

Making and Wasting Time Or: A Calendar For Self-Employed Agnostics Living in Seasonal Climates Who Follow Astrology

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Andy Warhol: They always say that time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself.

At different times in different parts of the world, there was and is great variety in the number of days in the week: calendars with four- (Central Africa), five-, six- (Soviet Union), seven- (Chaldean, now Hebrew and Christian), eight- (Tuscany) nine-, ten- (France and ancient Egypt), thirteen- (Aztec), nineteen- (Baha'i) and twenty- (Mayan) day weeks did and still do exist. As sociologist and rhythm scholar Eviatar Zerubavel has noted, calendars that are not based on astronomy or theism are usually constructed around a pragmatic local cycle, as in the market weeks of West Africa, or a divinatory rhythm, as in the fugue-like calendars of Java and Indonesia. The Javanese have weekly cycles of two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight and nine days going simultaneously, distinguishing their appropriate travel, market, and festival days by the synchronicity of the different cadences. West African communities have weeks with as many days as there are villages in the area, so that each village can host an exclusive market day each week. Their days do not have celestial or god-based names, but are named after each corresponding village; consequently, their names inform the community when and where to buy things on a given day as opposed to what god to worship or what planet is on the rise.

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Like language, the social structure of time is given to us. And, like language, we take what we like (or can use) from the days and weeks and ignore (or alter) the rest. Why not tailor the calendar to suit your particular needs and then intercalate the dominant calendar so that corresponding dates are readily available? Why not a calendar that functions personally or colloquially with more relevance, resonance and subtlety?

Sigmund Freud: Another procedure operates more energetically and more thoroughly. It regards reality as the sole enemy and as the source of all suffering, with which it is impossible to live, so that one must break off all relations with it if one is to be in any way happy. The hermit turns his back on the world and will have no truck with it. But one can do more than that; one can try to recreate the world, to build up in its stead another world in which its most unfavorable features are eliminated and replaced by others that are in conformity with one's wishes. But whoever, in desperate defiance, sets out upon this path to happiness will as a rule attain nothing. Reality is too strong for him. He becomes a madman, who for the most part finds no one to help him in carrying through his delusion. It is asserted, however, that each one of us behaves in some

respect like a paranoiac, corrects some aspect of the world that is unbearable to him by the construction of a wish, and introduces this illusion into reality.

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By adding three months to the year and then shortening all fifteen of them to twenty-four days each, the months become consistent in length and more integrated with the change of seasons, with the three new months—Emmanuel, Dorothy and Elizabeth—accentuating the arrival of the new year, the end of spring, and the end of summer. Their location within the calendar year also pushes the months we normally associate with winter, spring, summer, and fall more squarely into their respective seasons. New Year's Week would be a five-day period (six days, or an entire week, during Leap Year) that reconciles the monthly cycle with the 365-day year, just as the Mayan *xma kaba kin* (days without names) or the Aztec *nemontemi* ("hollow" or "superfluous" days) reconciled their calendars with the duration of the earth's orbit around the sun.

The twenty-four day month also switches easily to seven or eight-day weeks, should the need arise, with no change in the monthly or yearly cycle. A seven-day week aligns just as well with Dorothy or Elizabeth as it does with May or October: both have three days left over after an exact number of weeks have passed. Personally, an eight-day week would be preferable if I had a full-time job since it would give me three days off each week and the month would only be three weeks long. A cinch! For now, though, I don't have a full-time job, so I'm learning how to structure my own time. This calendar is designed to help make that process last as long as possible.

Laura Mulvey: The alternative is the thrill that comes from leaving the past behind without rejecting it, transcending outworn or oppressive forms, or daring to break with normal pleasurable expectations in order to conceive a new language of desire.

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My father has been self-employed for twenty-three years. On June 5, 1971, he resigned from his job as a heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration repairman with the Julian Speer Company and went into business for himself. Three years earlier, we had moved from a house on Main Street in Stoutsville to a house in the country that had a pond, a creek and two acres of woods with prolific apple and walnut trees. June 5, 1971 was also my sister Kathy's sixth birthday. Dad took her with him to Columbus that day not only as a present to her, but also as a way of demonstrating to his employer what he was missing by having to make all those overnight service calls to Ripley, Portsmouth, and Gallipolis. I hated my sister for that, since I wanted to go to Columbus and be a symbol for my father; but, with seven sons and one

daughter, he obviously felt she would convey more symbolism. I can appreciate that now, just as I can appreciate his wanting to have more control over how and where he spent his time.

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