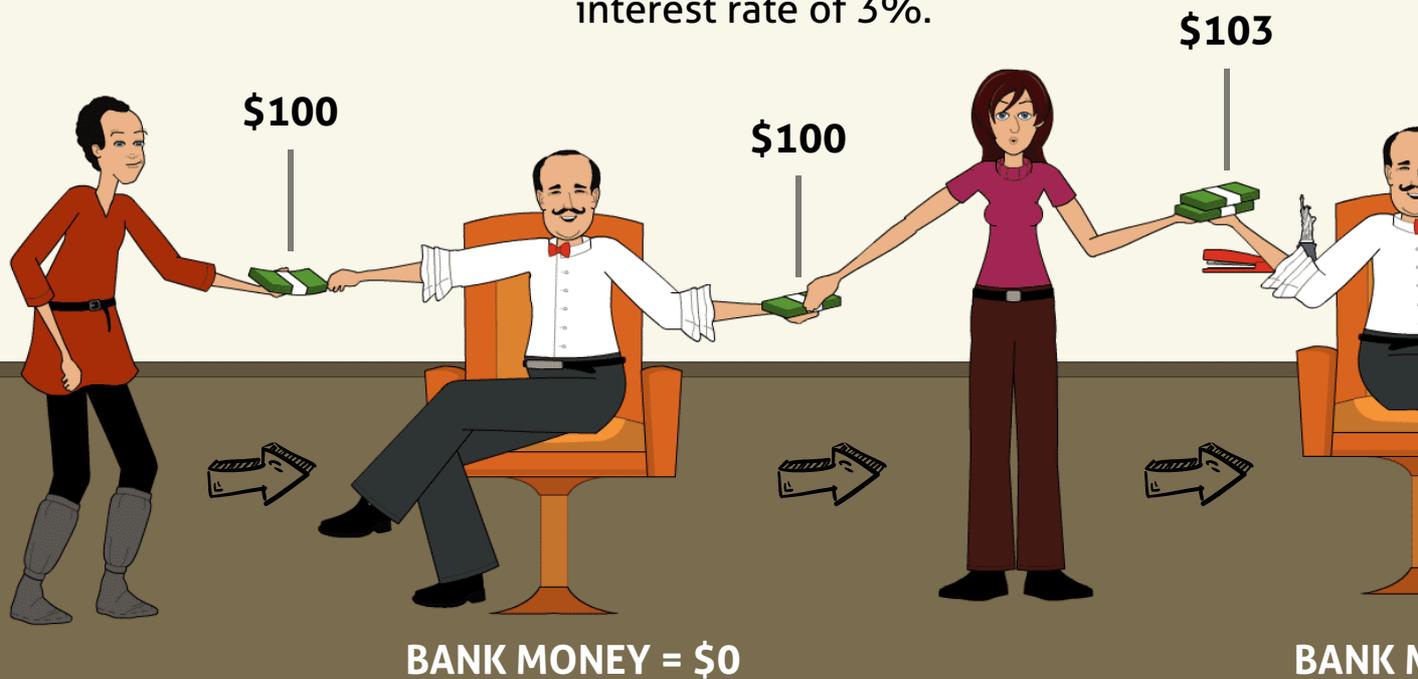




Someone deposits \$100 in the bank and starts the craziness.

The bank gives that \$100 as credit to someone else, with an interest rate of 3%.

That 'someone else' gives back the \$103 as interest.



By now, the papers that have replaced gold coins have become just like the gold coins. If I deposit \$100 in a bank account, the bank does not store that money for me. It lends it to someone else, and that someone else must give back more (as interest on the loan, remember?). From the money given back to the bank, the bank keeps a profit (the interest) and the rest, again, is given out as credit to yet another person.

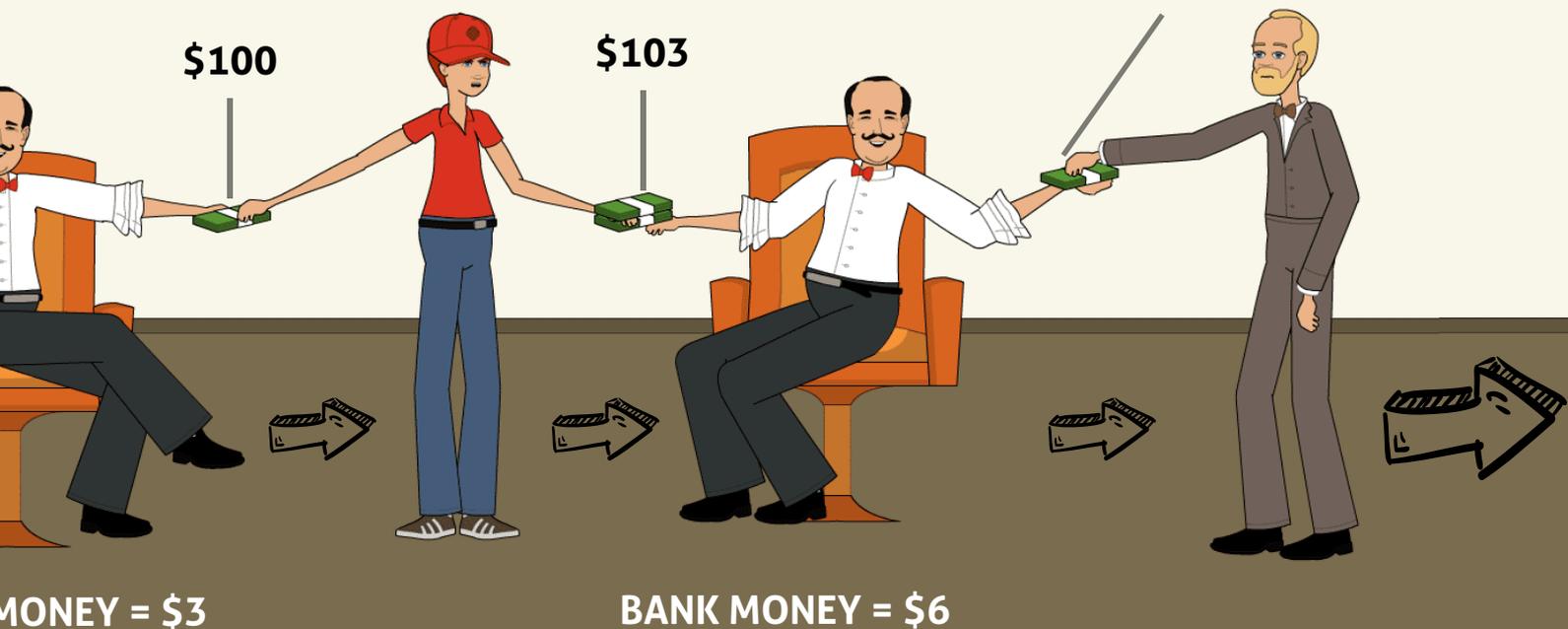
Note that the person who borrowed the \$100 and I each have \$100 worth of consumption power at the same time: I have it stored in the bank, while she has it in her pocket. From a very simple transaction like this (in reality, money rules make it much, much more complex), the consumption power doubles. However, we can't spend the \$100 at the same time, since there is only \$100 of actual physical money. The bank relies on me keeping my money stored in the bank, while the other person needs to spend that amount, so the bank 'lies' to me about having my money. In fact, the bank does not need to create any new money, as it just spins the same money around, making profits out of it all, and the whole time 'promoting' false purchasing power. Of course, there are more rules to this transactional game as you can see here, but this is the basic idea.

e'
00 +

The bank gives another \$100 as credit to someone else, with an interest rate of 3%.

That 'someone else' gives back \$100 + \$3 as interest.

As the story repeats, the bank makes more and more money out of the \$100 that it did not own.



Imagine how much money the bank will make after years of loaning out the same money with interest....

In our simplified example above, the physical 'money' was \$100, but the 'total money' (purchasing power) quickly became \$200. This example helps in explaining how 'total money' is always much higher than the 'real' (physical) currency. If an alien species could look at us financially, they would see that we have purchasing power of around \$60 trillion 'on paper', but in actuality, there is only around \$5 trillion to spend (source).

If everyone in the world were to go to their bank tomorrow to withdraw their money, they would find that the banks don't have it. However, if the people who owe money to the banks were to pay back their debt to the banks tomorrow, the banks would have plenty of money to pay everyone's withdraw demands. So, just keep in mind that there is a huge difference between the physical money supply and purchasing power (total money). The money that physically exists, the 'real' stuff, is called 'currency', while the total money supply is more simply called 'money'. It's important to understand the difference, because the terms are often misused interchangeably and it's quite difficult to avoid doing that even for this article.

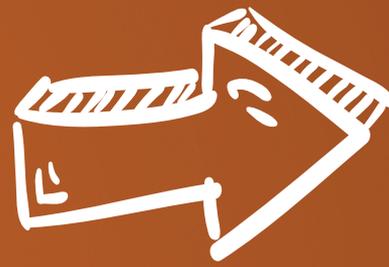


Things get much more messy when new currency (remember, 'real' money) is created via the 'central boss-like banks'. These banks create new currency (digital or otherwise) and 'inject' them into its children banks. Those banks now have more currency available for their needs, which will indeed 'inflate' the purchasing power because now both 'that girl' and I can have our \$100 to spend at the same time, as the bank suddenly has the extra currency for that to happen. The banks can also lend even more money to new creditors. Resultingly, this new currency promotes the creation of even more 'money', the non-real stuff. Central banks (boss-banks) create currencies, and the 'consumer'-level banks create money out of that currency, all while that entire money creation is triggering inflation across the entire system (rising prices, reducing the worth of your stored values, pissing people off, etc.) (source).

Just as boss-banks create this kind of inflation, they are also in a position to 'stabilize' it. To cope with inflation, the boss-bank has the power to intervene by declaring to all banks: "Starting today, the interest rates on new loans (credit) will be higher!", and thus the banks will begin advertising to people: "Instead of charging you interest of 3%, we are now charging 5% interest." This causes people to borrow less money, thus spending less, and so works to stabilize inflation as it reduces the overall flow of money. It is similar to how earlier people raised the prices for their pastas and chickens in order to slow down consumption/demand.



GO AND SPEND!



If you think that's crazy, you'll probably love this. When consumption slows down too much due to the boss-banks' games, it creates the opposite of inflation, and you probably already guessed it: deflation. When people consume less, they move less money around the system, and since everything is monetarily interconnected today, that negatively affects salaries, employment, and production, brought about by the resulting decreases in demand, and so on. Of course, this is a bad thing because we live in a world where we **MUST** consume like crazy or else the money game will break down and fail. So, when the boss-bank sees that potential growing, you may be able to guess what it does. It simply creates yet more currency, and reduces the interest rates for banks so that more money can enter the system. This back and forth loop continues again and again and again. These cycles generally occur every 5-8 years. Like the Roman Kings and merchants of the past, today's 'kings' may successfully stabilize the economy for a while with each of these cycles, but since it invents money all the time, and people rarely succeed in becoming debt-free, the entire world is in a perpetual state of increasing consumption and growing debt that perhaps can never be paid off. **Now THAT'S crazy!**

I highly recommend that you watch this 30-minute video explaining the entire maze of complicated rules of the economy, just for the sake of getting a taste of how complicated humans have made these rules.

Again, please don't get lost in these rules. The important thing to recognize is that it is all about moving stuff around and taking advantage of services. This has all become incredibly complicated because they continually add so many new rules that are very dependent on other rules, people's behavior, resource scarcity, and so on and, of course, more and more of these rules have become decoupled from reality.

As mentioned earlier, with the advent of mechanization, people found themselves able to produce even more stuff, thus allowing a growing amount of stuff to be moved around. Today, your food plate may include five items from five different tribes. It looks like a great system that allows us to enjoy luxury/comfort/opportunity, but it's quite naive to ignore two very important aspects of all this:

1

Remember the AssWhole king the 3rd and 4th. They wanted slaves, lions, or whatever exotic dishes or woman. They were able to express their distorted values because of the market place. Same goes today. The more AssWholes, meaning people with distorted values created by a frenzy of consumption, the more such ways to satisfy these 'clients' because satisfying them means profit for others.

2

I think it is right to say that the only reason you might find a certain wine from France amazing, or a food dish made of five different food types from five different tribes as delicious, or a 'rare' painting as gorgeous (aren't all paintings, good or bad, rare?), is all due to today's consumerism culture. It is the advertising; the ideas created in people's heads to want these 'exotic' things. We are used to thinking that the ability to see some polar bears in a warm climate (zoo) is such a great advantage, for our own entertainment or whatever, but these are nothing more than projected values from a consumerist world.

TO-

COST EFFICIENT AND THE REAL VALUE OF

LET'S CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING LIST OF ITEMS:



NEW
IPH-
ONE



TASTY
HAMBURGE



YUMMY
CHOCOLATE



SHINNY

FASHIONABLE



We are all familiar with those, and most of us have all of them (some on a daily basis), but what most of us don't know is the story behind each of those products. Learning the story behind them and how they are made provides a much clearer portrait of today's system, because the list covers the largest industries (trade 'movements') on the globe today: textiles and rare materials, electronics, food, and one more (as you'll soon see).



IPHO-



Let's start with the iPhone (or any smartphone). This is a product made by the US tribe, but it's only designed there and primarily manufactured (assembled) in China. Why? It would cost Apple 4.2 billion dollars each year to move its business back to the US. They pay around 2% in taxes for their phones in China, while that jumps to 35% in the US. They outsource because it's very profitable to do so.

Chinese assembly line workers are also paid much less than US workers, and under worse conditions: with exhausted employees falling asleep on their 12-hour shifts. Most have no other options but to accept these conditions. The assembly line is only one part of the story, however, because the materials needed to make these phones are also employing a series of destructive processes. Tin is a material used in all electronics, and it's mined mainly by poor people working under very dangerous conditions.

Many die extracting the material, many are worked to exhaustion, and that creates what is called a 'black market' (just another kind of trade that is not 'acceptable' to some tribes), where these materials are sold to various individuals and companies like Apple. The environment also suffers greatly due to this extraction, endangering coral reefs and creating water pollution. This BBC documentary showcases all of that.





Microprocessors, camera lenses, and iPhone displays are made in Japan and Taiwan (source), but that's the story with most smartphones out there, and perhaps all electronics. They are made from parts, and these parts are made from different materials mined or made by multiple tribes. Once you secure the needed materials, you typically construct the parts in other tribes, and then assemble those parts into products in yet other tribes, to then be shipped and sold to consumers around the world.

All of this insane movement of resources and services is done because it is cost efficient; not resource or energy efficient, but money efficient.

Workers in China and Taiwan working on the new Iphone 6 could easily be replaced by automated machinery, but using human labor is still cheaper than buying, installing and operating these machines.





日期	時間	機
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實際產出		
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器具累計		
戻出累計		
測試良率		
外觀良率		
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E04

宝丰



People of all ages work in mining tin, under severe adverse conditions





HAMB-

We have dedicated an entire article to the production of livestock and how destructive it is to human health and the environment. But the entire food industry is one of waste and unnecessary imports from other tribes. Tomatoes grown in Spain make their way to the US, while seafood is transported from Japan to Germany. You can read our TVPM article on waste to gain a stronger grasp of the severity of all of this.

For a sample 'taste', here's what goes into a typical American hamburger and fries meal: the meat is grown in Brazil, with its paper wrapper made from Vietnamese wood that is processed in an Indonesian plant, the fries are deep fried in palm oil from West Africa, seasoned with salt from Chile, and garnished with ketchup made in China (source). Of course, we're oversimplifying all of this, so you can probably imagine that a lot more goes into transporting all these 'items', as well as other seasonings, types of potatoes, power needed for the grills & deep fryers, and so on, all to bring you a very simple (and not so healthy) meal.



In summary, the frenzied global dance of food is another area of insane 'trade' exchange between tribes, and an 'out of this world' waste of resources and energy.

Consider that if enough people want a particular dish (a 'demand' mainly influenced by a consumption-based culture), there will be some that will provide ('supply') that dish for them, regardless of how much resources and energy will need to be spent on getting it to them. Plenty of people die while attempting to 'hunt' dangerous animals or exotic sea creatures, merely because someone is willing to pay them to do that so that someone can then sell those foods to clients.

There are so many people working under very tough conditions on farms, and frequently overexposed to the sun, just to harvest some fruits or vegetables that could much more easily be farmed in automated ways. Again, if it's monetarily cheaper to grow tomatoes in Spain and import them to the US, just because workers, taxes, etc. are cheaper there, then that is what today's monetary system / consumer culture forces them to do, ignoring the fact that far more energy and resources are wasted this way than using tomatoes grown in the US using automation.





CHOCOLATE

Speaking of food, your favorite chocolate is made from a plant that needs to be harvested, and its beads then extracted, dried, and processed. We eat it in cakes, drink it as hot chocolate, etc., but all kinds of sweets are made out of the cocoa bean. The plant needs to grow in very hot, rainy tropical areas, so if you want to make chocolate in Europe, Northern America, or Australia, you can't grow it there to save resources, although I suspect that it's technically possible to use indoor agriculture, if money weren't in the way. Anyways, these plants are mostly grown in the wettest parts of Western Africa and the rest of the world imports it from there in order for the rest of us to enjoy it.

It's not widely known that this practice comes with a huge toll on human lives, as the cocoa industry enslaves children like perhaps no other industry. This practice helps make their prices competitive, as they do not pay these children, although some plantations may pay others to kidnap and deliver these young workers to them.

According to reports, one child costs \$260 (230 Euros), which includes transportation and the infinite use of the child. Some of the children are even 'sold' to plantations by their own families, unaware of the working conditions of a plantation. But there are also children who offer to work under such conditions, and for very little wages, just to help support their families.

A CHILD COSTS ~~\$260~~

1.8 MILLION CHILDREN ARE/





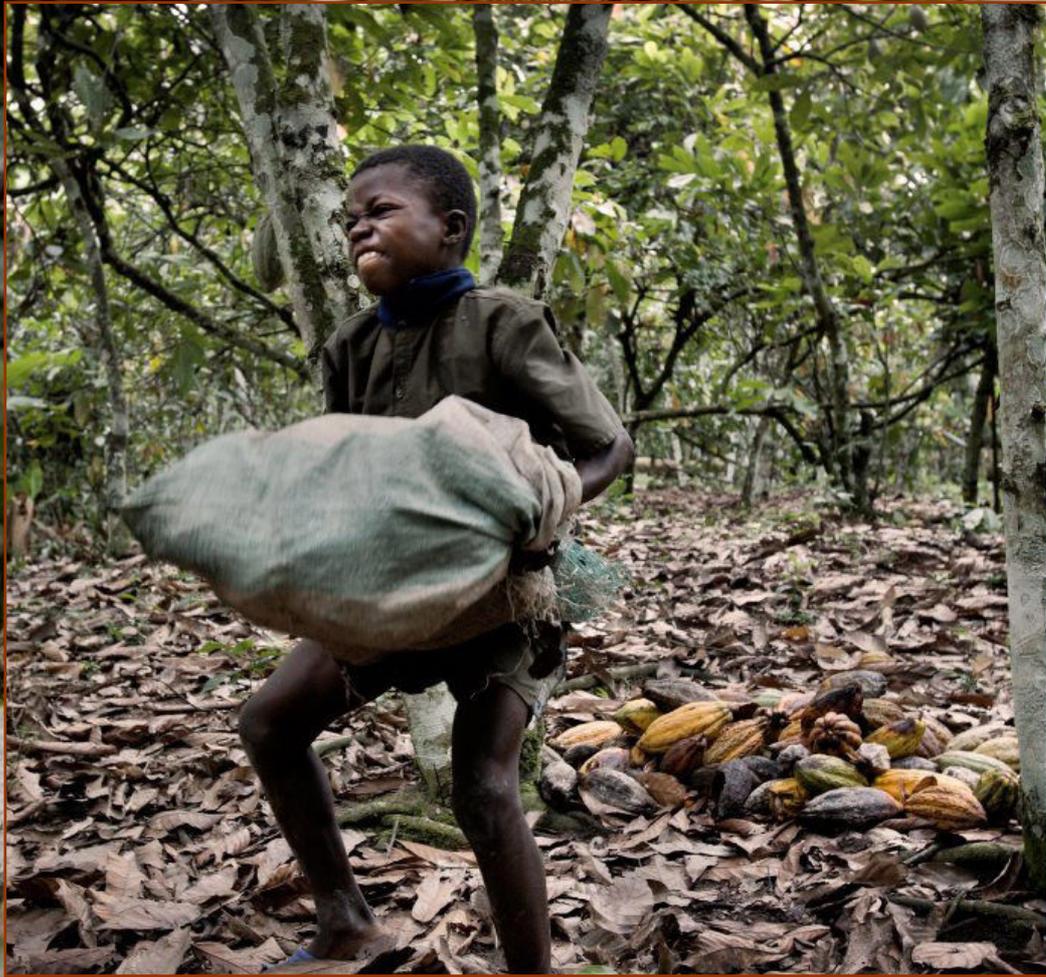
Conditions on these plantations are rough, as you might imagine: long exposure to pesticides, chainsaws and sharp, heavy machetes that can harm them very badly, long hours of work (6am to dusk), poor food and sleep, they are often beaten if they don't work fast, and so on. These children may be the ones working on the cocoa beans, but none of them have ever tasted chocolate. It is thought that over 1.8 million children have been abused in this way.

Moving their processing factories close to these plantations would reduce the tons of cocoa beans transported every year, but big companies recognize that the cocoa growing tribes are not safe enough for them to operate in (remember: taxes initially took shape by offering protection). Given the current cultural conditions there, it makes more sense to either put an end to this child slavery or drastically improve their working conditions. Unfortunately, the rest of the world's demand for cocoa and chocolate to remain cheap would mean a huge reduction in their operational budgets, perhaps so much that they would not be able to operate at all.

For the big multibillion dollar companies (Hershey's, Mars, and Nestlé), it is cost-efficient for this entire system of child enslaving and poor working conditions to continue undisturbed, as they spend little (if any) on supporting these lives, and have little to no interest in solving these issues, especially since these kinds of issues can easily be passed off as a different tribe's problem. This documentary highlights all of this outrageous situation.

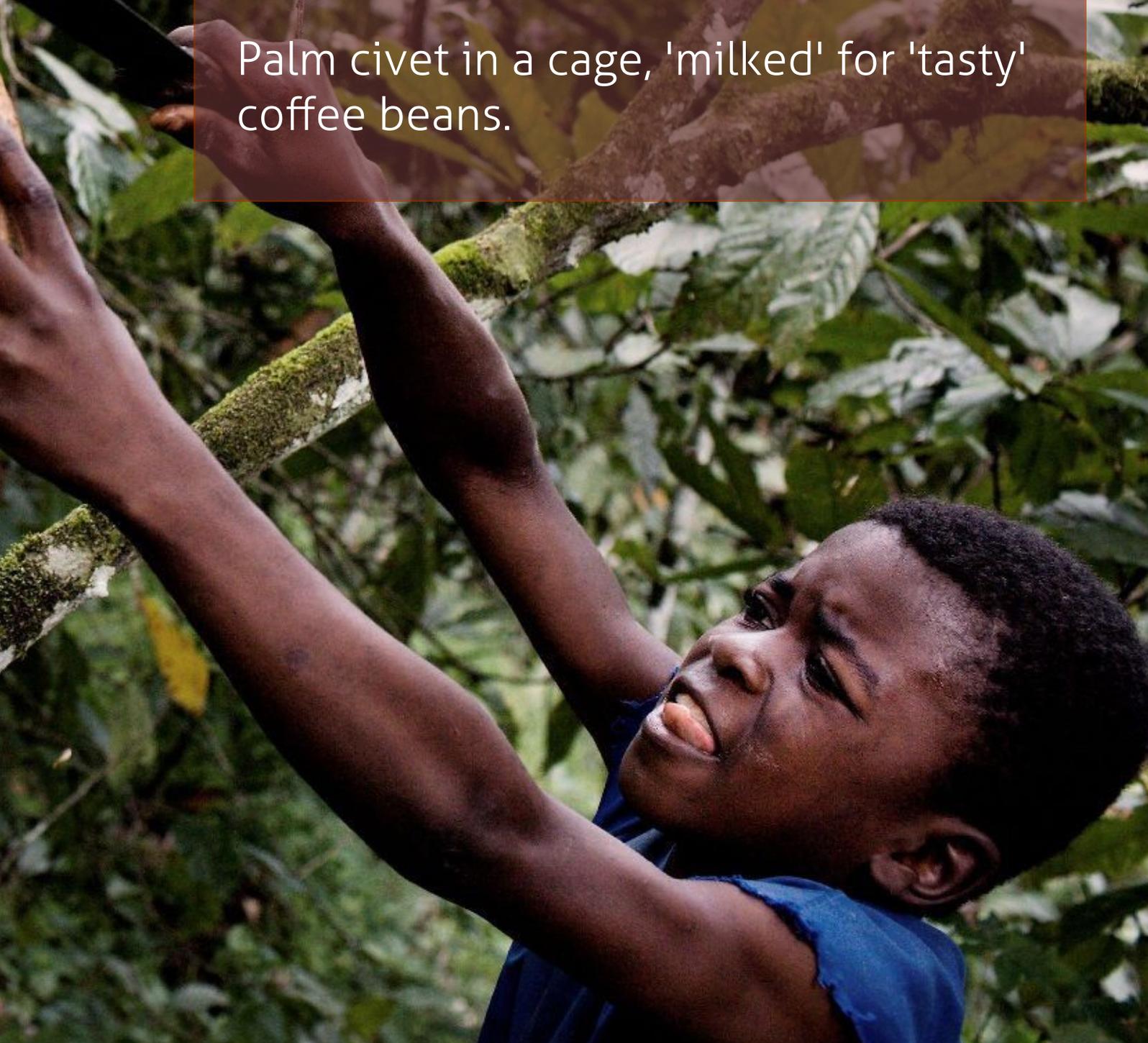
It's important to understand that the same situation exists for coffee plantations, where many child slaves end up working without compensation so that the entire industry can spend less on workers, and thus make more profit. It also exerts a significant toll on the environment, but it goes well beyond that, too: it also exploits numerous animals. You see, some coffee beans are found to be more 'delicious' (for some people) only after a palm civet, a small mammal found in the jungles of Asia, eats the beans and poops them back out. The animals are kept in small cages and forced to eat those beans. Workers then 'harvest' those pooped beans to be sold for significantly higher prices. Even elephants are used for a similar process (source).







Palm civet in a cage, 'milked' for 'tasty' coffee beans.



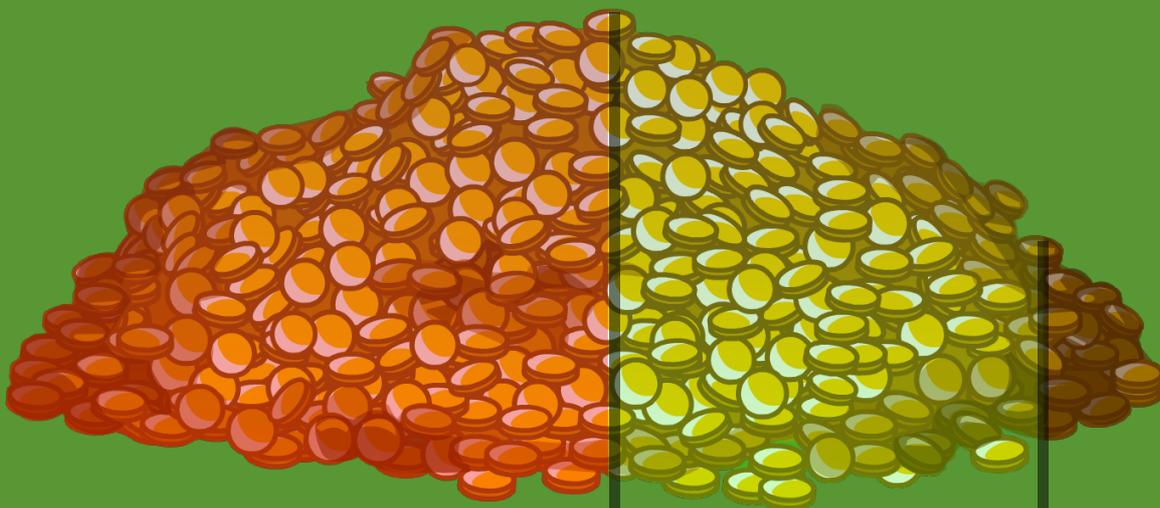


JEWELRY

Think about diamonds, gold, and silver. All shiny and, aside from their intrinsic nature (very useful in conductivity, insulation, and more), completely useless materials in the way they are marketed today and used by people in jewelry. There are two sides of this that make us wonder about the 'value' of a resource:

FIRST LOOKS AT THE 'USE' OF A RESOURCE

Gold conducts electricity extremely well, does not tarnish, and is highly malleable. It can be drawn into wire, easily hammered into thin sheets, melted and cast into highly detailed shapes, and alloyed with numerous other metals to gain new properties. Yet the primary use of gold is in jewelry (roughly 50% of all gold), while 40% of it sits idle in investments, and only 10% is used in industry (source).



50%
JEWELRY

40%
INVEST-

10%
INDUSTRY

Diamonds are one of the most, if not the most, durable/strong materials known to humanity. Most of its uses today seem to be practical, but their use in jewelry makes diamond much more expensive, as it drives up the price by making them physically more scarce for practical uses, and because it culturally increases the demand for diamond jewelry (the more people want it, the less it is available because of the high demand, just like the article's earlier pasta and chickens example, so the more 'coins' people can charge for it).

THE SECOND POINT IS HOW A PRICE TAG DOES NOT REFLECT UTILITY OR THE TRUE SCARCITY OF RESOURCES.

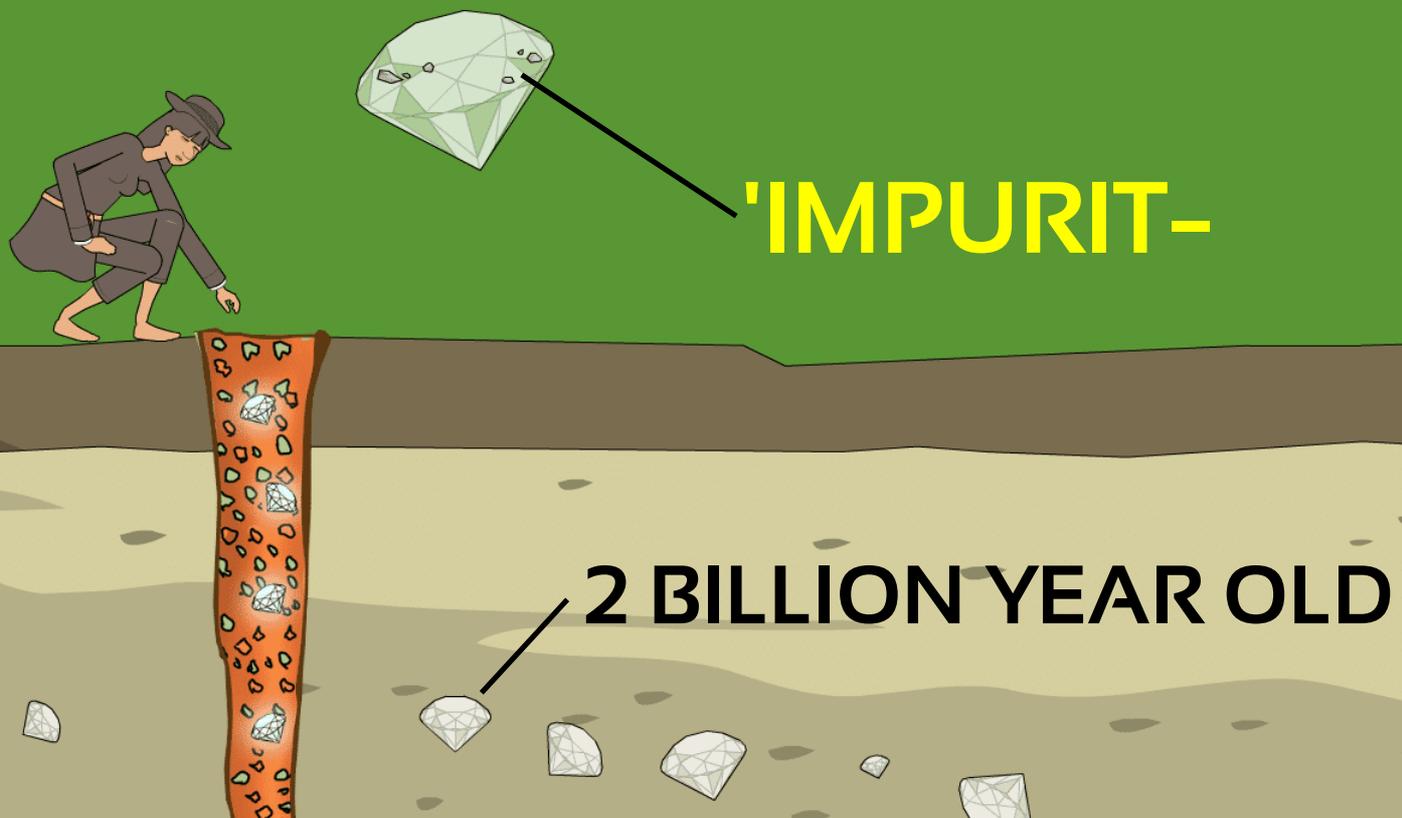
Why? If you take the 40% of gold that is currently used in investment (which just sits around and not being used) and add it to the little 10% of the gold that is available to industry, then the price of gold will dramatically decrease for industrial use. The resource would enjoy a 500% leap in availability (access abundance!). Now add up all of the useless jewelries and you further double the amount of gold for industrial use (a 1000% leap over its current availability), likely making gold extremely cheap for practical utility use. Gold only appears to be scarce or expensive because of the way it is used within the money game, which is not reflecting the real availability of it.

Diamonds are also a scarce resource. Or are they? Right now, we can produce diamonds in the lab at cheaper monetary cost, and the hardness, thermal conductivity and electron mobility of synthetic diamonds are superior to those of most naturally formed diamonds (source). Diamonds are used in jewelry due to of a mix of cultural influence and the idea of it being a scarce material. So why is it that even today, when synthetic diamonds are cheaper, diamonds are still viewed as being valuable? Well, it's people's values (again). Although synthetic diamonds used in jewelry are 20-30% cheaper, many people still prefer the 'natural' ones, just because... This very clearly highlights how the 'value' of a given resource is often based on the value that people merely perceive for that resource, and that perception is a direct byproduct of a marketing-filled, money-based world - a trade system gone mad and severely unhinged from reality.



Both diamonds and gold can be viewed as 'scarce' resources, but only depending on how you interpret that claim. There is no lack of either resource for practical uses, but tying them to monetary investment and people's value beliefs massively changes how valuable these resources appear to be. Remember when we said that the trade system always reflects culture and perceived need (you wouldn't be able to sell a smartphone 2,000 years ago)? Well, not long ago, aluminium was a 'valuable' resource for both a scarce reason and cultural one, so much so that kings had tables, dishes and forks made of aluminium to show off their affluence. Diamonds and gold are seen as valuable in today's monetary world for the same exact reason. Aluminium became less valuable as abundant methodologies were developed to mine and refine it, making it an abundant resource, and the same will happen for diamonds and gold as the methods for making them abundant and available improve beyond existing cultural and market system roadblocks. But hang on a minute, as the current situation is far worse than what we've discussed so far.

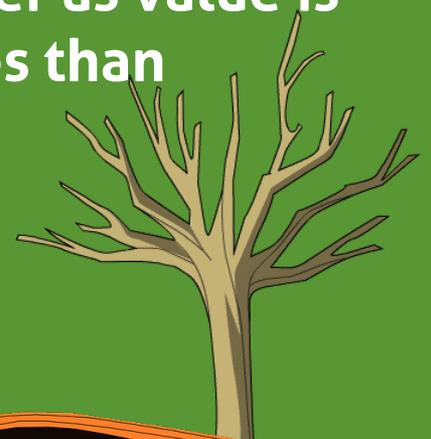
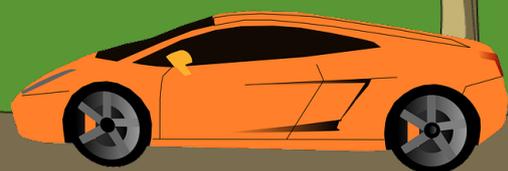
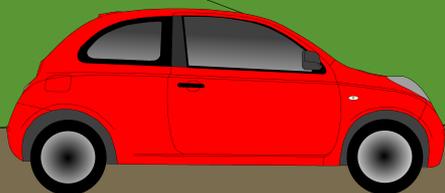
Diamonds provide key scientific evidence that the Earth's core is a highly dense and hot place, as diamonds could only form within those conditions. They are key in understanding aspects of the Earth's core, continental drift, and the age of the planet. Some diamonds also have a little 'dirt' inside them; material that became trapped inside and often provides essential scientific information about the Earth. But that precious dirt is regarded as 'junk' to people collecting diamonds for use in jewelry, so it is 'washed out' for 'clarity' and 'beauty'. This illustrates yet another example of the highly distorted values of 'consumers'. Examples of this distortion multiply as some people are now eating gold in their foods, although it's tasteless, just because of the artificial values they inject into this resource.



A 2015 Lamborghini Aventador costs about \$400,000 US, not because it's 40 times better than a 2015 \$10,000 car, even if it is somewhat faster (something of little use in the world) and perhaps made of better materials. The price mainly reflects a culture of privilege. This car is outrageously expensive because it is a 'luxury' good. Vehicular 'jewelry'.

The painting we mentioned earlier that costs as much as 1,000 villas was recently sold for \$179,000,000! Yes, that's 179 million dollars. If we were to go back in time to where 'trade' started and ask someone, "Here we have a pile of cow shit, and here is a painting. Which one do you prefer in trade for a pair of shoes?" You can be sure that the person will say, "The pile of cow shit, of course, as I can use it as fertilizer." Take the time to really think deeply about this. That Picasso painting holds a value of 179 million 'things' (dollars in today's currency), which translates into a stored value of many homes, cars, so much very nutritious food that you could never hope to eat in a lifetime, etc.. Seriously?!? How the hell does any of this relate to the world's resources? How is it even possible that such a resource, a painting that has already been replicated billions of times in digital and other forms, evolve and retain such a huge artificial value?

The answer mirrors the jewelry concept: trade has gone mad! That cannot be overstated, and this trade disconnect becomes even crazier as value is more and more reflected in currencies than in actual resources.





The diamond industry still enslaves people of all ages, still exerts a huge toll on the environment, and has killed many people, all for the sake of trade. The same goes for perhaps every aspect of the jewelry industry, an industry that has no real value beyond a cultural 'norm' created and empowered by currency and the monetary game.





CLOTHES/

Look at your t-shirt tag. What does it say? Made in China? Cambodia? Taiwan? Bangladesh? Indonesia? Vietnam? It is likely one of those, as the vast majority of clothes are made in these tribes. Why? It's (again) cost efficient, meaning that it costs less money to make them there, and here's why.

LET'S FOLLOW THE STORY OF A T-SHIRT:

We first need cotton, which is produced by a plant. We plant the plant in a plantation. Plantations were worked by slaves for most of human history, but they are mainly managed today with the use of machines. The plant that produces the cotton for our t-shirt is in the USA tribe; Mississippi to be more precise. Once grown, picked and separated, the cotton is shipped to Columbia, Indonesia, or perhaps Bangladesh, where it is processed from plant to fabric, mainly by machines, although people are still needed for making t-shirts out of the produced fabric.

97% OF THE CLOTHES SOLD IN THE USA ARE NOT MADE IN USA. AROUND THE GLOBE, ROUGHLY **ONE IN SIX**



Many work much more than they sleep, many are paid just at the limit of survival, and all of them live far worse off than those who will eventually buy the t-shirts. Sound familiar? Well, the story doesn't end there. The t-shirts still need packaging, boxes, and shipping containers, the containers need to be transported via air, land and/or sea, all of those transportation systems require fuel, and fuel needs to be extracted, refined, and transported to them. All of that (and much more that's too much to list here), just for making a t-shirt.

You may wonder why people aren't creating t-shirts in the USA, as though the people in these other tribes are some kind of wizards in making these t-shirts. Isn't it monetarily cheaper to make them in the USA, instead of transporting and mining/refining all this stuff from one tribe to another and hiring people from other tribes? Well, the answer has to do with the money again. If the trade is monetarily cheaper that way, wandering about on planet Earth from one corner to the other, then that's how it's going to be done, because that's how the market works. See, these people in Bangladesh or Columbia are paid 10-20 times less than people would be paid in the USA if they were making these t-shirts. So it is more cost efficient, but certainly not in terms of resources and energy consumed. As in all other cases, it's only about money (source).





Most fashion-related products like clothing are made this way. Also keep in mind that fashion 'trends' are intentionally and frequently changed nowadays, due to the financially profitable success of the consumerism culture. As a result, good clothing is thrown away more and more quicker after the purchase. People in Cambodia often buy second hand clothes that they made, but that had gone from USA (as cotton) to them, then from them to USA (as new clothes), and then back to them again (as good, but discarded, usually as 'outdated styles').





I recommend these two documentaries (1, 2) to gain a glimpse into the fashion world, and you can also check out this short documentary on how crocodiles are raised and killed in 'special' farms, just for the sake of making expensive bags out of their skin. Keep in mind that it's just one example of the senseless killing of animals for fashion products.





OIL

One BIG and IMPORTANT example that was not on our list, yet is used all over, is oil (petroleum). Where large numbers of creatures have died and their remains have become buried deep beneath the Earth's surface under huge pressures and temperatures, they form into a 'special' mix of stuff (hydrocarbons) that stores huge amounts of energy and has other properties that are very useful to our life. Plastic dishes, shower gel, bath mats, toothpaste, toothbrushes, refrigerators, cereal fertilizers, magazines, car tires, fuel for cars, and even the approaches that we still use for generating electricity, are all fully or in part made out of or made possible by oil.

To use this resource, you have to find a pocket of it deep underground, drill for it, extract it, contain it, transport it, store it, refine it, transform it into plastics, fuels, etc.. The detrimental effects of using this substance to fuel our world are already well-known, as it reintroduces millions of tons of previously sequestered (trapped) CO2 back into the atmosphere, along with additional unhealthy environmental factors that you can read more about here, but we are focusing on a significantly different angle right now: how a resource becomes engulfed into the world of trade, and how that affects its value. Oil is a recent 'discovery', and understanding how such an important resource enters a global money system is very interesting and tells a lot about the money game itself.



When oil was first discovered ('officially' about 200 years ago), there was no "Wow man, look at how many uses it has! We are going to be rich!". Oil is only useful if you have a technological infrastructure to both extract and make use of it. To put it more simply, if you don't have cars or machinery that require oil-derived fuel to 'work', then oil may be completely useless to you. Oil's first profit driver was basically to generate some light. See, back in 1800, there were no such things as light bulbs. They used oil lamps, and the vast majority of the oil came from whales: they hunted and killed whales to light up their houses. Because of a need (light lamps) and a trade that was very defined by currency, they killed more and more whales to satisfy more and more clients, driving global whale populations close to extinction. The guys who drilled underground for an oil replacement didn't do it to save the whales, but to make a business out of it. Just keep that in mind as a small but significant fact:

After extracting more oil than what was needed for the lamps, they were like: "Ok, we've lit up many lamps... We still have so much oil... Now what?" This highlights how a resource is only valuable within a context. Where there is no use for a resource, there is no value for it. Any resource viewed as non-valuable today may become very valuable tomorrow. But then, CARS! When cars, trains and other steam-powered machinery began to emerge, some inventors turned their attention to making them stronger using petrol-powered designs, and the industrial revolution boomed. Demand for oil increased and those extracting it were perfectly happy to make more money out of it, so they drilled and drilled, and grew in power as a result. It's worth pointing out that in a different kind of society, one not based on money and trade, the discovery of such a 'needed' resource may have been treated differently by them. In other words, when a needed resource is discovered in a resource-based world, then perhaps more time and investigation would be spent on thinking about how that resource could be managed most appropriately, both for our use and the total environmental impact. But in a trade world, such a resource is an opportunity to make wealth (money), so not much thought is put into how it is going to be used, or the consequences. So, keep that in mind, too, because it's another very important aspect.

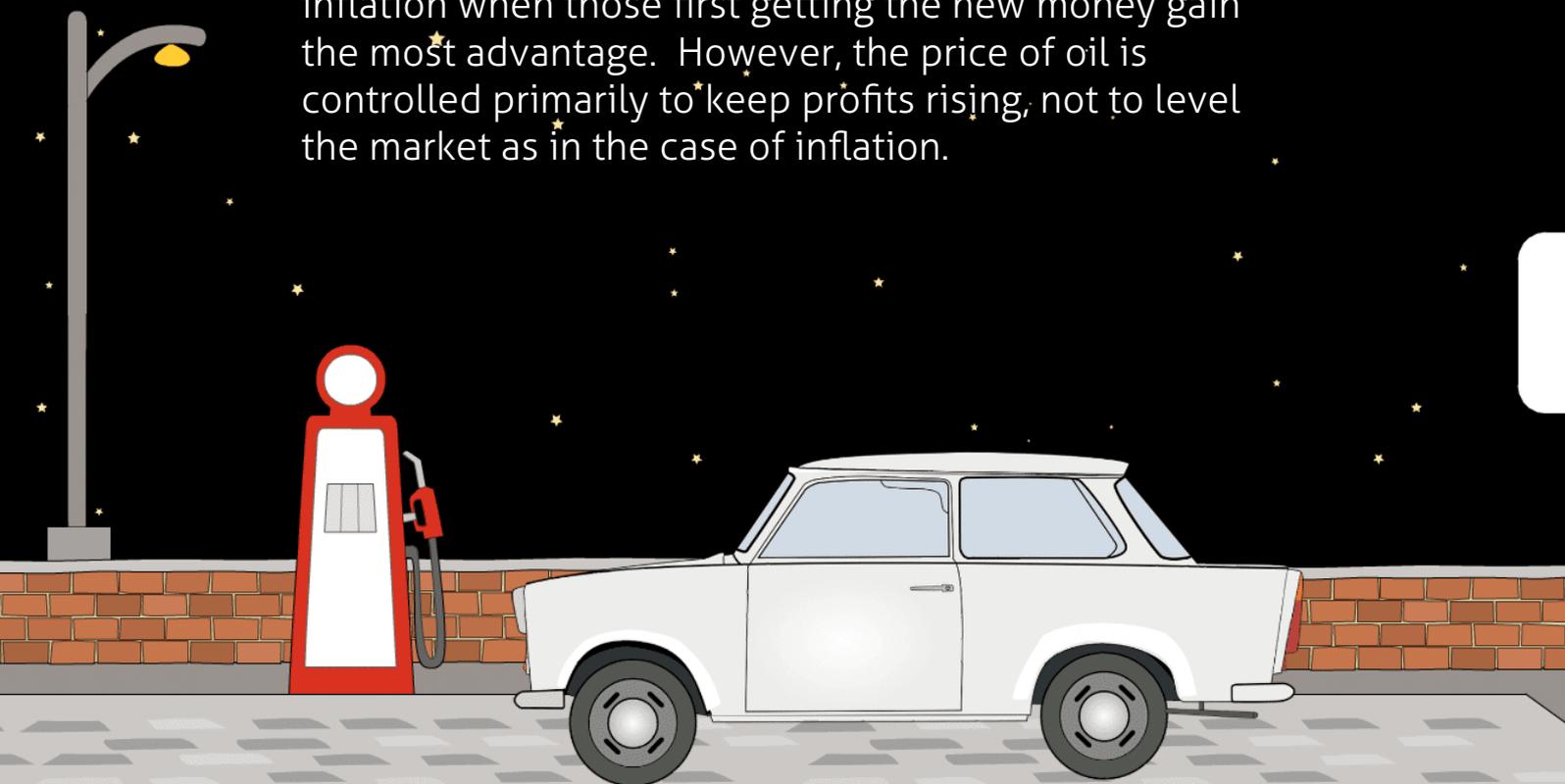


Here are more examples of what it means to discover such a resource in a money game (trade) world:

- More fuel means more cars; more cars means more fuel. This 'fuels' a corresponding increase in the use of other resources for building cars, transporting them, etc. The same applies for making plastics or other 'stuff', as the more plastic products you make from oil, the more you increase the demand for oil to make even more plastic products.

- Tribe A has oil, but tribe B does not. Tribe A then enjoys a big advantage in world trade and it can exercise additional powers. This leads to conflicts, wars, loss of other resources during conflict, many dead people, destruction of the environment, etc..

- Only a relative few control this resource, so the price of oil does not reflect how much oil costs to produce or its need (demand), but instead is filtered by those who get their hands on it first, like in the case of inflation when those first getting the new money gain the most advantage. However, the price of oil is controlled primarily to keep profits rising, not to level the market as in the case of inflation.



By 1960, more oil 'holes' had been drilled and much more oil was pumped out than what was needed for the demand, which meant that oil prices were shrinking lower and lower, reducing the profits of the oil barons. Their solution? Gather the chiefs of the tribes that had oil extraction plants and agree to control the production and prices of oil together, so that they keep the profit leveled (or rising). Today, this group has become one of the most influential in the world of trade.

You can watch this BBC series on the story of oil to learn more about this entire industry.

The thing is, oil is abundant as a resource and there is still plenty of this 'stuff' stored within Earth's crust. The main issues are control over the extraction of this oil, and the impact that using it has on humans and the environment. To put it more simply, if only a few control its extraction and initial distribution, then oil appears scarce, and if it is excessively used (driven by profit motive), then it severely impacts life and the environment in a negative way. SO, dealing with this globally used resource across so many domains depends directly on the global system being practiced. If we continue to rely on a global trade system like we have today, along with the frenzy of consumption it has created over the years, then this resource will continue to be fully exploited, not for improving people's lives or the society, but specifically to maximize profits.



What I've presented so far is not just about a few 'random' examples here and there. These examples represent the biggest and most dominant parts of today's global trade system: food, textiles, electronics, rare materials like gold and diamonds, and oil. Given that the largest trades are significantly in this state of enslaving people and causing massive waste of resources and energy, imagine the rest...

HERE ARE A FEW MORE,



ORGAN TRANSPLANTS

although it's technically possible to eliminate the need of organs for transplant (as we detailed here), people in poor countries still sell their own organs for little money because it is monetarily advantageous for both the person selling the organ and the one getting it (source);

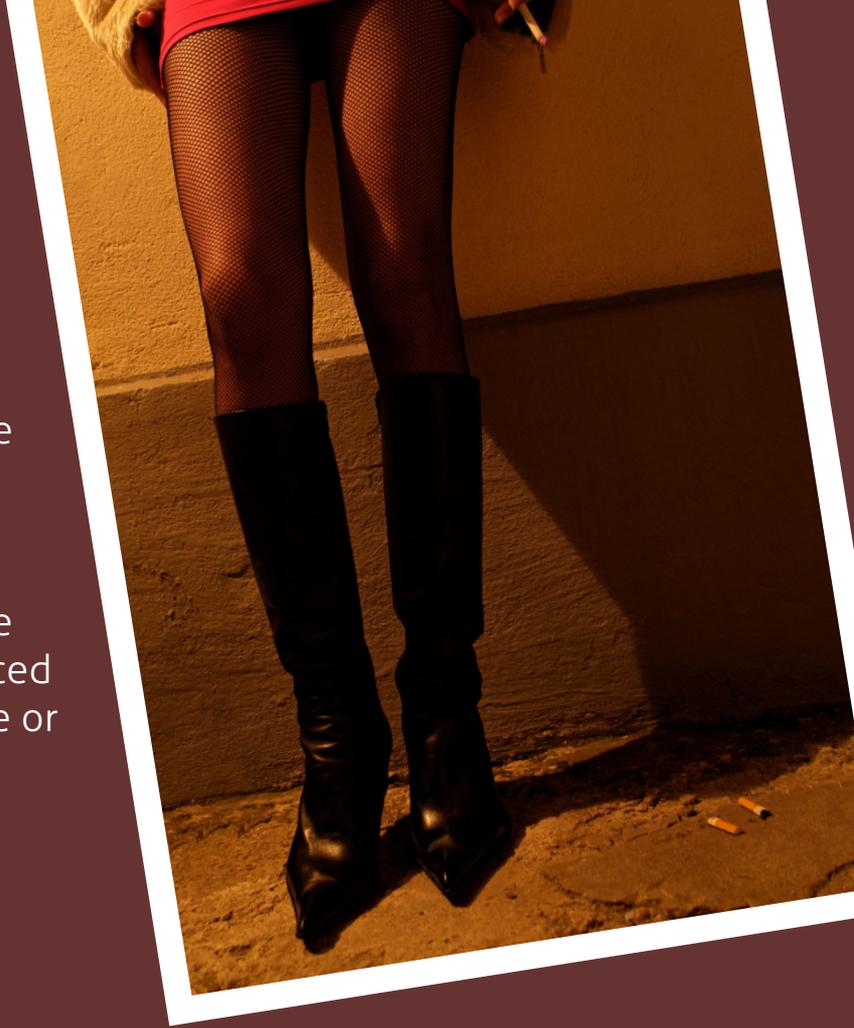


SURROGATE MOTHERS

in India (and other countries), human females are paid to grow babies inside them for those with money and the inability to conceive. These women are paid very little, but they do it exclusively for money because they are very poor (source);

PORNOGRAPHY AND PROSTITUTION

both are extremely exploited by the desire to make profit. Humans are 'stolen'/kidnapped and forced into prostitution; videos and photos are made with these humans to then be sold online or offline; many are forced into having sex with clients for little or no money, and so on. (source);



There are maids who work daily to support their families, zoo and circus animals are trafficked for the entertainment of a few human heads, many drugs are improperly prescribed due to monetary pressures (profit), the alcohol and tobacco businesses are more about making people sick and creating issues than about anything else, toxic gases spilled into the oceans or released into the atmosphere because it is more 'cost' efficient, scientific articles improperly written due to monetary pressures to release them or bended their findings in a way that favors certain agendas (also because of monetary incentives), and so on and so on (source).

The trade world is no longer about giving something useful to you so that you can give me back something useful. The emergence of the monetary system caused it to morph long ago into a crazy game of exploitation for both resources and humans (or other animals) for profit. If it is cheaper or more profitable to do something, that's very likely how it will be done. It doesn't matter if we have to move everything around the whole planet, with the raw materials grown or mined one corner, the production facilities in another, or whether it harms our own people, the rest of life on the planet or the global environment. Today, cost efficient only means money efficient, not resource and/or energy efficient. **Keep that in mind!**

Another thing to consider is that monetary cost efficiency theory is not always applied where it would significantly decrease expenses or increase the profits. In other words, businesses and governments do not always opt for what is more monetarily profitable, even when doing so would also save lives and/or restore some of the damage that humans have caused to the environment. For instance, it seems to be significantly more profitable (in terms of money) to go for renewable energies instead of oil for fuel, because a solar plant just sits there creating energy, while oil requires a massive amount of 'management': from discovery to extraction to transportation to production, and dealing with multiple environmental monetary costs.

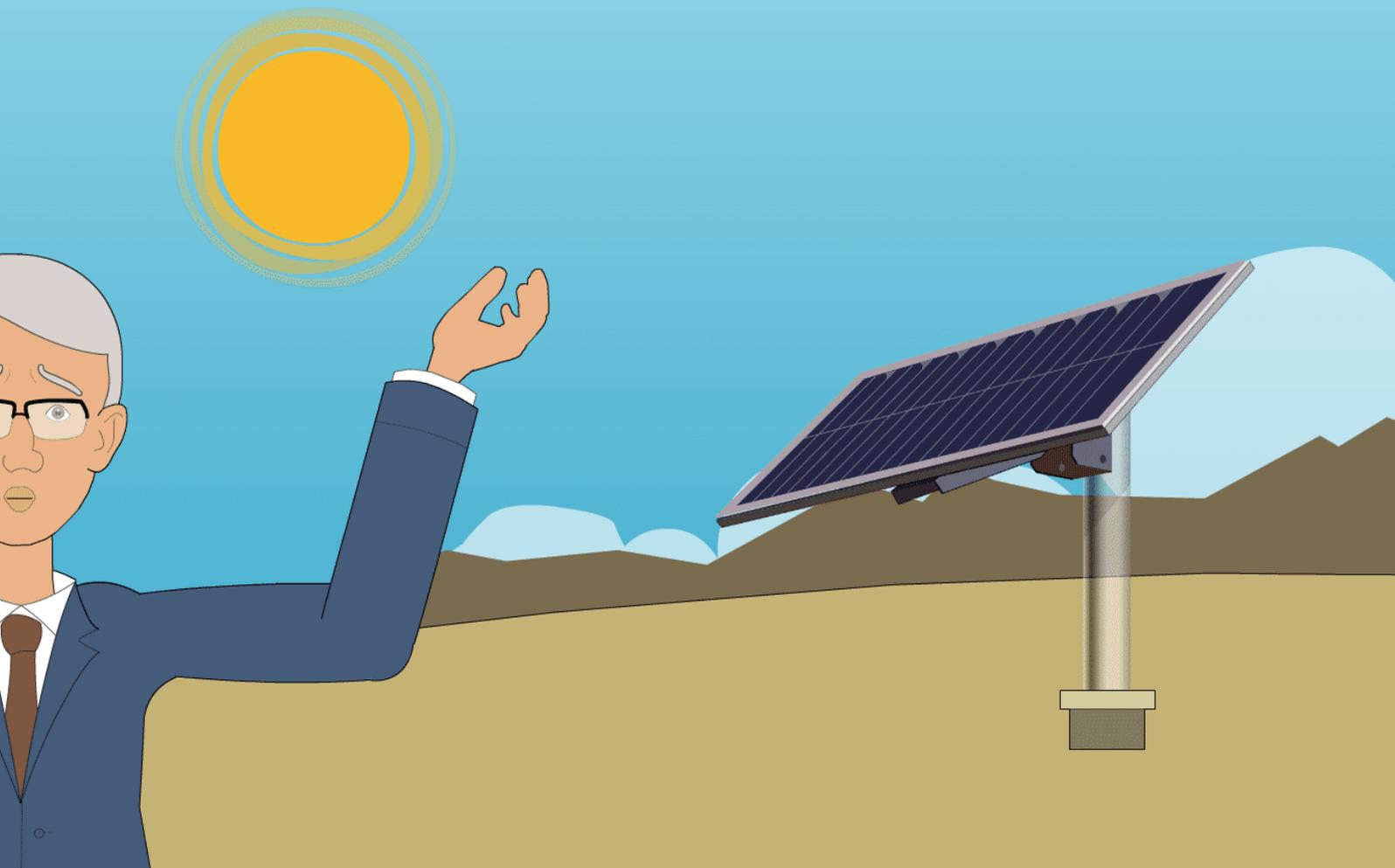
So, it costs much more money, labor and resources to run an oil-based energy production system than one based on solar or wind for the same energy production. Yet this is not done, primarily because of so many interrelated interests and how interdependent its global trade is across different tribes. Let's say I'm the boss of a big oil extraction business and it's time to replace an old, outdated oil plant. I calculate that it would cost me far less to build a solar plant that produces the same amount of energy as an oil production plant, and the profits would be significantly higher. If I then say, "The old extraction plant will close and we will open a new solar plant.", I will quickly find myself in trouble, because it would affect so many lives.



You see, many people will lose their jobs if I close the extraction plants, and since those workers are also consumers, their loss of income will affect many other businesses that depend on the worker's buying their products and services. Then there are all of those that rely on my plant's production to 'fuel' their jobs in transportation, refining, petrol stations, auto mechanics, etc.. What about all of the car and truck manufacturers and auto/truck distributorships who still need to sell cars that run on gas. What about all of the other tribes that will suffer if I stop providing oil for their needs???

As you can see, I can't chase profits even toward improved situations - even when it would be highly profitable for me AND the environment, because of the powerful interlocking interests within the money game that put many roadblocks in the way.

While self-driving cars are expected to save many lives and resources, even when limited to short-term estimates, what we're describing here is why they can't be implemented so easily within the money game. It would cost much less money for an economy (tribe) to work on reducing food or electronic waste, homelessness, crime, etc., but actually doing that would cut off other present-day businesses that the tribe depends upon, so such solutions are adopted either very gradually (extremely so), or (more likely) not at all.



At the beginning of the article, I mentioned that I do not understand how prices are created; why one thing costs more than something else, or how monetary value is attributed to resources and services. I believe I now have a better idea of how prices are formed. They reflect the culture's values (what is promoted as important or not), the system (taxes, rules), the perceived scarcity of a resource (often artificially created), and pricing strategies that are often affected by other prices. If you consider starting a new banana plantation farm, for example, you calculate your banana prices depending on how much money you have to spend on the land (because you borrow it from the tribe), how much you need to pay for the import of banana bulbs and pesticides, the cost of buildings and other support systems, how much you have to pay the workers, transport of the grown bananas to retailers, etc.. Then, you add how much profit you need, which is influenced by your competition. If you can't achieve a competitive price, perhaps because the land is not fertile enough or the climate is insufficient for growing lots of healthy bananas, then you can't even start that business.

Assuming the business is successful, bananas from your plantation eventually arrive in the US, Spain, and Romania. So how is it that the prices are so different in each of their markets? Isn't it the same 'thing' (a banana)? Well, here is where each importing tribe's 'rules' come into play. It depends on how much the tribe taxes its citizens, how big are typical salaries there, what agreements does the tribe have with the tribe that makes the bananas, and so on. A 2012 survey compared the prices of a MacBook Air, a 32 GB iPad 2 and a 16 GB iPhone 4 across different tribes.



The price for all three items combined were cheapest in Tokyo at \$2,225, and most expensive in Sao Paulo at \$4,160. That's almost double the price (source).

Of course, prices do not reflect resources and services in their true sense.

They are mostly disconnected from how useful or plentiful a resource is, or how useful a service is, and are basically a reflection of a tribe's rules (taxes, businesses, laws, etc.). This is why I pay five times more to access the internet in Spain than I do in Romania, even though it ranges from 5-10 times slower. People are paid more in Spain to manage internet systems (even if you could automate this) than in Romania. The same goes for the cost of physical materials needed for their internet network system. Even if they use the same materials worldwide, the Spanish tribe's trade rules make it cost more to make or bring them here to Spain. The cost of a typical internet connection in Spain comes to about 2.8% of the average tribal wage, while it's about 2.1% of the average Romanian wage. So even taking wages into account, Romanian internet connections are cheaper. Some products have similar prices in both Spain and Romania, especially items found in supermarkets, but then consider that the average wage in Spain is 4-5 times higher than that of Romania. On the other hand, eating out in Romania may cost you 4-5 Euros for pizza and a 33ml Coca-Cola, while it costs around 15 Euros in Spain for the same exact meal. So, it's usually cheaper to eat out in Romania, and cheaper to buy from the supermarket in Spain (quite costly to eat out).

Prices prices prices... it's all about the context of tribes, trade rules, what is 'cool', 'needed', or 'wanted' at any moment in time, and for what tribe. It rarely reflects anything more than that.



Wow! In Japan, the same items cost almost half, \$2,225

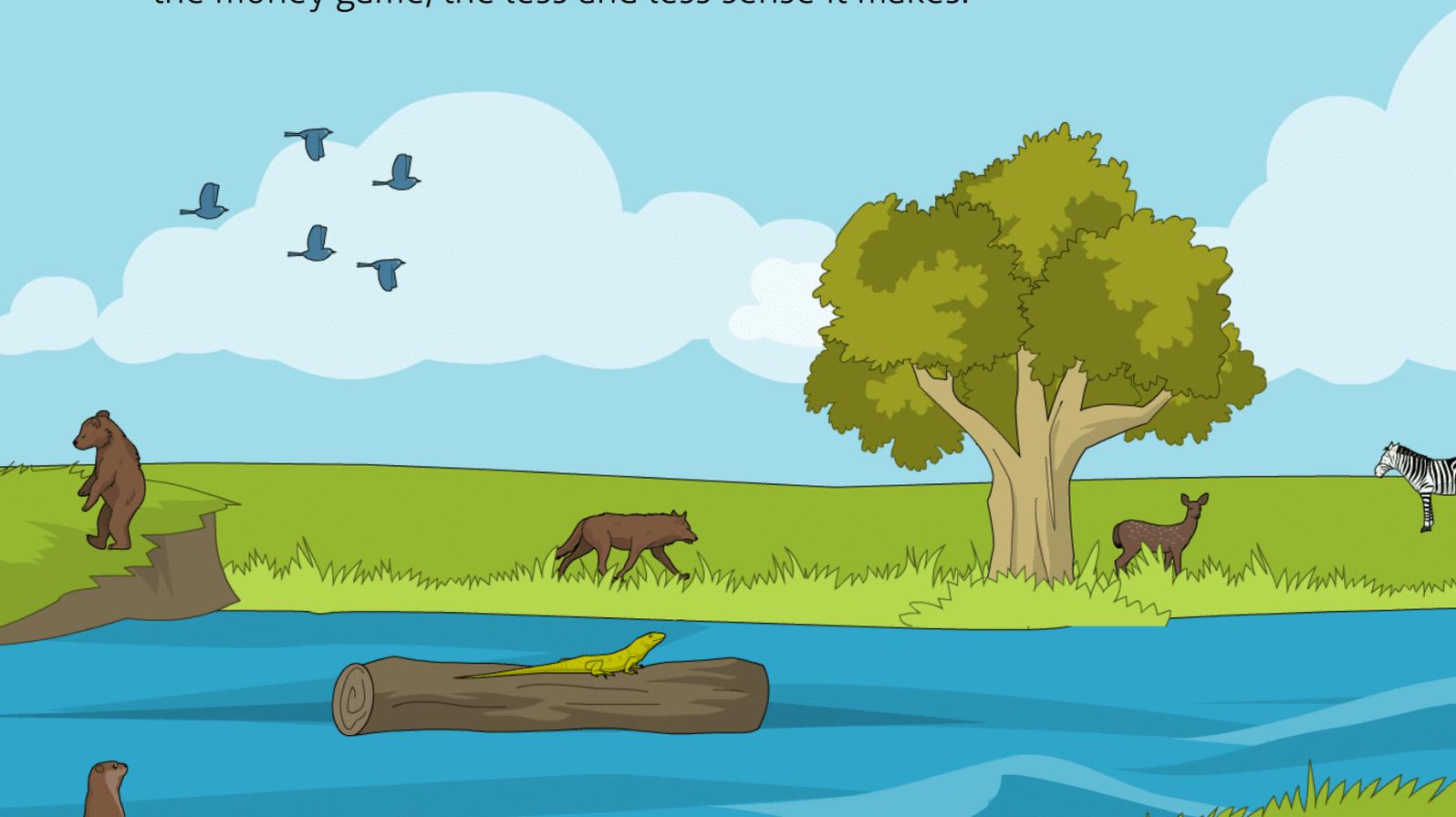
Northeast Trade Winds deliver over 20 billion gallons of water from the Amazon to South America, which translates into about \$240 billion dollars of economic value (source). But is that quantified in the money game? No!

What is the monetary value of an entire forest, with its vast numbers of plants and other biological life that allow new drugs to be invented, technologies, and large quantities of CO₂ to be absorbed? What is the price of bees, coral reefs, oceans, polar bears, or ancient rock formations found in nature that are so valuable for science? What is the monetary price of global climate stability, or that of the world's marine life?

If natural resources had a monetary value, at least money would be representing something real, as climate instability caused by varying amounts of industrial pollution would quickly decrease its value, resulting in price increases that would just as quickly work to restabilize, not the economy, but the climate (something very real).

It is thought that if natural resources like these were viewed as a stock market, they would all be rapidly headed for a crash.

But of course, it's near impossible to put a valid price on anything at all (resources or services), as you've seen, so the more you think about the money game, the less and less sense it makes.



The trade/money game appears to exist in order to provide a fair measurement for resources and exchange, while also providing access to them, and in some cases the money game can curtail overconsumption for a period of time through inflation, which seems to provide a good measure of stabilization for the worldwide trade system (you can't make everyone rich and expect all to have yachts, jets, and so on, since the prices will 'level'), but all of that is similar to saying that John has cancer, so he will die, but this treatment will reduce the cancerous cells from time to time, so he may or may not live longer. No matter what, the treatment won't cure him, and he will surely die from the disease.

The same story applies to trade, where the 'leveling' of prices won't stop over-consumption, it can only slow it down for limited periods, because of the way that trade is designed to consume an infinite amount of resources mined from a finite planet. If people do not continually consume at a continuously increasing rate, the money game will eventually collapse.



Trade is not something that humans invented. It's something that emerged out of what humans are: creatures that need to eat, sleep, and shit. Systems of simple barter gradually developed and expanded into complex trade systems to get them the stuff they need, followed by stuff they wanted. Influenced by all kinds of previously unimaginable possibilities, they eventually started to play the game in such a fanatic manner that they decoupled their planning and thinking from the world they lived in. They started to focus on things like: what I get, what I give, how much I have, how much I can make. As currency was starting to expand its role, the fanatic state went to light speed mode, as it made it much easier to get caught up in the trading game, wishing more for currency than the stuff itself. That gave rise to a widening of social classes and, once more widely separated, gave rise to a 'wish' for an ever-increasing consumption of resources, along with easier means to taking advantage of and enslaving others.

Even today, where you are led to believe that an incentive is a noble one, it may not be. Facebook and Google want to offer free internet services in 'poor' areas with no access, but what are the chances that they are doing that just to create more future customers for their ad-oriented service? (source). You hear some people saying: 'Hell this is a great time to live. Look, even children in Africa have cell phones. The world is getting better!', but the children they are picturing still don't have access to proper medical care or clean water to drink. I also have a smartphone, laptop, internet connection and electric stove, but I have no medical insurance and I have to struggle to find money to pay for all this. So if I get seriously sick and have no money, well... I'm 'fucked'. It clearly shows what our global culture is focused on, and that focus does not seem to include the care of our fellow humans and the environment, but rather the systematic exploitation of humans and the environment. **Even where it looks like 'care', it's more of a 'flare'; a masked desire to generate more profits.**



Moving stuff around may seem crazy when you think about how some AssWhole King the 3rd in China wanted some lions from Africa, but today's world is even more insane, as such trades occur on a daily basis; not for needs that people have, and not even for a more saner 'want', but mainly in direct support of the distorted values created by the consumerist world, where people are taught to be more like the AssWhole King than educated 'intelligent' eco-dependent creatures.

OF COURSE, THAT KING AND PEOPLE OF TODAY ARE NOT REALLY "ASSWHOLES". THEY ARE JUST PLAYING THE DARN GAME, AND REFLECTING THE TWISTED VALUES OF THE CULTURE IN WHICH THEY WERE BORN; PERFECTLY ADAPTED TO THE SYSTEM THAT INSTILLED THOSE VALUES INTO THEM (AND THE SYSTEM COULDN'T BE HAPPIER).



SUMMA

THE CORE ISSUES

- Currency no longer represents resources, nor does it reflect services, or even people's skills. To see how people's skills are 'valued' in today's world, read this article.
- Trade dramatically changed people's values, causing most people to want more and more stuff, and more silly ones
- It nurtures intense competition over cooperation. If you believe that money incentivises people, read this article where we argue the contrary
- It naturally exploits the environment (animals, people, nature)
- It is fully unsustainable, as it creates infinite demand on a finite planet
- It elevates profit-motive over human values or the environment
- It produces vast amounts of waste, as lots of stuff never gets used, and even more is dismissively thrown away
- It redefines the value of resources, making them less valuable than they are, or more, depending on trends (demand, and profit)
- It encourages artificial scarcity. If people would agree that we need to make better batteries starting tomorrow, they could easily make batteries much better, cheaper and helpful for all, but the world of trade won't allow them to do that. Batteries, like renewable energies and other tech or materials, are mainly scarce and expensive because of how things are ruled today, not because we can't make them more abundant, cheaper and eco-friendly.

- As long as you can create currency which, in turn, creates money (debt), you have the power to continually consume more and more. And as you make more money available to people (as debt) within such a system, you may perhaps forever live in debt

- Trade always requires people to work, to be part of the trade system, but this is challenged with the advent of sophisticated machinery that can already automate nearly all jobs (source).

- Trade always requires consumers, and that fuels the need to make lots of stuff to keep jobs going. That incentivizes the making of silly, unnecessary and sometimes dangerous goods and jobs, and increasingly gives rise to pointless services.

etc...

MONEY IS THOUGHT TO STORE VALUE, BUT the value of resources and services are both culturally created (what resources and services are considered important in a culture) and dependent on current technology/resources (extraction and creation of new materials is dependent on the technology, and when a resource becomes abundant, it loses monetary value).

MONEY IS THOUGHT TO BE A MEANS OF EXCHANGE, but today has become more of a means of power.

MONEY IS THOUGHT OF AS MEASURE OF RESOURCES, but it has become anything but that.

I know it looks as if trade is a really bad thing, but without trade, we wouldn't be in the 'modern world' we're in, as trade allowed for the development of societies, new materials, science and technology. It appears much more sensible to conclude that people simply didn't have the knowledge and means to do it otherwise, up until about 100 or so years ago. But perhaps they could have managed this trade journey better, with more careful planning. Nevertheless, the next parts of this series will showcase how we can do just that: to better manage the trade world and transform it into a completely different 'creature'.

Read our "Consuming A Year" article to see how the trade world influences almost all aspects of our lives, year after year after year.



In the next part, we will look at how people tried to organize world wide trade into systems: from communism, democracy, socialism, to capitalism, free market, empires and a huge variety of regimes. How did those ideas originate, how were they applied, what did they change?

A FEW FUN FACTS ABOUT

- All of the cartoon characters you see are custom made from pre-defined models, so much so that I had to individually create every posture, facial expression, hair style, colors, clothes, and so on. The same goes for all of the props: trees, objects, animals, furniture, etc.. Here's a video demo that demonstrates how that was done for every scene and character (if you find it a bit boring, keep in mind that I had to do that for everything :)). It was a huge amount of work.

- The entire *The Money Game* series will be made this way, telling stories with characters to help readers gain a better grasp of the complicated nature of today's 'economic' system. I 'hope' this helps you better understand it.

- This issue took longer to make because this article focuses on just a small part of the research I've done for the entire *Money Game* series (other parts of it are already in the making), as it always takes much more time to prepare a new multi-part series.

- I was able to develop all of these characters and stories for this article because we had the money to buy software and access services to create them. Without your financial support for this magazine, we would not have been able to do this. However we will run out of funds in November (only two months from the release of this issue)... If you can help financially to keep TVP Magazine going, please check our [Patreon page](#) (you can also read why we moved to Patreon [here](#)).

moving to patreon by tio

Trying to encourage public financial support for TVP Magazine is, quite frankly, a pain in the ass. I initially set up a donation module to make it easy for people to contribute, but the system turned out to have many errors, which then caused problems with Paypal, all of which placed a huge toll on myself to get it all straightened out. You see, it may appear simple when you donate, but that donation has to be set up in so many complicated ways in order to reflect it on our website display, properly process the payment via Paypal's services, provide options for anonymous and/or recurring donations, and so on.

The main advantage of this was that it only required one processing fee, to Paypal. Because there are so many issues with this system, we are ready to move to another one (with fees) because I can't manage the website, the magazine AND donation issues alone (for the most part), as I only have one head with one brain :).

Another reason for moving to Patreon is because of the continuous support that their system offers. It is designed to help 'creators' on a monthly basis, instead of one time donation for a year of work (which is good, but asking for a year's worth of money all at once can easily come up short of the goal, as it happens right now).

Because of their fees, we have to ask a bit more a month, but we can't do anything about that. Patreon is also very well-known right now, as many people now use it to support their work, so I hope that you will find donating to now be more user-friendly and 'secure'.

The huge issue with Patreon is that it can claim that you are being supported at \$2,455 a month, but you may only be getting \$1,267 due to some transactions not completing, or because some people may give up on the monthly subscription. But we are starting in a situation where we already have the funds needed for the next two to three months, so we may be able to cover for these gaps across those 3 months if, hopefully, you will help us achieve the monetary goal at Patreon.

I can't emphasize enough how much time is wasted on trying to encourage funds for the magazine, because our focus really needs to be centered on making TVP Magazine better and better for everyone, and all of the 'promotion' time could be best used for that. If Patreon works out well (meaning more consistent financial support), then the result will be more time to devote to the magazine, as I won't have to deal with donation errors or nearly as much 'promotion' for donations.

So, if you have the means, please visit our Patreon page and support our work. You are the only reason why TVPM keeps on going and improving. Without financial support, TVP Magazine cannot continue beyond November.

THE WEB DEVELOPMENT TEAM NEEDS YOUR HELP!

The Venus Project - Web Development team is looking for people who are interested in helping us finalize development of the new Venus Project website (thevenusproject.com). We are mainly looking for individuals who:

- have direct experience in software testing or
- have a background in software development or
- have a keen eye for design and detail or
- are interested in helping us test various aspects of the website's functionality

We need focused help that will keep up with this right up to the website's eventual launch. You will be providing feedback and interacting directly with the developers. You will also need to provide detailed explanations of anything that leads to errors, to enable us to reproduce and fix it.

Every new feature that is added to the site needs to be thoroughly tested. Testing is not that demanding on a case to case basis, as testing a single case may only take from 1-10 minutes. Your feedback write-up should only require 20-30 minutes of your time. So basically, you'll come in and pick a test case, work on it until completion, and then either be done or you can pick another one to test, if available.

Only about 20 people are needed for this, so it will be "first come, first served" as they say!
This image should help you gain a stronger visual idea of the testing system.

If you want to help with this, please contact webmaster@thevenusproject.com, or use the form below.

PERSPECTIVE: PRIVATE MOUTHS

by Tio

What would it be like if (human) people on another planet grew up thinking of mouths the way that we think about genitalia? Let's see...

DISCLAIMER WARNING: DUE TO ITS CONTENT, THIS ARTICLE MAY INCLUDE A NUMBER 'OBSCENE' PHOTOS, SO PLEASE BE AWARE OF THAT! :)







Dear People of Earth,
I live on a planet called PERSPECTIVE, and I feel greatly compelled to tell you how awful and obscene the people are here. I am human, and I'm told that you are too, so it should be easy for you to understand our situation.

We have these things called..., sorry for the bad language: "mouths". As I'm sure you're aware, they are our private parts. We talk with them, eat, and even kiss with them. I have to admit that kissing is very pleasant, especially "open mouth kissing", but I think our society went too far on this one.

You see... people nowadays walk around in public places with their mouths fully uncovered (no mouthwears at all), obviously creating arousal for other people and it's causing the breakdown of common social decency all over the planet. Many feel offended, even violated, and they are absolutely right to feel that way. Just last week, I heard that a pedophile followed a young girl to her home, snuck around the back of her house, and then took photos of her naked mouth through the bathroom window, which he later on posted on the internet. You just can't trust people these days; they have become far too dangerous and perverse.

I think some scientists are right when they say there has to be a gene that makes people too obsessed with lips and mouths. It makes sense, since I remember hearing that kissing came about as a way for people to gauge biological compatibility, or I also heard that it's a means of swapping gut biomes to improve immunity. I think that's the only explanation that makes sense. It looks like some can't control their behavior towards that, no matter what, so it must be an evolutionary trait.

My 15 year-old daughter just asked my wife the other day if she can wear lipstick or is it too early for that. My wife explained to her that she waited until she got married for her first kiss, and back in those days, no one ever learned about lipstick until they were of a mature age. Kids these days...

Anyway, think about it, if we're all allowed to walk around with our lips in plain sight, don't you think that everyone will become perverts? What happens when guys suddenly start kissing girls on the street? Or taking photos with them and posting them online to embarrass them? Well, if girls stop wearing their mouthwears, they are obviously asking for trouble... and it'll be their fault in the first place!

Imagine people walking around this way with their lips in plain sight... It would cause kissing orgies. Actually, these days, we already see delinquents sneaking kisses in public, even though it is illegal and obscene. Do you want your children growing up in such a sick society?



There are even some rare cases where parents have been caught actually kissing their own children!!! Incest is the worst thing that can happen and I hope those people rot in jail for a long, long time! Kids get traumatized for life when they are kissed at early stages of their development, and it's no wonder since lips and mouths are so fragile at that age. Even if they don't kiss them on their mouths, touching their 'old and ugly' lips anywhere on a child is too obscene, and it's still incest! Kissing is for two people of similar ages that love each other and are of a mature age, and they should only do that in private!

Some people even go to extremes with things like 'watching people eating', which is so disgusting and backwards. You can even find underground websites full of videos of people eating, chewing dead meat and 'stuff' that grows from the ground in their mouths, then gulping all kinds of liquids. Of course, you are probably not put off by your own eating, as I'm not either; it is 'your' mouth, after all. But why would anyone want to watch how others eat!? It's sick! I just don't understand it at all.

Nowadays, it's so easy for children to find all kinds of mouth porn online, unfortunately. There is a huge industry revolving around our private mouths: photo shooting, video mouth chat, lip service, and so on.

Don't get me wrong here. I don't mind people going out without mouthwears on a private beach or inside their own homes, but please have some decency and keep your filthy mouth out of my sight and the rest of society, or at least cover it with some lipstick if you must use it in public! We must maintain respect and dignity towards others and society, or we will all end up like crazed monkeys with our mouths uncovered and kissing all the time!

-----End of transmission from
PERSPECTIVE to EARTH -----





SHAMELESS

ONLINE STORE

ABOUT ONLINE

SUITS

JACKETS

COATS

SHIRTS

TIES

SHOES

TROUSERS

KNITWEAR

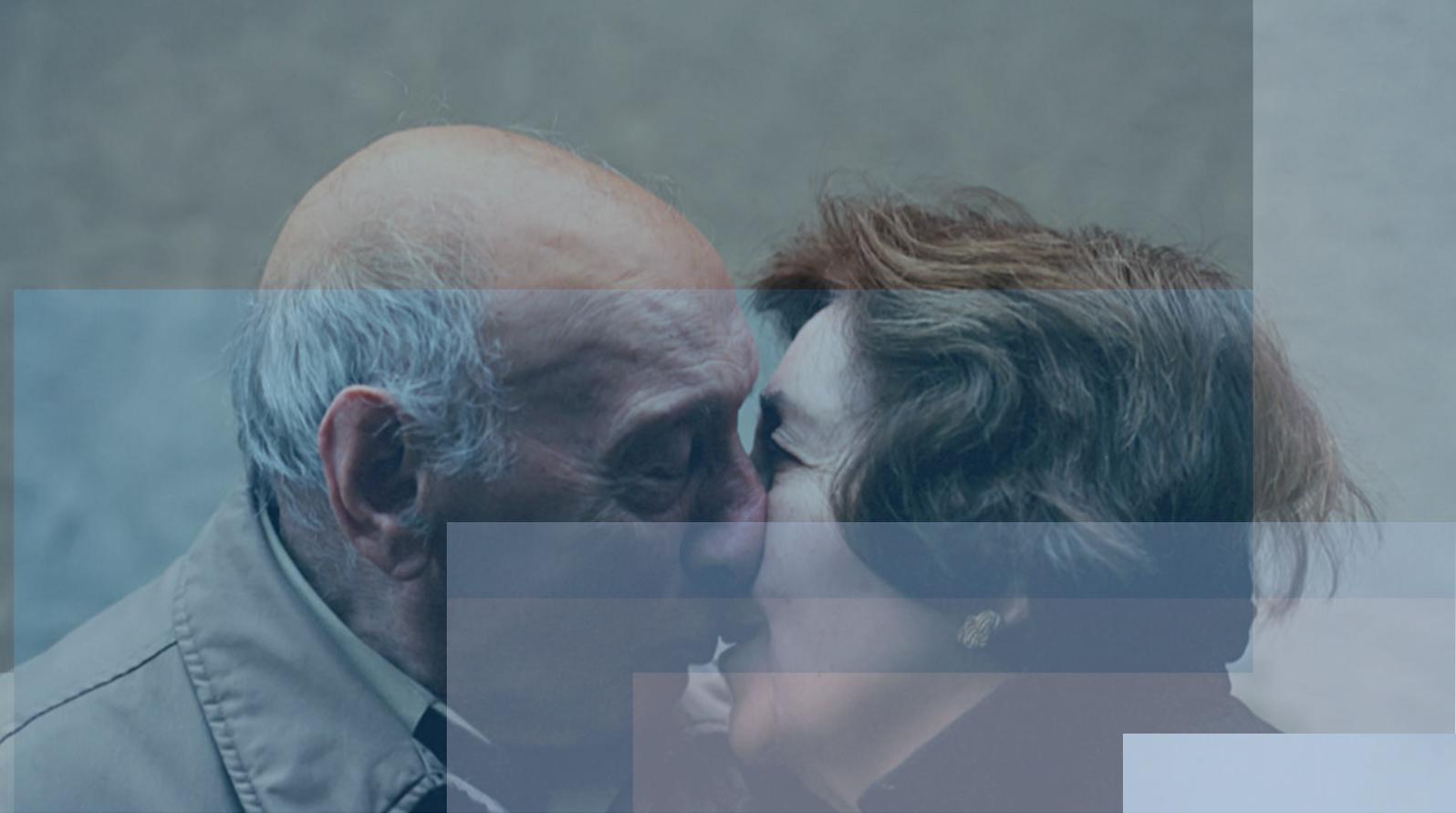
ACCESSORIES

Now think about it... We humans would behave the same way if we were raised to view mouths in the same way we're told to view our genitalia. Yet today, 'mouths' and 'kissing' are not seen as an issue at all, because we are not taught to see them in this way. No kid gets traumatised by seeing people kissing, and we do not judge it as incest or pedophilia when mouths touch other people in the same the family, regardless of their ages.



The background of the page is a collage of images. At the top, there's a man in a suit looking down. Below that, a woman with blonde hair is drinking from a white coffee cup. In the middle, there's a man in a suit looking to the side. At the bottom, a man in a suit is leaning over a woman who is lying down. The text is overlaid on a white rectangular area in the upper half of the page.

In some places, 'greeting' kisses are even part of the tradition. But 'genitalia' has been made into such a 'no-no' thing in our modern culture that it actually creates numerous negative issues and stresses around the subject. Some people turn to rape due of a perceived scarcity of sexual partners, or an arousal state created by a world culture that seems to revolve around arousal itself: from movies to commercials, photos promoted by those who want you to click online ads, or even popular music, a lot of it is centered around sex. Sex and genitalia (and other 'sexualized' body parts) are strongly promoted by today's media, specifically because they are so artificially 'scarced' by 'prohibitive' laws. In the current money-based world, where whatever sells best gets promoted even more, it continually and increasingly promotes this 'arousal state' that eventually leads to behavioral problems for many.



When a child sees his/her parents kissing, the child certainly does not become traumatized. Indeed, s/he is more likely to think: "Ah...my parents love each other so much!". Is it possible to imagine children today seeing their parents having sex and experiencing the same 'they love each other so much' feelings? It is much more likely that the opposite would happen, with the child becoming 'traumatized' for life. It's really important to recognize that, again, this is due to cultural standards that promote such values that, in turn, hurts people. If sex was treated the same as kissing, something people do because they enjoy each other and nothing more than that, we would never see traumatized kids (or people of any age) after experiencing such 'scenes', no obsession with sex or porn, and no 'offended' people.

But there is another thing that I really want to emphasize with the 'perspective' story: there are many who project that if people were allowed to get used to nakedness, it would cause the desire for sex, or sexual behaviors towards the bodies of others, to vanish or diminish a great deal. So let's look at mouths again. Here on Earth, people see mouths all the time, yet they still enjoy kissing a lot. Get it? That provides perfect proof of how the 'diminished interest' theory can't stand up to test. Another thing to be learned from this situation is that people have not become obsessed with mouths, lips and tongues. They only attach significance to the ones that are attached to the person they love ;). Imagine sex being treated the same way.





I saw this documentary a while ago, which includes a scene that I found really funny, and so relevant to this topic. In a tribe where everyone is used to being naked, a man (around 40) was stung in the groin (including his testicles) by a porcupine. When he returned to the village (in significant pain), some children quickly rushed to help the man remove the sharp quills from his groin area (genitalia). At no point during this event did any of the young girls (or boys) try to put the man's penis inside their mouths or otherwise arouse it in any way, as that would be unthinkable for them to do with their cultural upbringing.

It's no different than your father coming home (and you were a girl) after being stung by a porcupine in his lower face (lips, especially). Of course, you would do all you can to help your father remove those quills out of his lips, but at no point you would be thinking of french-kissing your father, right!?

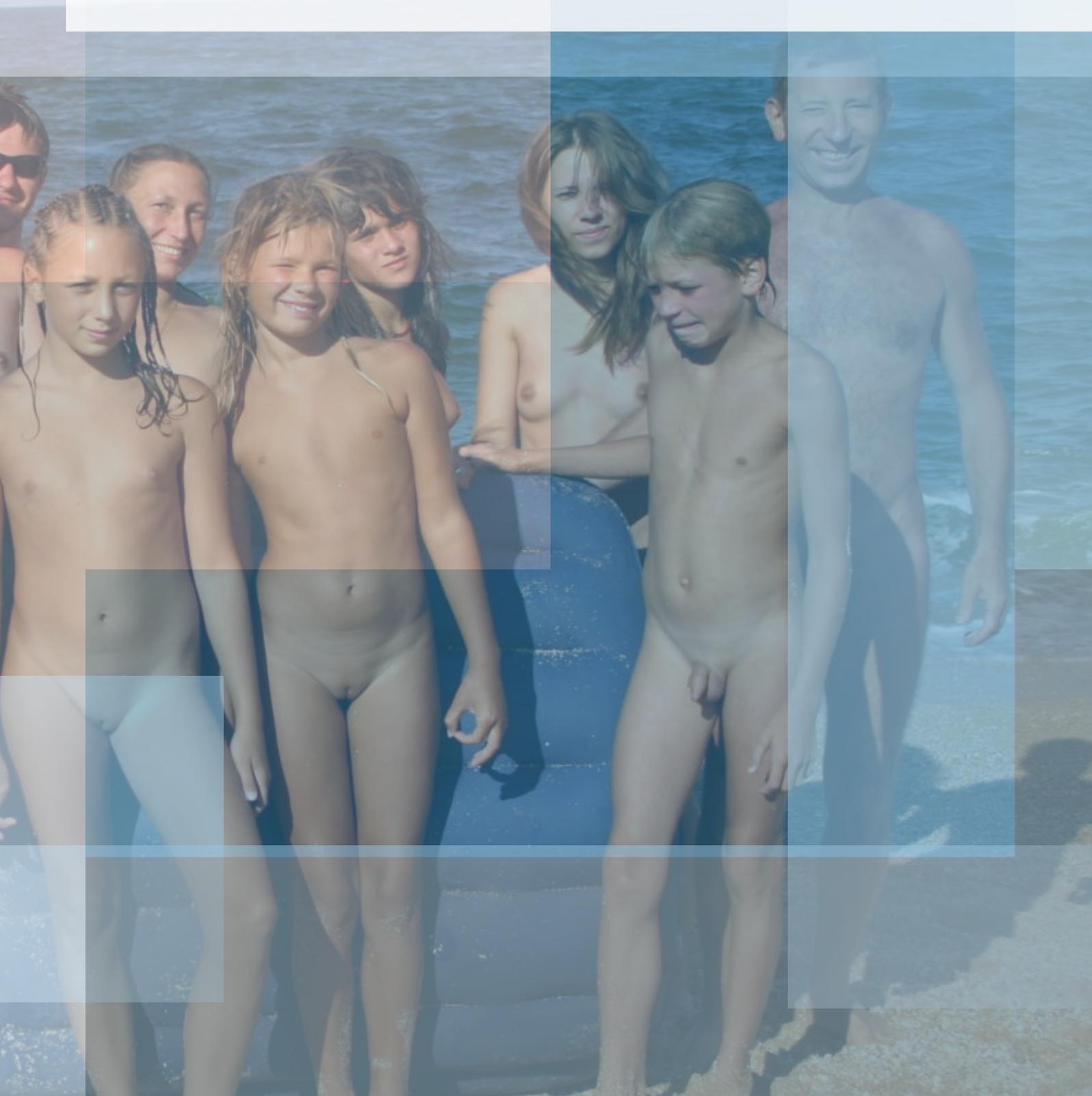




I am not saying that either cultural norm is good or bad. I am much more simply showing how whatever is considered normal within your culture, you will learn to consider normal, and whatever is seen as fucked up, you will be taught to think of that as being fucked up. The thing is, there are many tribes today that are fully used to being naked, as well as many groups of people that call themselves (or others call them) 'nudists', who are so used to nakedness that they view our 'normality' as perverse.

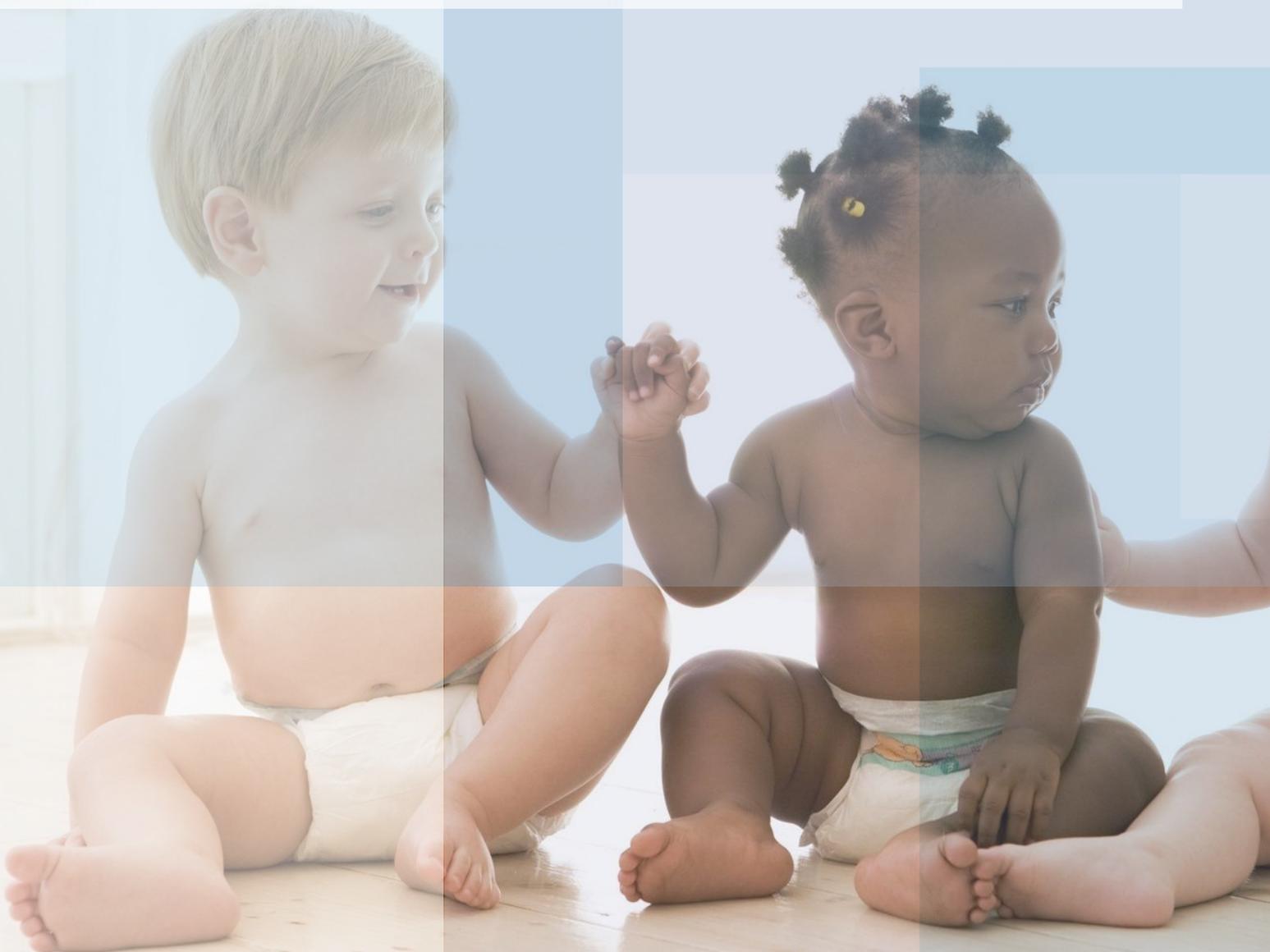


Thoughtless exaggerations that if nakedness were to become 'normality', we would end up with people having sex in public places all over the world, with so many orgies that many people would die of fatigue, or that people would no longer enjoy their partner's bodies, are purely primitive projections. That is both funny and sad, considering how little people are aware of other cultures and human behavior.



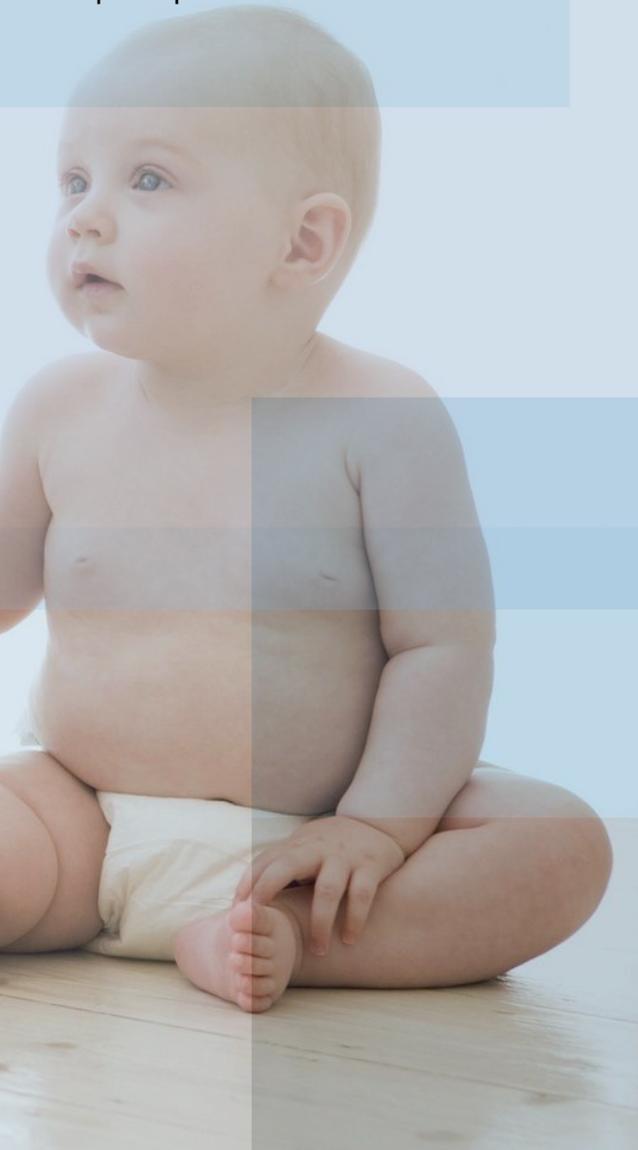
IN A SANER FUTURE ENVISIONED BY THE VENUS PROJECT, TWO IMPORTANT THINGS WILL HAPPEN IN REGARDS TO THIS TOPIC:

Because the concept of education will shift dramatically, as we exemplified in these two TVPM articles (1, 2), children will be taught to recognize the entire human body as being part of what it means to be human. A human consists of hair, chest, penis or vagina, legs, facial expressions, kissing, nose, masturbating, having sex, feet, eating and digestion, brain, and so on. In the same way that some kids are now taught that black people are no different from white people, children will not be taught to look more obsessively (or weird) at vaginas, penises, or female breasts than at people's ears, hair, or (gasp!) even lips. ;)



Much more interestingly is the fact that there is simply no need to 'teach' children to look at people of other colors or the opposite sex in an 'equal' manner, because children are not born with pre-installed values. Children are taught those distorted values, not the other way around. In other words, ensure that the environment won't mess with children's brains by teaching them such distorted values in the first place. They will have no reason to develop fetishes or obsessions with any specific part of the human body (or anything else) if they are not exposed to an environment that nurtures and promotes those fetishes and obsessions. Wherever children are raised to be accustomed to nakedness, there has been no need to teach them to not be obsessive about genitalia, for instance. They simply do not experience those problems.

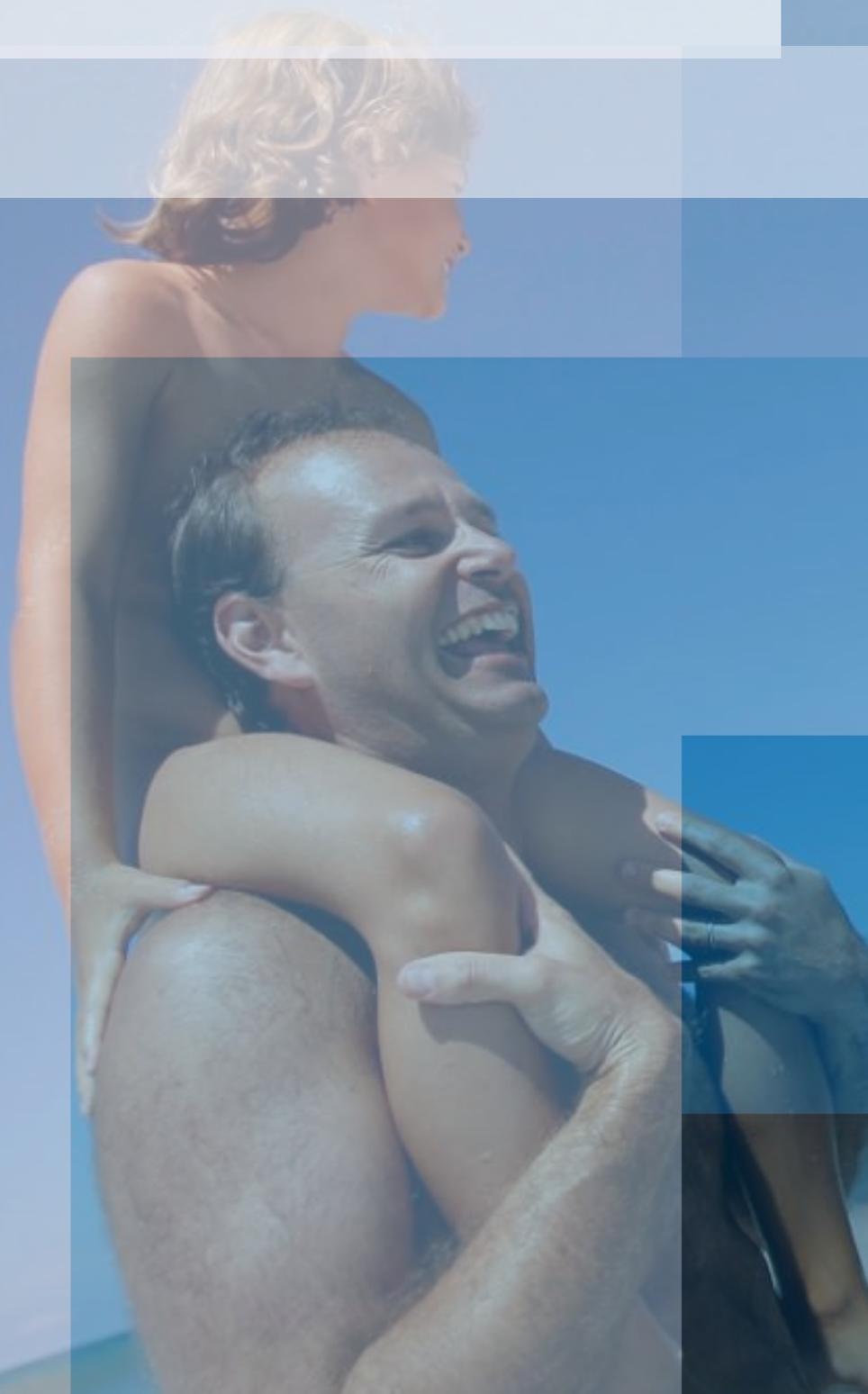
You may ask why some people seem to have fetishes about parts of the human body that are in 'plain sight', right? Well, one person's environment is not completely identical to anyone else's environment. There are many slight differences that can cause one to become obsessed with hands, for example, even if s/he shakes many of them daily :), or otherwise comes into contact with many of them. But these are rare exceptions within a cultural perspective that teaches very little, if anything, about other cultures and such perspectives.



But wait! Why is it so 'wrong' to be sexually attracted to genitalia, hands, mouths, or whatever? Nothing at all. The point of this article is to show how obsessions of any kind can become harmful, and how we can approach the issue so it won't drive people to rape others, invade their privacy, or feel offended by someone else's personal choices. In a TVP society, if one is obsessed with hands and likes to touch them a lot, s/he will more than likely find someone who really enjoys having his/her hands touched that way, because there will be an abundance of opportunity for meeting partners. People won't be forced to work or to stay in one place, so they can travel all over the world, meeting many potential partners, while people will be more 'educated' on how to truly interact and connect with each other.

On the other hand, today's obsession over body parts is driven by the second point: In the society envisioned by TVP, there is no drive to monetize 'obsessions', even if they somehow develop within one or more people. As soon as any small attractant is monetized, it quickly creates and reinforces ever-widening obsessions or fetishes around it. It's really that simple.

That being said, I think it is right to say that in a TVP society, people will not become dangerously obsessed with any part of the human body part, and humans will enjoy their bodies instead of selling them, creepingly 'chasing' them, or become mentally unstable when seeing them.



The stupidity of censoring, banning, or otherwise punishing 'nakedness' in our society is only the result of limited or no education (primitive values), and a money-focused environment in which people make a shit load of profits out of selling the idea of nakedness. It is no less ridiculous than the situation on the imaginary planet: PERSPECTIVE.

The thing is, whatever we find sexy, sensual, or obscene is generated by and is limited to the culture we live in, and is influenced by our 'total environment'. Genitalia is no more and no less 'obscene or sexy' than your mouth, or a leg, or an ear, or someone else's elbow. To learn more about this, you should check out our articles on beauty and obscenity.



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