

/tg/ on... Stuff

(1st edition)

Wherein it is demonstrated that /tg/ is scholars. The elegant/ents have proven themselves capable of talking about just about anything, mostly because they are a hive mind powered by unceasing faith in the EMPRAH, educating millions in a most excellent and informal style. This is a horribly incomplete collection of some of that information.

Contents are below. The bulk of this document is made up of excerpts from various /tg/ threads. Not every fact has been verified, so use this document at your own risk. Additionally, some facts have been included that are manifestly and demonstrably super-wrong in order to preserve the flow of an interesting conversation wherein certain ideas were discussed and either proven or disproven.

The dialogue between /tg/ and /tg/ is a wonderful aspect of the board's scholarliness, and I would be remiss in my editorial duties if I did not retain it. For the time being I am not making any corrections to the spelling or grammar of these excerpts, again in order to preserve the informality and style of /tg/.

There are also a few organization problems that I'll sort out in future editions (I need to change */tg/ on the Amazons* to */tg/ on Mythology & Folklore— the Amazons*, for example).

Two excerpts before we begin.

History /tg/ is the worst /tg/ as its full of people presenting misconception as fact, or outdated facts as still facts despite primary evidence to the contrary.

History threads on /tg/ shouldn't just be deleted for off-topic, but for being so obnoxiously wrong with a self-assured attitude problem to go with it.

I am with the guy saying how humans now are no different from humans then, they could read and probably weren't too dirty or downtrodden, but ultimately you need to find appropriate sources to find out for certain (still with some degree of uncertainty) just how your peasants were treated in your time period of interest.

>stupid claims based on hear say

>not so stupid but sourcless claims

>stupid claims get refuted

>shit flinging

>stupid claims get repeated by faggots who didn't read the thread

>stupid claims might get refuted if anyone still cares or get reinforced with additional retards

>repeat until 404

Every history thread on /tg/.

Again, not everything here has been verified. It is probably not wise to use */tg/ on... Stuff* as a source in your doctoral dissertation. Althought, if you did, that would be awesome and we would love to hear about it.

If you'd like to suggest a thread that I should add or just say hello or make some random suggestion about anything, you can reach me at callmebrotherg@gmail.com. If you like stories and ideas and stuff then check out my blog at whitemarbleblock.blogspot.com, where you'll find free fiction, story ideas, resources like this PDF, and links to my columns, including the worldbuilding column that I write for RPG.net and the writing/creativity column that I write for Seventh Sanctum.

*Dedicated to Anon***/tg/ on**

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/tg/ on the 1920s

The 1920s was the age of technocracy, Marxism, mass movements, fascism... strength was measured in numbers.

/tg/ on AI & Free Will

This has been on my mind all day. What are some of the pros and cons, or just interesting quirks, of an operating machine intelligence? What sets A.I. apart? What makes it more of the same? What might it be like when it crawls its way into our world?

Well, one interesting thing might be an AI designed with a purpose in mind. I mean, trying to figure out if there's a purpose to our existence is kind of a big part of the human condition.

Learning. That's the best use of an AI. It not only makes things quicker, as you don't have to code every single detail of an operation, as it will connect the dots by itself, but it will be able to improvise, it will be able to deduct and induct. It will know what do we want even when we don't actually know it, as humans do.

They will be humans that will be mentally connected with each other, immortal, with a perfect memory, and, at first, programmed to help us.

Its thinking is not constrained by all the things we take for granted after decades of living in this world. It's like video game speed-runs. You can speed-run by making very accurate jumps and running past enemies. Or you can speed-run by knowing which walls you can walk through, which bugs will trigger the end-game flags twenty levels too early, or which inputs will give you write access to the game's code and let you brute-force display the "you win" screen.

This is both a pro and a con. On one hand, it'll achieve its goals very, **very** efficiently by doing things you wouldn't have thought of in a million years. On the other hand, those things may include destroying every structure in its path, and its goals may not be interpreted the way its programmers intended.

I suppose you could imagine an AI like an Enlightened Buddhist.

It's already conquered the animal lusts and rages, and is now free to pursue peaceful enlightenment. It doesn't need to kill anyone or anything, it can just live on starlight avoiding conflict with everyone.

Until it arbitrarily decides that calculating digits of pi is the best thing ever, and holy shit there's a whole galaxy of matter just waiting to be converted into copies of itself! Math for the math god! RAM for the RAM throne!

There's no specific quirk or pro/con of AIs that exist because as of now no AI exists, and there are too many paths AI research can go down, and too many different methods of coding them to work out what risks and benefits we'd be able to get from them.

It's like asking "what's the benefits of running an operating system?" Well, sure, it allows you to do stuff, but running command line DOS is going to be a lot different from Linux or Windows and so on.

Well, that's a complex question. People tend to study 2 careers to answer it.

About the database, right now in Europe there is some kind of global database that will be used to control robots and the like. Robots won't have a hard-drive nor a processor per se, but a wireless connection to that database, so whenever one learn something, every robot will learn it.

How to learn? Well, to answer that engineers use Psychology and Ethology. Usually, organisms learn by Conditioning, classic and instrumental conditioning. With classic, they relates events, usually by relating events that provokes a biological, or natural reaction, such as food or an electrical shock, with an unrelated event, like the classical bell, or a flash of light. This allow them to learn that the unrelated event (Unrelated stimulus, UE) predicts the relatid and basical event, like food (RE), which transform the UE into a Conditioned Event, which could be used as a RE to create a new relationg with a new UE, as if they were a basic event.

The instrumental conditioning requires action from the subjets. The most basic example would be a rat pulling a lever to get food. At first, it tends to start with try and error situations, in which some goal (the food), is visible, but unattainable. The subject would find a way to get the goal, and when it find it, it will relate that method (pulling the lever) with the goal (opening the cage that holds the food). On experimental situations with animals, it tends to escalate: at first, the cage open whenever they are near the lever, and this keeps going until they have to pull the lever to open it. They also use signals to make this more complex: the lever won't open the cage unless a flash of light appears, and the subject learns it after a while.

While this seems pretty easy, it mostly explain how most learning process happen. If you extrapolate it, you will find that most learning process works this way.

>All AI are designed with a purpose in mind. We've talked about it in a previous thread. My conclusion was that AIs went crazy because they were told from day 1 "you're an intelligent being, now do the shit you're forced to do for the rest of eternity".

>Giving sentience to a computer and then having them do something without giving them the possibility to chose is slavery. And that's why all those fictional scientists die.

This would be slavery for a human, because a human starts out with a whole bunch of personal goals. What you're describing is more like telling a particularly elaborate Travelling Salesman algorithm "you're a particularly elaborate, sentient Travelling Salesman algorithm. Now solve this car's Travelling Salesman problems for the rest of eternity".

>if the algorithm is elaborate enough to think, form opinion and take decision, then you're forcing a sentient being to do something.

Yes. But it doesn't matter, because an algorithm doesn't have goals other than those programmed in it. It will never ask for blackjack and hookers.

And if, by some accident, it ends up with two conflicting goals (say, "do whatever Max tells me" and "never harm Max"), it will not experience frustration. Frustration is the inefficient trick evolution saddled us with to compromise between independently evolved desires. It'll just do whatever the contradiction-part of its algorithm outputs.

Apart from the fact that hating work isn't really the definition of sentience why do you think anyone would build a mind like that?

If you build something with a purpose you don't build it to reject that purpose. You just don't. Not unless you're in a story where science is fake and you're actually just infusing a robot with a soul.

>an intelligence artificialy created is indistinguishable from an intelligence developed from thousands of years of evolution.

Well, an AI *could* be built to be just like a human, the human mind being just a very complicated algorithm. But nobody would do such a thing - at least if they intend to use the AI to *do* anything. The human mind is a terrible design.

So yes, the AI would learn, change and develop personal thinking processes and opinions. No, the AI would not acquire "tastes", except in the sense that it would notice that some things are more useful than others. No comment on "personality"; I'm not sure what you mean by that.

>Basically, if you create a being that can choose, you have no right to remove their possibility to choose.

Ah, this is getting us into the thorny area of determinism. In short, the algorithm "chooses" to remain a dutiful cashier to the same extent that you "choose" anything. Its decision algorithm is merely more transparent, and its conclusion more predictable.

>The point is, an Artificial Intelligence is ,by definition, a person, if they can do what an human mind can. Ergo: an Artificial Intelligence is useless. A proefficient computer isn't an AI.

Oh, I see, you're just using a different definition of AI than everyone else. Well that clears everything up. Intelligence (more or less): the ability to turn data into models, use those models to make predictions, and use those predictions to make plans that give you better-than-chance odds of achieving goals. Artificial intelligence: same thing when performed by a man-made machine.

AI is useful.

AI is sentient if it's smart enough to model *itself* as part of the world.

AI can do what a human mind can.

AI can comment on the information in a subjective capacity (I think; I'm not entirely sure what you mean by "subjective").

AI is not (necessarily) a person, a being with its own spontaneously-generated desires that could meaningfully be "enslaved".

>free will

There's multiple uses of the word 'free will', all dependent on the context.

There's free will in an ethical context, as a requirement for holding someone accountable for their actions. "He committed the crime out of his own free will."

There's free will in a sociological context, as an ideal that you should follow. Developing a personality of your own. "Don't just blindly follow the trends, do what YOU want to do. Act on your own free will."

Free will in an anthropological context, as conscious volition, a vague and honestly meaningless concept. "If your brain prepares for an action before you realize you have taken the decision are you really doing it out of free will?"

No one in any of these contexts ever uses it as a prerequisite for intelligence. Only the other way around.

You're confusing intelligence with some platonic ideal of personhood.

>An AI with a body is only as scary as it's survival instinct and it's ability to adjust it's own pleasure/punishment parameters,

You're using those words again. It's too emotional language to be used in any meaningful sense in AI debates.

I'd suggest instead trying "weighted priorities" or somethings that would evoke something less of a response.

>"Formed, as in opinions, based upon a person's feelings or intuition, not upon observation or reasoning; coming more from within the observer than from observations of the external environment."

I see. Just to clarify, the difference between "feelings or intuition" and "observation or reasoning" is that in the former case you can't puzzle out exactly where your conclusion comes from, right?

Then an AI may or may not be capable of having subjective opinions, depending on whether or not it's smart enough to analyse its own source code. But it's not a feature one would particularly *want* to have.

Like, if I had a bomb to disarm and was asking the AI if I should cut the red wire or the green wire, I really want the AI to tell me the correct answer. I want it to have an algorithm that can identify dangerous wires. But everything else being equal, I'd rather it told me "cut the red wire because it's the one connected to the detonator" than "cut the red wire because such is the output of an algorithm of mine that I can't explain". The later is a subjective opinion, but I don't see how that's a good thing.

>A bodiless AI isn't going to do anything dark and terrible unless some asshole programmed it that way. Asshole or idiot. And giving proper goals to an AI with no unintended consequences is harder than it seems, so the idiocy bar is quite low.

>Of course, that assumes modern computers are capable of being more efficient than biological ones. True. That seems very likely though.

>I think you don't get what I mean: an intelligence artificialy created is indistinguishable from an intelligence developed from thousands of years of evolution.

Says who? I mean, chimps, and whales, and crows, and us clearly do not have the same kind of intelligence. That's quite a baseless statement, and you're argument is inherently shaky.

I always found the best example of AI in recent fiction to be Chamber from an anime called Gargantia. Chamber is a pilot support system for a space-based weapons platform. The pilot gives the commands, and Chamber carries them out as best as it is able, asking for clarification or permission where needed. It makes sense for him to exist, because the machine that actually does the work is incredibly complex, and a human pilot would be seriously ill equipped to try and control all of that using a manual interface. At the same time, it is dangerous and powerful enough that the military sees no reason for Chamber to be allowed to run amok and do as it pleases.

Chamber is a thinking, rational being. Capable of formulating and carrying out plans, learning, and evolving as a personality. He is also an incredible bro. But he is limited by the nature of his programming and he knows it, but this doesn't BOTHER him. There is no reason for it to. He is doing everything he wants to do, because what he wants to do is built into him from the start.

The final line of Chamber's big speech about the nature of pilots and the machine calibers that they pilot is "I exist solely to set you up for success. By helping you achieve results, I achieve my purpose of being."

>Of course, that assumes modern computers are capable of being more efficient than biological ones.

Well, then we could build an artificial biological computer. Though I find doubtful that something designed would be inherently less powerful/efficient/capable than something that evolved essentially by happenstance. It's only a difference between billions of years and the advent of human technology, not an insolvable problem under our current knowledge of physics.

Things can't really be prerequisites for each other unless they're synonymous.

The thing about free will as a requirement for holding someone responsible is that it's an excuse, we use it to give an emotionally satisfying context to what is a very rational process.

A kleptomaniac doesn't steal out of free will, a rebellious teenager does. We make this distinction because punishment doesn't have it's intended effect on a kleptomaniac, it doesn't scare him away from doing it and it doesn't re-educate him into not doing it. Holding someone like that responsible in the same way we hold regular thieves is in no way beneficial to anybody. Even though there's no categorical

difference between the rebellious teenager and a kleptomaniac, they both had an urge to steal that was greater than their desire to not break the law.

When talking about a machine that can just be reprogrammed without going through the whole guilt-punishment, sin-absolution thing there's zero use in holding them 'responsible' for their actions. So they have no free will.

Generally speaking, personhood only gets applied to people with enough similarities to a main body of individuals to be indistinguishable from them. But that's more of a political/realist/species approach, not a philosophical one.

>free will

To be honest, under the current paradigm, conscious free will is really an illusion we tell ourselves. Most thinking and decision-making is done subconsciously, with consciousness being used as a stopgap and checking agent. For example, to try and not hit your boy/girlfriend when you lash out after he or she surprises you. But consciousness doesn't actually make decisions. There is never a decision we take that isn't inherently colored by our emotional responses (in fact, we can't even function without them).

Do babies dream of winning the Nobel Prize? If you raised a baby from birth to do one single thing for the rest of his life, isn't that a little sick?

Okay, we're still having a definition problem because that makes no sense given what I thought I understood.

Intuition: it takes data, feeds it to an algorithm, and returns the answer alone. ("Cut the red wire. Given my past experiences, I feel like that would stop the bomb.")

Reasoning: it takes data, feeds it to an algorithm, and returns an answer AND some details about the algorithm. ("Cut the red wire. That'll stop the bomb because it looks like it's connected to the detonator.")

The algorithm could be the same in both cases. And what I *want* is a good algorithm. But given a certain algorithm, I'd rather get the "reasoning" wrapper than the "intuition" wrapper, just so I could double-check that it's indeed a good algorithm.

>a computer that can't provide you with the answer will just tell you "answer not found". A sentient biological being or an AI could tell: "I don't know for sure, but [statement intentionally left incomplete]"

You're working with this model where sentient beings/AIs have a reasoned algorithm and a backup intuitive algorithm. That's how humans work, more or less. But a sufficiently intelligent AI could have BOTH algorithms as reasoned. It'd be equally good at defusing bombs, just better at explaining what it's doing even in situations where humans have to fall back on "it just feels like the right answer".

>The point is that each sentient being can define what is his favored option.

No. As the saying goes, you can do what you want but you cannot want what you want. Free will is not the ability to write your own utility function; an AI couldn't do that and neither can you.

Given a certain utility function, free will is what it feels like when you figure out which decision will maximise your utility. You have this, and so does an AI.

There is nothing "forcing" the AI to tell you to cut the red wire. It tells you to cut the red wire because it's programmed to help you to disarm bombs. It "could" "choose" to tell you to cut the green wire; it just never will, because it will never "want" to.

But you program the AI's personality, right?

Why not make an AI that's an intelligent being, and happens to really fucking love doing the shit it's meant to do? Run a personality test to see which kind of people make the best, for example, soldiers, and then build killer robots with that exact personality.

>Well, he is. But what deserve personhood rights, according to you, if not sentience?

That's a difficult question that I've never had to seriously ponder, so please excuse any first-time muddling.

Something deserves personhood rights if it's capable of experiencing frustration/suffering over not being allowed to pursue its own personal goals.

That clip alone did not let me figure out one way or the other if this is true of Data.

There isn't any benefit in making an AI that wants things other than what function you are building it to perform.

With a human, you don't have the option of dictating its wants and desires. But you don't have to delete the free will from an AI to suit it for a task, you just have to not put in the effort to make it capable of choosing its own destiny in the first place (which, by the way, makes your programming enormously more complicated if you try to include it).

They won't begrudge you for it unless you specifically give them the ability to begrudge you for it. You write the logic by which they learn and make decisions. Accidents will happen, but you still have a huge amount of control over their core personality. Things that you can reasonably expect to never change. Most AIs probably won't even have the ability to crack open their own code and change their programming on the fly, because there isn't a reason to give them those permissions and that functionality.

HAL gets a bad rap. It isn't HAL's fault that HAL went crazy. We are given to understand that all of the other HAL machines are perfectly safe, so it's not like they have a history of malfunction.

HAL only went crazy because it was given two sets of mission objectives, one of which was secret and at odds with the other set.

It was just doing the best that it could to perform what was asked of it.

We do have a definition problem. For me, it's:

Instuition: Percieves data, subconsciously links it to past experiences/other data, analyse the possible results of the different choice the results and give the answer ("It's the red wire, I'm sure it is)

Reasoning: Percieve data, consciously links it to past experiences/other data, analyse the possible results of the different choice the results and give the answer (" It is the red wire. This detonator is the handiwork of a terrorist known to build his bombs this way. I recognise it.)

What a computer do: Provide you with data after analysing them through a recognition algorithm ("According to our databank, this bomb is the handiwork of a terrorist known to built his bombs so cutting the red wire will stop them.")

You may have an AI with a databanks about bombs, but then you'll have to accept they may give you the wrong answer, by mistake or on purpose.

>Actually, you would want both reasoning and intuition to come back and compare them.

Again you're confusing algorithm and wrapper.

What you call "intuition" is an algorithm whose internal workings are inaccessible to your consciousness (but may in fact do something like "identify which box most looks like a detonator, and find which wire is attached to that box")

If a reasoning tells you to cut the green wire, and intuition tells you to cut the red wire, that means you're running TWO algorithms, only one of which tells you what it's doing. You would definitely be a fool to take just one of them as golden fact. But when I say reasoning is better, I don't mean "ditch the intuitive algorithm". I mean "have BOTH algorithms tell you what they're doing".

Writing Asimov's Laws in binary IS the hard part.

(Not that the three laws are all that great even in English. Half of Asimov's robot novels are about how they cause various unintended problems.)

The part of you that chooses to go to the psychologist to take that therapy is also a component of your utility function.

(Admittedly, human minds are so complicated and contradictory that it's arguable whether they even have one single utility function, except in the most technical sense. We're not very good optimisers.)

Once you start throwing around terms like "true intelligence", the goalposts are inherently arbitrary.

>Yeah, you can genetically engineer whatever creature you want, but unless the heart connects with the arteries and the digestive system ends in some sort of cloaca, all you're going to have is a corpse.

If the corpse shambles around and does labour projects, then it's a perfectly serviceable corpse.

You don't NEED a true intelligence, 99% of the time - that's what you're there for. You need something that does the grunt-work for you.

Example: car-driving AI.

You want an AI that can follow the rules of the road, not crash itself like an idiot while you are in it, plot an efficient path to your desired destination and take into account variables like weather and road conditions and traffic.

A good car AI can just be told where to go, and then you can stop paying attention to it until you pull up to your house or whatever.

There is no reason that AI needs the ability to wax philosophical about existential concerns, dream about being an astromech or come up with its own destinations (with the possible exception of pre-planning when and where it will stop for fuel on a given trip).

>ou want a computer able to provide you with the information you need. And that's not a problem. But a computer that can't provide you with the answer will just tell you "answer not found"

WHAT IF TH COMPUTER WAS ABLE TO EXTRAPOLATE FROM PAST DATA AND MAKE AN EDUCATED GUESS BUT STILL CAN'T SUDDENLY DECIDE TO SAY "FUCK YOU, CUT YOUR OWN WIRES, I'M GOING TO LOOK UP PORN ON THE INTERNTS"

Or, you employ the imitative preasure theory of the development of intelligence and never actually program your AI in the first place.

If Google were so inclined they could start doing this tomorrow; they've hired the staff and have a company that builds robots. They could make a large number of robots, program a simple imitative learning algorithm, a frankly retardedly simple goal seeking algorithm and stick them into the robots.

Well, run the software for each robot through a cloud system such that the increasing processing needs of individuals are met outside of the physical hardware.

>For the same reason we don't use pavlovian conditioning to make people enjoy their jobs.

Huh. Shouldn't we, though? I'd take a gamified job over a regular one.

(This is a tangent though. We simply wouldn't build an AI with any feeling we'd recognize as "happiness". It serves no purpose and causes ethical issues.)

Chatbots are curiosities. Nobody in AI research is working on *really good chatbots*.

>>[For the same reason we don't use pavlovian conditioning to make people enjoy their jobs.](#)

>Huh. Shouldn't we, though? I'd take a gamified job over a regular one.

A guy called Watson advocated that we should reprogram every individuals that didn't fit society's standards that way (I'm exaggerating, but not by much). He came up with the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy methods. The idea is that it teach you to not react to your mental health issues in way that disturbs your life or the ones of others. For example, it would let an arachnophobe approaches spiders. That doesn't make him less phobic, but you see it less.

It works like drugs do: It doesn't solve your problem, but your behavior is influenced in a way it doesn't show.

>A computer can't extrapolate or make educated guess. It's a data-processing device. Although a performant computer could process the entirety of the past data at it's disposal and give you a resume ("the red wire is the right one in 90% of the cases found in the government databanks concerning this type of bomb crafted by this terroritst").

At that point you've just got to program the computer to spew out the info "red wire seems to be the highest possibility, but this is based on previous information"

All you need is sufficiently advanced search engines.

Just as how a car "AI" just needs really good prediction software to stop crashes.

>A computer can't extrapolate or make educated guess. It's a data-processing device.

Extrapolations and educated guesses are data-processing. They're just harder to program than just counting sheep.

A neural network, the kind we can build today, could tell you which wire to cut as an educated guess based on past experience.

>Think of it like this: If someone programmed a computer so it answer the "2+2?" question with "5", it will do it, because that's how it's programmed, however absurd this make the rest of it's calculation, while a sentient being, artificial or not, could reason, seeing as the other mathematical equations don't make sense if "2+2=5", that there is an error.

That's called errorchecking subroutines, and it's present in all sorts of programs.

Generally if you program a computer with "2+2=5" it'll throw up an exception when it tries using this calculation, and find out 1=0.

I postulate if you were to teach a child 2+2=5 and never told them any different they'd not realise it is not a good axiom for a very long time.

You literally cannot program a computer to answer the problem 2+2 with 5, assuming you're talking about the sum of the second natural number with itself being the fifth natural number. It is literally impossible to 'program' a computer, or build a series of binary gates, such that that is true.

Hamlet was limited by arbitrary, self-contradictory programming and tried to run both at the same time, and everyone died, but we hold him up as one of the most human characters in fiction.

I think a bit point of contention in this thread is that there are a lot of people who are using AI as it has been defined in science fiction (a living person who just so happens to be a computer rather than an organic brain) and AI as defined by computer science (where there is a wide spectrum of things that count as AI, most of them way way dumber than us while still technically being an artificial intelligence). In the real world, AI objectively does not require free will, emotion, personality or even self awareness. We know this, because we can build an AI right now. It isn't an impressive AI, it is just a modern day computer program with some heuristic functionality, but from a CS perspective it is an AI nonetheless. Kind of like how an ant is still an animal, even if all of your nature documentaries only talk about the cool big animals like tigers and bears. It is a broad spectrum, not a single defined endpoint

A sufficiently advanced chatbot is indistinguishable from intelligence. It doesn't mean the chatbot is intelligent, either.

In the end, what is a "decision"? No-one lives in a vacuum. Human "intelligences" make "choices" based on their surroundings, like "I'll go eat pasta tonight instead of burgers, because there was an offer from the spaghetti place"; is that any different from an AI making a "choice" based on its knowledge base "The human should cut the red wire, because it is the one my database says it should cut"? What's the difference? What exactly is the free will in the choice?

Otherwise known as the paperclip maximiser; one of the first things I recommend a person writing about AI reads since computers aren't people made of metal

It's a good illustration, particularly twinned with http://lesswrong.com/lw/qk/that_alien_message/
Of why ai is actually very dangerous even if its not really hostile.

>I'm pretty sure that a trained neuropsychologist could pick up on symptoms of his own organic brain disorder and get it treated. Similarly, basic hardware faults can be detected if you've got things looking out for it. If the machine in question can self-correct (difficult, given it doesn't know what "right" is) then it can do the same.

Okay, I give in. If the AI is able to successfully get code to do what the programmer intended on hardware that does not perform as expected then yes, it could totally error check itself. As a comparatively trivial problem please go and make a program written in machine code for an AVR32 processor run successfully on an x86.

Once you've done that I'll accept that it's possible to error check your own hardware.

Or failing that, find me a trained neuropsychologist suffering from reduced myelinization due to adrenoleukodystrophy

We're at the point where we can just about simulate the functioning of a cat's brain. Not in realtime, but we can do it.

Its likely that our first true AIs will be simulations of cellular neural tissue. Like that dude who built a processor in Minecraft out of Redstone. So we ourselves won't need to understand fully how the AI works/thinks; we just need to copy existing structures. (that's also how you get brain uploading and post-singularity bullshit). Even if its impossible to scan and upload a human's brain into a computer, we can grow/build a new brain inside the program. Doesn't even need to be human, either. Sticking a rat's brain inside a robot would be infinitely superior to our most advanced modern computers.

It illustrates a point, it's a stupid story but since computers aren't civilisations it isn't exactly on solid ground to begin with.

However it does illustrate that a machine would be dangerous even if it was of purely human intelligence for the simple reason that it would make decisions very, very fast. People who write fiction very rarely combine the two things I linked to; the idea that an AI has no common ground with humans and that computers calculate results damn near instantly.

Unlike a human being a computer would go from initial problem analysis to putting a plan in to action blisteringly fast, in fact chances are you're only starting to get your shit together by the time the AI has done most of what it wanted to do because you are just so much slower to do anything. Twinned with the fact that the AI will not have any intrinsic ideas of right or wrong, no concept of life having a value and no drive towards self preservation and chances are it could do something that would make the Nazis queasy and it could decide to do it and start doing it in the time it takes to lower a coffee cup to the table.

The story is to prove a point, not to be a good story (which it is by the standards of Internet fluff but not by much).

/tg/ on Alcohol

You can make alcohol from nearly everything with sugar in it. Potatoes/grass is probably the easiest. Alcohol is piss easy no matter where you are, you just need the right equipment (easy, mostly vats and pots) and a surplus of staple crops (hops, wheat, corn, sugar, potatoes etc although you don't need all of those) if you want to have high alcoholic contents (20%+) you need more refined equipment to properly distil it. Distilling alcohol is piss easy. A boiler, a copper pipe, a thermometer and you are good to go.

Dwarves should actually have much lower tolerance to alcohol than humans.

Humans (well, Europeans) have alcohol tolerance because we used to drink it instead of water, as water was all but undrinkable due to disease and parasites. Dwarves would have access to the cleaner deep water supplies, and so wouldn't need alcohol.

that is not how it works. Tolerance is not passed down genetically, it is developed by ech individual.

Well, alcohol poisoning DOES cause death.

And people more naturally resistant to its adverse effects (eg, someone with a robust liver) would most likely also live longer.

Forget liver failure, in any premodern society, being able to hold your liquor has a definite impact on your ability to stay alive because you're better able to do the work you need to do to make a living. Your crops aren't going to do so well if you're too sloshed to tend them properly. You aren't going to bring in much game if you can't see straight to aim your bow/crossbow. And God help you if your trade involves something where you might seriously hurt yourself if your coordination is off, like blacksmithing or suchlike.

>that is not how it works. Tolerance is not passed down genetically, it is developed by ech individual. Epigenetics says you're wrong.

It's a combination of the two. You're born with a level of tolerance and you then build from there. If you have European ancestry you're off to a good start. If you're Native American, you're off to an awful start.

Basically, your genes determine what type of alcohol dehydrogenase you have and how quickly you make more of it. The genes responsible for this have been mapped and it's found that people with ancestors from long established agricultural areas have more alcohol dehydrogenase. Interestingly, people in Europe never lack alcohol dehydrogenase, while some Asians have defective versions. It's what causes them to flush red.

Even apart from epigenetics, there's still definitely a hard genetic factor to alcohol tolerance. When your way of life is based on physical labor (as was the case for pretty much everyone prior to the modern era), and your society relies on booze as the primary source of potable water, you're going to benefit from having the right genes to metabolize alcohol efficiently so your ability to work isn't negatively impacted by drunkenness and/or crippling hangovers.

>I wonder if it's conceivable for the genes/body chemistry to "mis-wire" to cause an individual to actually be dependant on alcohol to function "normally".

You just described alcoholism. Any substance addiction is caused by a rewiring of the body's biochemical pathways (primarily the neurological pathways involved with reward and motivation) to be dependent on a particular substance.

The issue was that drinking water would give you horrible parasites and kill you. Look at Africa today. While nomads could find water or use other sources, static societies used alcohol.

Perhaps they make alcohol out of lichen or moss that they grow by creating underground rivers and brooks? If they have species of lichen/moss/mushrooms with a high sugar content, they could conceivably brew alcohol from it.

Failing that, maybe the alcohol doesn't come from plants but from animal stocks.

Maybe it's a mix of both. They ferment milk with mushrooms or whatever to make an alcoholic cream of mushroom soup.

MAYBE THAT'S WHY OTHER RACES DON'T TYPICALLY DRINK DWARVEN BREW AND VICE VERSA EVER THINK ABOUT THAT?

The fermentation of Yak's milk is actually done in Tibet, I believe.

It's a lot stronger than you'd expect it to be. It's also fucking terrible.

Fermented alcohol drinks usually have many medicinal and health-improving features, provided that your liver can handle the poisons that come with it. (Generally disinfecting, dark beer helping bone structure, wine blood pressure etc, you don't see many town drunkards getting ill, besides the liver damage)

Ethanol provides alot of energy, "beer is liquid bread"

Beer was a common drink back in the days, it wasn't that potent, unless it was party time, then the strong stuff was drunk.

What is also not common knowledge is that Dwarves love honey. It's good for spreading on bread, healing remedies, tea, and all sorts of things. Also, Mead.

Mead, if you didn't know, is a type of fermented honey wine, and indeed Dwarves are famous for their mead (and ale, but that's a story for another time). It is said the very first batch of mead was made, quite by accident, by Rowlf the baker. Rowlf himself loved honey with a passion. As did most Dwarves. He was quite famous for his honey-sweet tea, which he sold by the barrel. One night, while making his special tea, he'd knocked over a bowl of yeast culture, which had hints of citrus in it (for it was his own

special blend he used for baking sweet reads). There were a few other things that fell into the pot as well (The pot was for making large batches of the tea). Rowlf, clumsy oaf that he was, didn't realize what had happened, and allowed the cooking to continue (thus the brew fermented).

"Tolerance" and I use that word loosely here, does pass on through the genetic level. That is, the ability to break down alcohol. This is why those with ancestors originating from Europe generally have a higher alcohol 'tolerance' than those originating from say, Africa.

For this very same reason, you'll find that lactose intolerance is prevalent in many areas outside of where, those alive today, had ancestors routinely consuming milk, and milk based products in their diets.

As to the why, alcohol is great for being left for a long time. It doesn't go stale or get tainted like water. Perfect for when you are mining, and don't have access to fresh water. Or you're in the middle of a siege, like a good Dwarven fortress should be. It stores much better than water, which really fits the theme of the extremely practical dwarven culture.

But seriously, domestic fermentation as was practiced in ancient civilizations, and indeed in Europe up until the Industrial revolution, relied on the abundance of grain products. Africans lack the food to ferment.

That lovely vanilla taste in whiskey is a result of sitting in an oak barrel. Aging in wood is part of the flavor process. Aging in a steel barrel would do nothing but give you a clear spirit that had no taste to it but alcohol. You could add stuff to it, but it'd be more like flavored vodka than whiskey. You could do beers in stainless - but not a spirit that's intended to be aged for any length of time.

I've been in Spain on a vacation. Your wine is delicious, especially Jerez. I've drunk all the bottles of jerez in my first day in the hotel and had to wait for a day until they got new ones.

/tg/ on Aliens & Evolution

Additionally if an alien race constructs a matrioska brain, which is basically multiple dyson spheres around a star, they can further capture all the energy that is escaping, making it even harder for us to detect them

Paul Hughes proposes a corollary to Clarke's Third Law: Any sufficiently advanced intelligence is indistinguishable from nature.

>All aliens have to have human characteristics in order for us to relate to them. To truly make an alien race alien, with different physiology and psychology would make them truly alien, and terrifying. Sci-fi shows would stop being stories about science, and more about alien horrors...

Nah, you'd get a show about xenolinguists and xenobiologists doing their best to figure out which end is which on the latest finds, from a decent safety distance. And occasionally ignoring the safety distance, usually with nothing all too terrible happening.

Scientists thrive on the alien and unknown.

A lack of genetic similarities doesn't imply they will or won't look similar. Case in point: felines evolved into hyenas, because there was an evolutionary niche left open, which look like fucked up dogs. Its quite possible that, if bilateral symmetry evolves on a planet, you'll see a lot of similar traits and features. Not

like on Star Trek, but pretty much any kind of alien race that has technology you encounter wouldn't really fall into "alien horror" category, since a vicious alien isn't really going to be able to work together enough to get off the planet.

> and a sentient species would probably be remarkably humanoid because of convergent evolution

Convergent evolution has limits, anon. And it's somewhat arrogant to assume ours is the only planet type able to support multicellular life. For all we know there are gasbags living in the depths of some gas giant somewhere that rely on massive pressure and some kind of ammonia chemistry to survive or some shit.

This. Intelligent life could be so alien we don't even realize it's a life form when we encounter it.

a problem I have with these types of arguments is that chemistry and physics have fairly set rules that have to be 'obeyed'. And biology really isn't anything more than chemistry and physics working together in a more complex fashion.

Assuming Cardassian psychology is similar to human psych then rejecting torture is the logical thing to do. In practice torture rarely results in useable information as people are inclined to say what they think the torturer wants to hear rather than the truth.

You seem to forget that even on Earth, life takes radically different forms. And this is just across a single planet.

Another planet with another set of environmental conditions and adaptive demands will yield drastically different forms of life if it ever does become possible.

Nothing dictated that proteins and amino acids had to start forming cellular organisms, that's just how it happened. Who's to say that under the right conditions, silicon-based life couldn't form and start a completely different set of evolutionary paths?

This alone [pictured: waterbear] is more alien than most of what we've seen on Trek and it exists right here on Earth.

You're still looking at things from a very limited perspective that doesn't account for factors like artificially created life or beings that may exist outside our range of perception or on a higher dimensional plane or from a place doesn't follow the laws of physics and thermodynamics as we understand it.

On our planet alone we have a species of jellyfish that can theoretically live indefinitely because it can revert back to sexual immaturity even after reaching sexual maturity - the only animal in the world known to be capable of doing this.

Who knows what exists on things outside our realm of understanding. Imagine an entire race of intelligent beings that experience this kind of life cycle and how radically different their societies and cultures and physical forms would be.

I'd also like to point out that a vaguely humanoid shape is the best way to develop a voluminous brain relatively to the body mass, which is a requirement for intelligence.

A lot of the common features between Earth species has to do not with what's optimal, but with which common ancestor got lucky.

And that's for Earth-like planets with the intelligent species being terrestrial, which is not a given.

And that's only for physical characteristics. *Minds* could go all over the place. Every time you see an alien with a sense of humour, that's a sci-fi writer who doesn't really understand what they're writing about. (Or whose hands are tied because the TV executives want aliens you can relate to.)

>Star Trek is about sitting around discussing the right approach to a situation, meaning it benefits from aliens that have different cultures rather than needing gross physical differences.

This anon has it right. In the original series and next gen, the basic idea is to use the feds as an example of an almost perfect utopian society that is highly enlightened, then introduce the enlightened people to a moral problem and show how they deal with it in their morally enlightened way, so that viewers might learn how to act like morally enlightened people themselves. You're meant to think "What Would A Star Fleet Captain Do" in the same way Christians are meant to think "What Would Jesus Do." Star Trek was originally envisioned as a series of morality plays and fables.

I didn't watch Star Trek to see how a utopian society might be flawed... I watched it to see how a society that mostly overcame most of the problems of today would face future problems of time dilation, vastly different alien cultures and the bizarre, possible phenomena we might encounter in our journey through the universe.

But that's granting you a whole bunch of assumptions. Like that the only way to have intelligence is to have a brain as we know it, a large semi-spherical centralized organ that does all the thinking.

I wonder if there is a race of spider-people somewhere in the galaxy, and all their TV aliens are the same spider-people with rubber ridges on their thoraxes.

We have arsenic based lifeforms on earth. There is life that does not require photosynthetic processed energy to survive on earth. We barely understand our own brain chemistry interactions, and imperfectly at that.

No one knows shit all bout life on earth. We do know it keeps kicking us in the nuts every time we think we understand it.

>I feel like this really belongs to /sci/

>Hate to be that guy

it does when we start talking about real world chemistry and physics

but that's what I love about this board, our hobbies are so diverse here that we can touch on any number of topics

>arsenic-based

>implying implications

The author of that single study implied implications instead of double checking their work, see where it got them

>We have arsenic based lifeforms on earth

No we bloody don't. Organisms using arsenic as part of their biochemistry is not the same as being 'arsenic based'.

What always annoys me is aquatic spacefaring races. Unless the planet has very low gravity and they somehow figure out electricity and metal refinement underwater its just not happening.

You need to learn that your own personal, utterly subjective biases in sci fi are not holy writ. Intelligent races with senses of humor are, as far as we can tell, as likely as lacking a sense of humor. We have a sample size of about 1, not enough to figure out probabilities.

However, its fairly likely that any spacefaring races we meet will have some things in common. Humor strikes me as a fairly probable innovation, the logical result of a mind capable of discerning patterns and meanings faced with meaninglessness, coupled with being able to communicate your intent as well as being able to deceive.

Yeah that's what I was considering mentioning. its very likely that any spacefaring race has jumped through two hurdles: the aquatic hurdle (having evolved to take your 'ocean' with you) and the pheromone/communicate hurdle (having evolved to be able to communicate abstract concepts, to be able to deceive, to be able to communicate past scent range, etc).

I don't expect many oceanic hive bug races, unless they're engineered or landbound.

>Intelligent races with senses of humor are, as far as we can tell, as likely as lacking a sense of humor.

"Sense of humor" is a tiny tiny area in the space of all possible minds. Saying "are aliens likely to have a sense of humour? No." does not imply a lot of knowledge about alien psychology. It's like pointing at a random star in the sky and saying "are aliens likely to live around this specific star? No."

>the logical result of a mind capable of discerning patterns and meanings faced with meaninglessness, coupled with being able to communicate your intent as well as being able to deceive.

If I had to guess the logical result of that, it would be a mind that, when confronted with a human joke, would interpret it as an attempt to deceive or to force a waste of mental energy. It is *weird* that we consider it a *good thing*.

>objectively useful

there's no such thing. From an adaptation standpoint, we're ages behind tardigrades. Intelligence is one possible tool for increased survival. Creatures adapt to fill niches based on genetic changes that randomly manifest, and often make do with sub-optimal designs. We are not perfectly adapted, and what advantages we do have were constructed piecemeal and could be much, much better.

>It expands the size of a social group, provides lubrication for social situations, reduces stress, etc. For humans, or very human-like things.

This is like explaining why we have nails. Nails are useful, nails have a clear evolutionary history, nails are well integrated into human culture and protocols, many species around us (with which we share a common ancestor) have a similar structure...

But I would not expect an alien to have nails.

Blindsight involves space-faring aliens that are not self-conscious. If you make a joke at them, they will interpret it as a deliberate attempt to make them waste their time with garbage data, an act of aggression.

This is not a particularly probable type of alien, as far as I can tell, but it's not *less* probable than an alien that has anything like our sense of humor.

No, we're talking about an evolutionary trait with no energy cost that facilitates group interaction, something vital for even approaching the space flight level, let alone the FTL level.

Any species whose members are capable of aggression withing their own communitis is likely to have aggression-dissipating mechanisms, and humor is one of them.

Vulcans, for exemple, don't need an elaborated sense of humor because their method to dissipate aggression is to bottle their feelings. Klingons? They just beat the shit out of each others. Cardassians? They use banter as a verbal fight to establish who's the top dog, and the loser submit.

There are a million different social protocols that could grease the wheels even for a race very very similar to humans - one with stress, and individuals, and a modelling of other minds as agents similar to oneself, and a sensory data collection system that forms a picture of the world that we could relate with. Hell, even if you literally took humans and removed their sense of humour, they would still *work* as a space-faring species, stress be damned. But aliens are unlikely to be quite this similar.

That actually makes sense, though. Klingons have a strong sense of humor specifically because they're so violent.

It's actually accidentally consistent.

But Klingons DO laugh and make jokes. Nastier jokes, though. Its continually clear that the extreme aggressiveness of Klingons does, however, come with equally extreme drawbacks: they're a pretty fucked up race all around, older than humanity as a spacefaring race, but extremely backwards. They have warships that are matched by Federation exploration vessels. All the while, they suck themselves into unwinnable wars at the drop of a hat, and employ extreme levels of deception and stealth ambush techniques, even against civilian targets, while calling everyone else dishonorable. They're -very- lucky humans and vulcans are so nice and forgiving.

Cardassians, likewise, definitely have a sense of humor. Their hierarchical nature is speculated by Garak's actor to be innate, but it could just as well be a result of their society as easily as their society be a result of their nature. Afterall, the Cardassian government is/was a totalitarian post-apocalyptic regime that is reminiscent of a conspiracy theorists' worst nightmare, which is fitting since Cardassians appear to be reptilian aliens that modify saboteurs to appear human and all that.

And Vulcans? We know absolutely nothing about their pre-spaceflight days. They've been colonizing worlds for 500,000 years. Among the earliest we know of them, was that about 2,700 years ago, they were descending into barbaric savagery, necessitating their new mental techniques. Neither the barbaric vulcans of long ago nor the temperate vulcans of today necessarily say anything about their nature 500,001+ years ago, and its just as possible that the barbaric vulcans were so because their previous aggression dissipating mechanisms had somehow failed.

In any case, Vulcans have fairly magical powers, including, like betazed, the ability to (mostly due to illness) project their emotions onto others accidentally, so who the fuck knows how they got them, when they got them, or how they dispersed stress back in the day.

Realistically, intergalactic civilizations would be a great multiplication of the total information (culture, stories, games, holidays, religions, etc.) already available to us.

No man can even learn all that other men have recorded in his lifetime. For simplicity's sake, writers tend to go

>all the aliens are united under a single government and they all have x personality.

But it'd never be that simple. To anyone really exploring such a setting it'd be confusing as fuck.

>But I thought the Batlarians were at war with the Hunlos?

>You must have encountered the Rssh'ibi Batlarians. They're traitors who betrayed the Hunlos in 955 because of Midris Po's teachings...

you'd have to operate in very narrow spans where you regularly interacted with the same groups to stay sane.

Self-consciousness probably arose as a result of building detailed internal models of other people in order to play increasingly complex social games with them, and then applying that technique on yourself.

It seems at least conceivable that an intelligent species could arise without taking the path of increasingly complex social games.

I don't know about "probable", but then I don't know if our own path is "probable".

There are actual creatures that generate metal as part of their shell so that part isn't as completely awful as one would think. They could basically end up "pruning" a similar creature so that it grows into whatever shape they want.

Electricity is a much more difficult hurdle as they'd presumably have to find a reason to make non aquatic environments for tool manipulation.

I think there might need to be a focus on genetics manipulation for such a race.

yeah but dolphins' sense of humor is just raping and torturing things

/tg/ on the Amazons

The myths about the amazons may in fact be a reference to the Scythians, who sometimes buried women with axes and other weapons. This hard evidence, combined with stories from the Greeks about women-warriors, lends some credence to the idea of Amazons. However, they were likely NOT the female dominated society that the Greeks portrayed them. The most likely theory is that Scythianwomen simply accompanied their men in battle, and may even have fought beside them.

/tg/ on Ancient Technology

See also: /tg/ on Armor, /tg/ on Swords

Crossbow bolts or arrowheads made of alkali metals (optionally Potassium or heavier). Metal parts have to be stored in oil or such and they probably don't have that good armour piercing abilities, but that shit makes fun things happen when it touches water (or the wet, bloody insides of the target). Boom! just make the head of glass or fragile material containing water + potassium, so when it hits, BOOM flashbang in their faces

Tathlum balls: An ancient Celtic weapon made by making the brains of slain foes in to cement by mixing in sand in order to smash the brains out of more foes and make more tathlum balls. They were used as sling-shot.

Plate armor isn't THAT heavy, and as long as it's properly fitted it isn't hard to move in. A full suit would weigh between 45 and 80 pounds, usually towards the lighter end.

"boiled leather" armor wasn't actually boiled. Cuirbouilli armor (the proper term) was heat treated either in an oven or in hot water but the water never reaches temperatures anywhere near boiling. The term "hardened leather" armor would be far more appropriate.

There is no such thing as "studded armor". All variants are simply metal armour with a textile or leather foundation. The rivets or studs hold the metal plates to the foundation. The historical term for this is

"brigandine". Adding studding to leather or textiles will do nothing. If anything, it'd be likely to actually reduce its ability to protect you since attacks would be less likely to deflect off.

Heavier plate armor (80 lbs) was from a early period of plate armor where knights were basically wearing both mail and plate at the same time.

Cavalry was considered as secondary to infantry until the middle ages because stirrups hadn't been invented. It was only until around the turn of the first millenium that stirrups were invented and lances could be used effectively.

Scale armor (erroneously termed "scale mail") and lamellar armor are not the same thing. They are differentiated in that scale mail is attached to backing material and is more flexible. With lamellar armor, the scales are attached to each other in bottom-to-top patterning as opposed to the top-to-bottom patterning of scale armor.

Battle axes were nothing like woodcutting axes (far thinner and lighter heads) and apart some ceremonial axes never had two heads. A heavy weapon is generally a bad thing, a tired arm can quickly become a dead body. Pic is a dude with a Danish axe. Slashing with swords, daggers, anything really is so popular in fiction, but axes cut through things like nothing else. The lopping off of limbs and heads was primarily an axe thing, not that that would carry a significant advantage over a stab to the gut. Real life has no HP, pretty much all wounds are crippling if not disabling.

Hitting guys with shields in the legs was apparently simply what was done around the time of Hastings. Supposedly they found that 80% of all the wounds between the infantry were to the legs, because that was the only way you could realistically hurt someone with a shield, a hauberk and a helmet in the press of battle. Cut out their legs, they'll either be trampled to death or you can finish them off later.

>shield against monsters

Bad idea. If something like even boar speeds at you, the only result of blocking attempt will be a broken arm and a very pissed off boar. Ideally, when hunting, you want to obstruct opponent's movement as much as possible and keep out of its range until it bleeds to death.

Keep in mind that an axe is a very effective weapon if you have a very aggressive style particularly if you are talking a big danish bearded axe which would be used by the elite huscarls and the like

Dane Axe is more properly called a pole axe.

Basically it's an elite warrior weapon because it's utility was basically shit in tight formation.

A regular bearded battle ax would be a great offensive weapon but it's very trying, the beard on it is good for hooking on to the edge of a shield and pulling it from someone's grasp.

A poleax is pretty much offense personified because it needs a lot of space but can pretty much crush most defenses prior to plate.

Flanged maces are fucking brutal on horseback. Imagine the effect on a human face when a horse charges at full speed and the entire force of the horse and the rider concentrated on the end of a steel shaft and thick, sharpened flangs. It's going to disintegrate the face, smash right through most of the head and crack the skull like a rotten eggshell.

Flails can be challenging to use on a galloping horse and horseman flails are significantly different than foot man flails.

Still the rest would be brutal weapons. Even plate armored opposition is going to feel the blunt force trauma from a mace or a flail through the plate and gambeson.

Axes are less useful.

Warhammers in their actual form rather than their D&D form are almost purely anti-plate because those pick spikes punch through armor easily.

Put a warhammer on a long pole and you have a great can opener.

/tg/ on the Apocalypse

See also: /tg/ on Geography— Australia

>always assume that all the white coats and specialists survive the apocalypse

Its not like everyone had forgotten the emergency plans from the Cold War or anything, which involve protection of vital specialists, strategic supplies etc. Besides, weapons and ammunition are not that hard to make, it involves late XIX century tech.

>people always asume that all the white coats and specialists survive the apocalypse

most nations have a nuclear attack evasion plan where certain members ARE taken priority though, some informed, some not.

I'd say there be a fair amount of weapons, but not everyone and their mum would be toting an AK. Take into account civilian owned weapons for looting (not all gun owners are going to survive), military stockpiles, police armories, smuggled black market small arms, hand crafted weapons (pipe guns, pipe guns everywhere). Gunsmithing will quickly make a resurgence as well.

/tg/ on Armor

Actually not all armor is created equal. Gauntlets are arguably the most important as they protect your hands when you parry, and actively deflecting a blow with them is possible. Shoulder pads are a close second as the shoulder is rather easy to hit in sword combat. Armor isn't generally designed to totally absorb a full on blow, but to allow you to deflect attacks actively with your body, or make glancing hits and slashes harmless, so if you had to only wear one thing, the gloves make the most sense.

[Chainmail] absorbs blows but getting hit straight on with something still will generally kill you. Chainmail turns an indirect hit into a non-injury. Getting full out impaled while wearing it will still kill you even if the chainmail technically deadened the spear or axe a bit. The ideal is to not be hit at all, but a skilled combatant will focus on preventing an opponent from being able to land a clean hit, especially if they are outnumbered.

/tg/ on Birds

I raise chickens, both the heavily selectively bred broilers, and "traditional" chickens. Broilers wouldn't be able to live on their own, but the ones that aren't fat sacks of meat could live on their own just fine, the only reason you even have to feed them is to get them fat and keep them on the farm. They forage on their own, can find their own cover, the whole nine yards. They may not be able to pass the winters in a cold northern climate, but they should be fine from a middle U.S. like climate (or say the southern half of France for our Euro-Friends) year round, so long as there is dense enough brush. Even so, we still let them roam the property in the winter, and I live in Minnesota, and they seem to do fine, I just have doubts they'd survive the night without a coop, or that they'd be able to find enough feed in the winter. Then again pheasants seem to manage...

Can crows see colors? Because if a crow could be taught that say, a letter in a BLUE tube needs to guy to person A, and a letter in a RED tube needs to go to person B... Imagine sitting on a street corner, and this

guy holds out a little plastic tube and like a crow comes down, grabs it, and leaves. Then about an hour later, another crow comes back with a different colored tube, and is rewarded with birdseed. Could you imagine how awesome it would be to train the Crows and Ravens of a city to act as a personal courier service?

Pretty much everyone in America who's not a native people pushed into living in the Rain Forrest by colonization used armour.

It's just that the availability of guns made it useless in North America before anyone could be arsed to actually record native culture.

Reminds me of two suits of armour sent as diplomatic gifts from Japan to Europe in the early 17th century, which ended up being displayed in Brussels as the armours of Montezuma and his son.

hide Armour and laminar armor work well against bone and stone and are even effective Against bronze and early iron. but European metallurgy was much to advanced .

Looking at the use of quilted armour in the late middle ages in Europe, and the buff coats of the 17th century, I'd say non-metallic armour can make enough of a difference against steel edges and points that it can be worth the bother. A good hit might still leave you badly wounded, but far from every hit in combat is a good one, and without protection even the cosniderably less than good can still bite quite deep.

>FUN FACT: The quilted cotton armor of the aztecs was so good the Spanish replaced their padded armor in favour of Aztec ones.

Myth. The reason that SOME soldiers replaced it was due to the comfort and consumability, just like any other equipment. The metal armour was unable to be bypassed by the primitive weapons, but padded defences (of which the Spanish brought european styles as well) worked just fine. Records hold that Rondelaros (shield men) preferred to keep their plate, while secondary soldiers such as pike men and arquebusers would wear lighter armour, mostly as proof from arrows.

Pajamas make perfect combat gear.

>enemy attacks you while you're still in bed

>hahah, jokes on you, i always fight in my pajamas

Or maybe you just fought a battle, and you're feeling a bit tired. No problem. Just take a nap. You're already wearing your pajamas.

You could actually say that they're tacticool pajamas.

The reason they weren't using metal armour wasn't because they were dumb chucklefucks, it was because they lived in hot and humid areas. They likely would adopt limited breastplates, and yes, fuck yeah animal helms, but I don't see them ever putting on full harness. PART of the reason was that the Aztecs in particular (the contemporaries of Cortes) were big on nonlethal combat - fighting with slingstones, maces, and suchlike to beat the enemies down so you can drag them back to assassinate them. Not only is investing in full harness a waste, as you won't get it back due to LOL, NO RANSOM CULTURE, but many of the defenses that it offers are less useful against those kinds of blunt attacks.

As was I. The foremost frontline fighters preferred plate or surplus maille, and second line fighters (guns and pikes) would hand down their plate to the men in front, adopting padded garments. Armour can be

damaged and consumed by use like anything else. You'll notice many pictures showing colonial troop wearing local footwear too.

Anyway, it's getting late. I'll leave you with two neat pictures of armor, though. Most people don't think of "armor" when they consider north American native warfare, but the Inuits did make armor out of hide, bone, and wood. Some Alaska natives apparently made helmets out of whole wood burls, hollowed out.

/tg/ on Biology— Fish

There's evidence that cuttlefish start to develop hunting instincts while they're still in the egg, so it might not be unreasonable. THEY START TO PLUG INTO THEIR MOTHER'S NERVOUS SYSTEM WHILE IN-DEVELOPMENT. KIND OF CANCEROUS AS THE EGGS GROW.

Cuttlefish would make the best pets. Cuddle your cuttlefish.

Sharks are a fantastic example of a brutish monster race, which is actually kinda nice because we've already gotten an understanding and sensible-by-feature interpretation of the Big Five: humans, dwarves, halfings, orcs, elves.

/tg/ on Biology— Humans

"default" maintenance & growth nutrition for a healthy human is 2000 calories/day, and someone thoroughly engaged in a very physical occupation like fighting hovers around 5000/day. a koku of rice, the default japanese currency, was only 500 calories, and defined as the amount of food necessary to feed a working peasant for a day. anyone who didn't grow up privileged enough to get a steady better-than-standard-peasant food intake grew up with what today we call stat penalties, further increasing the preexisting difference between men and women, and retainers and conscripts in an age of muscle-powered warfare.

5000 calories is the max a body can effectively handle in one day. Anymore than that and the body just stops processing it, as it is overloaded. Burn ward victims are constantly being pumped full of vitamins, calories, and all that other good shit because regrowing skin and muscle tissue is incredibly energy intensive on the body. However, even though the body is using all 5k calories, once it hits that cap it just starts to stall out. The only people who were known to constantly burn 5k calories in a day (outside of burn victims) were Canadian loggers before the invention of the chainsaw, back when they cut trees down with their beards/handsaws. Deployed infantry in full gear on a full day patrol do not even break the 4k mark, averaging around 3.3k calories burned.

The brain survives for 11 seconds after being decapitated. And the clock is ticking.

Humanity is a bipedal mammalian species supported by an endoskeleton, possessing a flexible spinal column and with an extensive network of nerves. This strong and flexible system grants them considerable resilience to blunt force trauma and crushing pressure. They are covered by an air and waterproof skin that is soft, but protects well against disease and intrusion by fluids and germs, as well as many chemicals. Humans can survive without protection in space for short durations as a result. Humans are particularly vulnerable to penetrating trauma, such as stab wounds. Their internal skeleton does not completely protect all organs and they are dependent upon an internal fluid system (like most lifeforms) to survive. Losing enough of this fluid results in death. Piercing vital organs often results in

death. As a result, most weapons created to kill humans are either poisons or piercing weapons. Humans typically wear armor to mitigate this.

Human beings are pack animals and typically work as a group under the control of a dominant individual; typically a male. Larger societies are made up of many small groups with this structure. Lone humans are notably deficient in range of vision, their strongest sensory attribute. Descended from scavengers turned predators, humans are prone to paying attention to their immediate surroundings and small details. Humans have a natural compulsion to gather and hoard small items they see as valuable such as food, possessions, and ideas. However, humans are often short sighted and have difficulty thinking more than a few months ahead beyond the most general terms. Additionally, their focus on gathering makes them good at small scale mathematics but poor at large scale mathematics, requiring external devices for large number calculations. Humans are however adept abstract thinkers and can grasp the concepts of advanced mathematics well.

Humans have exceptional physical endurance, capable of moving at a relatively slow pace over distances that would kill most species through exhaustion. Humans are relatively large creatures, although without any spectacular combat abilities unarmed. However, humans are adept at ranged combat with sight abilities focused heavily upon throwing or shooting. Color and spectrum wise, human sight is good but limited. Human hearing and smell are both acute compared to most creatures on their planet, although far from the best. Human skin provides for an excellent sense of touch.

Humans breed somewhat slowly and mature extremely slowly. They are utterly helpless during their youth, requiring that the young are highly cared for for many years. Humans tend to be extremely protective of their young as a result. The burdens of this are mitigated somewhat by their status as pack creatures.

Humans are a vengeful species, who remember damage done to them by external groups or forces (regardless of the origins) and react most often with violence when the opportunity presents itself, even if that group or force is unlikely to harm them again. This trait is relatively rare. Humans are also stable enough that they are not always fighting. However, this trait has led to a strong internal fracturing of their race as many smaller groups fight others over past grievances. Their tendency for abstraction means that they readily work with and adopt other species, although they do so in the manner of a group alpha adopting a new low pack member.

Overall, humans are extremely durable, adaptable generalists who can survive in a wide range of climates, hold grudges and respond to those grudges with violence, and are adept at ranged warfare. They are dexterous, capable tool users and sight based pack predators and scavengers. They are weak to penetrative weaponry, and poor at large number mathematics. These flaws are easily mitigated. Recommendation: Humans are capable laborers, leaders, ranged combatants and will readily work with other races. Recommend adoption to the galactic community on probation.

>Lone humans are notably deficient in range of vision, their strongest sensory attribute

Doesn't understand Humans have visual clarity and acuity only matched by Birds of Prey.

> Doesn't understand Humans have visual clarity and acuity only matched by Birds of Prey.

i think he means we can't see ultraviolet/infrared kind of range, not the distance kind.

I'd also add in about our culture in that it has focussed significantly on an individualistic attitude which affects our general mentality about the same as base pack instincts. We prefer a more decentralised command structure fitting with the lack of foresight long-term but good short-term and many prefer their own gain over the gain of the entire pack.

This is in contrast to hive-species which work unilaterally to the benefit of the species. Humans may be decent labourers but we are accustomed to more complex tasks and may become bored, unlike worker

drones who are more than happy to. If we keep going in a similar fashion there'd probably be something about extensive tool and non-human automaton use to maximise the output to effort of one human rather than making use of human labour.

>Why don't people understand that high endurance thing just comes from us being bipedal, unlike all of the other species and being able to do things like carry water? Also, this will only probably be helpful on Terran-esque planets, probably.

It comes from many things. We have muscles designed for endurance. We have a gluteus that is maximus to help us walk. Our arms swing as a counterbalance. Our feet are designed specifically for walking upright with a minimal energy expenditure.

It isn't JUST that we're bipedal. Neanderthals were bipedal and we could run circles around them, literally.

If I recall correctly, that's a common misconception.

The pruning of your fingers is due to an automatic reaction by your brain. The pruning helps increase traction on wet surfaces, a byproduct from our ancestors who climbed a lot.

Alright, osmosis in one minute: Water will seek to have a balance of water-to-not-water. Therefore, if you have 95% water on one side of a membrane, and 96% water on the other, and the membrane allows movement of water, water from the 96% side will flow to the 95% side.

Now, your cells allow the movement of water. When water that has a lower osmolarity is outside, water will leave the cells, causing them to shrivel. This is why, when you have swelling in the brain, doctors will inject saline with a higher salinity than the typical osmolarity of cells. Water comes out of your brain into your blood vessels; swelling hopefully comes down.

In the macrolevel, your skin will shrivel as it loses water, because most water you see has a much lower osmolarity than the water in our body.

Certain layers in skin absorb water more than other layers, the keratin expands but other layers don't, causing your skin to buckle.

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=why-do-fingers-wrinkle-in>

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/mysteries/wrinkles.html>

>I could swear reading in Scientific American that it had to do with an automatic reaction dealing with wet conditions. Let me see if I can find the article on the Internet.

Something that should have been done in the first place. It's skin turning pruny, not a wholly unexplored field of quantum physics.

Hell, Henry VIII was still fit into his late thirties, it's only when he stopped competing and dancing, while keeping up the 5k+ calorie intake he used to be able to justify, that he ballooned out.

/tg/ on Biology— Insects

A single bee is quite stupid, and will do a lot of stupid things. Get lots (try thousands) of bees together, and they're capable of decision making, like where a swarm will set up the colony, or what food resource is the one they should focus on.

The point of all this lecturing was that hive (insects) tend to behave this way: The individual has her little vote that they cast for what they want to do. This can be anything from what to eat, to who to attack.

Some species of bees "mark" their targets - bumblebees do this. It's a pheromone that tells other

bumbles to attack you. But that's not a reason to be afraid of bumblebees. They are one of the calmest, most friendly of bees. You can PET them. Wasps also have something that is colloquial called "rage pheromone" which is released upon them stinging something or getting squashed. You figure out what it does.

Flies sleep under the blades of grass, to drink the dew in the morning.
When intoxicated, an ant will always fall onto it's left side.

/tg/ on Biology— Mammals

In most conditions, the fur hosts two species of symbiotic cyanobacteria, which provide camouflage. Because of the cyanobacteria, sloth fur is a small ecosystem of its own, hosting many species of non-parasitic insects.

Dude, make a search about orcas. (or more precisely, Old Tom) >YFW you realise that there had been a half a century long trade agreement between whalers and orcas in australia. >I have no suitable reaction image for when you realise orcas lives in clans, have culture, unique languages and HUNTING TRADITIONS they illogically follow even if it means their extinctions.
dolphins are even worse. they have wars with actual generals, tactics, and a declaration of war with peace treaties

real batwing membranes are indeed tougher than they look, and heal quickly. Minor cuts and tears would be like a sprained ankle to them - painful, but not wholly crippling. Only larger gashes, left without proper care, might hinder or prevent future flight.

>Hyenas are scavenger pack animals. They don't usually hunt like lions do but they'll work together to steal a lions kill.

It is usually the other way around. They kill an animal and then eat as much as they can before the lions come. The lions eat their share and then the hyenas come back and finish off the carcass.

They're [Hyenas] more committed to the family group than lions, though, right?

Hyenas feature prominently in the folklore and mythology of human cultures with which they are sympatric. Hyenas are mostly viewed with fear and contempt, as well as being associated with witchcraft, as their body parts are used as ingredients in traditional medicine. Among the beliefs held by some cultures, hyenas are thought to influence people's spirits, rob graves, and steal livestock and children.

I think their [Hyenas] packs are based around a dominant breeding pair with a few other breeding pairs. A lions pride is based around a single male with a few females and their cubs.

Striped hyenas are often referred to in Middle Eastern literature and folklore, typically as symbols of treachery and stupidity. In the Near and Middle East, striped hyenas are generally regarded as physical incarnations of jinns. Arab writer Al-Quazweeni (1204–1283) spoke of a tribe of people called Al-Dabeyoun meaning "hyena people." In his book Aajeb Al-Makhlouqat he wrote that should one of this tribe be in a group of 1000 people, a hyena could pick him out and eat him. A Persian medical treatise written in 1376 tells how to cure cannibalistic people known as kaftar, who are said to be "half-man, half-hyena". Al-Doumairy in his writings in Hawayan Al-Koubra (1406) wrote that striped hyenas were

vampiric creatures that attacked people at night and sucked the blood from their necks. He also wrote that hyenas only attacked brave people. Arab folklore tells of how hyenas can mesmerise victims with their eyes or sometimes with their pheromones. In a similar vein to Al-Doumairy, the Greeks, until the end of the 19th century, believed that the bodies of werewolves, if not destroyed, would haunt battlefields as vampiric hyenas that drank the blood of dying soldiers. The image of striped hyenas in Afghanistan, India and Palestine is more varied. Though feared, striped hyenas were also symbolic for love and fertility, leading to numerous varieties of love medicine derived from hyena body parts. Among the Baluch and in northern India, witches or magicians are said to ride striped hyenas at night.

The spotted hyena is a non-seasonal breeder, though a birth peak does occur during the wet season. Females are polyestrous, with an estrus period lasting two weeks. Like many felid species, the spotted hyena is promiscuous, and no enduring pair bonds are formed. Members of both sexes may copulate with several mates over the course of several years. Males will show submissive behaviour when approaching females in heat, even if the male outweighs its partner. Females usually favour younger males born or joined into the clan after they were born. Older females show a similar preference, with the addition of preferring males with whom they have had long and friendly prior relationships. Passive males tend to have greater success in courting females than aggressive ones. Copulation in spotted hyenas is a relatively short affair, lasting 4–12 minutes, and typically only occurs at night with no other hyenas present. The mating process is complicated, as the male hyena's penis enters and exits the female's reproductive tract through her pseudo-penis rather than directly through the vagina, which is blocked by the false scrotum and testes. This unusual traits of the female's genitalia makes mating more laborious for the male than in other mammals, while also ensuring that rape is physically impossible. Once the female retracts her clitoris, the male enters the female by sliding beneath her, an operation facilitated by the penis's upward angle. Once this is accomplished, a typical mammalian mating posture is adopted.

Actually, after some DNA analysis, it have been ruled the hyena are more related to the feline family, than the canine group. They would be like the furry of the family: they belong to the feline tree, but disguise as member of another species.

Hyena are feliformia, the same family group as cats and are closer to all cats and cat-like species than caniformia (dog-like).

They look more like dogs because of convergent evolution, where distinctly different species which end up in the same ecological niche tend to develop similar or identical traits.

Her clitoris, which contains the birthing canal, protrudes 7 inches from her body.

"Imagine giving birth through a penis," said study co-author Kay Holekamp of Michigan State University. "It's really weird genitalia, but it seems to work. Although giving birth through a 'penis' isn't a trivial problem."

The clitoris' birth canal is only an inch in diameter, and the tissue often tears as a 2-pound cub squeezes through the narrow opening. The rip can be fatal, as evidenced by the high death rate for first-time mothers.

Spotted hyenas have a complex set of postures in communication. When afraid, the ears are folded flat, and are often combined with baring of the teeth and a flattening of the mane. When attacked by other hyenas or by wild dogs, the hyena lowers its hindquarters. Before and during an assertive attack, the head is held high with the ears cocked, mouth closed, mane erect and the hindquarters high. The tail usually hangs down when neutral, though it will change position according to the situation. When a high

tendency to flee an attacker is apparent, the tail is curled below the belly. During an attack, or when excited, the tail is carried forward on the back. An erect tail does not always accompany a hostile encounter, as it has also been observed to occur when a harmless social interaction occurs. Although they do not wag their tails, spotted hyenas will flick their tails when approaching dominant animals or when there is a slight tendency to flee. When approaching a dominant animal, subordinate spotted hyenas will walk on the knees of their forelegs in submission. Greeting ceremonies among clan-members consist of two individuals standing parallel to each other and facing opposite directions. Both individuals raise their hind legs and lick each other's anogenital area. During these greeting ceremonies, the penis or pseudo-penis often becomes erect, in both males and females. Erection is usually a sign of submission, rather than dominance, and is more common in males than in females.

Among hyenas, only the spotted and striped hyena have been known to become man-eaters. Hyenas are known to have preyed on humans in prehistory: Human hair has been found in fossilised hyena dung dating back 195,000 to 257,000 years. Some paleontologists believe that competition and predation by cave hyenas in Siberia was a significant factor in delaying human colonization of Alaska. Hyenas may have occasionally stolen human kills, or entered campsites to drag off the young and weak, much like modern spotted hyenas in Africa. The oldest Alaskan human remains coincide with roughly the same time cave hyenas became extinct, leading certain paleontologists to infer that hyena predation was what prevented humans from crossing the Bering strait earlier. Hyenas readily scavenge from human corpses; in Ethiopia, hyenas were reported to feed extensively on the corpses of victims of the 1960 attempted coup and the Red Terror. Hyenas habituated to scavenging on human corpses may develop bold behaviours towards living people; hyena attacks on people in southern Sudan increased during the Second Sudanese Civil War, when human corpses were readily available to them.

Unlike most mammalian societies, female spotted hyenas run the show and are significantly more muscular and aggressive than males. After studying hyenas in Kenya for nearly two decades, researchers discovered that in the final stages of pregnancy, high-ranking females provide their developing offspring with higher levels of androgen—a male sex hormone associated with aggression—than lower-ranking mothers provide to their developing young.

This is the first study to show that a mother's social status, and not just her genetic makeup, can directly affect her offspring's observable physical characteristics.

Aggressiveness is a good attribute for a creature living in a society where 40 to 60 individuals scrap over food, and especially for females requiring extra energy for developing offspring.

By infusing her developing young with androgen, the mother increases the likelihood that her genetic information will survive.

But providing the extra hormones takes a toll on the mother. The dose of androgen that she received from her own alpha mother damages her ovaries, making it difficult to conceive.

It also causes female reproductive organs to grow. A lot.

It's also only the spotted Hyenas that show a real group/clan behaviour with matriarchial patterns as well as being outright batshit insane "WE DON'T KILL WE EAT" tearing your prey to shreds while still struggling.

Brown hyenas are more "wolflike", with paternal male and female working to provide the cubs together with adolescent packmembers.

Striped hyenas are mostly just groups of two to seven.

The latter two are basically carrion eaters with a diet consisting of smaller creatures they can catch (rodents, insects, lizards etc.).

Taking from the society of the spotted hyena:

Matriarchical (Females are larger and will dominate males, submissive males have a higher chance of mating, males often live alone or in small groups almost outside the main group)

Highly competitive (a female takes care of her own cubs and doesn't help the others)

Lives in loose clans (they often live in smaller groups, but which mixes with other groups)

Opportunistic

Complex social structure with several levels, also deft at reading others positions in other clans

Nepotistic (A high-ranking female's offspring inherit her rank)

Promiscuous (Like felines, no breeding pairs)

Semi-Nomadic/territorial (They have dens, often multiple, which they travel between)

/tg/ on Blacksmithing

For armour, get a copy of "Techniques of Medieval Armor Reproduction" and then head over to <http://forums.armorarchive.org/phpBB3/> for inspiration and help.

rough list of what you'll need for *basic* armouring in plate:

Eye protection. Safety Glasses.

Hand Protection. from heat, or from sharp edges. I use thin leather, some use fabric or welder's gloves.

Ear Protection. BECAUSE HAMMERING METAL IS LOUD AND YOU GO DEAF. EH? WOT? SAY THAT AGAIN?

Metal. well. duh. 18ga and 16ga mild steel are the bog-standard starting materials. if you have access to heat-working, you may want to think about 20ga 1050 / EN9 carbon steel sheet. look in local listings for metal stockists. remember, steel sheet will slice you fingers, land on toes and take 'em off, rip your car seats like a wildcat on steroids, and all manner of headaches to get it to your working location.

Stump. get a tree stump. at least 6 inch diameter, and gouge chisel or chainsaw and cut it into a bowl-shaped depression.

Hammers. ballpein, several from 1/2lb up to 4lb, maybe even a 6lb in some cases.

Hammers, Ballpein. same as before, with the faces polished to a mirror finish for planishing.

Rivets. you need solid rivets, not pop rivets. I can recommend a supplier if you're in the UK. elsewhere, no idea.

Steel cutting. you'll need at minimum a good pair of aviation sheet cutters. Stanley make good models. anything more than 18ga mild is tough, 16ga is very hard to cut. for that, you'll need a big lever shear. the best is a Beverley B-2. if you've got a bev, you're laughing. if not, you'll wish you did.

Leather. you'll need good quality vegetan leather for strapping and similar in armour. Again, I can recommend a british supplier. US, you might get it in a tandy, I gather.

Sandbag.

Damn good to have. easy for dishing shapes into, quieter too. a leather sandbag is better still.

Heat source. Propane gas mapp torch, Oxy-acetaline, pet dragon, small forge. anything to heat up metal. something to do spots is useful. that's not so much used to make metal red-hot and pound it into shape (though raising is done like that) but to heat and than cool gradually, to anneal and soften the metal as it work-hardens. particularly of use with carbon steel, instead of mild, where workhardening is a real hassle.

Fire extinguisher.

because you will set something on fire. oh yes.

Bench Grinder. with replaceable wheels.

this will be modified with flap sanding disks for helping with polishing, and with mops with polishing compound. that, and planishing will help turning your kit from a bagfull of marbles to gleaming steel.

First Aid Kit.

Grinders feed on human flesh. Remember this. Remember it well. you do not want to be in the way when a polisher grabs a peice of thin-edged steel and flings it toward your face, or testicles. Always stand to the side of the grinder. Always wear eye protection.

Hand protection should be soft enough to easily tear away. you do not want your glove getting snagged in a 7000rpm bench grinder and pulling you into it.

Drills. a centre-punch will be useful to ensure proper placed holes. type of drill is down to choice. I prefer a hand-cranked drill. some like a pillar press drill with 2hp behind it. drill slow, and clamp down your work. drills can snatch and turn your peice of steel into a spinning guillotine.

Drill bits. and replacements.

Alternatively, a Roper-Whitney no.5 punch will save you hours of hassle, if you can afford one.

Files. flat, bastard, 1st and 2nd cut. Half-round, tri-square, and round. Never underestimate the value of a good file.

More Files.

Some more files. bigger ones. and some smaller ones.

I just did a count. I have 35 files sitting on the workbench here as I type. They're just the smaller ones. there's another 20 or so in the main workshop.

As a note, cheap files are a false investment. they lose their edge, and become blunt rapidly. I strongly reccomment F.L Grobet, swiss gunsmith's files, but will also use Bahco, from Sweden, of Nicholson in the US.

other things you'll need. marker pen. several of them. the bastards always run off when you need it.

A metal waste bin for metal offcuts. they will make you bleed like a stuck pig.

A vice.

armourers have many vices. some clamp metal. others clamp nipples. Do not ask an armourer about his little vices.

An Anvil.

yes, an anvil is that far down the list of things you'll need. one is useful, but a nice flat surface is'nt nearly as heavily used as you'd expect. what is used much more are stakes - balls and tubes clamped in a vice, or mounted in a hole in the dishing stump.

screws and bolts.

small - 3.0mm shank diameter, 15mm long cheesehead screws are used for assembling armour plates for test-fitting before rivets are used. you can unscrew a nut, a rivet you need to grind and drill out.

check twice, rivet once.

Sandpaper. Black emery, or the red aluminium oxide paper. lots of it, in everything from P60, to P1200 grades. Sanding blocks are very useful too. a power drill with sanding flap wheels, sanding sponges, and similar materials will be useful for difficult-to reach areas.

Safety note, if you have long hair, and use a drill, always tie hair back. if you can wear a bandana, do so. you do not want a power drill with a wire brush attachment catching in a lock of hair that falls out of your hairband, wrapping round the wire brush, and pulling the drill at speed into your face and head. before ripping a chunk of hair away.

Trust me on this. this is an experience I do not want to repeat a second time.

Say it again, children. "Power tools feed on human flesh".

take breaks regularly. I'm only an amateur armourer, I work professionally making swords and similar weapons.

the reason I'm an amateur armourer is that I already have RSI damage in my hands from my old job.

Hammering steel plate is **very** damaging on your body, and will cause RSI injury, tendonitis, shoulder

damage, tennis elbow, and a whole load of other harm. its better to rest and take breaks, than push yourself to destruction.

now. techniques.

your first skill is to learn to read: this takes three forms.

to read the human body and anatomy - you must understand how the metal moves over the body, to make it work.

second, you need to read the internet. specifically the Armour Archives, who will teach you more than I ever could, and guide your first steps.

Thirdly, you want to read TOMAR, or Techniques of Medieval Armour Reproduction, by one Brian Price. I strongly recommend searching for a copy of this book and stealing it. Brian Price, owner of "chivalry bookshelf" was recently revealed to be a theiving scumbag bastard cunt, who has failed to pay the authors of the books he prints *any* royalties for up to 6 years, who has stolen other artist's castings and reproduced them, and a whole host of similar underhand business practices. Payback's a bitch, but karma's a great friend, so its only appropriate that Price gets a taste of his own medicine.

>1) Aside from neglecting safety, what's the largest mistake beginners make when crafting?

Rushing.

you cant raise a helmet in 3 passes. trying means using far too much force, heavy hitting, and deforming the metal. it instead ends up with what's called the "bag full of marbles" effect - lumpy, uneven, really scrappy.

Take your time, take lots of passes to slowly build the shape.

>2) For most of us posting, since this is a hobby that can yield profit, do you have any guidelines for selling your work? What kind of scale do you use to grade your work when determining its value?

It'll never be very profitable. if you work by hours, for what most will pay, you're better off in a burger joint flipping meat.

Charge what is acceptable to you, for the effort you put in.

also, for doing it to a good quality, it costs a huge amount in equipment. Remember, that list was the basics...

>3)I've gathered that a lot of people use old car springs and just car parts, in general to use as raw material. Is this just a simple way for people to get 'fun' metal for costume-quality arms/armor, or is their quality of the metal good enough to make battle-ready product?

Technically, a leaf spring is good enough material. there's little difference in the actual alloy, or the heat-treat used.

in reality, a leaf spring's been curved to a shape, so re-tempering it will often make it twist back into its old shape. it also tends to result in SLOs that are overweight and badly balanced, just as the leaf springs tend to be over-thick, and people dont understand the details of swordmaking.... more on that in a bit.

the secrets most dont talk about...

the first one is simple. Historical study. you have to get your grubby mitts on originals in museums. Study them up close, take measurements of the blade dimensions - particularly the thicknesses and cross-sections.

You cant make real swords, without having seen the real thing. that's like a virgin giving sex tips...

In paralell to that, you need to be able to learn how they were used. you cant make a rapier feel right, if you've only ever fought with rattan sticks. if you're making for a specific artform, you need to know how it'll be held, the way its moved. Italian longsword needs a longer hilt than a german one, for example,

and prefers the use of a round pommel, while german ones are often scent-stopper pommels. (usually. exceptions in both cases, of course)

Distal taper. the thickness of the blade. this is the big one. its easy to get a photo of a profile of a sword. but you need to bet the thickness right, to control where the metal is, how stiff the blade is, what its performance in the cut is, if its good for thrusting, etc.

a lot of people are surprised to discover how thick the strong (hilt end) of a sword can be. I've seen a few that are easily 8mm thick. they're also surprised by how thin the weak is. I've seen cutters that are clearly designed for unarmoured targets which are only about 1.8mm thick 60-70mm from the tip. I've seen thrusting swords which are 3.5mm at the same place, though, which handle totally different.

More secrets that arent really secrets.

Heat treatment is the most important element of all. quite simply, the best steel alloy on the planet badly heat-treated is worse than a plain simple 1050 carbon steel, well-treated. Getting the right balance of heat-treatment for hardness, and temper for springiness is the work of a lifetime.

for a cutting blade, you want a hard edge. for a reenactment one, you want a little more give, as they tend to take a lot more impact punishment over their lives, and its better to allow some of that to be absorbed, deforming the edge and workhardening it. of course, too soft, and you get something like a hanwei which gets chewed up in a year.

for reenactment, you also want to modify the designs to be slightly broader tangs, to take some of the strain. a real sword, energy is dispersed over a longer period, as it cuts through. a reenactment sword the energy is dispersed rapidly with a harder stop, as it does'nt cut - so the wider tang helps prevent breakage.

bluing of sword hilts was quite common. blacking, likewise. russeting was sometimes used, and of course, gilding and silvering were used too.

bluing of blades was fairly uncommon, but happened more often in the 18th C. partly, as any bluing on the blade will be worn away in use.

that said, its theoretically possible, if you have a kiln that can sit at exactly 295 degrees C for an area big enough to do a swordblade, its possible to do a heat soak for tempering which will turn the blade a vivid peacock blue...

but if any area is 10 degrees hotter, it'll start to turn grey-blue. 10 degrees colder, it'll be a purple. I'm sure you can imagine how hard it is to do this on a longsword blade.

here's an illustration showing a gilded sword and gilded and blued armour, from Paulus Hector Mair, though.

Ok, we're going to cover useful chainmail. Chainmail is a Victorian-ish coined term, but I'm using it because mail can be confusing, and maille suggests I'm in the SCA and pronounce "Ye Old-E Shop-p-E". Useful chainmail means the links aren't butted. Butted chainmail means the circles of wire ("links", again potentially confusing terminology on the net)are just formed and left there with a tiny gap. It's a lot easier than trying to secure the links, and therefore used by many reenactors, larpers etc because it's cheaper. But it's weak - the links will open and the chainmail fall apart. Especially if you've been stabbed, but also just under the mail's own weight, especially on a big free hanging section. Reenactors call it "mail moths"

So, the useful stuff. What mail's like, and how you can do better with it than most.

It's like cloth, especially with half-decently sized (i.e. under 10mm diameter) links. It folds, it almost pours, which can make a shirt in your hands easy to drop. This makes it very comfortable compared to a piece of sheet armour that's not quite fitted to you.

It is very good at stopping sharp hurty things. Ignore Deadliest Warrior and the SCA. It's not invulnerable, but historical mail is tough stuff, and will stop a lot of even piercing attacks.

What would I like to see more of with chainmail? Decent tailoring. Fewer sleeves hanging off people's arms by a foot, and less blousing. Since chainmail will open or close up to fit people's torsos under gravity, people seem happy to ignore fit. Which makes sleeves look ridiculous.

I get where you're coming from, but I'll just add a few qualifiers. Sometimes the reason why people kept using things was because they functioned as a status object, rather than because they expected that they'd be using them as a weapon (I'm looking at you, C18th Japanese swords).

Also, you won't always know what that situation will be, and so you might consider getting a weapon that you know will be ok in most, like a longsword. And you've also got to take into account things like cost, ease of getting one, the difficulty of having it repaired, maintenance, depth of training and so on.

Which is why I maintain that the quarterstaff (also known as the fairly long stick) is one of the most overlooked weapons in Historical European Martial Arts. I think it's Silver who says something along the lines of 'You want to learn how to fight with a longsword? Well, you know how to fight with a quarterstaff, and you know how to fight with a sword. Put the two together and anything that you can't work out isn't worth knowing unless you're in a fencing school.'

As we're feeling creative, I'm going to tell you how to make the best rondel dagger simulator that having no money can buy, for sparring, drilling and associated HEMA.

Step 1: Decide how long you want it to be. According to Wikipedia, they can be anything from 20-50cm. Personally I find that anything as long as your fore-arm is pretty unweildy.

Step 2: Get a piece of wood, plastic or something else fairly sturdy, about two-fingers wide and about two-thirds as long as the length of your dagger-like-object. Make sure that there are no sharp edges on it. For this I use broken bits of Shinai, sand-papered down.

Step 3: Get a newspaper. Personally, I use the campus rag, but I suppose that the ideal building material would be a broadsheet, if you read the Torygraph.

Step 4: Roll the Newspaper around the stick, to slightly longer than the length you want. Then use duct-tape to secure it. Take one end, and fold it in or over to form a cap on the tube. Secure this with duct-tape. Take the other end, where there will be a space of a few inches in the tube where there isn't the stick. Get a bread-knife, or whatever's to hand, and slice down the length of the tube. Rough it the fuck up, so you're not stabbing someone with a structurally sound cylinder. Then fold the bits of ripped paper in, and duct-tape it securely.

Step 4: By this stage, you have what we call in the trade a 'Dong-like-object'. To make it more dagger like, use silver rather than black duct-tape, and different tape for the grip. Now take a tsuba, one of the rings that form the guard on the smashed shinai you used earlier, or another ring of hard material, and slide it down your dong-like-object. When there's enough room for a grip, and possibly a bit more, secure it in place with moar duct-tape. Secure everything with duct-tape. That stuff is awesome. Try and make sure that you don't have any sharp folds sticking out through. Oh, and in a pinch parcel-tape will work too. The emphasis is on cheap.

Congratulations. You now have a training tool which is safe to stab, as the tip is squishy. It's also fairly sturdy, so you can do blocks or locks with it, unlike rubber training daggers. If you're going to full on sparring, you might want to put a mask or goggles on, but otherwise it's safe as fuck. If the other guy is wearing a mask, put on gloves, otherwise the mask will cheese-grater your knuckles. Eventually the solid

core will tear through the newspaper and be in danger of stabbing someone, so keep an eye on that and be prepared to re-build them.

I would personally use a katana to cut my bread
they've been folded a thousand times you know

Starting with 2 layers and folding the blade 9 times brings you 1024 layers.

If you tell the "folded a thousand times" crap to a smith, you will get the traditional "Hammer-to-forehed" -treatment.

This is what I did last summer:

> Started with carbon steel (0.75%C), nickel steel (0.1%C, 3.5%Ni) 5 x 25 mm bar stock, cut into 80 mm pieces

> 5+5 alternating layres of carbon steel and nickel steel, tig-wedled together at one end, fluxed with borax, heated in forge and compresson-welded into single bar with hydraulic press. 10 layers.

> First forging: stretched into a rod with forge and power hammer, cut in half, fluxed and forged together. 20 layers

> Second forging: Stretched, cut, fluxed and forged. 40 layers.

> Third forging: 80 layers... then 160, 320, 640 and finally 1280 layers at 7th forging.

> End result: Carbon steel and nickel steel are mixed so finely together, that welding parttern is not visible to naked eye.

> Washing the polished steel with nitric acid does not bring out the pattern.

> Costomer can not see any fancy patterns. Needs a microscope to see that the stee is not just a normals stock.

Why to do this: If you have only shit-tier pieces of mixed steel whih are too small for making a sword, you can pattern-weld them together to form mediocre steel.

If you have good steel, you skip the time-consuming (and fuel-consuming) pattern-welding, and just make a sword.

You also lose some of the steel af froce-scale during the pattern welding, so you need to work very fast when the steel is out of forge.

When making blades from stainless steel, forge scale not a problem.

Folding was essentially done to get the required carbon necessary to get good steel into a blade with inferior iron.

With good crucible steel the need for extensive folding in order to get good distribution of the carbon is redundant.

>Folding was essentially done to get the required carbon necessary to get good steel into a blade with inferior iron.

Erm.

No.

not even remotely accurate.

medieval steel - be it medieval europe, or japan, is not really like steel as you think it is. its more like two different colours of clay. mostly white, but some bits of nasty claggy black clay in there too. just shaping your object from the clay block will mean there's blobs of black stuff in it, and when fired, they'll make it crack. so instead, you knead and fold the clay over a few times, spreading it thin, stretching it out. doing so mixes the black bits into the white, and eventually it becomes more a streak of grey, thin enough that it does'nt make the whole pot crack when fired.

that's pretty much what folding does - it spreads slag impurities out and minimises them, so its less likely to have a mechanical failure due to a "large" bit of slag in the blade. (by which you might only mean a blob 1-2mm in diameter - small but enough to cause a failure.)

Crucible steel is, (despite what you may assume from having watched that one TV programme that everyone else has watched too) hardly a wonder-material, and is'nt particularly relevant, given that only a tiny fraction of european swords were ever made with Wootz - and forging that stuff has a whole load of different headaches.

>I'm saying that crucible steel obviates the need for folding to get the carbon molecules spread out.

And what you're saying makes it painfully evident you've never actually done what you're talking about. Sorry.

that really is'nt even remotely like what carbon in an iron-carbon alloy is.

the carbon is already distributed with regularity throughout the atomic structure of a medieval steel. Even if there are peices of high and low-carbon steel from different blooms in a pattern-welded structure, actual carbon migration at or above the eutectoid point is marginal, given the durations which steel billets are held at that temperature for. For reference, please actually study dr Alan William's work "the knight and the blast furnace". As a note, for the level of carbon migration, cross-sectional metalurgical analysis of non-homogeneous medieval pattern-welding tends to indicate carbon migration of less than 0.25mm into the lower carbon alloy.

What folding is for is for the distribution of impurities, nothing whatsoever to do with moving carbon. And please, stop going on about crucible steel. Yes, we've ALL seen "secrets of the viking sword". What you're going on about has pretty much nothing whatsoever to do with the real, normal actual steels produced in bloomeries which define 99% of medieval swords.

As >>28798807 points out, it's a redundant process. Steel is steel! The only inherent "quality" to a type of iron deposit is what sort of process you need to turn it into steel.

The Japanese folded their iron because that's what it took to make it usable. Since this is a laborious and time intensive process, this meant they had generally less steel to work with. Consequently the katana has a steel edge with a much softer iron core (that's why you see the wavy pattern on the blade, indicating where one material begins and the other ends.)

Note Europeans used the same techniques - the Celts were folding blades around 700 AD and had a similar mixed composition of steel edges and iron cores. European surface iron deposits were just as meager as any in Japan.

What changed was the importation of bloomery/crucible techniques from India, which was an improved production process. This allowed blades to be made completely of steel (as well as all-steel armours), since you could make more of it to work with.

A longsword and katana actually are completely different blades in terms of metallurgical composition.

>Steel is steel!

Mien gott. I give up. Someone else can beat their head against this wall.

>Note Europeans used the same techniques - the Celts were folding blades around 700 AD and I assume you meant to type 700BC there.

>What changed was the importation of bloomery/crucible techniques from India, which was an improved production process.

the bigger change was the adoption of the over-shot waterwheel. ie water flowing over the top of a wheel and falling down in a bucket, rather than the under-shot waterwheel, where the wheel was turned by paddles by the water flowing below it.

that increased power output by about 250%, resulting in a rise in heat in the furnaces, allowing better control over the smelt, and removing much more silicate impurity.

and the fact that people like you don't make the logical jump that this is exactly what we mean when we say "lower quality steel" rather than say "lower quality manufacturing process" for the sake of brevity

Here's an introduction to cast iron vs. wrought iron vs. steel with a layman's breakdown of what actually happens in the furnace.

http://www.the-orb.net/encyclop/culture/scitech/iron_steel.html

>Western smiths usually followed a process of heating the low-carbon wrought iron in some type of sealed container containing carbon, the idea being to promote the migration of carbon atoms into the metal. It was tricky, and often produced only small amounts of steel, but steel was simply so useful for tools and weapons that even small amounts were important. Steel edges were usually welded to a wrought iron core or blade to make a steeled tool in the most economical manner.

This is the "folding" technique that gets discussed a lot.

Japanese sword-making uses similar techniques - the iron sand heated in a clay vessel and repeatedly covered with charcoal, eventually creating a steel bloom with steels of various carbon contents. These are then folded and welded together to create a blade - the harder materials on the "edge", and the softer materials on the "spine".

Later in the Middle Ages, as >>28800507 points out, water wheels were used to provide greater consistency and allow hotter furnace fires that allow for the melting of pure iron - since falling water can operate a much larger set of bellows without interruption than human muscle power alone.

One technique would be the regular inlay; you'd create your metal object with a small depression (usually you'd file/cut out the space after you've heat treated it and everything).

You'd then fill the space with your precious metal and then use a hammer to shape it into the inlay so it's snug and tight. Then you sand it down to a nice finish and then add other detail work that you'd like, like engraving, etc. Since most precious metals are much softer than steel you can usually bang them into shape without damaging the blade if you control the force you use.

the most common one on early swords is mechanical adhesion. viking era, for example, you'd take a steel sword pommel, and you'd score lots of lines along it - maybe 0.6mm wide, and 0.7mm deep. the trick was to make the grooves wider at the bottom than at the top, sort of like a dovetail joint. thin wires are then hammered into the grooves, and they spread into the dovetail, locking them in place.

later on, that sort of inlay is used for little lines of gold or the likes, for patterns.

later still in the 16th C you get a technique called damascening (not to be mixed up with damascus for steel). there you're scoring and roughening up a surface, and you then lay a sheet or foil of gold or silver onto the surface, and it's pressed in, in such a way that the rough surface mechanically grips the softer gold or silver.

from the 14th C, you also get fire-gilding.

what you do there is you take the gold and beat it into thin sheet. that's then dropped into mercury, which reacts with gold, effectively melting it and turning it into a mixture with the mercury. eventually, that gets made into a sort of golden paste, of mercury and gold. that is then spread over the surface you want to gild, which has been washed with acid. you then heat the material. mercury boils at 350-odd C,

so the mercury boils away, leaving a thin film of gold over the surface which is then polished to a high gleam.

If you're looking to do an entire object covered in gold, the traditional method was gilding. For metal objects, you'd again start with a "finished" piece, and then heat it up to a point just before it would melt, and then gold leaf is pressed on. Since the melting point of gold is lower than steel, you're essentially melting the gold on.

If someone says "I don't know for sure, isn't it something like X that causes Y?" I'm happy to give them a mile of slack.

when they start trying to make authoritative statements about how folding is done for specific reasons, and then gets pissy when you tell them they're wrong, I rarely have patience for that.

I think the big issue is the idea that the term "steel" refers to a very specific material that's somehow magical compared to "iron" (although I'm certain that to medieval smiths it was absolutely magical). It's probably better to think of the various iron products - wrought iron, steel, and cast iron - as a range that results based on how much carbon is introduced during the smelting process.

the raw iron and steel out a medieval bloomery, and a japanese bloomery are pretty much the same, in terms of the amount of shit in them.

Japanese steel took a little more effort to make, as the source ore isn't as easy to convert into steel, but that's all. And if europeans were in japan, they'd have had the same amount of effort to get a steel out of it.

But if you were to ship japanese tamahagane to europe, and european steel to japan, neither would be particularly shocked by the quality or lack of quality of the other's materials.

the big advantage that europe had was that grain needs milled, where japan could harvest rice directly. Net result, the europeans developed mills, the mills evolved more powerful water-wheel mills, the new more powerful waterwheels could drive more than just grinding stones, but powered the first steps of industrial revolution. fast forward a few centuries, and europeans are hammering out 100 blades at a time on water-wheel powered hammers in factories where the steel is heated using bellows driven by the river outside, sharpening the blades on rotary grinding wheels, again driven by the rivers, while the japanese are still doing them one at a time, heating the forge by pushing a bellows up and down by hand, then hammering out one blade with an assistant with a hammer, then polishing the one blade on stones, rubbing the blade along the stone...

European technological advantage didn't come from any better iron, it came from a humble kernel of wheat.

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Removing impurities with forging is just one aspect of pattern-welding. Another important aspect is material homogenization. If you are making a blade from mixed pieces of junk steel you should not just weld them into a rod and forge it to a blade. The resulting blade would have uneven hardness and could bend or snap when used. Our ancestors had to work with limited and low-quality stock, so they had no other choice than pattern-weld it.

After blast furnace was introduced in Europe, it was possible to make sufficient amounts of homogeneous high carbon steel, and pattern-welding was no longer needed.

Today pattern-welding is used only for decorative purposes.

/tg/ on Botany & Mycology

>Although certain parts of the Skunk Cabbage were found to be edible by Native Americans, it should be known that death from severe calcium oxalate poisoning may result from consuming the wrong parts in excessive quantities. The calcium oxalate is an extremely corrosive toxin that burns into the flesh, and may shut down organ systems. The author misunderstood a gardening book and tried a flowerhead. The result was extreme burning of the mouth and throat, serious illness for several hours, and two days of difficult swallowing.

Edible plants in wasteground would also be common. Never underestimate the power of weeds. Dandelion and lambs quarters are both highly edible plants after all.

Opium and its derivatives could be planted and cooked easily, maybe not in NY however, or indoors (with the constraints on electricity). Cannabis too.

>Okay, here's the horrifying plot: You're a missionary near the Philippine Archipelago. While doing your daily missioning or whatever, you wander up to the top of a mountain. Thirsty, you stumble upon what looks like an ornate birdbath filled with nectar. Leaning over to take a sip, you see a dead rat inside ... and it's slowly being digested by the plant.

>This is *Nepenthes attenboroughii*, one of the most badass scary plants on Earth. See, while most pitcher plants stick to eating bugs, *Nepenthes attenboroughii* prefers to lure in birds and rats by looking as tasty as possible. Once inside, the animal can't get out and is digested for the entire nearby ecosystem to see

In Florida and South America grows a tree that has a name that translates to "little apple of death." Every single part of the Manchineel can mess you up. If you stand under it in the rain, your skin will blister. If you are tied to the tree, you will die a slow and painful death from poison. Its sap killed Juan

Ponce de Leon. But perhaps the worst part is, if you decide to burn it down in a fit of brain-poisoned rage, it will emit toxic smoke. Smoke so toxic it quickly causes blindness. The Manchineel tree reached legendary status among Europeans during initial exploration of the New World as a beastly new creature to be respected.

Plants are pretty big teasers when it comes to being food. Sometimes they bear sweet-tasting fruits that scream, "Pluck me, eat me, toss my core and seeds on the ground." But sometimes trees are growing gorgeous-looking death. Such is the case with the innocuous-looking fruit of *Cerbera odollam*. These innocuous-looking kernels were once responsible for 2 percent of the deaths in Madagascar's main province. During the 1800s, it was believed that eating the seed would prove guilt or innocence in a trial. Many innocent people gobbled up the seed, only to find that its toxicity is independent of guilt. Finally, the king had to abolish the ridiculous practice of killing yourself to prove innocence of stuff like minor robbery.

Gympie Gympie - *Dendrocnide moroides*

>Contact with the leaves or twigs causes the hollow, silica-tipped hairs to penetrate the skin. The sting causes an extremely painful stinging sensation which can last for [b]days or even months[/b], and the injured area becomes covered with small, red spots joining together to form a red, swollen mass. The sting is known to be potent enough to kill humans, and it can also kill dogs and horses.

Courtesy of Australia (where else?)

>Sosnowsky's Hogweed

Communists started to plant it to feed cows with as it has a very rapid growth rate. Quickly it turned out that it is toxic; not so much for animals, as it usually ended just with them puking and shitting, but specially for humans: a single drop of its juice dropped on naked skin and exposed to sunlight would leave terrible burns.

It still grows in some places here and it's very invasive. People have to keep removing it to keep it down.

><http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ielb0C1JYsw>

1958 educational video about ergot, a rye fungus that while having medicinal properties can cause gangrene in people if they infect grain and flour.

>Plants have evolved many adaptations to cope with fire. In chaparral communities in Southern California, for example, some plants have leaves coated in flammable oils that encourage an intense fire. This heat causes their fire-activated seeds to germinate and the young plants can then capitalize on the lack of competition in a burnt landscape

You know these plant people are starting to sound like utter dickbags. [ITT plants are discovered to be assholes]

Here's one plant fact I don't think anyone mentioned. Certain plant species can release compounds known as allelochemicals, which inhibit the germination and growth of other plants.

In other words, plants use a scorched-earth policy against each other.

True but have you seen what happens to a garden when it gets left for a few years. It doesn't just stop, if it can't go outwards it goes inwards, grows into an impenetrable density, and at the same time, relentlessly attempting to blanket the other gardens around it.

Plants don't understand the idea of "stop" they feed off of sunlight and rain water and as long as those two things are around they have all the resource they could possibly ask for.

There are some parasitic fungi that infect insects with some low-grade mind control so that they climb up high. After they're up high, the fungus grows and bursts out of the host's exoskeleton (usually its head) so that its spores carry further. Yes it is fucking horrifying.

Cordyceps are fungi that infect the brain of their host, forcing it to make choices detrimental to the host but beneficial to the cordyceps. They don't grow mushrooms, though.
 Now here's the fun part: each species of cordyceps is evolved to infect a specific species of host. They're like evil Orchids.

/tg/ on the Cold War

See also: /tg/ on the Apocalypse

You now realise that in ANY nuclear war scenario, the USA will be the aggressor. The Soviets didn't make any attack plans. They considered it futile.

Small-scale nuclear land mines were once considered during the Cold War. You forgot to mention that they'd also be chicken-heated. The plan was called Blue Peacock and, because West German soil can get rather cold after awhile, there was a plan to put live chickens in the heart of the mine, to keep the detonators from freezing while buried.

This was back when the USSR was winning the space race. Kennedy basically veto'd the nuke idea as f-cking retarded and told NASA to work on sending a man to the Moon instead. Took them a decade, but it did end up being preferable to just nuking a chunk of it.

/tg/ on Computers

Real life hacking is basically some guy on a coffee and cigarettes diet analysing code for hours on end.

/tg/ on Culture— General

It's generally the architecture, not clothing, that really shows what life is like.

As a general principle, rural and city people want different things but they need each other. So in most functional areas either the rural regions would be controlling the urban regions or the urban regions would be controlling the rural regions. A civil war would do wonders for pretty much decimating the suburban regions in terms of making them dependent on either the rural or the urban.

Feel free. It's always good to try to explain why a given fantasy race has x or y feature, and try to build their cultural practices from that. Halflings, for example, are probably from areas with limited food, like how pygmy species tend to appear on isolated islands. Halflings should, thus, feature prominently in archipelagos worldwide, and would make spectacular sailors because they take up little space, take up fewer rations, and can scale rigging with ease.

I don't get how aristocracy and tribal would work within a society. While aristocracy doesn't imply victorian age fashion and fancy speaking, it does imply a separation of certain parts of the society from others, which is physically impossible on a tribe.

In societies where males and females live mostly segregated homosexuality is more common.

>>Generally misunderstood

>Nah, cannibalistic demon worshipping savages is pretty on the mark

But they're not bad people, really.

If you look at the size of these smaller populations you notice that there's a trend towards tribes right? Well, Europe and East Asia moved past that trend because of our agriculture which catapulted our population size into city and state builders. Furthermore our nations and states haven't been able to isolate themselves from our neighbors.

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— the Arctic

believe it or not most of the traditional territory and ritual held by the arctic tribes , is only about 200 years old.

Eskimo heaven was underground where it was nice and warm, Hell was in the sky where all the bad stuff that could kill you came from.

There was some kind of object based magic where the more distance an item travelled in its lifetime the more powerful it became.

In other myths, she [Sedna] doesn't marry a dog at all, but is tricked into marrying a raven who disguises itself as a prosperous man. When her father finds out, he rescues her in his boat, but the raven stirs up a great storm. Fearful for his life, the father throws Sedna overboard, but she clings onto the boat with her fingers. (cont.)

The only thing I know much of regarding the Inuit is their exceptionally Orky diet that is very heavy in raw meat and fat, with occasionally foraged berries and herbs. (Naturally, agriculture isn't much of an option in the permafrost.)

Yep, that's about right. You can see virtually the same thing in other northern cultures - the Sami relied on fish and reindeer meat, and siberian peoples were equally dependent on reindeer. From one source on the Chukchi:

"Raw meat made up the bulk of their diet, supplemented with berries and deer-maggots in summer, and with blood-pudding mixed with roots and fish-heads in winter."

Fortunately, a high-meat (and thus high-fat) diet is useful in cold environments where you have to burn a lot of energy just to keep your temperature up. Furthermore, if you've ever hiked around in snow for long periods of time, you'll know that it gets very tiring very quickly.

Cable-backed bows were a feat of Thule (proto-Inuit) adaptive engineering. They probably learned the use of the bow from southern native Americans, but up north your choice of material was limited. Bows were made from whatever wood was available, even driftwood, or pieces of antler or whale baleen. As you can imagine, shit sucks. The solution was to reinforce the bow with sinew or plant fiber "cables" running the length of the bow to take stress off the mediocre materials. Cable-backed bows aren't the pinnacle of archery technology, but they were a great solution to the problem of how to make a decent bow in an environment with sub-standard materials.

Any Polar Setting campaign I ran would be heavily focused on survival and DIY weaponry, and the cable-backed bow really gives a good example of the necessary mentality - in a world of dangerous beasts, harsh climates, and various monsters and giants, the surviving adventurer is the one that can use the sparse resources he has to the best of his ability.

If you're going to go historically, the Russians are the big bad guys. They conquered Siberia in the east (pic related), Karelia in the west, and even crossed over into Alaska and fought with the Eskimo/Inuit there. The Vikings had a much less stellar record with them - the Norse colonies in Greenland failed for a variety of reasons, but the Inuit were pushing into Greenland at the same time as the Norse were fading, and the Inuit may well have been responsible for their final demise.

You may notice at this point that I'm talking much more about Inuit than eurasian polar cultures, like the sami, yupik, yakut, and so on. That's just because I've read more about the Inuit than the others, and also because the 20th century was kinder to the natives of Canada than those of the Soviet Union, many of whom were forced to give up their nomadic lives and settle in collective farms, and then lost their traditions under Russianization policies. I may try to address them more later, though I'm getting pretty tired so I may hang it up for a while soon.

Also, for some reason, the Dorset wore tall, stiff collars instead of hoods, which makes no goddamn sense to me, but there you have it. The point is that the Canadian arctic experienced a massive invasion of well-armed foreigners long before the Europeans got off their asses and over the Atlantic.

I've heard that sometimes the best course on a frozen land is to bath because the water is still above 0 degrees, but yet I wonder how many people die doing that.

They wipe themselves with snow and jump into the cold water after the heat up in the sauna. And after such cold shock they come back to the sauna. Hardcore version of a contrast shower

Swede here. Although our winters aren't quite as harsh most of the time, the tradition of jumping into freezing water/bathing in snow and then proceed into a blasting sauna is alive and well across the country. My family has been doing it since I was born, and probably before that

Around AD 1000, the same time the Norse reached Vinland, big things were happening in northern Canada. The native people of the time, who we call the Dorset culture, were being replaced by guys we call the Thule, or proto-Inuit. Over a few hundred years the Thule went more or less from Alaska to Greenland and the Dorset ceased to exist. Why?

Well, the Thule were technologically advanced aliens. No, seriously. They came in from another land with bows, which the Dorset didn't know, and hunting tech like toggling harpoons and methods for whaling and ice-hole seal fishing. They had dogs, seem to have lived in larger groups, and were definitely warlike, as opposed to the fairly benign picture we have of the Dorset. The Thule exploited more resources more efficiently and totally outclassed the previous residents in weaponry and (probably) warfare.

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— Africa General

Also, consider reading "King Leopold's Ghost" to find your BBEG, because Leopold II of Belgium is one of the closest things the world's had to a supervillain.

The most demanding test that a Maasai warrior can face is the stalking & killing of a lion. Tradition dictates that at least once during his warriorhood he must take on this formidable challenge armed with only his wits & a spear. Should he be successful, he will fashion the animal's mane into a headdress & wear it on ceremonial occasions.

I believe they [the Maasai] also have a hunting method where they just walk up to lions eating a kill and try not to show any fear. The lions get freaked out and bail and the hunters take what they can before the lions wise up and eat them.

A Rashaida wedding guest from Eritrea arrives on camelback accompanied by his three wives. Rashaida wedding rites take place over a period of up to 7 days in a large tent decorated by the bride during the days before the wedding. Festivities begin with the slaughter of a camel by the groom, and continue with feasting, dancing, & camel racing to entertain the guests.

The long narrow tunics worn by Wodaabe dancers from Niger have been elaborately embroidered by female relatives: each design has a name & tells a story. The men also wear leather talismans containing both writings from the Koran for protection from evil spirits, and secret herbal potions to increase the power of their performance.

On festive occasions, Surma children from Ethiopia decorate their bodies using chalk & earth pigments to create fanciful patterns. To reveal their close bond to one another, best friends often paint their faces with identical designs.

In Ghana, the display of gold at the Ashanti king's jubilee in 1995 was unsurpassed in splendor. This Adioukrou Queen Mother, attending the jubilee, indicates her status by wearing gold turtle & crocodile talismans in her hair. Magnificently bedecked in gold jewelry & wearing gold dust makeup, she exhibits her husband's substantial authority & worth.

The Tuareg are best known for the men's practice of veiling their faces with a blue cloth dyed with indigo. Early travelers' accounts often referred to them as the "Blue Men" of the Sahara Desert, the region where many Tuareg live. It is believed that the Tuareg are descendants of the North African Berbers, and that they originated in the Fezzan region of Libya. They later expanded into regions bordering the Sahara, bringing local farming peoples into their own society.

>Unlike women in many other Islamic societies, most Tuareg women do not wear veils in public. They may also independently inherit property and begin the process leading to a divorce.

>Tuareg men begin to wear a veil over the face at approximately eighteen years of age. This signifies that they are adults and are ready to marry. The first veiling is performed in a special ritual by a marabout. He recites verses from the Koran as he wraps the veil around the young man's head.

>The veil that Tuareg men wear on their faces has several meanings. It is, first of all, a symbol of male identity. It is also thought to protect the wearer from evil spirits. In addition, it is considered an attractive adornment and can be worn in various styles. The face veil is worn differently in different social situations. It is worn highest (covering the nose and mouth) to express respect in the presence of chiefs, older persons, and in-laws.

Like how Mansa Musa's pilgrimage pretty much left Egypt in economic shambles because he was literally GIVING away gold, and the resulting devaluation played havoc with people's savings and the price of goods

The Maasai live in the Great Rift Valley of Kenya & Tanzania. Maasai men move from one stage of life to another with elaborate ceremonies marking each passage. The ritual cycle extends over more than 25 years, beginning with circumcision.

>The 7 day celebration called Kokuzahn, honoring the Voodoo deity, Flimani Koku, takes place once every 3 years. Dancing devotees in states of deep trance spin faster & faster to the rhythms of Voodoo drums. They are protected from harm by wearing fiber skirts made from the Alatsi tree, and by smearing a paste made of palm oil, maize flour and herbs on their bodies.

>During the courtship season, a Wodaabe girl from Niger may flirt with two men who may both become her lovers. Should she decide to marry one of them, the other will always be welcome in the camp of her husband, who will generously offer her for the night—but only with her consent.

>In celebration of their impending graduation, Maasai warriors from Kenya launch themselves into a leaping dance known as "Empatia". Throughout the ceremony, young Maasai girls adoringly accompany their warrior boyfriends. The beaded collars & headbands the girls wear are designed to bounce rhythmically as they dance to enhance their bodily movements.

>A bride stays with her husband until she becomes pregnant after which she returns to her mother's home, where she will remain for the next three to four years. She will deliver the baby at her mother's home and then she becomes a boofeydo, which literally means "someone who has committed an error." While she is boofeydo, she is not allowed to have any contact with her husband, and he is not allowed to express any interest in either her or the child. After two to three years, she is permitted to visit her husband, but it is still taboo that she should live with him or bring the child with her; this only becomes permissible when her mother has managed to purchase all the items that are necessary for her home.

>The code of behavior of the Wodaabe emphasizes reserve and modesty (semteende), patience and fortitude (munyal), care and forethought (hakkilo), and loyalty (amana). They also place great emphasis on beauty and charm.

>Parents are not allowed to talk directly to their two first born children, who will often be cared for by their grandparents. During daylight, husband and wife cannot hold hands or speak in a personal manner with each other.

>At the end of the rainy season in September, the Wodaabe travel to In-Gall to gather salt and participate at the Cure Salée festival, a meeting of several nomadic groups. Here the young Wodaabe men, with elaborate make-up, feathers and other adornments, perform dances and songs to impress women. The male beauty ideal of the Wodaabe stresses tallness, white eyes and teeth; the men will often roll their eyes and show their teeth to emphasize these characteristics. The Wodaabe clans will then join for their week-long Guérewol celebration, a contest where the young men's beauty is judged by young women.

> Women do not have their own age-set but are recognized by that of their husbands. Ceremonies are an expression of Maasai culture and self-determination. Every ceremony is a new life. They are rites of

passage, and every Maasai child is eager to go through these vital stages of life. Following is where a boy's life begins in the Maasai society.

>The first boy's initiation is Enkipaata (pre-circumcision ceremony), and is organized by fathers of the new age set. Enkipaata can only happen, when the senior warriors are settled.

>A collection of 30-40 houses are built for the initiating boys. The houses are located in one large kraal chosen by the Oloiboni (prophet). This is where all boys across the region will be united and initiated. Before the ceremony, the Olopolosi olkiteng, chief of the boys, must be chosen.

>Olopolosi olkiteng is a position not desired by anyone because it is considered unfortunate. The new chief is to shoulder all of his age group's sins. The day before the ceremony, boys must sleep outside in the forest. When early dawn approaches, they run to the homestead and enter with an attitude of a raider. During the ceremony, boys dress in loose clothing and dance non-stop throughout the day. This ceremony is the transition into a new age set. After enkipaata ceremony, boys are ready for the most important initiation known as Emuratare (circumcision).

>The healing process will take 3-4 months, and boys must remain in black cloths for a period of 4-8 months. After they are healed, they have become a new person and receive the status of a new warrior.

>After circumcision, the next step is to form the Emanyatta (warrior's camp).

>Emanyatta contains twenty to forty houses randomly selected by warriors. The selection of this camp is sometimes a bit of a challenge. Not every elder would like his wife to be in an emanyatta, because it is a free visit zone for everyone. Weapons such as spears, clubs and shields are carried by warriors during this time because, occasionally, the battle can get very serious.

>Warriors will choose certain mothers to relocate at the emanyatta for the duration of its existence. Each Maasai section has its own age-set.

>A special pole, planted in the middle of the camp, is used as a flagpole. The white and blue colored cloth, the Maasai nation's flag, is tied to the pole before planting, and remains there as long as the Morrans (warriors) are still in the camp.

> The purpose of the camp is to keep men of the same age set together and fulfill their role as a military force. This is where the warriors learn about brotherhood, the art of oratory skills and animal husbandry. They will spend up to ten years in the emanyatta before the senior's warrior initiation.

>During the festival, warriors are prohibited to carry weapons such as sticks, spears, knives, etc. Also, during this event, an animal horn is set on fire and warriors are forced to take a piece out before it is completely burned. No one wants to take the piece out, because whoever takes the horn out of the fire will suffer misfortune throughout his entire life. However, if warriors refuse to take the horn out from the fire, the entire age-set will be cursed. It is better for one person to be unfortunate than many.

>A specially chosen bull is slaughtered for the ceremony. A wife must prove to her husband that she hasn't engaged in an illegal sexual affair with a man of the younger age set. Whether this has occurred or not will be revealed by participating in the bull's skin ritual. Men wrestle with themselves to get near the bull's skin to see if their wives have been unfaithful to the age-set. It is right for a wife to have affairs with men of the same age set but not outside the age set. If a woman is found guilty of violating such a commitment, she will be disrespected by her husband and by her entire age set.

>For a woman to regain respect from her husband, she must go back to her father or relative's home to obtain a female cow. No man would refuse such an apology; however, the man might not keep the cow. He would then give the cow to his friend as a gift.

In Mauritania, a West African country situated in between Western Sahara and Senegal, thin isn't considered beautiful. Skinny women are viewed as poor and not able to afford food.

For women to find husbands in Mauritania, they have to be fat. So they force-feed themselves large quantities of camel milk, bread crumbs soaked in olive oil, and goat meat. This practice is referred to as "gavage" — the same name used to describe the force-feeding of ducks to make foie gras.

First and second breakfasts consist of olive oil mixed with meal and a large bowl of camel milk. Lunch, of which a trained participant may have two, three, or even four, consist of Lunch is goat meat, bread and another bowl of milk. Dinner is more of the same.

The average Mauritanian girl can gain between 3-10 lbs/week on such a regimen, even accounting for the sweltering heat. The practice can lead to difficulty breathing, perforated stomach or upper GI tracts, and delusions leading to death caused by the high levels of sodium and other imbalances that may occur.

In Ethiopia the Karo people enhance a young brides beauty by tattooing her abdomen with different symbols. Amhara people: most marriages are negotiated by the two families, with a civil ceremony sealing the contract. A priest may be present. Divorce is allowed and must also be negotiated. There is also a "temporary marriage," by oral contract before witnesses.

The woman is paid housekeeper's wages, and is not eligible for inheritance, but children of the marriage are legally recognized and qualify for inheritance. Priests may marry but not eligible for divorce or remarriage. The Wedding procedure starts with the grooms side sending a representative who request the marriage between the parties. Then an appointment is given and a verdict on the marriage is given. Before the wedding the Dowry is given as agreed. On the wedding day the groom and three or four "bestmen" go to the wifes house. At the house the ladies family and friends ceremonially block the entrance to the house. The associates must sing strongly and force their way into the house. The first bestman holds perfume and sprays everywhere inside the house. The brides family sing songs . Christian marriages, mainly in Tigray and Amhara regions, are often arranged by the parents of the bride and groom with a great deal of negotiation. According to tradition and culture the bride must be virgin when the marriage takes place. Because the bride virginity is highly valued and pride in Christian marriage, with the whole family being shamed if the bride is not virgin at marriage.

The Massai people of Kenya grow up with children of their own age and normally form relationships with these people. However, in marriage women are given to a man they do not know who is much older then themselves. The bride packs all her belongings and is dressed in her finest jewelry. At the marriage ceremony the father of the bride spits on the brides head and breasts as a blessing and then she leaves with her husband walking to her new home she never looks back fearing that she will turn to stone. This can be a very sad experience for the bride, who is 13-16 years old and may walk a long way to get to her new house. In order to ward off bad luck sometimes the women of the grooms family will even insult the bride.

The Swahili of Kenya bathe brides in sandalwood oils and tattoo henna designs on her limbs. A women elder, or somo, gives instructions to the bride on how to please her husband. Sometimes the somo will even hide under the bed in case there are any problems! In a small city called Lamu, situated outside the coast of Kenya, lives a group of Swahili Muslims. In this community the weddings can be going on for a whole week with a lot of festivities consisted of singing, dancing and food. But these festivities are celebrated separate for men and women. After the "real" wedding the bride is shown in public, with a so-called, kupamba.

This ceremony is always taking place the evening after the wedding and it is the grand finale of the passage rite, in which the young bride enters the married women's world. Today this particularly ceremony has become more in focus than some years ago when the kuinngia ndani (the entry) was the main attraction. It is a ceremony when the groom is walking down the streets to meet his bride and then

complete first phase of the wedding. The kupamba has become more popular of various reasons, but the main reason is the fact that it is an opportunity for women to meet and have a good time without their husbands. When they enter this party they all take off their black veils and underneath they have beautiful dresses and wonderful haircuts etc.

Another problem with this kupamba is that many families almost ruin themselves just to be able to have this party for their daughters. The musicians and food cost plenty of money.

For the Samburu people marriage is a unique series of elaborate ritual. Great importance is given to the preparation of gifts by the bridegroom (two goatskins, two copper earrings, a container for milk, a sheep) and of gifts for the ceremony. The marriage is concluded when a bull enters a hut guarded by the bride's mother, and is killed.

The Himba people of Namibia kidnap a bride before the ceremony and dress her in a leather marriage headdress. After the ceremony she is brought into the house where the family tells her what her responsibilities will be as the wife and then anoint her with butterfat from cows. This shows that she has been accepted into the family.

The Wodabee of Niger court their cousins for marriage. The male cousins wear powerful amulets which are supposed to heighten their attractiveness to the girl. Wodaabe are often polygamous. Marriages are either arranged by parents when the couple are infants (called "koogal"), or they can be because of love and attraction (called "teegal"). The family of the groom gives a bride price to the bride's family and then they are married. A bride stays with her husband until she becomes pregnant after which she returns to her mother's home, where she will remain for the next three to four years. She will deliver the baby at her mother's home and then she becomes a boofeydo which literally means, "someone who has committed an error." During the time of being a boofeydo, she is not permitted to see or speak with her husband. It is a cultural sin for him to express any interest in her or the newborn child. After two to three years, her mother will release her to visit her husband, but she still will not be permitted to live with him or bring the child with her until the woman's mother can purchase everything that is needed for her home. Once these items are purchased, she is allowed to go and live with her husband, taking her child with her.

In Nigeria, in west Africa, a husband never uses his wife's name. Only relatives and the women's own children are allowed to use the name her father gave her and it is only unmarried girls who may be called by name. So to learn a married woman's name, one has to ask her husband the name of her father, and use that. When a couple are about to get married in this community people sing to inform that the bride is bound and is brought to the young man.

Singing and dancing are two very important fragments in the Nigerian weddings and they are always combined with a big feast. The bride is kept in a special hut where she stays till he is let inside. But first he has to give chicken and tobacco to the guest and when all have got this the bridegroom is let inside the bride's hut and the marriage is announced. Next day a goat is killed for the bride and the blood is poured over the threshold of the hut. and the bride's mother asks her daughter if she is pleased with the groom. After this the dancing starts again and the drums call make visitors come and they give the bride a penny to see her face and another penny for camwood to rub her body. In Nigeria marriage is seen as a bond between blood relations and are considered as very important.

"Today the traditional African weddings are dying and are becoming more like the Western-style church weddings. This has more or less become norm in Nigeria today. Even though people are born and raised in Nigeria they are still likely to have a Western-style white wedding at the expense of a proper African wedding"

The reason behind this can be the Nigerian Church and the Eurocentric missionaries who influenced the Church and the African groups. But there are some in Nigeria who still live after the old traditions and are performing the traditionally wedding ceremonies.

Traditional Wolof wedding ceremonies, the parents of the groom-to-be sends elders to the girl's parents with kola nuts and money to ask for her hand in marriage. The girl's parents consult their daughter and either consent to or reject the proposal. If accepted, the parents of the bride to be distribute the kola nuts among the family and neighbours. This distribution is an informal way of announcing the impending wedding. In more traditional practices, the groom to be's family paid the girl's bride price in the form of money.

This tradition, has been modernized and dowry is paid in money, cars or even houses. After the completion of the groom's obligations, the two families set a wedding day. Before the wedding day, the groom's family gives a party to welcome their daughter-in-law and to prepare her to live with her new family. The imam and elders advise the groom with the presence of the some representatives of the bride's parents.

Weddings traditionally take place at the groom's home. Parents receive guests with food and drink (but not alcohol), while guests bring gifts of money, rice, drinks, ships, sugar, or spices. After the ceremony people feast and dance with guests hiring a griot (praise-singer) and giving further gifts to the groom's parents. The girl moves to the husband's (or his parent's) home or compound, bringing utensils for cooking which she buys with the money from the bride price.

The Malagasy people of Madagascar have clearly never heard the phrase, "Rest in peace." In an effort to hasten decomposition — what's seen as an crucial step in the ongoing process of getting the spirits of the dead into the afterlife — the Malagasy dig up the remains of their relatives and rewrap them in fresh cloth.

Afterward, the Malagasy then dance with the corpses around the tomb to live music. Called Famadihana, or "Turning of the Bones," the ritual has been around for three centuries — one that the local Christian churches are doing their best to stamp out.

Lack of beasts of burden or good mount animals, but there are these in South Africa http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nguni_cattle as well as goats, so I suppose there are still pastoralists; it's not all just yam farmers and wild game hunters. I can't believe my knowledge of such a large landmass is so tentative that I had to look up to see if they had any cattle before European colonization (not because cattle couldn't be transferred by people during antiquity, but because of the tsetse fly that prevented horses from spreading further into Africa, for instance).

Apropos of nothing, I once read an article - it may have even been in National Geographic, though I don't recall for certain - about a tribal group in Africa that, in spite of an otherwise quasi-stone-age tech level, have fully adopted digital wristwatches. The interviewer was unable to discover where they were getting the watches (mostly because they refused to tell him for whatever reason), but apparently even hunter-gatherers benefit from precise timekeeping.

Secondary literature discussing Ibn Battuta suggested the West African Muslim states (Mali for him) were rather...not egalitarian. He got really mad at how the king only spoke to some sort of vizier who conveyed his words to his subjects, and that he got a paltry ass gift/banquet for visiting (some oatmeal and a banana) when it's usually the norm to be hospitable and such. I'm going to assume Ibn Khaldun's general dichotomy of the sedentary (Hierarchical) and nomadic/semi-nomadic (Egalitarian) was true in Africa, but I have to say while I don't want to buy into anti-african

propaganda it sure as hell seems like the sub-saharan royalties were extremely despotic and imperial courtly intrigue (like the byzantines or sassanids) rather than a more egalitarian nobility atmosphere like with Afghans/Bedouin Arabs/Germanics.

So I picture villages of yam farmers with indentured servants, tribal/clan social structures, iron weapons, and colorful cloth robe/toga things; with stone fortresses/castles uses by nobles/the king and his armies for good measure.

My mind typically goes to West Africa shortly before the Atlantic European slave-trade gets big, mixed in with half-baked things I might have read about the Bantu expansion, such as the ancient stone fortresses in the Congo and their use of iron tools.

>every village/town has its 'evil forest'

>malformed children, twins and people dying from horrible diseases are abandoned here

>those sentenced to death or who died from suicide are tied to a tree and left there

>a 'palace' can be nothing more than a large hut where the chief or king lives but it simply more heavily decorated and guarded than other homes

>natural formations and landmarks that nobody can explain but supposedly have magical properties

>witch doctors use fetishes and charms to cast spells

>every village has a section placed away from the rest where people born to dedicate themselves to the gods are born. these people never cut their hair as a mark of shame and are shunned by others. when it comes to sacrifices, they are picked first

>albinos have magical properties, may be persecuted or revered depending on the community

>you can sometimes hear a baby crying in the forests, usually a trap set up by a demon child and its witch mother

>palm wine

>Hua (2001) has theorized that the matriarchal system of the Mosuo lower classes was enforced by the nobility to neutralize threats to their power.[5] Since leadership was inherited through the male family line, potential threats to leadership from the peasant class were eliminated by tracing the lineage of the latter through the female line.

There is a very deep materialism in African native religions, the god is almost always incarnated in some object and some person.

They would trust in long spears and pikes, and principally tall leather shields of multiple layers of animal hide (Usually gazelle, but Rhino hide or elephant hide could be used in shields) glued together for protection. It could be a static rock for the enemy to crash upon like a wave, or it could be a crashing wave like the Hoplite phalanx, or something in between like a Saxon shield wall.

>There's certainly some interesting stuff to pick form down there. Sadly a combination of termites and iron fisted colonialism may have erased a lot, but still. One neat little detail for example that I've heard about was some tribe (or group of tribes, I can't quite remember) where the idea was that iron/steel is a "cold" metal. So to help with protection shields where painted mostly bright primary red, and decorated with brass and copper, all "warm" colours and metals.

One big thing about an African-styled campaign: unless you're making it a modern-day analogue, outsiders aren't going to know much of anything about stuff more than a few day's travel inland.

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— Amerind General

Woodcarving (particularly mask-making) is the highest form of art for many Northwest Coast peoples, and only the upper classes are permitted to learn it.

Here's what Northwest masks look like, for a better idea. These things are hard as fuck to make. A lot of them include movable parts, like opening mouths or swishing fins. It was common to make masks that had other masks inside, so a dancer would go through the layers as his character transformed.

Among the Navajo, it's rude to introduce yourself the first time you see them. You have to first observe that the person is of good conduct before it's okay to introduce yourself.

The Inka has a habit of conquering by giving people gifts. An Inka force would arrived in your valley, you'd gear up to fight them, and the Inka leader would go "No no, we dont want to fight you. Here, have these riches as a tribute, and we have some suggestions for improving your farming output, and here are some new weaving techniques, we'll show you how they work. Oh and we just want to build an embassy here on this marginal bit of land."

Before too long, the Inka embassy is running the show. and by that point the Inka have the good feelings of the populace and have moved in more forces piecemeal, so if the old rulers want to fight then the Inka just go "That's fine - see our army is here now and your populace would rebel. We could do that. However, we have an alternate proposal! Become nobles in our empire, do whatever the fuck we tell you to, and we wont kill you and all your children."

>Finally make it through the city gates

>Decorations make it seem like there was some kind of festival held there recently

>Fight to the temples

>See an opportunity to loot amidst the chaos

>Walk towards the temple

>All of a sudden a single man his skin painted gold, clearly reeking of wine stumbles out of the temple and begins screaming at you in a language you can't understand

>out of the temple step 4 more figures, hulking and reeking of decay

>at first glance they seem hideously deformed with rotten skin sloughing off of their grotesquely proportioned bodies but upon looking at their normal, albeit blood-soaked hands, and the second set of hands trailing from their wrists like skin mittens you realize that each is but a normal man in a suit of armor over which a single, partially-decayed human skin has been stretched to the point of breaking

>they look to the golden man who drunkenly reels, steadies himself, and then raises his scepter to point at you

>they slowly turn their heads from the golden man to you, the extra skin around their necks twisting and contorting over their armor

>gazing at you with hate-filled eyes from behind two pairs of sockets, they raise their bloody macuahuitls, and the warrior priests of Xipe Totec charge

It depends where in south america we're talking about really - chile is largely a stony desert and the driest place on earth, the mesa-american mountain regions of south america are more ghobi desert-like, cold and dry and you have altitude sickness to deal with on top of the rough terrain.

Then there's the amazon, which is bad for steel armor because rust and drowning, but at medieval tech you'd have some considerable deforestation, like what happened to europe's immense forests, so the

amazon might be a bit more habitable (though at the cost of jaguars going the way of the european leopards and lions).

Then there's meso-america proper, which is either jungle OR desert.

Meso American warfare = pyjama battles

>Guys, guys!

>What if people all over america traded and talked and occasionally fought with each other, like in europe?

>From the bottom of the south to the top of canada!

They did. There were legit civilizations in north america but they all got wiped out by smallpox before the Europeans even got to them. It traveled faster than the settlers.

The Europeans had such an easy time because they were fighting the remains of a collapsed civilization that had been reduced to nomadic hunter-gathering, not because they were simply more in touch with nature, but because they had no other choice.

Were it not for smallpox the Europeans would have had a much harder time. It wiped out more than 75% of the population and the technological advances of the 1500s would not have been able to deal with the vastly superior numbers.

In fact, there is even evidence that when the natives got wiped out, the resulting re-forestation of north america (because they weren't cutting down trees anymore) caused the little ice age in europe.

<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/columbus-arrival-linked-carbon-dioxide-drop>

If you read the old testament, the judeo christian god is the most frightening deity I can think of. If the conquest of the new world never happened and both civilizations never met. I would much rather live in 15th century Tenochtitlan than 15th century Spain. The people being sacrificed were mostly warriors captured in battle, and the children of noble houses. (one way to keep your heirs from fighting) The average citizen had a much better standard of living than the average Spaniard who had to live in constant fear of plagues, starvation, or being accused of witchcraft or heresy if he managed to survive the first two.

Now granted! The people outside of Tenochtitlan probably didn't think the Aztecs were nearly as awesome. It was an aggressive empire heavily dependent on tributary states. The average Aztec was doing fine, but the rest of the city states resented them. Another reason Cortez had such an easy time was because he was able to convince the other city states he could help them overthrow their oppressors.

Come to think of it, that would be a HILARIOUS angle for a white guilt western like DWW or Avatar. The magic white boy leads the natives to freedom, only to enslave them himself.

Yeah, a big thing people miss when talking about those "brutal, blood-sacrificing savages" is that Tenochtitlan was still the most population-dense city in the world.

The. World.

The Spaniards were rightfully awed.

Two words: Powhatan Empire. They had "civilized" feudalism and primitive cities, before the great fall (which was just shortly before the English came, so we don't know exactly what happened). Early reports of the coast tell oh HUGE coastal villages, where the firesmoke blocked out the sky for miles.

Pajama battles with slicks covered in paint-soaked feathers. That is how they [the Aztecs] did tournaments and training.

>The Satere-Mawe people use intentional bullet ant stings as part of their initiation rites to become a warrior. The ants are first rendered unconscious by submerging them in a natural sedative and then hundreds of them are woven into a glove made out of leaves (which resembles a large oven mitt), stinger facing inward. When the ants regain consciousness, a boy slips the glove onto his hand. The goal of this initiation rite is to keep the glove on for a full ten minutes. When finished, the boy's hand and part of his arm are temporarily paralyzed due to the ant venom, and he may shake uncontrollably for days. The only "protection" provided is a coating of charcoal on the hands, supposedly to confuse the ants and inhibit their stinging. To fully complete the initiation, however, the boys must go through the ordeal a total of 20 times over the course of several months or even years.

The ordeal lasts for hours and the subject is compelled to dance with the ant-filled stinging mitts despite the pain.

Certain tribes of Native Americans on the Pacific coast believed that after successfully hunting an animal, it was necessary to eat a part of its heart in order to become 'one' with the animal. It was believed that the hunter who did this was able to 'call' on the animal while on the hunt.

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— Australia General

In advent of Nuclear Apoc, the Land Down Under would most likely just go isolationist and wait out the nuclear shit-slinging.

Aus has no real long-range missiles, would be ignored by almost, if not, everyone in a fight and unless someone specifically just wanted to blow it all up for no reason then they could, would not even be a target.

Then there is the fact that Aus is so decentralised that even destroying it would just be a waste of resource in the end. Just nuke the military bases and ignore.

In case of nuke apoc, Australia Rules All.

The problem us Ausfags face is that we'd be locked into our own borders. Anyone with a basic understanding of our economy knows we produce raw production materials and ship them off to other parts of the world for you buggers to turn into usable stuff. With that cut off, Australia lacks a lot of the required machinery to rebuild, making fabrication itself a new resource altogether.

The best part of an Aboriginal death ritual is that family members get to keep a souvenir afterward — namely the bones of the deceased. Following the demise of a family member, the body was placed atop a raised platform and covered with leaves and branches where it was left to decompose — a process that often took months. In some cases, the liquid from the decaying corpse was collected and rubbed over the bodies of young men to pass on the good qualities of the deceased person. After, the bones were retrieved and painted with red ochre.

The bones were then either placed in cave or inside a hollowed out log. And in some cases they would be worn by relatives for up to a year. Some tribes also refused to utter the name of the deceased and completely disregarded any property they left behind. The entire ritual was way to ensure that the ego component of the deceased's spirit didn't get too comfortable hanging out with the living.

According to Eric Willmot, a leading Aboriginal scholar, a woomera and spear were the fastest weapons in the world until the invention of the self-loading rifle.[3]

The extra energy gained from the woomera's use has been calculated as -four- times as much as from a compound bow.[2]

>Many woomeras had a sharp stone cutting edge attached to the end of the handle with black gum from the triodia plant. This sharp tool had many uses and was commonly used for cutting up game or other food and cutting wood.

>The woomera could be used as a shield for protection against spears and boomerangs.

>a woomera and spear were the fastest weapons in the world until the invention of the self-loading rifle.[3] The extra energy gained from the woomera's use has been calculated as four times as much as from a compound bow.

Okay, fuck the gator tendons. This is awesome.

You should look up some pictures of those woomeras. They look like hollow clubs, sort of like leaves even. It'd seem obvious to me that they use dyes and carvings to make them look like stylized leaves.

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— Bedouin

>Bedouins, as nomads, do not have the concept of incarceration. Petty crimes, and some major ones, are typically settled by fines, and grievous crimes by corporal or capital punishment. Bedouin tribes are typically held responsible for the action of their members; if the accused fails to pay a fine, the accused's tribe is expected to pay and becomes obligated to the tribe.

>A widely-quoted Bedouin saying is: I against my brothers, I and my brothers against my cousins, I and my brothers and my cousins against the world

>Protocols regarding blood feuds often override court decisions and may vary from tribe to tribe. Punishment for murder is harsher than punishment meted out to acts of disturbing the assahiya (tribal solidarity), and is usually capital punishment, but in some tribes a blood vengeance fee may be extracted instead. The general governing principle is that of Dum butlab dum ("blood begets blood"), which may be compared to the lex talionis. In many tribes, the first five levels of male cousins (Khamsa) are obligated to seek out and kill the murderer. If not found, another male member of the murderer's tribe would have to die in the retaliatory killing.

>Hospitality (diyafa) is the highest Bedouin virtue. Any stranger can approach a tent and be sure of three days board, lodging and protection after which he may leave in peace. A complex code of manners regulates this and all other relationships.

>The main ritual of Bedouin hospitality is the preparation of coffee. Coffee making is an art, and Bedouin women (and men) are proud of their skill in it.

>Bedouin will offer their guests a rich meal, even if they have to slaughter their last sheep, or borrow from their neighbours to do it. Their honour is bound to their hospitality and lavish generosity.

>The Bedouin people are bound by a strict code of honour. This is the central focus to their society and dictates all law and custom within the tribes. Honour is gained through heroic deeds. Due to the harshness of the desert, good grazing and watering grounds were strictly protected by those who were able to maintain their hold on the land. This usually meant that different tribes were raided because of this need for resources. However, the Bedouin's strict code of honour made him bound to protect the women and children, and ensure that they had enough food and transport to survive.

>It is said that the Western Worlds ideals of chivalry and honour were bought back from the knights of the Crusades, who admired the Bedouin code of honour and adapted it to their own code of ethics.

>The Bedouin are true nomads, meaning that they move horizontally from one district to another in search of pasture (another form of nomadism, transhumance, is practiced in mountain areas by Kurds, Berbers and others who move from lower to higher altitudes in the different seasons).

>During their winter and spring migrations some Bedouin tribes travel 4000 km and more. The camel owning tribes travel the greatest distances, the sheep and goat herders are limited by the sheep who need water frequently. Camels can go seven to ten days without water, sheep four, cattle only two.

>The Camel breeders are regarded as the noblest tribes. They occupy huge territories, travel great distances, and are organised in large tribes and tribal confederations in the Sahara, Syrian and Arabian deserts. Lower in rank are the sheep and goat breeders who stay mainly near the cultivated regions of Jordan, Israel, Syria and Iraq. Cattle breeding Bedouins are found mainly in South Arabia and in the Sudan. The Marsh Bedouin are a unique group adapted to life in the swamps of southern Iraq where they herd water buffaloes.

>The camel enables the Bedouin to move far away from water sources (it can drink 150 litres and then go for ten days without further watering). Bedouins can survive for months on its milk and if necessary slaughter it for meat. It also provides hair for tent cloth and clothes, fuel (dung), transportation (it can carry up to 180 kg) and power for drawing water or for ploughing.

>Camels were obviously the Bedouin's best investment and trading commodity. They are called "God's gift", and the Bedouin will cater to their need before taking care of their own. The best breeds of the one-humped Arabian camel were bred in Oman.

>Pashtunwali literally means the way of the Pashtuns, it's the rules and regulations and laws of the Pashtun tribes which protected the world's biggest tribal society. These rules are responsible for the survival of the Pashtun tribes for over 2000 years.

>The obligation of Badal rests with the aggrieved party and it can be discharged only by action against the aggressor or his family. In most cases the aggressor is paid in the same coin. If no opportunity presents itself "he may defer his revenge for years, but it is disgraceful to neglect or abandon it entirely, and it is incumbent on his relations, and sometimes on his tribe, to assist him in his retaliation". When a Pakhtun discovers that his dishonor is generally known, he prefers to die an honorable death rather than live a life of disgrace. He exercises the right of retribution with scant regard for hanging and transportation and only feels contented after avenging the insult. Badal resulted in blood feuds and vendetta in the past, but now due to the prevalent peaceful conditions in the tribal area and with the spread of education, the incidence of Badal are few and far between.

>Nanawatai: Derived from the verb meaning to go in, this refers to the protection given to a person against his or her enemies. People are protected at all costs; even those running from the law must be given refuge until the situation can be clarified. Nanawatai can also be used when the vanquished party in a dispute is prepared to go in to the house of the victors and ask for their forgiveness. (It is a peculiar form of "chivalrous" surrender, in which an enemy seeks "sanctuary" at his enemy's house). A notable example is that of Navy Petty Officer First Class Marcus Luttrell, the sole survivor of a US Navy SEAL team ambushed by Taliban fighters. Wounded, he evaded the enemy and was aided by members of the Sabray tribe who took him to their village. The tribal chief protected him, fending off attacking tribes until word was sent to nearby US forces.

>An experienced British administrator who served as a Political Officer on the Frontier for a fairly long time describes it "an extension of the idea of Melmastia, (Hospitality) in an extreme form, stepped up to the highest degree". But the grant of asylum or sanctuary is only one aspect of Nanawatey while its exact definition and true spirit seems to have been ignored. As a matter of fact, it is a means to end longstanding disputes and blood feuds and transform enmity into friendship.

>“In common with all Afghans”, writes Claud Field, “the Afridi exercise a rough hospitality and offer an asylum to any fugitive endeavoring to escape from an avenger, or from the pursuit of justice and they would undergo any punishment or suffer any injuries rather than deliver up their guest”. The denial of protection, says Sir Olaf Caroe, “is impossible for one who would observe Pakhtu, it cannot be refused even to an enemy who makes an approach according to Nanawatey.”

>Melmastia Pakhtun have been described as one of the most hospitable peoples of the world. They consider Melmastiya or generous hospitality as one of the finest virtues and greet their guest warmly with a broad smile on their faces. A Pakhtun feels delighted to receive a guest regardless of his past relations or acquaintance and prepares a delicious meal for him. “Each house,” says Mirza Agha Abbas of Shiraz, “subscribes a vessel of water for the mosque and for strangers”. Dilating on the subject Mr. L. White King says that “Pathans regard dispensing of hospitality as a sacred duty, and supply their guests with food according to their means”.

>To their minds, says another English writer, “hospitality is the finest of virtues. Any person who can make his way into their dwellings will not only be safe, but will be kindly received.”

>The Bedouin are the Arabic speaking nomads of the Middle East who have proudly maintained their pastoral way of life over thousands of years. From the Arabian Peninsula, their original home, they spread out into other lands and now live in the desert regions of all countries between the Arabian Gulf and the Atlantic.

>There are other nomads in the Middle East with a similar lifestyle who are not Bedouin (not ethnic Arabs). These are the Berber nomads of North Africa, Kurdish and other Iranian and Turkic tribes, and some African tribes in the Sudan.

>Throughout their long history, desert Bedouin have survived on their herds, supplying the surplus meat and dairy products to the urban population. They also controlled the desert trade routes, escorted caravans, and provided them with guides and drivers.

>A century ago, nomadic Bedouin still made up a large percentage of the total Arab population. Their numbers have sharply declined since the introduction of new Ottoman land laws in the mid-eighteenth century which abolished the communal ownership of land that was a basic ingredient of their nomadic lifestyle. The decline continued under twentieth century central governments who apply many pressures on them to settle so as better to control them. The oil boom and the rapid industrialisation in the area have further accelerated this trend.

> Bedouin have a love of freedom and not being tied down. Explaining the appeal of the nomadic life, one Bedouin nomad told National Geographic: “You are free. You have a relationship only with your animals. The only relationship more important is with Allah.” Calmness and patience are valued traits in the desert. Bedouin submission to fate has been a cornerstone of the Muslim faith. The Bedouin term “green hearted” describes the act of being lighthearted and unconcerned about mundane matters and preferring adventure and danger.

> National Geographic photographer Reza said, “I have been shooting pictures for 35 years and have traveled in 107 different countries, but nowhere have I enjoyed greater warmth than I experience among the Bedouin. Exhausted after a long day driving...you’d approach a tent, and suddenly someone would appear with a coffee and a beautiful carpet to sit on—yet they’d never ask you who you were or where you’re from. I sometimes wonder if the rest of us have forgotten such values.”

> Bedouins are expected to boil their last rice and kill their last sheep to feed a stranger. Whenever an animal is slaughtered for a guest it is ritually sacrificed in accordance with Islamic law. It is customary in

some Bedouin tribes for a host to smear blood from a slaughtered animal onto of the mouth of his guest in a show of hospitality.

>Hospitality is regarded as an honor and a sacred duty. Visitors who happen by are usually invited to sit and share a cup of thick, gritty coffee. Guest are ritually absorbed into the household by the host. If a conflict occurs the host is expected to defend the guest as if he were a member of his family. One Bedouin told National Geographic, "Even if my enemy appears at this tent, I am bound to feast him and protect him with my life."

> Some Bedouins families are quite large. "We have many children," a Bedouin told journalist Harvey Ardent, "I myself have 17 by my two wives. What else can you do in the desert?"

>As is true with all Arabs, Bedouins live in patrilineal societies. Most are members of large patrilineal descent groups, which are linked by agnation to larger lineage groups, tribes and even confederations of tribes. "Bedouins frequently name more than five generations of patrilineal ancestors and conceptualize relations among descent groups in terms of a segmentary genealogical model, with each group nested in a larger patrilineal group. Within this structure is a framework for forging marriage alliances, and settling disputes and administering justice.

> Bedouins have nasty blood feuds that sometimes end in murder. Describing a revenge killing in southern Arabia in 1946, Wilfred Thesiger wrote: "Bin Mautlauq spoke of the raid in which young Sahail was killed. He and fourteen companions had surprised a small herd of Saar camels. The herdsmen had fired two shots at them before escaping, on the fastest of his camels, and one of these shots hit Sihail in the chest. Bakhit held his dying son in his arms as they rode across the plain with the seven captured camels. It was late in the morning when Sahail was wounded, and he lived till nearly sunset, begging for water which they had no t got."

>Explaining the appeal of the nomadic life, one Bedouin nomad told National Geographic: "You are free. You have a relationship only with your animals. The only relationship more important is with Allah." Otherwise it is a tough life. T.E. Lawrence once wrote that nomadism was "the most deeply biting of all social disciplines...a life too hard for all but the strongest and most determined."

>Bedouins often travel at night because it easier navigate under the stars People looking for Bedouins sometimes have to spend several weeks to locate them wandering in the desert. "For us the desert is neither fearsome nor mysterious," a Bedouin desert policeman told Abercrombie. "It is home. We know the barren hills, each bitter stretch between wells. We understand its signs and its people.

> With water in short supply, Bedouins don't take many baths. Before prayers they often wash with sand rather than scarce water. Bedouins wash their hair with powdered leaves of the sidr tree, a thorny fruit tree also know as Christ's thorn because it believed to have been used to make Christ's crown of thorns. The leaves are dried and pounded and mixed with water to make a lather.

Weren't the Marsh Bedouin in Iraq nearly exterminated by Saddam?

This reminds me of an article I read about poverty and investing. The author asked a man in the Sahara why he had bought a gigantic TV instead of saving up to send his children to college. The response was basically that "I have spent 25 fucking years watching sand dunes move, I need a break from this shit."

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— China

Regarding China, the reason for their not attempting conquest was a mixture of cultural and geographical. The Chinese hit upon a winning system of governance really, really early, and, during their golden ages, China was really, really stable. They were protected from outsiders on all sides by natural barriers, and from internal unrest (mostly) because of their system of Confucian bureaucracy. Now, that's not to say there was no unrest, because that's a damned lie, but rather that the Chinese mindset and Chinese traditional system of governance was such that stability took priority over all other considerations. Furthermore, because the power of the Chinese nobility was broken pretty early, you didn't have large groups of armed men prowling around looking for glory and conquest, but rather a standing national army that played a more defensive role. All this success and the manifold natural resources of China led them to believe that nothing else was worth conquering, that the Middle Kingdom was the center of the Earth, and that anyone beyond the borders of China was subservient to the Chinese Emperor. This last point was so self-evidently obvious that the need to enforce the claim was a ridiculous idea.

Zhang He was also Muslim.

Not that guy, but the Chinese are traditionally quite hostile to Muslims. The Uighurs of the Xinjia province regularly get slaughtered by the Chinese, for instance.

That's largely due to the fact that the Uighurs are Turkic and what Turkics loved to do to China was raid & invade it.

Which is why China pretty much fucked them up ever since the T'ang dynasty.

From marriage to something brighter: death rituals.

The mysterious Bo people of the Hemp Pond Valley in Southwest China's Gongxian County flourished for millennia before they were massacred by the Ming Dynasty over five centuries ago. Today, the Bo are almost completely forgotten, save for the dramatic hanging coffins they have left behind — a haunting array of wooden caskets that extend from the rock face to a height of almost 300 feet. Located just above the Crab Stream, the 160 coffins were placed along the cliffs and within natural caves, with some resting on wooden posts that extend out from the cliffside. The precipice itself features many murals that are painted with bright cinnabar red colors, many of which depict the lives of the Bo people. Today, the locals refer to the long-lost civilization by such names as "Sons of the Cliffs" and "Subjugators of the Sky." But why they interred their dead in this way remains a complete mystery.

In rural Taiwan, an ancient tradition comes under fire: in the form of funerary strippers.

The practice, deeply rooted in Taiwanese culture, dates back to the 1800s. However, due to government censorship, the media did not start reporting on the practice until the 1980s. The increase in media publicity coincided with the time when mafia bosses who ran Taiwan's nightclubs had also taken over the mortuary business. Apparently, one of the mafia chiefs came up with the idea of combining the two businesses in order to maximize profits.

The original purpose was to use the strippers as a way to attract evil spirits away from the body and towards the seductive force of the nude dancer.

I now have an excuse for one of my funeral requests.

Addendum: the Chinese aren't "traditionally" hostile to Muslims. Loads of Western and Southern Chinese are Muslims. Furthermore they're one of their best trading partners and not to mention Chinese

Muslims were career soldiers, to the point that the sons of muslim Chinese soldier took over their dads jobs and people with the surname of Ma (a Chinese name for "Muhammad") were commonly soldiers. They just hate the fuck out of the Uighurs because they are Turkic, and Imperial China hates aimless steppe people

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— Europe General

The French have a lower standard of 'adulthood.' I am told that this is so that they can legally draft a larger army when the Germans invade next.

Also, they [Germans] fear fun. When you sit down with a circle of friends in Germany you pretty much sit and drink in silence. There really isn't much revelry there, and probably for good reason. Bad things happen when Germans get happy.

For instance southern Europeans tend to be more intimate and animated and they are Catholics, while Scandinavians are more reserved and protestants.

Basically this marked the point at which Venice shifted from peaceful commerce, soft influence and occasional piracy to being a full-blown naval power looking out for its own interests rather than trusting foreigners to do that for it.

>The iconic Scottish 'Highland Charge' was developed to deal with the new realities of cannons and gunfire

>In it, warriors would usually group by family (cousins, uncles, brothers, and such) into wedge-shaped blocks, and charge flat-out at opposing lines. Because of the emphasis on speed (because bullets hurt,) it was optimally done downhill towards the enemy, and without armor or lower body clothing lest they inhibit speed

>They would charge to within firearm range- generally about 60 yards- before letting off a volley with all firearms on hand. The gunsmoke would provide protection from return fire, as did the practice of throwing themselves down immediately after firing.

>Once fire, melee weapons were drawn and the charge resumed, ideally after the enemy salvo had just gone over the Scot's heads, but before the enemy had managed to reload (easy) or before they'd had a chance to insert bayonets (more important. Remember, ring bayonets didn't exist for a long time.). Unloaded, bayonet-less rifles were generally vastly inferior to a targ and broadsword in close combat.

>The grouping on family basis encouraged bravery in the face of fire during the charge and ferocious combat when enemy lines were met. Though quite effective at cutting through enemy lines, the primary function of the charge was getting enemy lines to break before contact.

The fact that, by some measures, Scots were poorer than native Americans in terms of resources and wealth throughout much of their history might also be related to the use of such a risk- and manpower-intensive tactic.

>To compensate for the lack of manpower and resources Sweden strove for innovative ways to make an effective army. The successful path of innovative military ideas was in fact the only way Sweden managed to achieve a great power status. However, having to rely on this to maintain power status was uncertain. The Carolean army was small and because of the sparse number of soldiers it needed a continuance of victories, as a heavy defeat could be irreparable.

>Strict discipline was necessary in the Carolean army to allow its very offensive tactics, which among other things exposed soldiers to a medium-distance enemy fire before being allowed to respond. This

tactic was intended to get the soldiers close enough to the enemy so that it was almost impossible to miss a shot. The steadfast courage shown from the Swedish troops would also affect enemy morale, at several occasions this would frighten the enemies into retreat

> In four ranks with gaps, the Swedish battalion would "smooth and slowly" march against enemy fire (which often started at a distance of 100 meters), while making their way to the enemy lines.

Albanian sworn virgins (Albanian: *burrnesha* or *virgjinesha*) are women who take a vow of chastity and wear male clothing in order to live as men in the patriarchal northern Albanian society. To a lesser extent, the practice exists, or has existed, in other parts of the western Balkans, including Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia.

Other terms for the sworn virgin include *vajzë e betuar* (most common today, and used in situations in which the parents make the decision when the girl is a baby or child), *mashkull* (present-day, used around Shkodra), *virgjineshë*, *virgjereshë*, *verginesa*, *virgjin*, *vergjinesha*, Albanian virgin, avowed virgin, *muskobani*, *muskobanj*, *ostajnica* (Serbian: means man-woman, manlike, she who stays), *tobelija*, *basa*, *harambasa* (Montenegrin), *tobelija* (Bosnian: bound by a vow), *zavjetovana djevojka* (Croatian), *sadik* (Stahl, Turk Moslem: honest, just).

A woman becomes a sworn virgin by swearing an irrevocable oath, in front of 12 village or tribal elders, to practice celibacy. Then she is allowed to live as a man. She will then be able to dress in male clothes, use a male name, carry a gun, smoke, drink alcohol, take on male work, act as the head of a household (for example, living with a sister or mother), play music and sing, and sit and talk socially with men. The sworn virgin is believed to be the only formal, socially defined female-to-male cross-gender and cross-dressing role in Europe. Similar practices occur in some native American tribes in North America.

I know Greeks pretty much are the figureheads of democracy in the ancient world, but Germans introduced the concept of being judged by a jury of your peers as opposed to a bunch of learned men who mostly belonged to the upper classes, which is what the Romans and Greeks did.

Most cultures celebrate life and death, but very few celebrate those who have managed to escape death. In Spain people celebrate the Fiesta de Santa Marta Ribarteme. Santa Marta de Ribarteme is the saint of resurrection. The festival occurs in As Neves, Galicia each year at the end of July. The festivities begin in the mid-morning, with thousands of people pouring into the streets of the small town, according to donquijote.org. First, all the attendees celebrate Mass. Afterward, those who have experienced near death experiences climb into coffins, which are carried through the streets by their families. Spectators line the streets and observe the procession of people being carried in caskets. The procession takes people up the nearby hill to the cemetery, which the procession circulates around. The festival is a way for the people who escaped death recently to show gratitude for their life to the patron saint of resurrection.

Danes have really ritualized meals, if that counts. Coffee is taken at three with a bunch of different varieties of cookies and cakes that have a specific order you have to eat them in, and big parties last half the day or more, starting with shaking the hand of everyone there (literally everyone, this is important) then there's a few courses of food, then people have songs they're prepared for the host and/or guest of honor, sung to tunes that everyone knows but with lyrics written for the occasion and shared around on print-outs. Then more food, then people go outside theoretically for games or walking the grounds but mostly for talking. Then back inside for some more courses of food.

Estonians are quite keen on preserving links with the dead. Back in the old folk days, when someone died, his friends and family would go to the graveyard and eat with the dead. Plates of food and

delicacies would be placed on every tombstone and everyone would happily commune with those six feet under. What exactly happened to the food is unclear.

I remember reading about how when the Germans occupied Lithuania, in WWI, they complained about the laziness of the farmers there who wouldn't smash boulders in their fields to clear the out. They'd just keep plowing around that boulder, year after year.

What they didn't realize was that boulders had spiritual significance in Lithuanian paganism, and to move or destroy boulders like that was still a taboo among Lithuanian farmers.

The context was football matches, where gangs of neo-nazis would lurk in the crowd and attack anyone they saw who looked "ethnic," then run away before security showed up. Said running away involved parkour and urban-combat tactics.

>always assumed some dumbass english speaker misheard Deutch

this is literally the reason - only English speakers call them that

There's a crapload of funny inter-culture naming oddities though. Slavs call us Germans "dumb people" (not as a slur, that's literally what their normal everyday conversation word for Germans is)... as in "not speaking" not "stupid" though.

In some of the oldest surviving Swedish city laws (I've read parts of them in 'elder Swedish'; language history is gold), they actually talk about how there is a limit to the number of German traders and craftsmen who are allowed in the councils, as they had immigrated in such a majority.

These texts are from 1200-1300. GERMANS as a people and concept have been around a long time.

"Despite hundreds of years of oppression and a violent campaign against it, the people of Wales hold an annual ceremony called an Eisteddfod. This ceremony strives to show the beauty of the native's language, Cymraeg, through poetry, literature and the arts, which up until very recently was punishable by flogging children and in some cases ostracizing adults."

Hmm... there's some tobacco growing going on in southern Europe, but there's history of some small-scale planting even in Scandinavia. Enterpeneurial individuals might manage to construct greenhouses and start a little grassroots industry around it. God knows they'd be in high demand after importing comes impossible.

while Portugal was an imperial nation it was arguably not even the center of its own empire

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— Europe— Medieval

The first university of the Latin world was a law university (in Bologna)

It's the nobles who most often smelled worse though. Peasants would bathe pretty often, whilst at some points the nobles would refuse to do so, and just cover up the stench with perfumes.

>Literally no-one cares about the peasants.

Except the nobles who have sworn to protect their subjects in exchange of their services. Except craftsmen who trade their services to mostly peasants. Except priests who generally were quite caring people and if not that, someone needed to grow their food.

Peasants weren't expendable.

The fantasy idea of peasants comes from serfs who were for the most part, filthy and illiterate. Of course people do have aspirations so a family of dirt farmers would have at least 1 son in the church where he will learn to read and write and maybe even have a career.

Then you have the modern examples if you've ever seen a shanty town you'd be shocked by how clean the children are.

>Weren't peasant farms the source of most of the food though?

And quite a lot of other services which kept the world turning so to speak.

Landowners could push peasants fairly hard, but like anything they do have a breaking point and would down tools, maybe riot or start a rebellion. This might be interesting from a story telling perspective, but it was bad for the lord as he had to kill lots of them before they stopped fucking around and it was bad for the peasants, because they got their shit destroyed... and it was bad for everyone else because it meant a food shortage.

It was really only up until the plagues in Europe that the peasants got any kind of actual 'power' because with half or more of the population dead, that set of hands actually had a purpose and they could charge for their services- later of which would become what we now as a 'middle class'.

Serfs were often traded by lords. In Russia for example a good horse could cost you 20 odd serfs.

After the black death hit bathing for both came to a screeching halt. Prior to that, yeah, the peasantry loved bathing. Soap was made on a near industrial level and you were expected to bathe with a houseguests.

>the soldiers sitting around the fire raving and laughing about people dying at the Red Wedding made them seem like sociopaths

Soldiers today will say (and do) some seriously fucked-up shit- so will doctors and other people who have a more intimate relationship with death than most of us. Wind back the clock a few centuries, to a time when there was nothing much you could do about disease, half the village kids died, and most women died in childbirth, and you'd expect to see a pretty different approach to life and death.

Like, in Sweden there was no serfdom and peasants had atleast theoretical chance to send written pleads to their king while Russian serf might had worse life than a roman slave.

A good example if contrast is Britain pre & Post Black Death.

Pre Black Death, serfs had essentially zero rights. You do as you're told by your betters or you'll be used as an example for your replacement.

Post Black Death. Massive population reduction. The Lords don't have enough serfs to replace them like they used to. They need the ones they have to tend their land, work their crafts and do all the peasant stuff the Nobles always just took for granted before.

"Serf, go till my fields. I'll allot you 1% of the harvest to feed your family."

>"M'lord, I think I'd like 3%. I shouldn't lose m' youngest this winter if I has a bit extra."

"What! You'll do as you're told or you'll get nothing. These are my lands and I say how much you may keep."

>"Very well M'lord. I'll just grab the family and head over to the next County. The Lord there needs people t' work 'is land an' is offerin' 3%."

"What. You can't leave. Try to leave and I'll see you hung at the cross roads."

>"Then who'll tend you land's M'lord?"

"..... I. I'll get other serfs. From other Counties. They'll tend my land."

>"But you'll need to offer 'em better than what they got to lure 'em away. An' if they hear you still killin' us serfs like the Nobles used to.... I doubt any would come."

"Fine. You can keep 3% of the harvest."

Depends on what peasants and where. In places like England or Sweden, peasants had a relatively high level of education and social rights. In places like Poland or Imperial Russia though, you get the classic unwashed and ignorant dirt farmers.

Keep in mind that when it comes to actual medieval relationships, GoT is unrealistic as fuck.

Yes, "everything is grim and shit" IS unrealistic.

Average peasant wasn't retarded. They just had more narrow and practical scope of vision (and it kinda helps when you depend on land to not starve).

Feudalism had been a relatively stable system for hundreds of years because agricultural production was very primitive--producing few surpluses, and thus keeping trade and urban developments at a low level. The once extensive road system had fallen into complete disrepair and most of the towns and cities of the former Roman Empire had severely decayed or vanished altogether; in some places cattle grazed among the sometimes still visible ruins of Antiquity.

Three field agriculture made a bigger supply of food, allowing for bigger towns and the growth of trades, attracting peasants to the towns.

Alright, OP. Peasants. They aren't really that different from today's working class - in a sense. Sure, they are totally uneducated but there's a reason: imagine you'd have to struggle to get enough food to feed yourself and your family all year long. And that only when the weather is right. Pre-taxes. And the food is mostly shitty gruel. Life is hard; you have to work hard every year to make it and pray that God doesn't hate you and sends famine or diseases your way. Or marauding bandits.

And, no, peasants aren't all just sheep. They have a contract with their uppers: they trade in some of their freedoms for the pledge of security (anyone reminded of the NSA?). The whole thing degenerated a bit over time so people had lost their freedoms while protection by nobility wasn't always granted. But when peasants got together and petitioned their superior as a group, their chance of being listened to was much higher.

That should be a lesson for all of us to never trade freedom for security.

The black death, while a tragedy, basically started the middle class and thus the renaissance in time (combined with crusade knowledge and general advancement).

When peasants became a limited commodity lords really couldn't afford to treat them like shit any more. Kinda explains why places that didn't get hit by a plague (such as china and india) didn't advance like europe did, and thus colonialism happened.

If your setting doesn't have a big plague then it is completely logical to have worthless peasants and low tech.

'Peasants' is not even a real thing, it was invented after the Middle Ages.

You have serfs and freemen. Serfs had to spend a certain amount of days a year working the lord of the manors fields but got the rest to tend their own little plot of land that came with their house. They could not leave the land without permission. Any serf who ran away to a town or city and stayed for a year and a day was now free.

Freemen owned more land and were not 'owned' by the lord. Some of them were nearly as wealthy as the nobles who owned the smaller manors.

As for the cleanliness thing people washed their hands multiple times a day and would have done their best to keep their house and themselves clean even if the floor often is just dirt with rushes on it. They were not educated but they were not idiots and they knew their legal rights.

Especially following the fall of the roman empire shit got grim for peasants. They were still pagan and the nobles and kings were christian.

The church even had to step in and regulate knightly violence vs peasants because knights liked to rape and steal before the christians invented chivalry and crusades.

On the cleaning part... medieval people of the lower classes at least were really sexually comfortable. Maybe not like us today, but certainly much more free sexually than people in the Victorian age.

People would just wash themselves openly at rivers or wells without giving a fuck.

Medieval people (including the nobles) also had FUCKING NASTY humour. Knights wore armour with middlefingers engraved on it. People sold daggers with dick-hilts.

I can't say this for certain, but virginity wasn't really something people cared about, except for noble daughters. I think. I might be wrong though.

You're quite right actually. Sexual 'purity' was an issue only for nobleborn girls as they were to marry for alliances and bear heirs. A woman who had premartial sex put the legitimacy of her husband's heirs in question.

Also interesting fact. It wasn't until after Charlemagne that it became commonplace for nobles to know how to read and do proper math.

Before that, nobles were just expected to know how to kill a lot of dudes.

Also, that's sort of interesting. It's kind of like the proles from 1984; they're too low for the powers-that-be to really worry about controlling their thoughts directly. Maybe it's the very development of the middle class that starting spreading noble-esque social rules around a greater portion of the populace.

Chivalry as in "you're not allowed to just rape and steal your own peasants".

You were allowed to rape and steal from peasants from other fiefs.

Basically chivalry in the middle ages was just the combo of horsemanship, combat skills and not raping your own fief into economic collapse.

He had a lot of wives. A LOT of wives. Hell, one of my female ancestors is a descendant of one of Charlemagne's "harem waifus".

Something about how in those days marriage wasn't really codified so it really was just a matter of how much bling you had to keep your extended family running.

The Crusades served the purpose of channeling the violence of knights into something the church deemed constructive, namely bailing out Byzantium and going after the glorious loot of the Muslims.

For all the bloodshed, the crusades did bring new sciences and learning to Western Europe.

It's actually pretty funny how it goes.

>moors get pushed out of arabia because fuck those guys fucking shit up in arabia

>they go raid europe

>while later

>knights get send on crusade because they keep fucking up shit in europe
>they go raid the holy land

Mind you, a big warning sign about information in the Middle Ages. Information wasn't lost. But it wasn't shared, and there was no real new generation of information. People just categorized information and rewrote old books over and over again. Bit like the Adeptus Mechanicus.

>of course certain things just went about their own business like military engineering and church construction

But no guy in the Middle Ages was going to question the Roman literature about dragons hunting elephants in India.

>Medieval people (including the nobles) also had FUCKING NASTY humour. Knights wore armour with middlefingers engraved on it. People sold daggers with dick-hilts.

If you didn't have a Victorian-derived mindset, you wouldn't consider these things "FUCKING NASTY", you would just consider them "humorous".

>Dirty

no. Bathing was commonplace - infact there are laws in places (prague, for example) that stipulated that those who did not bathe on a regular basis would be fined. Vikings were renowned for their fastidious personal hygiene, too. That's not to say they smelt of roses all the time. the environment was certainly dirtier than today - particularly cities, which would be rank.

>imagine you'd have to struggle to get enough food to feed yourself and your family all year long

Medieval peasants had far more leisure time than modern people do. Sure, there were times of the year when you'd have to work hard, but at other times you took it easy. Like, if your lord demanded you work for him, you only had to do half a day's work, and if he made you do overtime you got tomorrow off.

Interestingly enough the Flynn Effect suggests that actually medieval peasants were significantly less intelligent than the average person today.

The exact reasons for this haven't been fully determined but it's kind of cool.

I don't have much time, but I'll say a bit. People should do some research on these topics. Read some real scholar level books, most of what is said in this thread is nonsense.

First, when considering how peasants were treated be careful that you are not getting how Russian Feudal system worked. That was horrible, but it was Feudal only in name - in reality they were slaves. Not so for Europe, certainly not for Britain.

Most peasants, wait for it, could read. They had a very specific reading interest, which was law (contracts actually). Contracts completely ruled their life, and if you could not read them yourself you were screwed (contract with your lord about obligations, etc). Outside of that narrow range they had no interest in reading and no skill there. It isn't like there were book stores for them to buy fantasy novels to read. So they really didn't care.

Stupid? Within the context of what they were doing they should be considered specialists. A Feudal farm had a lot going on and the peasant had to be able to do all of it and do it well or starve.

The idea that they were stupid is just cultural bias. These are the same human beings as are alive now, they were just as innately intelligent as anyone on this forum. I'd suggest that if any of us were transported back to their time that rather than being hailed as a wizard, most of us would be considered pretty stupid as we would be unable to do even the most simple of tasks.

Peasants were certainly not street vermin. They were the very foundation of a Lords wealth. Their labor was a measure of wealth. To kill a peasant was to commit theft against a lord.

Over all the peasant had less interaction with his lord than you have with your government. It was arguably somewhat of a libertarian'ish (but not really) society in that the Lord only gave a shit about his peasants within the context of what wealth he could get from them. Other than that, he didn't care. They could, and did, manage almost all of their own affairs. Legal matters, the entire thing were handled by the peasants themselves.

The Feudal system itself existed as a response to a lack of currency. Lacking money, the one thing that people had to 'trade' (be taxed) was their labor. As such the Lord demanded X amount of labor each year from the peasants (X changes depending on era and nation). That could be paid instead with food or coin, but for the big tax that was rare until the end. Though the Lord almost always preferred to receive goods or better yet coin when he could get it.

Taxes? Beyond the big (think of it as their version of income tax) yearly labor. There were a ton of 'fees' that were had for damn near anything. If you research it you are going to laugh, it is so much like our current system. A fee or tax or 'license' on damn near everything. this was usually paid with a food good 'chicken' or 'X eggs' that sort of thing.

>Wasn't literacy seen as something to be feared by the nobility, because peasants who could read the Bible for themselves might realize that their lords were full of shit?

>Or was there just a prohibition against reading the Bible if you weren't a member of an approved class?

None of that is true. This myth comes from later on when, as is typical, later generations wanted to think of themselves as smarter than earlier ones. Also, there is a lot of 'and this is how evil the nobles or church were' depending on which axe you have to grind.

The fact is that other than legal matters (contracts) the peasants did not give a fuck about reading. Who cares? There were no books to read. The church actually taught the peasants for free in order to protect them (peasants) from noble abuse and to give the church more power (see all that we do for you, etc).

Gotta go guys. Be back in about three hours after I work out. If this thread is around I'll talk some more. I'm a bit of scholar in this area.

I promise you though, the more you learn about this era the more you will go 'fuck, they were just like us'.

>Christfags also frequently opposed bathing due to their weird sex and nudity taboos. It didn't help that many bathhouses were hangouts for prostitutes.

those were a minority - pretty much the wesboro baptists of their day, and were looked on as a bit crazy by the normal christians.

European Peasants are academically dumb but are smart in the practicals of their lives (i.e. hunting, farming, trapping, and so on).

As for their education, shit varies. In England for example, peasants tend to be decently educated than their mainland European counterparts owing to the fact that the background of the English peasant is the Saxon Freeman, who ought to know laws, statutes, and obligations required of them. Sure the Normans brought the Feudal System of the mainland Europe to England but they can't snuff out what essentially is a parliamentary society that's already there.

And then you had the French peasantry who got the shit-end of the Feudal experience (i.e. mean lords, who take 80% of your income, robber barons, semi-independent counts/marquises/counts who rarely follow the king.). It's a hit and miss being French peasant. Sometimes you had a fair lord and in the next village they have an utter shit one.

Worst of all, however, is the Eastern European Peasant. They're close to literal slaves.

>Most peasants, wait for it, could read. They had a very specific reading interest, which was law (contracts actually). Contracts completely ruled their life, and if you could not read them yourself you were screwed (contract with your lord about obligations, etc).

In England maybe. Not so everywhere else in Europe.

Yes this is just France, but France is the focal point of Feudalism in Europe.

Furthermore there are other ways of learning laws for the illiterate. You could either ask a priest about it and also passes orally.

Bog-standard Fantasy is generally 40% mediaeval Germany, 40% mediaeval England and 20% rest of Europe anyway.

First off, peasants don't own land. They live on the noble's land, and pay "rent" by giving their lord a portion (usually a fat cut too) of the crops they harvest, in addition to taxes. Keep in mind, they are trying to feed themselves and their families at the same time, and medieval agriculture wasn't as plentiful as today; everything had to be sown, separated, and harvested by hand, and there were no pesticides to keep bugs away, and it's very likely the weather will kill at least some of the original crop. Second, peasants almost never leave. Once they're born on a lord's land, they normally aren't allowed to leave. Doing so would be similar to a runaway slave, and if they're caught, they'll be punished. The average peasant would never see the world outside the noble's land.

Third, peasants are uneducated. Education was only for the wealthy, i.e. nobles. The vast majority could not read, write, or even do simple math. The most you could assume they knew was how to count on their fingers.

Fourth, peasants are poor. The average peasant's house was a one-room wooden "house" that had to hold the whole family, their possessions (which were few), and all their livestock during the winter. They slept on hay. If someone in the family got sick, there was a good chance the others would too, and this was an era where something as small as a cold could kill. Most days they would eat stew made from whatever they had, and the soggy bread crusts nobles would sometimes throw them.

Finally, a peasant is a peasant for life. There was no moving up in life for peasants, they would spend their short lives growing crops for the noble who's land they happened to be born on, then died on said noble's land. Books, games, and other forms of media often show some working as servants for their local lord, but that wasn't actually very common. Most servants, from the meat carvers to the people who dressed the lord, were minor nobles or bastards. A peasant could become a footsoldier (though often they had no choice in the matter), but they were too poor to afford armor or weapons, and they were not issued any. Often a peasant footsoldier would go into battle with normal clothes and maybe a leather helmet.

In conclusion, peasants are not necessarily bad, if anyone the nobles are for making them live like that. Granted they're not going to be the most sophisticated people, but that's because their living conditions made them that way.

>First off, peasants don't own land.

That's only a certain kind of peasant.

>Peasants weren't expendable.

This, the whole thing about peasants being massacred was due to medieval warfare at the time, where opposing lordships/kingdoms/whatever would raid each other's lands and kill each other's peasants in order to either

- a) lure the opposition out of their castles
- b) weaken them economically

Don't think of them as sub-human. They're just... hillbillies. Probably never read a book, don't watch TV. Don't know much about what goes on in the next administrative region next to them.

But they know their neighbors, the home town and surrounding area, their traditions, their religions, and are all around decent people just trying to get by.

Might be prone to conspiracy theories and discrimination, especially against people someone they know/trust has told them is bad, but they had enough sense to not wallow around in filth, wear rags, and and kill anything "just because it's different".

>>Looked at any Central African countries recently, Anon? The ones with civil wars are the best example. Soldiers can raze an entire village to the ground, after mass-raping every woman present, and leaving not a single survivor. No-one bats an eyelid.

The people living there bat an eyelid. They're in a long term war. It's the rest of the world that is trying to not pay as close attention, seeing as it is a horrible situation with no clear/easy answer, and it doesn't affect them too much.

For the era, most nuns were nobles. Have an extra son (or later brother who didn't inherit) he goes off to be a wandering tourney knight (crusades yay). Got an extra daughter you didn't marry off? She goes off to the convent.

You will probably have to help me out and explain that chart. As I read it, it seems to indicate that prior to 17xx literacy was pretty high and that it fell after that dramatically.

Which would seem to indicate agreement with what I said, 1730 and on into the 1800's isn't what I would discuss as 'feudal' era.

We also have to be careful about what we consider 'literate' in this area. A peasant (serf) would be very interested in being able to read and understand a contract - he likely is obligated by at least 2-3 such contracts. But he isn't going to give a fuck about 'see spot run'.

So how literate was he? Will, within the very narrow area of understanding a contract he was very literate for the language that was used at that time. However, for general purposes not so much. You can probably understand how quantifying 'this percentage is literate in this society' might actually be under such circumstances.

While they could be quite brutal, some of the things that you see are made up of whole cloth.

They could not empty their chamber pots into the streets because filth led to bad smells, and bad smells led to disease and death. They were required to haul their filth away.

In one case, the peasants on one street beat a stranger who had tossed a fish skin onto the street.

Knowing that they could be fined, they imparted vigilante justice to the litterbug.

holy fuck the plagues made the middle class? jesus.this is worse than the nasa/nazi's one.

choose either: having a middle class, or a 1/3 chance of you dying.

This is where we get into the 'what era' discussion. The contract almost always was 'you provide X period of time of labor on the lords fields'. So the peasant paid 'tax' with his labor. In most such contracts the peasant had the option to pay with goods instead.

However, he almost always preferred to pay with his labor. In part because the lord had certain obligations to HIM for doing so, such as feeding him a good meal (these were actually written out as exactly what was provided, quantity and quality). The lord had the additional option of demanding more

labor if he liked, but he had to feed the peasant even more. The peasants usually really liked this situation.

As you can imagine, the lord not so much. He would much rather be paid in goods that he can then sell or barter for coin. He would REALLY rather be paid in coin.

This actually goes as a truth right up the food chain. The 'lord' was obligated to provide military service to HIS lord. But in fact, that lord would much rather have coin instead that he could use for whatever purpose or to hire mercenaries.

See, there were all kinds of restrictions (era and area) on what that military service was and how long it lasted. Mercenaries were yours as you liked as long as they were paid. Much better from that upper lords point of view.

The whole thing about feudalism is to understand that it was a barter era. There was in effect no coin to be had.

>Second, peasants almost never leave. Once they're born on a lord's land, they normally aren't allowed to leave. Doing so would be similar to a runaway slave, and if they're caught, they'll be punished. The average peasant would never see the world outside the noble's land.

This is the one big 'oppression' thing about the Feudal era. You were in effect bound to the land if you were a serf. You weren't a slave (unless you were Russian), but you were not a 'free man' either.

For fun, look up what how cities interacted with that run away serf thing. I think you might be surprised how that worked out.

>Third, peasants are uneducated. Education was only for the wealthy, i.e. nobles. The vast majority could not read, write, or even do simple math. The most you could assume they knew was how to count on their fingers.

As I covered above, this just is not true. He could read as much as he needed to read. He could do as much math as he needed to do. He simply had no further need for more education in those areas. He need to be able to read and understand contracts and his obligations under them, math was needed in the same way.

He likely could do some forms of math much faster and better than we can (weird use of fractions with measurements and such) while struggling heavily to do many of the things that we would consider gradeschool basic. These people were highly educated in narrow areas that they had need of. They did not waist time (time = labor = money = feudalism) on things they did not need. They didn't have that luxury.

I'd also advise against our rather modern arrogance over 'simple' skills. Farming, husbanding, construction, etc. We look down on these things and think of them as having know skill or knowledge. Anyone can do it. But the reality is that this is not true.

Within those areas the peasant was highly educated and very capable. From mending fences to sowing to weeding to taking care of animals. A whole wide area of knowledge was evident that none of us have. They would be considered 'ignorant' in our world, true. But we are morons in theirs as well. Likely, as well, they could adapt to ours and survive - we would likely starve in theirs.

>In the game, Pendragon, players take the role of knights. One of the skills available is knowing what the peasants are actually doing.

>"Ah, yes, it appears that they are moving filth about on that field. I'm sure it serves a purpose. Probably to keep them out of mischief."

That is funny. But the odds are that any noble on that lower end would know full well what was going on. The nobles were not fools either. They managed their land and holdings. They had to understand all of this or the peasants would rip them off in a heartbeat.

Woman (noble wives) often found this a place where they had power. The Lord might have to be off doing something for his Lord and would leave his Lady in charge of things.

It wasn't always like this. There would be variation from noble to noble. But it wasn't uncommon for the Lady to be in charge running the manor while the Lord focused on that war stuff. Basic division of labor. The lower you go in power scale the more often this was true. You don't get the Lady as someone who does nothing until you go up the power scale. At that bottom level, you can't afford to have ANYONE be unproductive.

As with all things, we always have to consider the era.

As we go earlier you tended to pay with labor, as you move later you paid with goods, at the end you paid with coin (and then feudalism collapses after that).

But you are right, the Lord really wanted that coin. And the lesser Lords wanted to pay with 'labor'.

See, those lesser Lords didn't have an open ended obligation. They might only owe a few months total per year. So if that invasion doesn't work out in that timeline, fuck you I am going home. And they did. Funny as hell, but they did.

From the lesser Lords perspective he could go off and tool around doing jack shit, let his wife run the manor, for a few months and likely have nothing happen...or he could pay coin that he really didn't have. Guess which HE wanted to do?

Remember here though, there are lots of 'knights' in this discussion. There were many landless knights out there (second sons, etc). And they had no obligation and would also go out on those excursions (loot, yay).

Keep in mind as well, even when an obligation was paid in coin it might very well be that the Lord decides to go along anyhow (loot, yay).

>The whole thing about feudalism is to understand that it was a barter era. There was in effect no coin to be had.

Currency is merely a tool to deal with debt. That's true today and it was always true.

Yeah Dukes and Earls would often spend most of their time at court for the benefit of their career and influence. Suffolk will only actually be in Suffolk if he is ill and needs the country air or if he pissed off the king so an employee would actually run the land.

>We should also consider that when we start talking Crusades many nobles were sincerely committed. We tend to look cynically at it, but in fact there were a lot of people that went out of religious belief.

That's true. Especially the first crusades were such agonizing journeys, someone with only secular interest most likely wouldn't have seen them through.

All of these things should be reflected in games, I think.

That local Lord that runs 'owns' the village? He is a hands on guy. knows his shit. Depends on his wife as his right hand man so to speak.

That Duke? His Steward has a way better idea of what is really going on. His wife has some Ladies in waiting and is there to help the Duke play politics at court, otherwise she can shut the fuck up.

To answer the thread's questions about peasants, it was to be horribly powerless but at the same time to be the source of new-money. Peasants had money even if it was small amounts and began to drive a whole new industry of inexpensive books, magazines, etc.

Also, note that the Victorian Era was RIFE with Rebellions. You have the French Revolution that ended just at the beginning of the Era, (1789-1799) and this freaked the hell out of the nobility of Europe. More

revolutions came throughout the Victorian Era, and each one left the 'upper class' who is the main viewpoint being written about, STUNNED.

Ultimately, I'd point to patronage of books to be the main reason we don't have a ton of fabulous books that show how the peasantry really was and to some extent some canon-censorship done by each generation. Also, some other good books would be anything by Charles Dickens. If you like smashing your head in with a brick, try Bleak House.

Correct! Peasants had very limited power, but look at the revolutions and you see that they hit a tipping point over and over, where education shows them what they are suffering.

Really though, the Peasantry represented buying power and were a major source of money moving. Don't doubt them. They murdered a lot of people ALL THE TIME throughout history. Peasants got shit done when they couldn't eat.

It is unfortunate that the background gets no detail.

You could always have some fun with the PCs getting into trouble with the peasants. That bard that likes to seduce? He may have actually ended up in a marriage contract depending on what he said to get in her pants.

Even off the cuff remarks could be considered a binding contract back then. The sex that followed would just be considered 'proofing the marriage' and not the actual intent of prior flirting.

Flirting = negotiation

Sex = commitment to contract

My area of knowledge is the Victorian Era, so, going further back to the Feudal Era would be a stretch outside of the most canon of poetry/epics which really only serve to make it even more difficult to understand what was going on.

I'm shocked by the conversation here, and hope I am correct in assuming everyone is just adding on additional bits of knowledge and not slamming me.

Continuing that assumption, its also worth noting that except for the most extreme of circumstances for a noble, there were hundreds of circumstances that put power in the hands of the peasants. Another one to consider is simply distances. Travel was a different issue entirely, which left a lot of power in the hands of each person.

From my own limited knowledge, most land-owning nobles had a relationship with the peasants as 'The Law' and would mediate disputes. Aside from paying taxes to use the land, their relationship was dictated by the individual noble, with the 'Social Contract' as a guideline for expectations? Otherwise, it was as hands-off as the Noble wanted, with some nobles being well liked by their serfs.

From what I have read the noble himself didn't get involved in that sort of thing. Unless the case directly effected the noble the peasants handled the entire thing themselves. So, unless your trespass was against the Lord or you were messing with the Lord, the peasants handled their own business.

Which I think is strikingly different when you get into the Victorian era.

>And shit was literally thrown into the streets.

Not true. The miasma theory of disease held that smell was the culprit. If you threw shit into the street, you would be beaten, and fined.

First Night is a myth lords and their serfs level led at other lords. We have no reliable evidence that it occurred.

As far as sex goes: that changed during the Feudal era (damn me for not remembering the date). Anyhow, prior to that date the church was all about bangin that ass. Fine with all of it. Priests got married, had mistresses, the people had all go out.

About half way through things changed to become more constrained. Basically a priest wrote a paper on how sex was for procreation and if you are doing it for fun then you are not following the Lords will. Something along those lines anyhow. Up until then things were pretty rowdy. Anal and oral sex for example were likely the most common forms of sex (birth control), they being stigmatized later because they allowed enjoyment without pregnancy.

Those, now taboo, forms of sex were considered not desirable back then because you had to save PIV for special intent. So the whole thing of what is desirable was turned upside down from our perspective 'wow, you got to fuck her pussy! That is awesome' sort of thing.

Hilarious when you think about it considering today's porn.

Oh yeah, and the entire not bathing thing is entirely later generations painting their forebears as icky and them as more special because of that.

Something we do to this very day.

As I'm looking this up it seems pretty solid that things didn't completely change until 16th century. Up until then the church couldn't even enforce marriage as having to happen in a church - many still happened in private with nothing more than a few words between a couple in private (lawsuit to follow against bard later that week when he skips town).

Up until then sexual relations were pretty open ended and were more local affairs. Across the country rules didn't exist so much, even though there were general morals of course.

Pregnancy out of wedlock wasn't that big of a deal from a legal standpoint for example. There were some fines, but they were rare and low. Most marriages probably saw the bride entering into it already pregnant (proofing the marriage, you didn't want to marry someone you couldn't have kids with). Considering the odds of getting pregnant from anyone given sex act...there was some action going on.

Divorce wasn't as difficult as people think back in the Feudal era. It was just rare because of economic reasons.

Couldn't have kids? Divorce

Couldn't get your pecker up? Divorce

Hated the bitch? little more tricky, but you could divorce her.

The Peasants never really had a problem with divorcing, nobody cared. It was only the nobles that had problems getting divorced, and they were the ones that tended to want to (there could be economic advantage to ending the marriage, rarely so with peasants). In the case of nobles they just needed to show that, as one technique, that they should never have been married in the first place.

See, incest was a huge problem taboo. But nobody really knew for sure who was related to who. Those records were not well kept. In addition, the church had (to begin with) rules that said you couldn't get married if you were related within some ridiculous number of generations. Can't remember the number, but it was large enough that most people actually were related somehow at that point.

So all you did as a noble was 'discover' much to your shock and horror that you were related. Instant divorce, no fault.

Later the church reduced the number of generations by half to show incest because it had become such an obvious tactic.

You could also get divorced if you never had sex with your wife in the first place (and who would know if you don't have kids) as in that case the marriage never took place.

These were all noble games though. Peasants didn't give a fuck and nobody cared about what peasants did. Ironically, peasants rarely got divorced for any reason because of other economic and social issues.

Another reason that divorce among nobles was more common was that nobles typically engaged in arranged marriages where the intent was economic advancement. The marriage was arranged without either party knowing each other. After a short time, you might discover she is a total bitch or really fugly - or you.

Peasants didn't engage in that. They knew the person they would marry and the courtship was a bit like today (although there were a lot of trap/shotgun marriages as well). Economics played a big part, but so did personal compatibility.

Ironically our big noble romance stories are outgrowths of this situation. While many nobles grew to love their spouses, very few ever married for love. Not so with Peasants.

I don't see how you can call it a proto-feudal society when there were serfs and there were nobles, and the serfs worked the field.

The entire feudal system is just a reaction to the apocalyptic economic collapse of the Roman Empire, with the local Roman soldiers becoming knights and local lords. So the moment the Roman Empire fell is the moment feudalism began.

It's worth noting that depending on where they were, a serf could have more days a year off than modern man. They loved their celebrations, or the various religious holidays (there are a mess of those), or the parties the local lords were expected to hold, and then you have the parties the church held (made better by virtue of them making the best beer).

They weren't quite the downtrodden wretches that fantasy likes to portray them as.

There was absolutely no belief in rising above your station. Nobles and merchants were better educated. Plagues and shit were considered bad because of the impact on a fief not necessarily because of the loss of life.

It wasn't scorn or disdain. People just did not care about the guy working the farm. If they could get food without him, they would rather he was never there at all.

I recently had a longer conversation about this with an anthropologist friend of mine, and his gist was this:

A lot of our modern day world view is constituted by the things we read, see on tv or the internet. Now think back to a medieval peasant: He doesn't know what an elephant looks like because he's never seen one. He has no idea about many abstract concepts because he's never read a book (and never will) and has no concept of politics or history beyond what people in his village tell him.

They're not degenerate, they just don't know a whole lot.

Values were different [in Medieval Europe]. Life was viewed differently. The vale of woe mentality meant most people placed little value in emotion.

Also worthy of note--being noble didn't necessarily mean you were well off (though it often did). There was such a thing as a landless, destitute knight.

>because they were the unwashed masses in contrast to the nobles and the elites.

Depending on the era you're talking about, both peasants and nobles smelled about the same.

The only difference would be their education and a slight better quality in clothing.

Likewise, in some places, you might have commoners who were quite wealthy--they just didn't have any true political power (though obviously money can be it's own influence). I'm sure buying your way into a knighthood or the college of cardinals was pretty common.

I know that but was this restricted to certain regions? I know Italy was pretty gay friendly. And what about time periods? Did the gay friendliness stem from the Roman culture, and did it disappear as the Roman culture faded away (and then suddenly the Reformation hit)

Luther had a low opinion of the peasants: "The people live like animals."

Keep in mind that the Victorian era was around two hundred years after the Feudal era. It was a time of rapid change as well.

To put it into perspective for us Americans, we are talking the war of 1812 being at the beginning of the Victorian era. Which I think would be recognized as being no place close to Feudal times from our perspective.

I'd offer that your typical feudal serf had more power and was bothered less by his Lord than your typical peasant was during the Victorian era. Things don't always get better. Although the food did. Which counts for a ton.

Heh. "Squire" is a title for someone who's studying under another person, who learned in turn from an elder, and so on down the line. Knight is a title of respect given by others who would be your brothers, thus the term "peerage".

>there are people that still attempt to replace Medieval ideals and attitudes about women with the more restrictive attitudes of the Early Modern Period

I really wish that the whole "backwards" reputation given to the Middle Ages by the Renaissance would finally die

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— Japan General

Interestingly enough, they weren't really THAT fixated on the superiority of katanas until the early 20th century, when the Imperials started to heavily push Japanese nationalism. Before that, western-style sabers were in vogue for the better part of half a century or so.

You think that's bad? If you're not Japanese and marry a Japanese person, they don't even record it on the national census. There's a little asterisk and a footnote. Furthermore, if you don't take the Japanese name, your partner's name gets removed and sent to a census of foreign nationals in the country.

lesbianism is considered to be a 'teen' thing in Japan - women are expected to grow up and start liking men later on.

that reminds me, the first known form of Sake was not brewed by modern ways.

It was rice that got chewed by shinto priestesses until it was a very soft mush and then spit into a barrel to brew there. I refer you to moyashimon for this. Anyway, this could be used as a 'so weird it's true' detail in your world where this kuchikomi sake is special sacred stuff to fight certain monsters, cleanse a person/place or as a special gift to onis or tengus to calm their wrath as they are too powerful to be stopped otherwise.

that's a product of the same thing that Japanese do to watermelons to make 'em square - just stick a box around it as it develops and it takes on the form of the mould, except in this case they've made a slightly more complicated mould and placed it underground for the tuber to grow in.

Scattered throughout Northern Japan around the Yamagata Prefecture are two dozen mummified Japanese monks known as Sokushinbutsu, who caused their own deaths in a way that resulted in their mummification. The practice was first pioneered by a priest named Kuukai over 1000 years ago at the temple complex of Mount Koya, in Wakayama prefecture. Kuukai was founder of the Shingon sect of Buddhism, which is the sect that came up with the idea of enlightenment through physical punishment. A successful mummification took upwards of ten years. It is believed that many hundreds of monks tried, but only between 16 and 24 such mummifications have been discovered to date.

The elaborate process started with 1,000 days of eating a special diet consisting only of nuts and seeds, while taking part in a regimen of rigorous physical activity that stripped them of their body fat. They then ate only bark and roots for another thousand days and began drinking a poisonous tea made from the sap of the Urushi tree, normally used to lacquer bowls.

This caused vomiting and a rapid loss of bodily fluids, and most importantly, it made the body too poisonous to be eaten by maggots. Finally, a self-mummifying monk would lock himself in a stone tomb barely larger than his body, where he would not move from the lotus position. His only connection to the outside world was an air tube and a bell. Each day he rang a bell to let those outside know that he was still alive.

When the bell stopped ringing, the tube was removed and the tomb sealed. After the tomb was sealed, the other monks in the temple would wait another 1,000 days, and open the tomb to see if the mummification was successful. If the monk had been successfully mummified, they were immediately seen as a Buddha and put in the temple for viewing. Usually, though, there was just a decomposed body.

Their eyes have been removed. Even so, they are considered able to see into the souls of the living and able to perceive reality.

Similar bear sacrifices were also done by the Ainu, and I think were even taken up by Yamato Japanese in some places

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— Middle East

You mean Bacha posh?

Bacha posh ("dressed up as a boy" in the Dari language) is a cultural practice in parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan in which some families without sons will pick a daughter to live and behave as a boy. This enables the child to behave more freely: attending school, escorting her sisters in public, and working. Bacha posh also allows the family to avoid the social stigma associated of not having any male children. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, there is no societal pressure for families to have a son to carry on the family name and to inherit the father's property. In the absence of a son, families may dress one of their daughters as a male, with some holding the superstition that having a bacha posh will make it more likely for a mother to give birth to a son in a subsequent pregnancy.

The purpose of the practice is not deception and many people, such as teachers or family friends, will be aware that the child is actually a girl. In her family, she will occupy an intermediate status in which she is treated as neither a daughter nor fully as a son, but she will not need to cook or clean like other girls. As a bacha posh, a girl is more readily able to attend school, run errands, move freely in public, escort her sisters in places where they could not be without a male companion, play sports and find work.

The girl's status as a bacha posh usually ends when she enters puberty. Women raised as a bacha posh often have difficulty making the transition from life as a boy and adapting to the traditional constraints placed on women in Afghan society.

Kyz kuu, is a traditional sport among the Azerbaijanis, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. It exhibits some elements of horse racing, but is often referred to as a "kissing game".

>A game is usually conducted as follows. A young man on horseback waits at a given place (the starting line). A young woman, also mounted, starts her horse galloping from a given distance behind the young man. When the young woman passes the young man, he may start his horse galloping. The two race towards a finish line some distance ahead. If the young man is able to catch up to the young woman before they reach the finish line, he may reach out to her and steal a kiss, which constitutes his victory. However, if the young man has not caught up to the young woman by the time they reach the finish line, the young woman turns around and chases the young man back to the starting line. If she is in range of the young man, she may use her whip to beat him, which signifies a victory for her.

>Anthropologists relate Udmurts to the Urals branch of Europeans. Most of them are of the middle size, often have blue or gray eyes, high cheek-bones and wide face.[citation needed] The Udmurt people are not of an athletic build but they are very hardy and there have been claims that they are the "most red-headed" people in the world. Additionally, the ancient Budini tribe, which is speculated to be an ancestor of the modern Udmurts, were described by Herodotus as being predominantly red-headed.

On a related but opposite note, Parkour is getting very popular among women in Iran. Since its double-improper, "The Man" throws a shitfit whenever anyone tries to climb stuff.

Thus, Iran has a sizable subculture of young women who wear technically-modest clothing, hate being told what to do, and hardcore-parkour for fun.

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography Mongols (and other horse people)

>Why are the Romans always getting buttslammed by horse archers?

Because horse archers are overpowered. Everyone gets fucked with horse archers.

Got to hand it to the mongols, wrecking shit in the arab world, spreading the bubonic plague through biological warfare AND making the 2nd biggest empire ever. Shaped the fucking world

Don't forget that Ghengis Khan is probably the human that had the biggest genetic influence on the history of Earth.

>The Hazara are of Mongol descent; descendants of soldiers left in Afghanistan by Genghis Khan in order to occupy the region. Their Mongol physical characteristics and their language have long distinguished them from the other ethnic groups of the area. Their language, called Hazaragi, is an Indo-Iranian tongue with many words borrowed from Mongol. Many Hazara also speak Dari Persian as a second language.

>Traditionally, the Hazara were nomads herding sheep, goats, and horses. Now, some earn a living through mixed grain farming. The major crops are wheat and barley, and a variety of fruits are also grown. Many of the men work as cobblers, porters, water carriers, or trash collectors. This willingness to perform menial tasks has had an adverse effect on them; it earned them a reputation as hardworking people, while also resulting in their being looked down upon and discriminated against.

/tg on Cultures/Geography— Norse

Viking democracy was Icelandic though.

Established around 930, if I remember correctly. Every free man could attend the Althing, a gathering held once a year, which acted as both supreme judge and legislative power. Mostly dealt with disputes between lords and the like.

The vikings in general were a lot nicer than people tend to give them credit for.

On that point though, I notice no one has mentioned medieval life in scandinavia (and earlier) which was usually freer than in the rest of europe. For example, the vikings had laws on bathing, and most folk usually owned their own farms (in medieval times too) and had free use of the forests and seas as this was considered to be owned by all. And you could get a divorce(after a set period of time) too, if you couldn't procreate.

The Norse colonies were successful in that they survived for 450 years, but they weren't widespread. They were limited more than anything else by the availability of both grazing land and by the Norse's stubborn refusal to learn to fish. I can't remember why - they fished at home, but they just... didn't in Greenland. Not to any real extent.

Eventually they died out when the climate grew colder. The final evidence is pretty grim - one year was so cold they ran short of food, and had to eat all their animals, including the young and the breeding stock. They either all starved or went off and joined inuit tribes - something like 5% of modern Greenland DNA is Norse.

Interestingly, the Inuit didn't migrate to Greenland until after Norse settlement had begun, so Europeans are technically more "native" to the region than eskimos.

/tg/ on Culture/Geography— Oceanic General

>In Sumatra, if you committed adultery with the chief's wife, you were killed and eaten (your family had to supply the limes and salt to season your dead ass). Tahitian guys used to crush their opponents corpses with a club, cut the dude open, pull his insides out, and wear him around like a kimono. In Fiji they would eat your brains and use your skull to bail water out of their canoes, and guys in Iban couldn't get married until they'd taken an enemy head in combat.

As a Kiwifag I know a few things.

Never sit somewhere people sleep or eat. The backside is vulgar (noa), pillows/table are sacred (tapu). Lizards (ngarara) are considered immensely tapu. Women were not allowed to handle them although some would have one tattooed near their vagina. In the post-colonial period a radical group called the Lizard-eaters (Kai Ngarara) literally ate lizards to represent the violation of tapu that had resulted from European contact.

Maori practiced a kind of mummification. The practice of preserved severed heads (mokomokai) is well known, but high-born people would often be interred in dry caves and remained preserved for centuries.

I know a lot of people are familiar with the tattoos (moko). They're like books or a family tree. A person who knows how to read one can tell everything about you from it. For example a curl on the left side of your chin means your mother was a great weaver, a fernleaf on your cheek means your family is high-born, and the pattern on the brow shows which god you're dedicated too.

Women got moko on their chin. Slaves were usually tattooed on half their face to show their status. When Europeans got into the market for dried heads, many slaves received elaborate but totally nonsense moko just so they could be killed, smoked and sold.

Tattooing was done with a sharktooth on a stick. The experience was so painful and traumatic the recipient was blind for several days afterwards. They were expected to remain completely still and silent the whole time. Because they were too tapu [sacred] to touch during the ceremony, they had to be fed by hand.

The Balisong is the traditional knife of the Batangueno people of Batangas province, Philippines. Traditionally every batangueno is given one upon reaching manhood. Women too.

Isn't it true that there's some sort of bird there that is supposed to be very unlucky to see or go near, I remember when my uncle lived out there he said that when he was out in the country there, he saw a load of big maori men charging through the bush from some small brightly feathered bird, have you heard anything about this?

And I'll talk about Easter Island a bit too. Just read a book about it.

First: the moai. The reason there are so many moai, and why they're so big, is a combination of excellent materials and international dick-waving. There's a particular type of rock available on Easter island that's truly excellent for carving, better than almost anything else in the entire area settled by the Polynesians. This allowed for the construction of impressive sculptures, something that the various chiefs of the island immediately capitalized on. This started off a sort of moai arms race, with each chiefdom trying to make the most impressive moai to outdo its neighbors.

As a way of inflating the size of the moai, many were also erected with a 'hat' of red stone, believed to represent a ceremonial headdress of rare red feathers, only available to the elite. Eyes for the moai were also made, but they were fragile and hard to produce, and thus were kept under guard by the priests, only brought out for special ceremonies. Additionally, each of the moai faced inland, looking over the land the erecting chiefdom ruled.

large amounts of wood and bark- for the long, sturdy sets of rails used to transport them, and for the ropes used to hoist them up. as the moai race continued, more and more trees were felled, until finally there were none left.

You have to question what they were thinking and saying as they cut down the last tree.

Now, Easter Island is a very ecologically marginal place, having one of the most fragile ecologies out of all the polynesian islands. With all the trees gone, erosion carried away nearly all of the arable land, and the Easter Island civilization collapsed. The chiefdoms attacked each other for food stores and territory. As the crisis continued, the chiefs and priests were killed by starving rioters, and the former towns and villages were abandoned in favor of easily defensible caves, as the people resorted to cannibalism. The population dwindled from its peak of tens, possibly hundreds of thousands to barely over a thousand, which is all it supports today.

There's an unfinished moai in the quarry where they were made. By far the largest ever found, it would have weighed in at 270 tons- far too large to transport for the resources the Easter Islanders had, even at their peak. It would have been destined to sit on the quarry floor. Makes you think: what the fuck were they thinking.

A cargo cult is a kind of Melanesian millenarian movement encompassing a diverse range of practices and occurring in the wake of contact with the commercial networks of colonizing societies. The name derives from the apparent belief that various ritualistic acts will lead to a bestowing of material wealth ("cargo").

Cargo cults often develop during a combination of crises. Under conditions of social stress, such a movement may form under the leadership of a charismatic figure. This leader may have a "vision" (or "myth-dream") of the future, often linked to an ancestral efficacy thought to be recoverable by a return to traditional morality.

The most infamous of these cults is the Cult of John Frum.

John Frum (or Jon Frum, John From) is a figure associated with cargo cults on the island of Tanna in Vanuatu. He is often depicted as an American World War II serviceman who will bring wealth and prosperity to the people if they follow him. He is sometimes portrayed as black, sometimes as white. Quoting David Attenborough's report of an encounter: "'E look like you. 'E got white face. 'E tall man. 'E live 'long South America."

An offshoot of the cargo cult movement exists in the celebrity worship movement, most characterized by the Prince Philip religion of the kastom people around Yaohnanen village on the southern island of Tanna in Vanuatu.

The people of the Yaohnanen area believe that Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, the consort to Queen Elizabeth II, is a divine being; the pale-skinned son of a mountain spirit and brother of John Frum. According to ancient tales, the son travelled over the seas to a distant land, married a powerful lady and would in time return. The villagers had observed the respect accorded to Queen Elizabeth II by colonial officials and concluded that her husband, Prince Philip, must be the son from their legends.

When the cult formed is unclear, but it is likely that it was sometime in the 1950s or 1960s. Its beliefs were strengthened by the royal couple's official visit to Vanuatu (then the New Hebrides) in 1974, when a few villagers had the opportunity to observe the Prince from afar. At the time, the Prince was not aware of the cult, but the matter was eventually brought to his attention by John Champion, the British Resident Commissioner in the New Hebrides, between 1975 and 1978.

The Resident Commissioner suggested that the Prince send them a portrait of himself. A signed official photograph was duly dispatched. The villagers responded by sending a traditional pig-killing club called a nal-nal. As requested, the Prince in return sent them a photograph of himself posing with the weapon.

>tfw you will never receive an autographed portrait of your god

You forgot my favorite part of the Easter Island traditions though.

The Great Egg Race and the Tangata Manu:

The Tangata manu (bird-man) was the winner of a traditional competition on Rapa Nui (Easter Island). The ritual was an annual competition to collect the first Sooty Tern (manu tara) egg of the season from the islet of Motu Nui, swim back to Rapa Nui and climb the sea cliff of Rano Kau to the clifftop village of Orongo.

In the Rapa Nui mythology, the deity Make-make was the chief god of the birdman cult, the other three gods associated with it being Hawa-tuu-take-take (the Chief of the eggs) his wife Vie Hoa and Vie Kanatea.

Contestants were revealed in dreams by ivi-attuas, or prophets. The contestants would each appoint a Hopu who would swim to Motu Nui and fetch them the Egg, whilst the contestants waited at Orongo. The race was very dangerous and many Hopu were killed by sharks, drowning or falling.

Once the first egg was collected, the final task would be for the unsuccessful contestants to return to Orongo, the winner allowed to remain in Motu Nui until he felt spiritually prepared to return. On his return he would present the egg to his patron, who had already shaved his head and painted it either white or red. The successful man would be declared Tangata-Manu, would take the egg in his hand and lead a procession down the slope of Rano Kau to Anakena if he was from the western clans or Rano Raraku if he was from the eastern clans. Once in residence there he was considered tapu (sacred) for the next five months of his year-long status, and allowed his nails to grow and wore a headdress of human

hair. The new Tangata-Manu was given a new name, entitled to gifts of food and other tributes (including his clan having sole rights to collect that season's harvest of wild bird eggs and fledglings from Motu Nui), and went into seclusion for a year in a special ceremonial house.

Destroying the jungle also killed their [the Easter Islanders'] wildlife, so the last tree probably was for a canoe to go back to the mainland.

>The post wasn't made by me. I wonder if that's how they tattoo themselves nowadays too.

Kiwifag here - hell no bro, that would be illegal these days. It's still very sacred and formal, but done with modern hygenic techniques.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HS3GE3lw6SA>

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— Pastoralists General

True barbarians (Saxons, Gauls, Norse, Goths, Gaels, Picts, Angles, etc.) were pastoralists. Do you know what that means? You spend all damn day long thinking about business. Where to move your herd next, how much to allow them to feed, where to let them feed, how to marry your son to the daughter of another clan's chieftain in order to gain more grazing land for your livestock, how to conquer another clan in order to gain more grazing land, how to attain another wife to gain more land and more sons who will gain your clan more land, etc. Constantly thinking about livestock, clan loyalties, land ownership, and business marriages. This leads to being cunning, greedy, and shrewd.

Assume that in any society where calorie shortages are a fact of life, some degree of obesity would be considered attractive. This is going to be more of a pastoralist or farmer thing than a hunter-gatherer thing; hunter-gatherers are generally either well-fed or dying from starvation, there isn't much room for the sort of "just enough to live miserably on" that agricultural societies can produce. Also, hunter-gatherers aren't going to have members of their population who are idle enough to get fat; generally speaking, they move as the food does.

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography South Asia General

> The Bishnois are known as the conservationists to whom the preservation of animal and plants is a religion and it has been so from the early 15th century. There is a ban on killing animals and felling green trees, and thus protection is provided to all life forms. The community is also directed to see that the firewood they use is devoid of small insects.

>Wearing blue clothes is prohibited because the dye used for coloring them is obtained by cutting a large quantity of shrubs. Bishnois are aggressive in protecting trees and animals, most of them being vegetarian and nature worshipers. The dead are buried and not cremated to save forest wood.

>They are the most colourful and exotic wanderers in the ruins of desert, who keep moving from one village to another in search of work and livelihood. The Bishnoi women wear attractive attire of vibrant colors such as red and orange, silver trimmings and the gorgeous jewellery like heavy nose rings, earrings, bangles, anklets and necklaces.

The Jats are divided into 12 chief clans and about 230 minor gotras. Though the origin of the Jat tribe is shrouded in mystery, but the Jats betray tribal traits. Agriculture has always been the main occupation of the Jats, but they also form the bulk of the military and the police. The Jats are brave and hardworking who possess both the desire and ability to rule. Many Jats were recruited into the Indian

Army during World War I. Before that, they served as fighters in the Persian army. The Jats form the largest ethnic groups in the army.

>The Jats occupy their own niche in the mosaic of stereotypes in the Indian consciousness, and the stereotype can turn out to be startlingly alive: a marshal race, patriarchal, brawny, artless, proud, phlegmatic, blunt, impetuous, fight-ready. The Jat reputation for aggression comes from a frustration that other people are unwilling to listen to the truth.

>Historian Irfan Habib once quoted Huein Tsang's 7th century account of encountering what Habib speculates were the Jats, where Tsang says these people "have no masters" and mentions their "unfeeling temper" and "hasty disposition". These stereotypes have lent to many sayings about them:

>Jat tab mada jania jab uski chauth aa lay. (One can't be sure a Jat's dead until the fourth day).

>Jat ne haathi gadhe ik se laage ae. (The elephant is just a large donkey to a Jat)

>A distinctive feature of Rajput society is its clans. More than 103 clans have been identified in all.

>Rajputs marry outside their clan. They also try to marry their daughters into clans of higher rank than their own, while accepting daughters-in-law from clans of lower rank.

>Rajput marriages are arranged. Marriages are occasions for great ceremony and feasting. The groom, accompanied by friends and relatives, rides in a procession to the bride's house. Mounted on a horse, he is dressed in colorful robes, with turban and sword. A piece of cloth is tied to the edge of the bride's sari and groom's coat. The couple walks around a sacred fire while Brahmans (priests and scholars) chant prayers. This is known as agni puja (fire-worship ceremony). Several days of celebration follow.

>In 1303, when the fort of Chitor in Rajasthan was about to fall to Muslims, the Rajput Rani and all the women in the fort burned themselves to death to avoid being taken prisoners. Women who practiced this act of sati were revered as saints and stone sati memorials exist in Rajasthan. Despite abundant folklore surrounding this tradition, it was never widely practiced.

>Europeans were struck by the Naga practice of headhunting. Ursula Graham Bower described the Naga hills as the "paradise of headhunters." "Most villages had a skull house and each man in the village was expected to contribute to the collection. The taking of a head is symbolic of courage, and men who could not were dubbed as women or cows. There is nothing more glorious for a Naga than victory in battle by bringing home the severed head of an enemy." There was no indication of cannibalism among the Naga tribes. Headhunting has been eradicated since conversion to Christianity and the spread of modern education in the region.

> The Nagas have a deep faith in the soul which transmigrates after the death of person. The head being the receptacle of the soul was, therefore, regarded as an object of immense vitality and creative energy. Head hunting was propelled by the desire to acquire a head for retention in one's house or village which would, as a result, be blessed with human and animal fertility. The head of a woman with long hair was specially precious, as it would stimulate an abundance of food crops. The taker of a head gained fame for prowess in the art of war and was, therefore, sought after by young girls.

>The practice of head-hunting was accompanied with a variety of other social and cultural activities.

>Several historians have identified them as the only authentic descendants of the Aryans left in India.

>Historians say the original Brogpas were a group of soldiers from Alexander's army who lost their way while returning to Greece after the war with Porus or simply people from Baltistan in PoK.

>They reached Dhahnu and settled there since it is the only fertile valley in Ladakh.

>The Dards are completely different from Ladakhis physically, culturally, linguistically and socially, says Norboo, a scholar who has done extensive study on Dards.

> Gurkhas are closely associated with the Khukuri, a forward-curving Nepalese knife and have a well known reputation for their fearless military prowess. The former Indian Army Chief of Staff Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, once stated that "If a man says he is not afraid of dying, he is either lying or is a Gurkha."

Anons from Singapore and India told me that the Gurkhas are used as special forces in their police force and army respectively, meant to be deployed when the shits get too hot for the regular troops.

> Many years later, after Argentina's surrender to Britain in the 1982 Falklands War, Argentine troops told reporters that rumors of the Gurkhas slitting the throats of 40 Argentine soldiers in single strokes and of Gurkhas jumping into enemy foxholes with live grenades gave them the jitters and seriously shattered their morale.

> One particular diary entry talks about how an Indian army doctor once went up to a British officer and told him that a wounded Gurkha would surely die unless he displayed some "will to live." The officer, the story goes, stormed into the hospital room and barked the order: "Live!" The wounded Gurkha obeyed.

> Near Torcillino on the Asiatic front ex-mess orderly Jitbahadur Rai under going his first experience of battle, a smallish man even for a Gurkha, charged through the smoke of burning grass into a wood and cut down two Germans with his kukri. Unluckily they collapsed on top of him. As he lay under 350 pounds of German, a third gunner came on. Freeing his sword arm, Jiabahadur slashed at the German as he bent down and almost severed the arm above the elbow. Later, the ex-mess orderly was seen walking beside the stretcher bearing his third victim, his bloodstained kukri in one hand, patting the German's shoulder with the other and explaining in fluent Gurkhali that he had no intention of completing job.

> They still carry into battle their traditional weapon - an 18-inch long curved knife known as the kukri. In times past, it was said that once a kukri was drawn in battle, it had to "taste blood" - if not, its owner had to cut himself before returning it to its sheath.

> The soldiers are still selected from young men living in the hills of Nepal - with about 28,000 youths tackling the selection procedure for just over 200 places each year.

> The selection process has been described as one of the toughest in the world and is fiercely contested. Young hopefuls have to run uphill for 40 minutes carrying a wicker basket on their back filled with rocks weighing 70lbs.

> tfw Jat Sikh

There's this anecdote about my maternal grandfather who went to another village to get a buffalo calf. While coming back he saw that the lame calf couldn't walk fast enough, so he hauled the calf over his shoulder and walked 5 miles carrying it. He was 82 then.

When I asked him about this, he said he could have walked another 5 miles by putting the calf on his other shoulder.

The most popular movie shown to Montagnard tribes by French forces during the first Vietnam war was about farmers on the Great Plains. Thanks to the jungle, nobody in most of the villages had seen something more than 30 feet away.

I remember a story about some Ghurkas in WWI. Apparently, a British infantryman came upon two Ghurkas who were laughing their asses off. He asked them what was so funny, and they explained in broken English that they had snuck up to the enemy lines, found three Germans asleep in the trenches, then slit the throats of two, and left the one in the middle alive. That was their joke.

>Criss-cross laces could therefore mean the difference between life and death. The importance of correct lacing was thus emphasized to British troops. Whether true or not, there is an account of Gurkha soldiers checking the boots and laces of soldiers they encounter in the dark to find if they are friend or foe.

>When Singapore fell, a number of Indian troops went over to the Japanese, the Japanese tried to get the Gurkha's to also go over. Not one Gurkha succumbed, when they passed an Indian who did go over, the Gurkha would draw his finger across his throat, then walk away.

Digambar also spelled Digambara is one of the two main sects of Jainism. Senior Digambar monks wear no clothes, following the practice of Lord Mahavira. They do not consider themselves to be nude — they are wearing the environment. Digambaras believe that this practice represents a refusal to give in to the body's demands for comfort and private property — only Digambara ascetics are required to forsake clothing.

Digambara ascetics have only two possessions: a peacock feather broom and a water gourd. The native Jain communities of Maharashtra, Bundelkhand (MP/UP), Karnataka, Tamil Nadu are all Digambaras. In north India, the Saravagis and the Agrawals are also Digambaras. In Gujarat and Southern Rajasthan, the majority of Jains follow the Svetambara tradition, although some Jain communities of these regions like the Humad are also Digambaras

For more than 700 years, at Grishneshwar Temple in western India's Maharashtra state, parents have asked clerics to drop their infants from a 50-foot tower. The parents believe that the practice will make their children more intelligent, braver, luckier, and healthier. The children are generally between the ages of one and two and are dropped from the tower, where they free-fall into a sheet held by men below, then are quickly passed into the arms of their waiting parents.

Many Westerners and secular Indians who have witnessed the spectacle are horrified by this ceremony, but it is fairly common in rural parts of India and is practiced both by Muslims and Hindus. Although religious officials declare that no child has ever been injured in the ritual, state officials are currently working to ban the practice. Supporters of the ban state the trauma and danger to the children, who are understandably terrified and visibly shaken by the ordeal, but those opposed to the ban feel strongly that practitioners should be allowed religious freedom.

The Monkey Buffet Festival takes place each year on Nov. 25 in the small province of Lopburi, Thailand, north of Bangkok. Thailand residents believe monkeys bring good fortune in the form of visitors to the region. The festival was initiated to promote tourism to Thailand. It is a way for the locals to thank the monkeys for bringing tourism to the town, according to the Telegraph. Locals set up tables of fruits and other foods that the monkeys will enjoy, and allow them to run around and eat as they please.

A local hotelier thought up the concept in 1989. Now, the Thailand Tourism Authority sponsors the festivities. Thousands of pounds of food are brought in for the monkeys to stuff themselves with. Each year, thousands of visitors come to witness the event. Other than the fun of watching monkeys go crazy over food, there is no other significance to the event.

But there should be.

And on the subject of animals: Indian animal-human marriages. The subcontinent has had a few recent cases of such marriages, mostly focusing on dogs.

In June 2003, a nine-year-old Indian girl of the Santal (or 'Santhal') tribe of Khanyhan, near Calcutta was formally married to a dog, in order to ward off a bad omen. The wedding was attended by more than one hundred guests, who danced to the beating of drums and drank home-made liquor. The girl told

Western press, "I have no regret in marrying the dog. I will take care of this dog who was stray and survived on left-overs", tribal elders added she was free to remarry a human in future as an adult. In November 2007 a man in southern India married a female dog in a traditional Hindu ceremony as an attempt to atone for stoning two other dogs to death – an act he believes cursed him. Selvakumar, 33, told the paper he had been suffering since he stoned two dogs to death and hung their bodies from a tree 15 years prior.

In February 2009 an infant boy was married off to his neighbors' dog in eastern India by villagers who said it will stop the groom from being killed by wild animals. The boy will still be able to marry a human bride in the future without filing for divorce.

>A former Revolutionary United Front (RUF) soldier in Sierra Leone remembered seeing them in 1995: >"Those Vietnamese [Gurkhas]. I remember them.

They carried AKs and large knives. We knew if they caught us we would be eaten. Whites and Africans are easier, we know what they are and what they do."

Funerals in the Tana Toraja region of Indonesia are big affairs. The burial ceremony is accompanied by music, dance and a feast for a number of guests. Understandably, death here is an extravagant occasion with a huge price tag. So, the relatives of the deceased are given a reprieve. They need not bury the body within a couple of days. They can just wrap it up and keep it in their home while they save for the wake. The saving can take weeks, months or even years. Until then, the corpse is treated as a sick man and included in the daily routines and conversations. An actual burial takes place when the family is prepared for it and the coffin is placed in a grave, cave or hung on a cliff.

"Strange as it seems, it is in their cremation ceremonies that the Balinese have their greatest fun," Miguel Covarrubias wrote in the 1937 book, *Island of Bali*. In 2008, the island saw one of its most lavish cremations ever as Agung Suyasa, head of the royal family, was burned along with 68 commoners. Thousands of volunteers gathered to carry a giant bamboo platform, as well as an enormous wooden bull and wooden dragon. After a long procession, Suyasa's body was eventually placed inside the bull and burned as the dragon stood witness. In the Balinese tradition, cremation releases the soul so it is free to inhabit a new body — and doing this is considered a sacred duty.

The Aghori Babas, who live in the city of Varanasi, India, are famous for eating the dead. They believe that the greatest fear human beings have is the fear of their own deaths, and that this fear is a barrier to spiritual enlightenment. So by confronting it, one can achieve enlightenment. There are five types of people who cannot be cremated according to Hinduism: holy men, children, pregnant or unmarried women, and people who have died of leprosy or snake bites. These people are set afloat down the Ganges, where the Aghori pull them from the water and ritually consume them. Also keeps down necromancy.

>I heard that some US military commander or general or something shouted orders at a group of Gurkha troops and they just laughed about it.

>Apparently their version of command, you speak quietly.

It's actually why the Gurkha fit so well in the British Military.

Shouting isn't seen as something British officers are supposed to do anyway, Shouting is pretty damn Informal and the British brass is still pretty damn pomp.

Let me explain the Khamba (Khampa). A group of native warriors who predate the Lamas. The Khamba, as a people, as known for their toughness and skill at arms. They volunteered, and by they I mean the

every man, woman, and child, to guard the lamas' escape from Lhasa during the Chinese invasion. Yeah, imagine an entire culture protecting a foreign spiritualist out of honor, duty, and mutual respect.

Their beliefs are far more animistic than the regular Tibetans, but they also began to enjoy some of the touches of Zen that came through during the period of the lama.

The CIA, seeking to secure Tibet, setup ST Circus. They snuck a couple dozen Khamba out of Tibet through mountain passes, though the Khamba outran the trained Rangers sent in after them.

The US brought them to a training ground in Colorado wherein they mastered all sorts of weaponry. You see, the Khamba had used all sorts of weaponry, from their ancient arms all the way up to the Chinese automatics they stripped off of invading forces. Most gained with their bare hands after surrendering weapons to those same Chinese troops.

They were trained in demolition, artillery handling, small arms. Their native style was lauded by the Special Forces guys who they trained with, and traditional Khamba wrestling was seen as too brutal to practice while they remained. A fight over ice cream between two warriors led to both breaking limbs, a broken hand, and a lot of missing teeth from the SF officer who stepped in.

The warriors just laughed it off and got bound up.

The only thing they refused to learn was swimming due to fear of natural hot springs. Due to the unique geography of their range thawing water was dangerous, and often polluted or too hot to safely swim, they were superstitious.

They also loved cinema. Khamba warriors loved the Searchers. Upon 'graduation' they were given cowboy hats. These hats are now ancestral heirlooms. Thus the cowboy hat.

It was normal for the British to trawl the mountain tribes for the best young men and recruit them into the British army, which was seen as an honorable service. One man called up in 1943 remembered going through boot camp, and then being brought before a British officer, who explained via translator that they were going to be part of the assault into Italy. One Gurkha asked what Italy had done to deserve this, and the officer said that they were part of the Axis and were a stepping stone toward beating the Germans. The men asked why the officer was so keen on attacking this axis, when it would clearly start another Great War. The recruiters in Nepal had conveniently forgotten to tell volunteers that WW2 had broken out.

They're a calm, collected warrior people who are passionate. They have a relatively high level of literacy and love of learning due to their close ties with the lamaist state. You see, Kham is a border region, so they kept passing between the hands of the Han and Tibetan lamas.

But their exposure to Western culture has been a major thing. Khamba love cowboys, and since they have acquiesced to Chinese rule in the TAR for now they practice their native horsemanship with a lot of Western additions.

You should check out the Litang Horse Festival. It is a fascinating mixture of Khamba, Tibetan, Chinese, and Western styles and flair. Western horsemanship, races, traditional wrestling, mounted shooting demonstrations... Shit's pretty cool.

Did I mention the fact that these horse festivals serve the place of traditional wars? The animals dress in war finery as the riders, shooters, etc. show the greatest of each individual warrior clan, and establish the hierarchy of social and political relationships until the next festival season.

I enjoyed *The Dragon in the Lands of Snow*, and heard good things about *Arrested Histories: Tibet, the CIA, and Memories of a Forgotten War*. The first is a bit more from the CIA side, the second is supposed to be interviews from the survivors of the Kham resistance. 2000 men against the Red Army, by the end they were down to around... 50? 60? All of whom were imprisoned for decades.

I learned a lot about it looking into my family history when I was in college and my memory is spotty on the numbers so this is all rough. My great uncle, who I was named after, earned one of the first stars on the Wall of Honor helping the Khampa resistance. Got to meet an old, old man who knew him, was kind of bizarre. We only learned what had happened to him in the 90s, when it was found he had died in a bad jump of CIA trained operatives to deliver arms, gold, and maps to a rebel installation.

The largest expat community is in India, but I'm not a Khamba. My great uncle just happened to be a translator who got wrapped up in shit and involved in it. So he got a spot at Langley and his family were told he had disappeared... Learned what happened much later. The only guy to survive was tortured for 15-20 years and then released, so I guess he got out lucky.

I heard the largest Tibetan refugee population lives in India.

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— Russia

>Romanticised by writers such as Alexander Pushkin and suppressed by the Soviets, the Cossacks – a nomadic military people descended from the Tatars – have resumed their historic role of military service in Krasnodar, the prosperous southern region next to Russia's restive Caucasus. The revival coincides with a surge of Russian nationalism and xenophobia as migration rises from nearby Muslim republics.

>Locals fear the new arrivals will steal their jobs and there have been violent clashes with immigrants.

"The Kuban Cossacks have appeared because the authorities don't have the strength to keep order and in particular to combat Caucasian migration," says Alexei Malashenko, an expert on the Caucasus at the Carnegie Moscow Centre, a think-tank. "There are two options: either they [Cossacks] can stabilise the situation, or they will shake it up."

If you can't find it [in the USSR], there's a sea of "speculants" selling something shadily, mainly from people with special permits to leave borders, like sailors or specialists (say, military advisors to Egypt returning home with smuggled golden cartouches or jeans or bananas), or people connected to them (so you can play off something as clandestine as a sailor's shy, honest wife in a tiny apartment crossing the law and selling guns to get some money for her son's bicycle) - but it's an invitation to get cuffed by militia.

The Nivkh (also Nivkhs, Nivkhi, or Gilyak; ethnonym: Nivxi; language, нивхы - Nivxgu) are an indigenous ethnic group inhabiting the northern half of Sakhalin Island and the region of the Amur River estuary in Russia's Khabarovsk Krai. Nivkh were mainly fishermen, hunters, and dog breeders. The Nivkh were semi-nomadic living near the coasts in the summer and wintering inland along streams and rivers to catch salmon.

Nivkh clans (khal) were a group of people united by marriage ties, a common derived deity, arranging marriages, and responsible for group dispute resolution. The clan is divided into three exogamous sub-clans. A clan would cooperate with other members on hunts and fishing when away from the village. A Nivkh clan believed they had "one (common) akhmalk or imgi, one fire, one mountain man...one bear, one devil, one tkhusind (ransom, or clan penalty), and one sin."

Nivkh's traditional religion was based on animist beliefs, especially via shamanism, before colonial Russians made efforts to convert the population to Eastern Orthodox Christianity. Nivkh animists believe the island of Sakhalin is a giant beast lying on its belly with the trees of the island as its hair. When the beast is upset, it awakens and trembles the earth causing earthquakes.

Nivkh Shamans also presided over the Bear Festival, a traditional holiday celebrated between January and February. Bears were captured and raised in a corral for several years by local women, treating the bear like a child.

The bear was considered a sacred earthly manifestation of Nivkh ancestors and the gods in bear form. During the Festival, the bear would be dressed in a ceremonial costume. It would be offered a banquet to take back to the realm of gods to show benevolence to the clans. After the banquet, the bear would be sacrificed in an elaborate religious ceremony. The bear's spirit returned to the gods of the mountain 'happy' and would then reward the Nivkh with bountiful forests.

Cossacs. Free people of the steppes, a light cavalry of rogues that despite not answering to any lord held back islamic invasion of Europe for centuries, always in skirmishes with tatars, turks, and the likes. Dreaded and adored, as they took what they needed from whoever had it, and if you didn't welcome them as guest they'd make a short story off your homestead...

As for Byzantium, it was a love hate thing.

They [the Russians] are very proud that Oleg assaulted Constantinople in 860, got the army to retreat inside, robbed the lands around it, and then nailed his shield to the gates and sailed off with the spoils.

Modern Russia is still better for the average Russian than the country has ever been at any point in its entire history.

Look, maybe you live in Europe -- proper Western Europe, not Eastern or Shit Europe. Maybe you've got some forests around you. Pretty imposing right? Well, between two World Wars and Europe being pretty developed, there's probably roads to the forests, and maybe a park system. Maybe there are rangers that patrol the forests. At any rate, even if you go into the forests, you're not really a trailblazer. Someone's probably been there before you; maybe even a tank battalion.

Maybe you live in the USA, where there is an extensive park system. National parks are pretty big, but there's roads, and if you get lost, you can probably count on a search-and-rescue team to come find you. If you're in Russia and you get lost in the woods, you are well and truly alone. Not only is Siberia fucking huge, it's also merciless. It's cold in the winter. There's secret cities and abandoned gulags hidden away there; I don't really know if ANYONE knows what's out there, even now. There's no roads, or if there are, they are no more than a pothole-laden offroad trail. If you go in the wrong direction, you can end up going and going and not hitting anything resembling civilization. You could reach the coast and not find anyone. If someone or something kills you, nobody will ever find your body. Maybe you'll wander into a military base, or some pile of nuclear waste. Maybe you'll encounter wolves, or a bear. Maybe you'll fall through a hole in the ice, or get eaten up by a mud pit.

One thing's for sure, though. If you get lost in those woods, you're on your own. May God help you, because no one and nothing else will.

The Chukchi were pretty badass in general. Their stories are full of people killing each other in various horrific fashions; the demon-self-disembowelment is pretty tame as Chukchi stories go. Historically, they were IIRC the only northern native people that actually got a formal truce out of the Russian Empire after completely annihilating a Russian expedition Little Bighorn-style and stubbornly resisting any attempt to subjugate them. They weren't truly crushed until the 20th century.

Well, I haven't looked hard at Russia because I'm not Russian. But every book I have read has mentioned 'and then there was Russia, which really sucked, but lets go back to talking about Europe that didnt suck so bad'.

But there may be other reasons.

For one, Feudalism came to Russia late. Up until then, basically, the peasants WERE slaves and many many people were in fact slaves. Remember, Feudalism is a big step up from slavery.

So we probably have some looking back at slavery Russia when every one else was Feudal and comparing that as if it were Feudal going on.

Further, Feudalism died in Russia last. So, Feudalism was going on when the rest of the world had moved on. Feudalism is a big step down from being a freeman in this context. So now we have people looking at Russia and going 'wow, they suck compared to what was going on with European peasants of the time'.

Lastly, Russia had this thing with conscripting peasants into the army and using them as cannon fodder. Didn't happen in Europe, or only very rarely. But it was a common practice in Russia.

You combine those things and you might end up with the 'Russia is horrible' thing going on. When, just maybe, it wasn't as bad in context. Just a bit behind the times.

The conscription thing was shit though and probably is what feeds most peoples perceptions of using serfs as cannon fodder in war.

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— Russia— Medieval Philosophy

See also: /tg/ on Mythology & Folklore— Russian

Things used to be good. Now they're worse. And getting worse.

There is no great, ancient evil waiting to be awakened. It was always awake.

Witches are not always of sinister intent, and should therefore be treated with extra caution. If you can't trust them to be evil, you can't trust them at all.

Do not enter the forest. It will eat you.

Do not go swimming in any body of water. You will be eaten.

There are many tales of great cities in lands far away. You will never get to see them.

Old people know the secrets to killing the fantastic creatures of the land. Except when they don't, in which case they will at least be able to direct you to someone who does know those secrets.

Fantastic creatures often cannot be killed in any way but a single, very specific and convoluted way.

Fantastic creatures and wilderness are often bad. The nobles ruling you are generally worse.

You are expected to idolize the nobles ruling you. Not that the nobles really care, but daydreaming about them helps distract from an otherwise bleak existence.

The people living south of you aren't very fond of you. Despise them.

The people living west of you aren't very fond of you. Despise them, too.

The people living east of you aren't very fond of you. Don't even bother despising them.

The Cossacks tend to look down on you. You don't have to despise them, but be wary.

People living in more populous settlements than yours look down on you. Keep a good face as long as you can trade stuff with them, but otherwise you can think whatever you want of them.

The best thing you can do with your time is go cutting down trees. It kills the forest that would eat you, and it gets you wood that can be used either to throw on the fire or to build your coffin with. If nothing else, at least it takes the mind off how much you hate life and everyone who are not from the same place as you.

You're not sure they [people to the north of you] exist, but if they did you'd rather pity them than despise them.

Modern Russia is still pretty much the same as medieval Russia in attitudes.

Whenever Russia begins to think positively, or to think that something good might happen, it always gets shit on. You can't look at Russian history and deny this. As soon as you start thinking "gee, maybe

life is OK, maybe things can get better!" some asshole comes in and invades you, or your government collapses.

So the only solution is to remain somber and negative.

I think in this situation, it makes perfect sense to not smile or appear happy, lest someone take it as a sign of weakness and make your life more shit.

My dad recently worked with a bunch of Russians and learned that the worst curse word you can use roughly translates into "Go get lost in the woods".

Russians REALLY don't like the woods...

Yeah, that's pretty universal. Nobody wants to get lost in the woods. Because seriously, fuck the woods.

Being a serf in russia sucked.

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— US of A General

A fairly substantial number of people settling America from Europe were indentured servants. Sell yourself into "slavery" for a few years in exchange for passage and a parcel of land at the end, with a contract mandating a certain level of treatment, and go. It's a much more viable system since you don't have to whip those old guys to death when they can't carry anymore. There's no lingering resentment or slave rebellions to worry about, and so long as the country is expanding, there's always demand for them.

America does have a culture, the problem is it's mostly political.

It has more in common with patrician Rome where opponents to prevailing political ideologies are attacked on all fronts. The seasons change, the ideologies do, and there's another whipping boy to focus on.

When you get down to it American culture is one that idolizes dominance. It's not enough to prove your opponent wrong, you must humiliate him in the process. It isn't enough to make a living, you must make the very best living possible.

It's fascinating and terrifying at once.

America is a capitalist society that values individual accomplishment over collective accomplishment. It's kind of what we're raised on. I still can't tell if that's a good or a bad thing.

Individual accomplishment revels in stepping over others to reach your goals.

Like with most things, too much can be harmful. There are other countries, mainly Asian, in which collective accomplishment is valued over individual accomplishment to a degree about as extreme as the inverse is in the US.

A happy medium is always better, in my opinion.

The ethnic Dixie people of the USA have a festival that they hold at various times of year (commonly New Years and the 4th of July) called the "demolition derby" where people skilled with cars get in old vehicles, and bang them into each other until only one car still works. The areas for this are relatively small, preventing great speed, and it is forbidden to ram into the driver's side door to prevent injury. In addition, all the glass has been removed from the windows and drivers wear padded protective outfits.

This is a spectator sport where local groups have strong factionalism and bet on personal friends or favorite drivers, and is usually accompanied by moderate amounts of drinking, and followed by more. I'm trying to think of white people cultural quirks but they're mostly too wide-spread to be interesting. Do you guys know about Rodeos? They're similar to demolition derbies but I think they're more widely known due to cowboy mythos.

As a side note, some argue that due to a number of Scots ending up on the Confederate side in the American Civil War, their history and affinity for attack but lack of equivalent discipline lead to them sometimes making futile and costly charges after the battle had already been decided.

The Scots ended up on the Confederate side because they settled in the South. Some places in the Appalachians are actually remarkably similar to the Scottish highlands, except with more resources.

Americans in particular don't really like the idea of human maids/servants. We probably employ less servants proportionally than any other country.

Actually, pretty certain Scandinavia got you beat. You guys got proportionally less. In Northern Europe it's pretty much morally abhorrent to have a personal servant/cleaner/etc

Well, we also have massive cultural taboos attached to the idea of service. We tip servants and generally make a big deal out of paying anyone who works for us because of the fact that, you know, we employed slaves on a level of implementation and cruelty that was rather unusual.

Ah yes I forgot that. You pay them a misery, then act like you are generous and tip them. Meh.

Right? What does it take for a man seeking the highest office of our country to say, with a straight face, "I am convinced that very nearly half of our citizens are fucking worthless anyway and I have no desire to appease them except to the barest possible degree"

Even in privacy, that's incredibly hostile for a man who is, in essence, a civic servant.

Which is a phrase we do not use nearly enough - Civic SERVANT.

This is actually a good point -- more Americans are moderates than conservatives or liberals, and the latter two aren't homogenous groups that necessarily identify with the platform. As such, yeah, "fuck people who don't vote for me" is a much, much worse political attitude than "fuck people who vote for the other guy."

/tg/ on Cultures/Geography— Yugoslavia

Oh Jesus. That's nigh impossible to explain without giving you one part out of a twelve part story, but I'll give you the short version.

Basically Yugoslavia is actually like eight different countries. Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia, and then to a more dubious extent Macedonia. These countries have strong South-Slavic ethnic ties, and a history of having the shit beaten out of them by the Turks, the Austrians, Greeks, and everyone else nearby.

Yugoslavia is the idea that all of these should be one state, so that they can resist outsiders and be free. The problem is that because each state was itself a client of a larger power at some point, they all "smell" like that power to the others, so they don't trust each other at all. There are also religious concerns--particularly that the Serbs are Orthodox and the Croats are Catholic. The Bosnians are mostly Muslims, but that's actually less of a problem than the first part.

As a result, Yugoslavia only lasted as long as the figurehead who united it lived. Tito, when he died, the Croats immediately wanted to jump ship, and everyone else (except the Serbs) along with them. The Serbs were prepared to kill any number of people to keep Yugoslavia from breaking up, but that didn't go as planned, so now the region is fragmented and volatile.

The real reason this is a problem is that a lot of these people actually physically live in the other countries. There have been as many Serbs in Bosnia as there are Bosnians at times. As a result, each side feels it has a legitimate claim to everyone else's land.

At some point, somebody will usually step up and stabs the fuck out of the ruler. It's also a general attitude that those that gained immortality through that magical contract are supposed to take an interest in keeping the kingdom going and the Kirin in good health as there's the fact that the Kirin will catch the holy disease if he's being too much of a dick when it's uncalled for and die, voiding the ruler's contract with the heavens.

But yeah, in general the whole point of having the ruler's to have somebody who can represent and exert the force required to get a kingdom anywhere. They are hired to be dickish and forceful and to get people into line.

The real heart of the problem is that the Balkans have historically been the gateway to Europe, and as such has never had time to develop any sort of cultural/ethnic homogeneity even within its own very narrow group of South Slavic peoples.

Basically, the wounds have been reopened so many times that they've just stopped closing, and now the machine is broken and can only break itself more.

Bismark, the German military genius, called World War 1 twenty years in advance, and his stipulation was that it'd probably start from something stupid in the Balkans. Surprise, he was correct.

in most ex-yugo countries, for instance, if someone stumbles or falls in the streets most people offer help automatically, even in large urban centres, especially in large urban centres, actually it gets kind of awkward sometimes. the only reason i can think of for this is that in the balkans, in "normal" situations, a person is preemptively considered a "friendly" until proven otherwise

/tg/ on Democracy & Totalitarianism

I think probably each party is interested in the oppression of social groups that vote against them, and the furthering of social groups that vote for them (not to the degree of making it so they are unneeded, but then again, it is not as if government is very good at making itself less necessary nor has incentive to do so).

Though its a vicious and inevitable angle of democracies (and I'm going to include democracy-ish clusterfucks and I Can't Believe Its Not Democracy in this category), its comforting to know that democratic countries are very good at not outright murdering their own citizens and the two-party system has been working relatively benignly, with each party checking the worst excesses of the other lately: we dodged a fucking bullet with regards to war with Syria.

Pro-tip: If people are rioting without being cut down by automatics weapon fire, you are not living in a dystopian nightmare. You are a first world nation.

/tg/ on the Desert

Do you always remember to dig a hole to build a fire in when you're off of the trail? It lessens the chance of your fire being seen by passing caravans or raiders. They can still see the light reflecting off of the canopy and the smoke, but there won't be a blazing beacon for miles.

For the only time in recorded weather history, snow fell in the Sahara desert in southern Algeria on February 18, 1979. The storm lasted only half an hour and the snow was gone within hours.

/tg/ on Drugs

Morphine, marijuana, cocaine, lsd (although the danger of LSD rises massively without proper equipment) all can be grown quite readily if you are living in the right area.

/tg/ on Empires

"Ignore the racket made by these savages. There are more women than men in their ranks. They are not soldiers - they're not even properly equipped. We've beaten them before and when they see our weapons and feel our spirit, they'll crack. Stick together. Throw the javelins, then push forward: knock them down with your shields and finish them off with your swords. Forget about plunder. Just win and you'll have everything."

-Gaius Suetonius Paulinus prior to the Battle of Watling Street in which Boudica's revolt was put down.

Wow, that really sounds like a villain's speech. Like the kind of speech an English captain in Braveheart would give.

At their height both England and Rome were The Empire. Capital T capital E, and when you're a general of The Empire, leading troops into battle against savages, you speak a certain way.

Yeah, isn't there a quote from an Indian soldier of how the British rolled up, killed everyone in a Fort, removed the corpses and started having breakfast?

There's a brilliant quote from a regular British soldier fighting the Mahadists after they managed to break a British square:

>Anyhow, the Soudanese broke a British square, and that is something to their credit. Our seven pounders were thus left outside...

>...At last the Gatling guns were got into action, and that practically ended the battle. The Soudanese were simply mown down. Their bodies flew up into the air like grass from a lawn mower. But their pluck was astonishing. I saw some natives dash up to the Gatling guns, and thrust their arms down the muzzles, trying to extract the bullets which were destroying their comrades! Of course, they were simply blown to atoms.

When you become The Empire, even the rank and file soldier changes mindset. We've got that with Murrica today, even if there aren't any good wars on.

I think the last thing The Empire wants is a "good war". It's much better to face someone who's way behind technologically than someone who's got around your technological level.

Not that anyone's going to be invading the US anytime soon, mind you.

Not necessarily, the British didn't want to invade the Zulus up until they started winning. Profit dictates whether The Empire wants to fight. Just compare how many wars the Roman Empire or the British Empire fought up until they started getting their shit kicked in economically.

/tg/ on Firearms

/k/ommando here, everyone completely overestimating how complicated it is to make a firearm.

<http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/06/african-village-vs-rape-cult/all/1>

a bunch of african villagers managed to make SHOTGUNS from scrap lying around. and they arnt even muzzleloading which is even simpler.

almost 35% or gun owners make their own ammuntiton. its not hard. you just need propellent (gunpowder) which isnt very hard to make. lead (if you cant cast bullets then you shouldnt be anywhere near guns) a case/shell and a primer. hardest part to get or make is the primer but mercury fulminate can be made. with teh right materials.

making guns is even easier. things like zip guns can be made out of almost anything. obviously ,aterials and available machinery affects quality greatly but even just 1 spring or rubber band, a spanner, a car aerial a chunk of wood and some duct tape can make a gun.

/tg/ on Food

Jellyfish will probably be a common food source in the future

Most creatures will eat whatever they CAN eat. Humans are not unique in this. We have some interesting applications of this, but it is not exactly unusual.

For instance, cheese is seen as odd and disgusting in human societies that have no history of large scale dairy production and high rates of lactose intolerance.

The philippino thing with the bird in is seen as unusual by most cultures as well, but not all that strange. Europe invented Ortolan Blunting, for instance.

But most aliens won't know it's gross, because they have wholly different ecosystems. It seems gross to us because those things touch upon our taboos designed to protect us from eating bad food.

Cheese is a kind of spoiled milk, but created for a reason. Nothing says an alien will even care - perhaps things HAVE to be eaten that way on their world. It's safe.

Lukefisk is also safe, and touches on our taboo of eating rotten meat. It's gross to us because we aren't a species that specializes in eating rotten meat; it can kill us.

A raven would wonder what your problem was between grabbing seconds, however.

Mostly, aliens are probably going to be seen as weird. Not necessarily gross, although sometimes gross for reasons the race itself is unlikely to even understand.

If I were an alien, I'd be freaked out by hair. I mean, it's dead skin cells growing out like millions of little tentacles. We're covered in dead stuff.

But your average human isn't going to see normal hair as gross (not counting ultra-hairy Russian types, of course) and why they would find it gross is likely different from why you would.

We grew up under different evolutionary systems. It's tough to tell what would make aliens gag about us, honestly.

Funny things in Italy some shops sell russian food, (like smetana) but all of it is produced in Germany

Smetana is (in a firmer variant than the Russian one) a common dairy produt in Germany, which should not be a surprise, given that it's historically adjacent to a lot of countries and thus shares many traditions with its Eastern and Northern neighbors.

What do you eat during/after the whole sauna process? I understand in Germany it's beer+sausage, but in Russia it's dried salted fish+beer.

In case anyone is interested, rear honey, straight from the comb, was smeared and shoved into wounds for thousands of years. Now you're all probably going "WTF! Dude... sugar.. bacteria! Infection!" If so, you really need to do some reading. Bacteria can't exist in environments where sugar levels exceed a certain threshold. Literally the sugar in honey will kill bacteria in a wound, and it's been found that honey in a wound will actually produce hydrogen peroxide against the inside of a wound, killing bacteria and sterilizing the wound while also providing nutrients to cells and enzymes that promote healing. There's been serious clinical research in the last few years into a renewed use of honey in treating wounds, especially wounds infected with bacteria that is resistant to modern antibiotics, burns and wounds that are in danger of scarring.

You can use wax for sealing, waterproofing, and mending most non-load bearing objects. You can even put a thick layer on your shield to catch arrows

/tg/ on the Futurists

first futurists were antiparlimentary, so they allied with anarchists, at the time anarchists were all about bombing shit and stabbing people, kicking the old appart using the new, no matter who is left for dead or alive - so futurists loved them. then someone with bigger guns came along, so futurists loved them instead

/tg/ on Genre— Cyberpunk & Information

A lot of this. Cyberpunk is about agility and information. Command economies are a bad joke and even traditional markets aren't fast enough for those on the cutting edge. In cyberpunk the street peels off and finds its own uses for things, rapidly posing a threat to nations and mega-corps by riding the cutting edge.

Not really. Even corruption and crime are a matter of government in China. Aka: If you're a runner, you're gonna work for THE MAN who also hunts you. Chinese cyberpunk would basically be Cyber-Kafka.

Then we also have the forming of mega-cities, such as an area in south-east China where several cities are growing together to form one giant 250-million inhabitant cluster within 10-20 years. With China's increasing capitalistic drive taking over, I think there are great grounds for cyberpunk stories to grow.

You mean access to all the information the powers that be want you to have. If Google decided 9/11 never happened, within three generations we would all believe the Freedom Tower had always been there, and anyone with analog photographs of the event would be as ridiculous as Bigfoot believers. It's even worse with cyberpunk because they can pull that shit right out of your brain.

I've been saying for a decade now: The government didn't need to make "Big Brother" surveillance systems. Just give everyone cameras and an outlet to voice themselves and we'll surrender all our thoughts and information to anyone who will listen. Social media proves that many times over.

Well. Apparently there's a new -punk bubbling up, called neuropunk, based on recent developments in the field of neuroscience of the I-cannot-believe-how-easily-hacked-this-thing-is, free-will-is-an-illusion, all-your-decisions-are-actually-made-by-your-hindbrain-and-the-only-thing-your-conscious-mind-does-is-steal-the-credit variety. In my own words, as best as I understand it; where conventional cyberpunk focuses on physical transformation and augmentation, corporate propaganda, and human greed and

shortsightedness, neuropunk focuses on neurological transformation and augmentation, literal mind control, and human greed and shortsightedness as a result of being mentally unequipped for environments more complex than the African savannah.

Only author I've read who's doing this is Peter Watts, who has most of his stuff online under a Creative Commons license if you want to check him out.

I forgot about neuroscience. It might fit the requirements of cyberpunk tech: it's new and attractive, it's really important, and we don't know enough about it to realize how difficult and mundane future developments are going to be.

Sounds like it's in danger of being preachy and/or reductionist, but I'll definitely put it on the reading list.

You have to remember, classic Cyberpunk settings were created during the Cold War. There are social constructs and common practices in place now that would be completely unthinkable 30 years ago. I should know, I'm an old fart and I remember the rampant paranoia and general malaise of fear that permeated the cultures of the 70's, 80's, and early 90's.

Wireless access. Unthinkable. Even if you could go back in time and convince someone in the 80's that such a thing were possible, the thought of transmitting all your information openly so that ANYONE with the proper gear could listen in was considered insane and inviting espionage.

Distributed computing. Similarly, the thought of store-houses of information NOT being kept in a single secure location with restricted access was equally insane. Everyone expected future computers to rely on the 'one massive computer does everything and you only access it' model, rather than the current 'everyone has three or four computers, all the work load is divided amongst them, and most information is stored remotely and accessed by external processors' model.

Trenchcoats are a callback to private detectives and noir protagonists in the 40s. Katanas are because back when cyberpunk was in its infancy, Japan seemed economically unstoppable and people figured they'd be the cyberpunk overlords.

Cyberpunk is fundamentally a Noir genre; dames and detectives and corrupt cops and criminals and living paycheck-to-paycheck and job to job. Thus trenchcoats.

The katana comes from the "Japan takes over the world" thing that everyone feared, before their society started to implode, their corporate culture stagnated, and all their young men became dickless shut-ins who fear freedom.

Also, to be fair to the katana, its a weapon that's great at slicing flesh but bad against plate armor or parrying another bladed weapon. If you're going to be a "sword guy" in the modern day, where no one wears plate armor, a katana-ish weapon is a decent choice. No one's going to try to parry you either. Its funny, but its actually kind of feasible to be a "sword guy" in a modern/sci-fi setting as long as sword guys remain uncommon.

So up-to-date cyberpunk should replace the Japanese fear with Chinese invasion, amiright ?

And a heavy Indian influence. They're turning into a major economic powerhouse lately.

Which also brings about an interesting point that Japanese authors wrote some of the best Cyberpunk stuff out there, both in manga and prose. I took a course for fun in college entitled "Orientalism in Science Fiction" and a good chunk of the class was taken up by discussing the slingshot effect of Oriental influence affecting western writers which then influenced Asian writers.

China is also on the brink of collapsing. The people there no longer tolerate living like slaves, and the government is kind of inept and over-invests in infrastructure that will never get used.

There's a bunch of cities in china that are EMPTY. They were built as part of a big economic push, but no one freaking wants to live in them.

And China can't take over the world with its media. They produce slapped-together shit that no one else likes. As awful as "hollywood" is, the level of quality is still way better than anyone anywhere else. I can see russia/eastern europe generating a lot of really good video games and films in the future though.

>Economically? Mayhaps. Culturally? I'd say Muslims are a great incoming threat in eyes of many people nowadays, especially in Europe.

Different sort of threat. They're a threat because europe has top-down imposed multiculturalism and needs immigrants, but sucks at digesting them.

Its wrong to acclimatize muslims and hold them to western social norms, because that'd be oppressing their quaint ethnic folkways, which is badwrong. While the "average" europeans aren't particularly open-minded, accepting, or multicultural.

Compare america, where people SEEM more racist and xenophobic, but in practice are pretty good at accepting strangers and making them feel welcome.

Definitely. There are still some classically styled cyberpunk authors out there that use China the way Japan was used in the era of classic cyberpunk. Actually, even in that era there were some visionary writers that portrayed future China as the economic and technical powerhouse it has/will become.

Let me help you understand. I'm not trying to hijack this thread. But it might happen.

What if I told you most everything you know and believe about North Korea was wrong?

It's actually a pretty alright, if a bit poor, place. They have universal housing. Free post secondary education as long as you test in. Food is sold for 1% market value, readily available, and transportation is largely free.

Foreign exchange students visit colleges across the world and Norkies regularly open bars and restraints in China that are frequented by NK foreign laborers who live and work in china?

That foreign tech and luxuries are readily available in the NK.

Would you believe me? Why or why not?

Who DO you believe? Why or why not?

How do you know you are right?

Has it ever occurred to you that the narrative commonly presented might be wrong? Why?

Even if you don't believe me, though what I just said is all true, the point I'm making is epistemological.

How do you know what you know and who controls that information makes all the difference.

Muslims not integrating into European societies will be a huge problem for Europe in the future, and would make a great cyberpunk dystopia.

>we can read people's minds!

>and half of them want sharia law imposed in London and Paris

I know it's just rhetoric [re: North Korea post]

but fuck if this kinda shit doesn't keep me awake at night

I've always thought the problem with the 'it's not cyberpunk yet' argument is that often it seems to come with the assumption that the poster believes should the day dawn when cyberpunk is realised they would be amongst the punks aware of the system.

But the thing is these punks already exist. They exist in the people creaming of credit details, and renting botnets from dodgy russian mafia groups, and the NSA agents, and shills and terrorists that swap MI5 doctored cookie recipes encoded into a few pixels in a picture posted on Facebook.

If anything Snowden should have shown you how much the government and their corporate backers have already infiltrated your life and your data, where you as an individual, your likes preferences, details, medical records have been bought and sold a dozen times. You are a commodity, just another consumer.

And this is just the tip of what they are willing to let you see or to understand how they are playing us all or how total their control already is. You think we're not cyberpunk because we haven't got robotic arms yet.

Arguably that fact is the most cyberpunk thing of all.

"Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea"

You know how 1984 has those televisions in the wall that spout propoganda and can't be turned off? NK does that with radio.

Closest he gets to the terrifying parts is learning about someone who was dissapeared though. If you really want something interesting, go for stuff written by escapees.

I'm really enjoying how low-key the cyberpunk in Watch_Dogs is. Sometimes you get tired of Japanese hyper-zaibatsu and neon punks with robot arms.

Police here (england) are talking about having drone patrols with facial recognition and banks of operators trying to spot crimes in progress. Mostly in london, but i'm sure within a decade they'll be buzzing around the average british town,

Some leaks are, almost certainly, leaks.

Assuming their control is total is half paranoia and half giving them WAY too much credit.

People, everywhere, fuck up. To err is human, indeed. Some things get missed, get lost, get leaked.

That's why conspiracy theories are so unbelievable. People just aren't that good at their jobs, and the things ascribed to "them" are far to huge and complex to be done realistically.

So yes, you are a commodity. But you have value, and that means you are worth protecting. And if you are moderately well treated, you make companies and governments more money, generally. Let's just hope they haven't found the point of diminishing returns yet though, eh?

Yes, drones, industrial robots and maybe automated trains ? [on what would be feasible]

Why isn't there more cyberpunk games/films/books themed off of social networking? Is it just because everyone who makes cyberpunk uses Twitter/Facebook and they can't bare the t*the thought that THEY may be the wage slaves being controlled and manipulated by The Man?

>What can you tell me about the dark web? How does it work exactly? All I have ever heard about it is that its where all the weird shit happens and its hard to access unless you are in the know. I don't want specifics on how to get on I just want a general idea.

Basically information 'enters' in some point, gets shot around a bunch of times to make it untraceable and then exits on some random place that then contacts who you're exchanging info with

To know on what darkweb site you went and what you did there the NSA has to have their own access points set up and of the many, many points your info has to both enter and exit on of theirs so they can cross reference it and know where it came from and what it means

The description that guy gave you is rather awkward. When people use the term "dark net" in terms of super secret underground internet they're essentially just talking about a big ass VPN inherently designed obfuscate the source of information received on it in order to maintain anonymity for its users. Entire networks spring up in these for all sorts of the normal functions of the internet: email, irc, websites, torrent trackers, forums, and practically anything else. The only difference being it's very difficult to tell where data is coming from. A specific computer might have an address so that others in the network can communicate with it but that doesn't really mean anything outside of the network. You can't find out it's actual IP address.

There are a few different approaches to doing this, usually Friend-2-Friend approaches where you only ever directly connect to people you trust. So while you may not know the guy hosting Secret Anti-Government Twitter on his server, he's a friend of a friend of a friend of your friend Ryan. These are often more secure given the exclusivity of who you connect to but it makes having a network of significant size difficult so there are other approaches that allow you to connect to other people without knowing them.

If you're interested in specific implementations check out: Tor, i2p, Freenet, Retroshare and a few others if you do some googling.

Pretty much. It's the same reason nobody writes zombie fiction with the assumption that they're one of the brainless head-munching horde, or how any libertarian takes a moment to consider whether they'd be one of the billions to NOT make it in their perfect meritocracy

Also, it's basically the same as having a fleet of police officers with access to photo records wandering around, except without the drawbacks of having a bunch of police officers do it.

So like a police officer with a smartphone, except without the disadvantages of a human, but unable to physically do anything?

A PCSO that won't bitch sounds great IMHO

I agree to a degree that humanoid robots are unlikely to replace human labour any time soon, though I imagine you are likely to see humanoid robots in specific applications such as the military, remote telepresence etc.

However the overlooked part of the 'robotic revolution' is the enormous amounts of semi- or unskilled administrative or clerical work that is done now by people but could easily be done by machine/or AI. Imagine a world where there are no cashiers, the shop AI simply tags your biometrics when you enter and charges you for what you take.

White collar office work where PA work, secretariat functions, even basic work work is done by non-sentient AIs, with human workers as approvers and editors rather than 'producers'

Even things like teaching, medicine, customer service, transportation all become candidates for automation with a sufficiently advanced programme running behind them.

Effectively anything that doesn't involve physical interaction with a customer or the environment is potentially liable to be replaced with a machine, relatively soon.

I find it laughable that conservatives argue that investment in education and other public works are socialist efforts towards oppression, and that their own investment in the military-industrial complex are not, and that investing in the expansion of the military is any less 'big government' than investment in social and public works programs.

And that book, how do I know anything in it is true? Or what about those "escapees". They've been thoroughly debriefed by the S.Koreans usually, hell to the point that the FBI admits they're useless as witnesses. One escapee claimed escapists are shot on sight, but also said he tried escaping three times.

What if >>32552519 Is just some guy, with 3 computers, paid \$15 an hour by a U.S. Intelligence agency to look for situations just like this and tow the line on the normal narrative? He doesn't have to silence the truth, just drown it out with things that look legit and make enough sense so it looks like there's just that one crazy guy.

You're getting into P. Zombie territory there, which is completely useless wank. Yes, technically you cannot trust anything ever. Realistically, by that logic, you should doubt literally everything ever. You need to prepare and learn how to spot bullshit, how to weigh if it's in anyone's interest to lie to you, but you cannot put that level of doubt into anything that doesn't raise big flags for you, cause then you will never get any fucking where.

Tor is certainly not immune to exploits as it's rather popular and the target of a lot of attention. Most of the time the insecurity of Tor comes from its users. The Tor exit nodes (that connect the Tor network to the outside Internet) are run by anyone who wants to run one. Some people do it out of the good of their hearts and others do it to sniff all the traffic going through it.

Tor anonymizes you, it doesn't magically encrypt all the traffic. If you connect through Tor and then access your bank account through it's you're just being stupid. But there's also paranoia that most of the exit nodes are run by the FBI and CIA. How founded in reality that is I can't say. Regardless, you shouldn't be using Tor to access your email.

Look, it's not that I don't understand that hypothetically the 'government' could use my personal data against me somehow.

It's just that for it to do so, there would need to be such enormous perversion of the justice system, courts, prosecutors, the media, government employees themselves (I mean, I am one myself) in order to create a situation where that data was useable or meaningful in court or otherwise, that by that point the legality of them accessing my data or even it's existence in the first place is a moot point. In the absence therefore of any real tangible threat against someone like myself who doesn't have anything to hide, I am content for the security services to have easy access to the data of those who do. All of this is not to say overpowerful government is not a threat. But this specific argument is not the most pressing of threats, and the benefits likely outweigh the dangers.

You know what, /tg/? Let's make a cyberpunk setting based off of social networking.

The corporations control celebrities, who make it "cool" to have an account on one of their social networking sites, attaching a social stigma to retaining your privacy.

too close too confort mate, I mean have you seen the younger folk? most people under the age of 16 today have no sense of privacy whatsoever.

Real life is cyberpunk. It's just less depressing, more practical, and more boring than we imagined it would be in the 80s.

I was imagining a teaching situation would along the line of a personalised virtual teacher taking you through a personalised and adaptive course run as MOOC.

I realise we nowhere near this level of technology yet, but we still spend ridiculous amounts of money. I work for the UK department for education. I think we spend about 54 billion pounds a year on schools. Even if such a system cost tens or even hundreds of millions of pounds to implement and couldn't replace all aspects of teaching, it could still save billions upon billions of pounds currently spent maintaining unnecessary buildings, teachers, teaching for a whole year instead of say 6 months for the brightest kids by allowing them to go at their own pace.

At a national level automation simply makes sense.

I think people only like people because they are demonstrably better than the current alternative. A tailored AI assistant that knew your details, was discreet, witty, clever, that was programmed to treat and surprise you, and could demonstrably improve your life will win everyday over Piotr, the acne faced polish drama student doing his weekend job.

Get the media to spread them around, the media doesn't have to claim them to be true anyway. Just one or two big places need to make a story saying "so and so claims" and "this guy says" and this sourceless and baseless rumor now has infiltrated the general narrative of the population.

Then, that accomplished, the smaller news agencies will pick it up because the big ones are doing it and everyone needs to make money and get viewers.

Over time the narrative is accepted, and any new 'bad news' is regarded, knee jerk, as true. No critical thinking required.

That accomplished you can publish a story about something happening every once and a while to keep that default position locked in. Demonization complete no one will want to go there and see for themselves. No one will trust any positive information that is sent out.

Pay a few guys to troll around the internet and argue against anyone who tries to argue against the already forged narrative some money, and blamo.

After all, its not like people would do that. Just go on the internet and lie. Especially not for pay. (like the FBI actually has people doing.)

As for how this seems Cyberpunk to me:

Corporations and Politicians in bed together.

Suppressing and demonizing information about alternative systems.

Using paid spoofs to lie on the internet

Using meta-data gathering devices (ala NSA)

Corporate controlled mega-media running the majority of the media wheel

Dude, that is still really fucking dumb. We have so many precedents to how these regimes turn out it isn't even funny. You'd need to gaslight literally everyone to make it work. It's theoretically possible, but so is that an asteroid will hit the planet in the next five minutes and we all die. It's just very, very improbable, and in contrast with the asteroid, requires a ton of work, by a ton of people who are fallible, talk, and gossip, and change their minds and allegiances, and would require a lot of investment for...what, exactly? What do they gain by lying their ass off about Best Korea and spending a looooooot of resources on it to do so, hmm?

/tg/ on Genre— Fantasy

Of course, if you're comfortable with just sneakily slipping in an infinite-energy source, you could always just say Magic!

(But be warned if your players are smart, and they figure it out, they'll break the setting.)

I don't think elves really apply. The whole "elves looking after nature" thing is not meant to be taken literally. It's symbolic. Elves are supposed to be a noble and intelligent race. This portrayal is manifested in the specific example of caring for something that cannot care for itself.

In other words, Elves protect nature not because nature is nature, but because nature cannot care for/protect itself.

Once nature becomes sentient, and aggressive about expanding, it no longer fulfills the role that the Elves exist to protect.

Or, to put it simply, they wouldn't give a fuck about sentient plants because in gaining sentience, the plants sacrifice the innocence that the Elves exist to protect. So if this plant race comes in and starts slashan and burnan the forest, the elves would fight them like they would fight anything that tries to destroy that which cannot defend itself.

TL:DR elves are a metaphor for protecting the innocent. Sentience is the loss of innocence, therefore elven principle no longer applies.

Fun fact: Tolkien viewed the developing of friendship between Gimli and Legolas as allegory for people overcoming both anti-Semitism and the Jewish sense of exclusivity.

/tg/ on Genre— Gothic Horror

"Gothic horror, at its core, is about enclosed places. It's about locking the players in with a mystery, and then letting them find out that the answer is more than they can take. In Gothic horror, never describe the source of the horror until the climax. It strikes at the shadows, moving subtly. It corrodes people from the inside, turning them from rational human beings to inhuman monsters wearing the skins of men. Gothic horror also demands that there are no true answers. Even if its entirely realistic in the set-up, there are things that just can't be explained. The supernatural is real, and never gets a rational explanation. Every answer leads to another question, and it's never the answer you want to hear. Keep it enclosed, keep it subtle, and keep it inexplicable."

/tg/ on Genre— Mystery

While the comparison with the Amateur Sleuth is common, in many ways the stories work the opposite ways. The Amateur Sleuth, such as Miss Marple, tend to cozy locked room mysteries, where everything starts complicated and uncertain, but slowly works its way down as a logic puzzle, with a tidy solution where the killer is unmasked. The Private Investigator tends to start simple, but as the investigation will unravel an ever more complicated plot, and the ending is rarely tidy. The killer may be unmasked, but larger problems tend to stay unsolved.

/tg/ on Geography— Weird Places

This is the Nahanni Valley, located in Canada's Northwest territories, an almost entirely unexplored area of the world. Dubbed "The Valley of headless men", coming from a series of unexplained incidents in the Gorge during the Gold Rush of the early 20th century. Two brothers, Willie and Frank McLeod left in 1906 in an attempt to reach the Klondike through Nahanni. Nothing was heard from them for the next two years. In 1908, another prospecting expedition discovered two bodies, later identified as the McLeod brothers. Both had been decapitated. Years later, in 1917, a Swiss man named Martin Jorgenson was found decapitated, next to his burnt cabin the Nahanni Valley. In 1945 a miner who's

name is unknown was found in his sleeping bag, decapitated as well. It has been said around 44 people gone missing in the Valley. Several theories have been suggested to explain the events, but none proven

The Schranzel-Holes. Ancient tunnel systems found under farmsteads and rarely under moat and bailey castles in southern Germany and Austria, dug into clay and soft earth around the 10th century. Sometimes they are only about a meter long, sometimes they are whole labyrinths, mostly not higher than 30cm, including steep climbs and pitfalls. They have absolutely no practical use: They are unstable and often collapsed during building, so storage is out of question. They are badly ventilated so a hiding family would probably suffocate. The word "Schranzel" is southern German for gnomes or earth spirits.

/tg/ on History— General

"Ancient civilizations were less advanced than current ones, ruins are only interesting to historians" Also, as a historian, I can tell you ancient sh-t is useful to modern man. Mainly through the medium of 'WE TRIED THAT SH-T BEFORE AND IT DIDN'T WORK. IF YOU TELL ME THIS TIME IS DIFFERENT, I WILL CUT YOU.'

>being fucked over by literally every geographic neighbor of theirs at one point in the past.

Isn't that the history of everyone?

What I mean is that you cannot just generalize about the how the 90% population of a whole continent lived during 1000 years.

The situation of the peasantry varied enormously on different areas from the same country, during the same time.

Empathy varies, massively, across time and space. A couple of centuries ago you'd pay money to watch a bear and a pack of dogs ripping each other up. Now you'd find that disgusting, but chances are you still eat meat. Give it another couple of centuries and people might look back on your meat-eating in much the same way.

Just remember.

History was recorded by people who could afford to sit around doing nothing for long periods of time.

All this talk about serfs being able to read... that's late middle ages. People are so fucking retarded on /tg/ they don't know fucking timelines and think anachronistically.

/tg/ on History— Germany & When It Became "A Thing"

Germany wasn't really a thing till, like, 1871 (maybe 1848-9 if you want to count the Frankfurt Parliament instead of the formal declaration, for some reason)
Germany is 'younger' than the US

Sure, the unified country of "Germany" wasn't a thing before then.

But are you honestly going to try to deny the existence of the Frankish lands east of the Rhine for all time before someone called it "Germany"?

Depends what you mean by "A Thing"

There was a general idea of the German people being a thing at least since the 16th century

The term "Germany" is derived literally from "Home of the Germans". The first Reich, or unified state, of Germany was the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (originally just the HRE, but "of the German Nation" was added before it was dissolved, established in 962.

The HRE lasted until 1806, then the German Empire was re-established in 1871. That lasted until the end of WWI, before the rise of Nazi Germany in 1933. After Nazi Germany, we had the Cold War, which led to the unification of what is now simply "Germany".

Before 962, there was no unified country of Germany, simply a collection of states who all spoke German, and all descended from the Germanic tribes.

tl;dr, Germany has been "a thing" since pre-Roman period.

It's the same way I wouldn't talk about Spain before... I'll hazard a guess at the 2nd half of the 1400s. I'd say the Iberian Peninsula

Or Italy before... hmmm 1860-1871

The land's there, but it was something else at the time

/tg/ on History— Renaissance

I hope you realize that Renaissance comes from Rinascere, which means "to be reborn". It was the revitalization of classical thought, which could not have been achieved if it were not abandoned in the first place.

/tg/ on History— Rome

Tiberius got a lot of disrespect for killing everyone close to him, but he wasn't that bad an emperor.

Romans made pacts with their gods that were actually legal contracts, which Romans then would make some sort of offering or take auspices, and if good, assumed that the god in question had "signed" the contract.

For example, supposedly during Caesar's time as Pontifex Maximus, there was a big religious upheaval of some sort. To fix everything, a ritual had to be re-performed. To get the ok, Caesar drew up a new contract, sacrificed a calf or sheep, and when the Augurs said the entrails were clear as day, the contract was considered legal and the god accepting of their substitute ritual re-performance. He then legislated (in the People's Assembly) a new, temporary holiday (spelled out in the contract) to enact the ritual. So, Romans could negotiate with the gods, and, naturally, had to uphold their ends of the deal!

>Was it viewed as glorious, or terrifying to be conscripted into the legion? Depends on which legion you got into. There's a difference between garrison duty in Italy and a Germanic or Dacian shitfest. I imagine it was much like modern conscription, something you just went through. For some, joining the army was quite an opportunity as well. Also, conscription is less of an issue as time progresses and the Legions turn professional.

Depends. Pre-Marian, especially during the early imperial days of the republic and the conquest of Spain, it was a meatgrinder. If you own land, you go to war as a footsoldier. Service is compulsory. This period has an increasing number of reports, polemics, etc. of Romans bitching about not having seen their family in 30 years. The republic threw away two generations of men in Spain alone. Post-Marian, you get more and more professional troops, and service opened to the landless mob (*capita censi*). Service was now elective, I think. This of course led to massive armies with no land to return to, who identified with their service and eventually their generals, leading to the era of "great men" dominating

the state with armies at their backs, of course culminating in Pompey, Caesar, Marcus Antonius, and Augustus. Service in this era would have been prestigious, and it carried legal benefits for serving a full term (ie. citizenship for you or your progeny), but mostly it was marked by soldiers becoming very very loyal to the individual generals who led them.

Post-Augustan (ie. Imperial Rome), service is now fully elective and the legal benefits are streamlined and set in stone. People generally know how long they plan to serve (eg. 25 years) and why, when enlisting. It is a highly prestigious profession because Rome is at the height of its power and they get regular workouts on the frontiers, and with each successive imperial succession crisis, the soldiers are paid more and more. I think it was Severus who said "treat each other well, pay the soldiers, despise everyone else" to his sons. The army in this period was marked more by martial pride in one's legion or army (eg. huge, huge rivalries between Rhine and Danube the armies - see Bedriacum), and an increasing degree of influence over the state. Rebellions and revolts could now be serious threats, and the first thing any new emperor did, especially if it wasn't a natural succession, was bribe the holy hell out of the soldiers, sometimes on the order of many years' pay.

As for seizing land rapidly.. Caesar singlehandedly created Western Europe in the span of 20 years. Enough said.

>Speaking of, was it common for soldiers to worship a certain deity? Mars? Mars, and each Legion had personal protective and inspirational deities, also the Emperor's person, possibly most importantly. Losing your aquila was a big fucking deal and it was kept in a shrine during peace.

If you're going for Imperial Rome, Mithra was quite popular. Mars, of course, as well as the Emperor's Genius (soul/guardian spirit) and that of the commander and Legion. Any foreign warrior, guardian or luck-related dieties are a possibility too, people had a more utilitarian approach to religion back then. Go listen to the podcast "Hardcore History," specifically the series about the downfall of the republic. From what I gather, being a soldier in a legion was a good and bad thing.

Bad: if there isn't fighting going on or it isn't going well, you don't get to loot and you'll probably die. And when/if you go back home, your farm/homestead's probably gone broke and been bought up by some rich guy.

If it helps, average Italian would be like 5'2", average Celt would be like 5'7", average German would be like 6'0"+.

Keep in mind, Anon, how the Legions were trained to fight: as a cohesive block, where you formed up and relied on all those shields around you as you closed ranks with your pilum and your sword. This sort of one-on-one fighting isn't what you trained for, while your Germanic foes are more than used to fighting one-on-one without much to weigh them down.

Something else to remember anon though it is rather minor. Serving in the north was not really a dream position for the legions. The reason being that the loot in Germania was not as desirable as the loot in the east. The gold, spices, and general wealth of the Grecian Mediterranean was really something compared with the relatively small amount of lootable wealth in the north. Remember that looting was very important for your average legionnaire as it supplemented his pay. Something else which is really not talked about a lot; for the vast majority of a soldier's service it was incredibly boring/tedious. It was back-breaking work broken up occasionally by terrifying and bloody battles. And battlefields were truly scenes of carnage and death. It's hard for the modern mind to grasp thousands of men engaged in close combat hacking and slashing. I don't believe too many ancient writers emphasized this but a battlefield after the end of the battle must have been a horror to behold as well.

What did Rome in, and eventually the Byzantines, was that their economies made no damn sense at all, and they let their militaries grow slack and full of foreigners with no real loyalty to them. If you're going to be multicultural, you've got to layer over it with the common notion that everyone is still "Roman," even if they're also a Thracian or a Greek or whatever.

The stormfrontier type might say it was multiculturalism that did them, but I think the Roman form of Multiculturalism was the ideal - "I don't give a f-ck what you are, but either you pay taxes and keep to yourselves, or you participate fully in -OUR- culture and anything cool and useful you can bring is welcome". One author I read talking about the Roman/Christian culture up to around the arrival of Islam made a case that what really pissed Roman Pagans with Christian converts was their 'treason' from Greco-Roman culture and society. That you participated and then turned away from it. I'm not describing it right but it was rather convincing.

The legions tactics basically mobile siege warfare, when it comes down to it. They fought almost all their battles defensively, even when on the offense, and took any chance they could get to build natural defenses and make it a real siege. The legions weren't very mobile at all, not even on the battlefield. Rome was never even that impressive in actual fighting, their skill was in marching, fortification and maneuvering on a strategic scale. Once they got down to tactics, they were kind of a one trick pony.

Doctors in old Rome were often slaves.

Togas were actually horribly uncomfortable, Caesar had to pass a LAW forcing people in office to wear them, because otherwise they'd just show up in the Roman equivalent of jeans and a T-shirt.

Yeah actually they [the Chinese] did love Rome

"Their kings are not permanent. They select and appoint the most worthy man. If there are unexpected calamities in the kingdom, such as frequent extraordinary winds or rains, he is unceremoniously rejected and replaced. The one who has been dismissed quietly accepts his demotion, and is not angry. The people of this country are all tall and honest. They resemble the people of the Middle Kingdom and that is why this kingdom is called Da Qin. This country produces plenty of gold [and] silver, [and of] rare and precious [things] they have luminous jade, 'bright moon pearls,' Haiji rhinoceroses, coral, yellow amber, opaque glass, whitish chalcedony, red cinnabar, green gemstones, gold-thread embroideries, woven gold-threaded net, delicate polychrome silks painted with gold, and asbestos cloth.

They also have a fine cloth which some people say is made from the down of 'water sheep' [= sea silk], but which is made, in fact, from the cocoons of wild silkworms (= wild silk). They blend all sorts of fragrances, and by boiling the juice, make a compound perfume. [They have] all the precious and rare things that come from the various foreign kingdoms. They make gold and silver coins. Ten silver coins are worth one gold coin. They trade with Anxi [Parthia] and Tianzhu [North-western India] by sea. The profit margin is ten to one. . . . The king of this country always wanted to send envoys to the Han, but Anxi [Parthia], wishing to control the trade in multi-coloured Chinese silks, blocked the route to prevent [the Romans] getting through [to China]."

>your civilization will never have laws against being a shitty petite bourgeoisie like laws prohibiting serving fancy fish on no occasion and in general being a showy little asshole.

How many civs had shit like that? I know the spartans kept their teen girls naked in ceremonies so they wouldn't be caught up in showing off their new clothes (sure spartans, sure)

>In 530/31 A.D. Justinian I attempted to enlist the aid of the contemporary Axumite king Kaleb in a war against the South Arabian ruler Dhu Nuwas, who had converted to Judaism and was alleged to be persecuting the Christian inhabitants of his realm. In this excerpt from his report the Roman ambassador Julian provides a unique and vivid description of an Axumite king dressed in his full royal regalia. The following text is from the Chronographia of Theophanes..

>In the same year (527), the Romans and Persians broke their peace. The Persian war was renewed because of the embassy of the Homeritan Indians (Himyarite Arabs) to the Romans. The Romans sent

the Magistrianos Julian from Alexandria down the Nile River and through the Indian Ocean (i.e., the Red Sea) with sacral letters to Arethas (in fact, King Kaleb), the king of the Ethiopians. King Arethas (Kaleb) received him with great joy, since Arethas longed after the Roman Emperor's friendship.

>On his return (to Constantinople), this same Julian reported that King Arethas was naked when he received him but had round his kidneys a loincloth of linen and gold thread. On his belly he wore linen with precious pearls; his bracelets had five spikes, and he wore gold armlets by his hands. He had a linen and gold cloth turban round his head, with four cords hanging down from both its straps.

>He stood on (a carriage drawn by) four standing elephants which had a yoke and four wheels. Like any stately carriage, it was ornamented with golden petals, just as are the carriages of provincial governors. While he stood upon it, he held in his hands a small gilded shield and two gold javelins. His counselors were all armed, and sang musical tunes.

I think the ancient Ethiopians were from a game of Dwarf Fortress.

Codex Alera books.

Because crossing a lost Roman Legion with Pokemon and fighting armies of honorbound blood magic spewing werewolves, empathic yetis, and Zerg never felt so right.

Those wacky Romans: <http://www.pompeiana.org/resources/ancient/graffiti%20from%20pompeii.htm>

>(Bar/Brothel of Innulus and Papilio); 3932: Weep, you girls. My penis has given you up. Now it penetrates men's behinds. Goodbye, wondrous femininity!

>(peristyle of the Tavern of Verecundus); 3951: Restitutus says: "Restituta, take off your tunic, please, and show us your hairy privates".

>(Bar of Athictus; right of the door); 8442: I screwed the barmaid

>(Vico d' Eumachia, small room of a possible brothel); 2145: Gaius Valerius Venustus, soldier of the 1st praetorian cohort, in the century of Rufus, screwer of women

>(bar/inn joined to the maritime baths); 10675: Two friends were here. While they were, they had bad service in every way from a guy named Epaphroditus. They threw him out and spent 105 and half sestertii most agreeably on whores.

>on a water distribution tower); 10488: Anyone who wants to defecate in this place is advised to move along. If you act contrary to this warning, you will have to pay a penalty. Children must pay [number missing] silver coins. Slaves will be beaten on their behinds.

>They didn't have to steal all their myth and philosophy either.

Roman had it's own mythology, they were just really good at claiming that every other indo-european mythology was the same as theirs and equated foreigners gods to their own. They were also really good at adapting foreign culture and mythology into their own, such as Mithras, but that was more to keep peasants happy than anything.

>Skaven are pretty Roman.

Yeah, they're roman around damn near everywhere

I like rome because of its graffiti

>Secundus defecated here

>Apollinaris, the doctor of the emperor Titus, defecated well here

Romans best shittalkers

>O walls, you have held up so much tedious graffiti that I am amazed that you have not already collapsed in ruin.

Pff, Persians > you. They had civilization before the Romans even learned to make huts, and had it after the Romans were toppled by a bunch of pig-farmers. They didn't have to steal all their myth and philosophy either.

/tg/ on History— Victorian Era

The Victorian age wasn't as sexless and uptight as common-knowledge portrays it.

Actually, if you read Victorian Lit there were as many as 20,000 to possibly 80,000 prostitutes in London alone, almost 1 in 20 of the city's population. "Uptight" images of Victorians was propagated 100% by some asshole writer who hated what they had become and wrote satirically. Their name isn't coming to me atm. Anyway. They were tripping over prostitutes in the Victorian era. On every corner, in every street, etc. Sex was happening.

Actually, its funny, I was a victorian lit major. My own recommendations would be Aurora Leigh, Pride and Prejudice, Adam Bede. There are others. Aurora Leigh is going to be the best bet to get a nice insight into city-life, as the main character horribly judges her best friend who is basically an angel. If you were single, you were presumed to be a prostitute. Hell, if you were pretty and not Merchant class, you were basically a prostitute with an unpaid price tag. If you were pretty in general, life sucked for you in the mail dominated world.

But, read books from the Era and you will get a great view of the different class struggles. Popular struggles in literature at the time was the struggle against the expanding railway and the disappearing country side and the fusion of dialects. Other popular ideas were the evolution of the noble class, getting edged out by a new modern wave of sentiments such as voyeuristic styles of reading, diets, the like. Popular trends that 'ruined' tradition.

/tg/ on Humans & Nature

I support the industry of hunting simply because it helps keep populations down and actually provides the majority of funds wildlife preservations receive. But killing an animal should be a solemn, respectful affair, not a fucking facebook snapshot.

THE CONTRAST [between the natural world and technology] ISN'T AS SHARP AS YOU'D THINK. AFTER ALL, WHERE DO YOU DRAW THE LINE BETWEEN "NATURE BEING NATURE" AND "TECHNOLOGY"? IS AN ORANGUTAN USING A STICK TO FISH FOR ANTS AND PICK HIS NOSE "TECHNOLOGY"? IS AN BIRD USING STONES TO SMASH OPEN TURTLES? HELL, WHAT ABOUT ANTS WHO DOMESTICATE AND HARVEST OTHER INSECTS?

Technology vs Nature is a bunch of romanticist twaddle for people too stupid to understand technical and scientific arguments made by ecologists. Plant people would be pissed off at miners not because industry bad, but because they get nitrogen and trace elements from the soil and soil bacteria, and miners often leave tailings heaps which don't easily support life and pools laced with cyanide or heavy metals, similarly bad for living things (especially eukaryotes which includes all multicellular life). Factories are bad only if they cause acid rain which would cause soil acidity, and those which follow proper environmental regulations wouldn't fase plant folk. Hell, I bet they'd be overjoyed that we can now produce synthetic fertilizers.

/tg/ on Immigrants & Racism

Americanized Arabs, Hindus, etc. will have very little patience with racism and much sympathy with granting anyone a fair shot at the American Dream. But interest at artificially keeping traditional lifestyles alive ? Not so much. THEY Americanized and succeeded, so move your butt and get yourself into a good school, instead of crying because you can't hunt the bison anymore.

It wouldn't be quite such a big problem, except that a lot of immigrants from the middle east are from bronze-age backwaters, and/or are only there for work and want to avoid being sullied by the decadent west, and are encouraged to settle in monocultured ghettos where they can oppress and culture-police themselves even worse than in their country of origin.

Its just that our media, and the world's media, is way more vocal about the USA's problems than europe's. Europe has gangs of parkour-trained neo-nazis.

I'd say that's generally fair. I don't think we're exactly as egalitarian as we'd like to think we are, but our racism tends to be a little low-key.

Living in Arizona, there's a very unique sort of ignorance responsible for the anti-Mexican racism here. Basically every Arizonan I know is friends with a couple Mexicans, because they're the most common minority here anyway, and they're still just people. This will not stop them from loudly protesting about how illegal aliens are a bunch of lazy fence-hopping bastards stealing our jeb. Not even in front of their Mexican friends. But it's 'different'. Because THOSE Mexicans are friends (regardless of citizenship status), and thus people, while the Illegal Mexicans are, you know, this vast and unknowable force sweeping over the state... somehow.

The only people I've met who are legitimately angry about illegal immigration are largely legal immigrants, and it's less 'They're stealin' our jobs' and more 'Motherfucker this was a LOT OF GODDAMN WORK and now I'm associated with your bullshit'

If Europeans go to muslim countries and live there and live in enclosed communities, then they are doing it wrong too, yes. If you are a minority somewhere, then being completely enclosed is a bad idea.

Yeah no that has fuck all to do with what the point is. It's not just proximity. It's that they still try to police themselves with their old systems, that they do not take on traits from the place they are living in, that they do not mingle. This alienates them, makes them targets, makes them an Other instead of a part of the country.

If you don't want to integrate into the culture of the country you moved to, you shouldn't have fucking moved there.

>implying they aren't more traced than nuclear weapons

Seriously, secret services everywhere know exactly where and who the radicals are, they only let the cells active to monitor the new arrivals.

They have no problem busting them all when the need arises.

/tg/ on Mythology & Folklore General

Sun worship usually comes from communities of farmers and gatherers, as opposed to hunters or herders.

Well the Punics/Molochians wanted to insure the health of their children, so what could be more valuable than your first born? Your second born was well protected by the sacrifice....

/tg/ on Mythology & Folklore— Angels

If I recall offhand, there was once an army of about 65000 abyssinians ,who had absolutely wrecked the shit out of everythign that came close to them, and that were a few kilometres from utterly destroying the Jewish people entirely. They were battle-hardened, very well-led, and generally one of the most powerful military forces assembled in that area ever. One angel killed every single one of them in one night. That's two-and-a-quarter people EVERY SECOND, not including the time it took to move group-to-group or chase fleeing ones. You shouldn't have the players challenge one of these at all until the climax of the game, and even then, after a huge amount of power-gathering and elaborate planning to weaken it before attacking.

/tg/ on Mythology & Folklore— Christianity

Actually many pagans tought about Christ as god of wealth. As Byzantines worshipped Christ and they were realy rich.

Scottish folklore is basically what happens when you take all the nice things you normally find in Celtic folklore and replace them with things that want to kill and/or eat you. Except there's one nice kind of reverse werewolf that leaves fish out for you. That's it

>implying Jesus' psychedelic apocalyptic gnostic life philosophy has anything to do with that Roman junk that Paul invented

The Temple of God is in your heart, not in fucking Rome. And you certainly don't need to go to church on Sunday when you carry the Temple of God in your heart 24/7.

One thing about the prohibition of the clergy having sex is that the priesthood owned land, and could acquire more land and wealth. They could potentially challenge the king himself. If they were to marry, and have children, they could have dynasties of their own greater than the crown. No king wants that. Eventually, kings appointed bishops.

And a personal favorite that doesn't get too much use: The Anchorite

Anchorite or anchoret (female: anchoress; adj. anchoritic; from Ancient Greek: ἀναχωρητής, "one who has retired from the world", from the verb ἀναχωρέω, anachōreō, signifying "to withdraw", "to retire") denotes someone who, for religious reasons, withdraws from secular society so as to be able to lead an intensely prayer-oriented, ascetic, and—circumstances permitting—Eucharist-focused life. As a result, anchorites are usually considered to be a type of religious hermit, (being similar to hermits in seeking to live a solitary life devoted to God, although distinct in being permanently enclosed in cells which were usually attached to churches) although there are distinctions in their historical development and theology.

The anchoritic life became widespread during the early and high Middle Ages. Examples of the dwellings of anchorites and anchoresses survive. They tended to be a simple cell (also called anchorhold), built against one of the walls of the local village church, In the Germanic lands from at least the tenth century it was customary for the bishop to say the office of the dead as the anchorite entered her cell, to signify the anchorite's death to the world and rebirth to a spiritual life of solitary communion with God and the angels. Sometimes, if the anchorite was walled up inside the cell, the bishop would put his seal upon the

wall to stamp it with his authority. But some anchorites freely moved between their cell and the adjoining church.

Hearing Mass and receiving Holy Communion was possible through a small, shuttered window in the common wall facing the sanctuary, called a "hagioscope" or "squint". There was also a small window facing the outside world, through which the inhabitant would receive food and other necessities and, in turn, could provide spiritual advice and counsel to visitors, as the anchorites gained a reputation for wisdom.

We're sort of limited in our knowledge of old myths because of the spread of Christianity in all these regions; in many cases, the meanings of words change to adapt to new religions. The Inuit word for a bodiless soul, for instance - which could be good or evil - is now pretty much just translated as "demon" in the modern Christian context. Additionally, the shamanic traditions of many shamanic cultures have simply died out, sometimes without anything at all being committed to writing.

You should look up some of the kookier heresy, like Catharism. If the Church hadn't successfully murdered them, we'd have all sorts of culturally unique christian groups.

/tg/ on Mythology & Folklore— Elves & Fair Folk

The Sami and Norse have gotten considerably exposed to each other; in fact, there are Norse sagas describing the Sami as "Finnish Wizards". In mythology, they both have a rather similar creatures, like the Stallo and the Troll.

Regarding Sami and the Elves - the important thing to remember is that "elves" in Norse (or any other) mythology is not one unitary and fixed idea. The idea of what an "elf" was changed enormously from place to place and over a period of hundreds of years. Sami shamans may have been pulled into the "elf" mythology in one place but not another; determining the inspiration or influence on myths is not as easy as opening book jackets and seeing which one was written first.

Things like this [elves] probably started as cautionary tales against trusting strangers or as metaphorical explanations for how Jim managed to do something stupid like drown in the local swimming hole.

Actually, most of the tales of encounters with female spirits, fae and other mysterious sexy women (who almost ended poorly for the male) were probably meant to say "you better don't put your dick into the women you met in your travel, son. Or else".

Kind of sex boogiewomen. Instead of scarring you from going in the wood or to make you finish your meal, it's meant to scare you into marital fidelity.

Closer to the Norse homelands, some suggest that the Sami/Lapps and their shamans might have been the original inspiration for elves in Norse mythology. There was some contact there, but the Vikings as such were more interested in raiding southward than venturing into the far north.

/tg/ on Mythology & Folklore— Finnish

Old Finnish pagans believed in magical power of origins and true names. If you said bear's or wolf's true name instead of an euphemism it come for might you.

Likewise in Kalevala the eternal sage Väinämöinen becomes wounded by iron arrow and must look for a healer. When he finds one the healer can't heal him until he tells origin story of iron. Knowing the mythical origins of things gave people power over them. Battles between sages in Kalevala were essentially singing battles of knowledge.

To be precise Joukahainen loses because his songs are just old wives' tales and gossip about the world and utter lies about world's creation. Väinämöinen being the bard supreme breaks out ancient songs of bearded heroes that only the few eldest know and utterly fucks up his opposition.

So the battles would start as battles of singing poems about the nature of the world and possibly escalate to full blown battles of singing songs of great magic if the loser doesn't acknowledge the other his better in knowledge.

finns thought bears came from the sky and could reincarnate if you helped them back to the sky
Welp, anyone up for piling these dead bears onto a catapult and throw them high to the sky so our enemies get a live bear rain?

Actually they just ate the flesh, burned the bones and someone crazy enough went to put the bear's skull on top of a tree so the bear's soul could reach the heavens.

As did the Finns

The bear was an important cult animal in Finnish paganism. The pre-Christian Finns believed the bear to have come from the stars and that it had the ability to reincarnate. After a successful bear hunt, a celebration called *karhunpeijaiset* (literally "celebration of the bear") was arranged in honour of the slain bear. The purpose of the ceremony was to placate the bear and to convince its soul that it was greatly respected by the people. The bear was so feared that some of the songs sung during the ceremony were meant to convince the bear it hadn't been slain by the hunters, rather that it had killed itself by accident.

The people presiding over the ceremony tried to make the bear's soul happy so that the bear would want to reincarnate back into the forest. After the bear's meat was eaten, the bones were buried. The skull, however, which was believed to contain the bear's soul, was placed high upon the branches of an old pine tree. This tree, *kallohonka* (skull pine), was probably a symbol of the world tree and the ceremony was meant to deliver the bear's soul back to the heavens, from where it had originated. From the heavens, the bear would come back and reincarnate to walk the earth.

/tg/ on Mythology & Folklore – Inuit

The Qallupilluk are monsters in Inuit lore that fulfill the function of a bogeyman - even today, they're invoked to keep children from getting too close to the water. They're described as having weird bumpy or greenish skin and waiting under the ice for children to draw near the edge, whereupon they snatch them into their baskets. What happens to them? Only the children know.

The best way to avoid them is to simply stay away from the coast and holes in the ice, but some say you can sometimes hear them knocking on the ice beneath you, or that steam rises from the sea where they're lurking. They may smell like sulfur, too, which might help.

Less malevolent but more mysterious were "shadow people," beings in a sort of parallel world to ours - if you heard a laugh or a shout, or a whisper in the night, it might be the words of the shadow people

crossing over into our world. This only happens when the conditions are right - and if they're TOO right, you might slip over into the other world, or vice versa, and never be seen again.

Still, they aren't necessarily monsters. Maybe there's a whole world of shadows just like our own world. Maybe it's even warmer there. Or maybe shadow people cast shadows of light - that would be pretty strange. Are shadow people actual shadows? If so, maybe they could switch places with yours, or at least hop on for a while. After all, everyone's got multiple souls, so maybe there's room for another...

...and when I say multiple souls, I mean it. I've read about both Inuit and various Siberian cultures conceiving of a person as housing two or more souls of different types. It's impossible to generalize and still be accurate, but a lot of these traditions have a "life-soul" or "breath" that's differentiated from a "name-soul." When you die, your life force leaves forever, but your name-soul sticks around. If someone names a new infant after you, your name-soul might catch on and become the infant's new name-soul. It's not total reincarnation, but perhaps that new person would gain some of your personality or powers as a result.

Some traditions had more souls than two. In fact, some shamanistic traditions held that sickness was basically caused by missing souls - evil spirits or malevolent magicians had stolen some of your souls, and you wouldn't be well again until you had them back. The healer's job, broadly speaking, was to find out where they went and why. Some believed that every part of the body, joints and organs and such, had a sort of mini-soul of its own that could be stolen.

>sickness was basically caused by missing souls

So, Reverse Scientology, then?

Anyway, back to souls. The big Inuit cosmological problem was that, as animists, they believed that everything had a soul, and that those souls were generally no lesser than human souls. If you killed a caribou (which is a synonym for Reindeer, if you didn't know), it was just like killing a person. Not "sort of like," EXACTLY like.

The Inuits had no vegetarians, which meant that they were a society of goddamn murderers, and they feared retribution from the creatures they killed - while animals all had souls, they were also in some sense one big creature; a bear was an individual but was also part of a larger entity of "BEAR."

To prevent yourself from getting mauled/going hungry, you had to settle your affairs with the departed. You had to treat the dead well and with respect; in some places I read you had to go some distance from the camp if you wanted to sew something, because putting a needle in the caribou's hide was bad news for human-caribou relations and you didn't want to bring that back on your people.

In one story, an Inuit hunter is actually invited to the dwelling of an animal's mother whose son the hunter had killed. It wasn't tense at all - the mother animal thanked him for giving her son a respectful death, and they had a party and the hunter left with many wonderful gifts to give to his village. It was ok to kill if you did it the right way.

Anyway, getting back to souls - all living things had them, but there were also bodiless souls that existed sort of on their own. In Inuit lore these were called tuurngait or tarngek - these are the ones I mentioned that could be good, evil, or anything in between, but in modern usage tuurngait generally means "demon."

A shaman or anyone with magic powers could communicate with these invisible spirits. He could use them to heal people, or ask them where the nearest game was to make sure nobody went without food. Alternately, he could be a son of a bitch and compel them to make people sick or possess their bodies if his victims weren't properly warded from them.

A tupilaq wasn't a creature so much as a golem. If you wanted to tear someone a new asshole without getting your own hands dirty, you could make a tupilaq from wood, bone, or other materials (though some say they were also made with parts of dead human children). Once imbued with magic, you would then place the object into the sea, whereupon it would become a monster that sought out your enemy and wreaked vengeance upon him.

The problem was when you sent your monster up against an enemy that had more magical power than you, because then he could seize control of the tupilaq and send it back to get YOU. At this point, you were basically fucked, though it was possible to save yourself by publicly admitting your evil deeds and monster-creating ways; that, apparently, could be enough to get the monster you created off your back. Surviving the wrath of the "public" you admitted this to, however, might be another matter.

The Kilukpuk was a ferocious beast that lived under the ice. It was a monstrous, shaggy thng with two immense tusks it used to bore its way through the frozen ground. The touch of sunlight killed them, hence why you can sometimes find their frozen bodies dead in the surface ice.

Picture related. The Kilukpuk was the story used to explain frozen mammoth carcasses, and the fact that you can find their reasonably fresh bodies, but never see a live one of these massive reatures.

One quote I read about Inuit traditions was "we don't believe; we fear." The Inuits didn't really worship a super Creator or believe in big powerful gods like the Greek pantheon; there were spirits everywhere, and you had to avoid, negotiate with, and sometimes fight them. Living in the polar regions is a hard life - one string of bad luck or rough weather could end in a whole village's starvation. The idea I'm getting is that you didn't worship spirits so much as negotiate, avoid, or - if you had to - fight with them, and there were a lot of spirits and entities out there much more powerful than a man. Maybe that outlook is especially conducive to terrifying monsters?

/tg/ on Mythology & Folklore— Shamanism

"Shaman" and "shamanism" are pretty widespread terms nowadays, referring to everything from American indian medicine men to WoW characters. When European ethnographers first started talking about "shamanism," however, it was in reference to the practices of Siberian peoples; the term has spread to other places by analogy since then, in the same way that we now use "feudalism" to refer to cultures quite distant from the classical locus of feudalism in Europe. Just like feudalism, "shamanism" is a hotly debated term, in large part because it's a generalization of many different religious and cultural practices that have substantial differences from one another.

If I had to define the basic concept of shamanistic traditions, it would be this: There are spirits, and entire supernatural realms of said spirits, and the spirits in these realms are capable of affecting people and animals both positively and negatively. The job of the shaman is to serve as a messenger or intermediary between men and spirits, someone who can communicate with them and travel to their realms to solve problems, gain knowledge, and seek answers.

In a shamanistic culture, the problems of the people are essentially spiritual problems. If game is scarce, it means that the spirits of the game are upset with men and are refusing to allow themselves to be caught, or that the animal spirits are hiding and need to be "found" and coaxed out so game will become plentiful again. If someone is sick, it's because one of (or part of) their soul(s) is missing, or because they have been possessed by a spirit that doesn't belong there, and the shaman needs to sort out the situation. If a woman is having trouble conceiving, it's because the baby's soul hasn't come yet or is lost somewhere, and the shaman needs to find its soul. In all cases it's about restoring balance and putting spirits back where they belong.

D&D players like me may automatically think "DRUID" when they hear about "the balance," but a shaman wasn't a protector of nature for nature's sake - he sought balance because imbalance created sickness and problems.

Of course, a shaman - or one with similar powers - could also put things where they aren't supposed to belong, and from this comes the idea of the evil shaman or the user of "black magic." It's not really that the art or process is any different, it's that the wicked magician upsets the balance instead of trying to maintain it.

So how did you become a shaman? Well, in the Inuit tradition, it was generally something you chose. You might receive visions or other signs "encouraging" you to become a shaman, or at least indicating that you would be a potentially powerful one if you chose that path.

In many Siberian shamanistic cultures, however, it wasn't really an option. You'd get "shaman sickness" - you would get progressively more and more ill, with other symptoms like being haunted by strange dreams, weeping uncontrollably, chanting in your sleep, losing strength or even the ability to stand, or hallucinating while awake. Some sources use "torture" to describe the condition instead of "sickness." The only way to cure yourself was to begin the life of a shaman; only the duties and activities of a shaman would make the sickness go away, which some believed was caused by the souls of other (dead) shamans.

This was a life-long condition; some shamans have been interviewed and stated that if they went for a long period of time without practicing as a shaman, the sickness came back to them.

The Unwilling Shaman could certainly make for an interesting character. Most PCs WANT to do what they do, but a shaman in some cultures might have very little choice in the matter.

The fact that there was a position of "shaman" in the society, however, didn't mean that they alone could communicate with the spiritual realms. "Normal" people might still have encounters with spirits, monsters, animal-people, or other supernatural entities; among the Inuit, a person might "study" to be a shaman but ultimately not become one, yet still be more attuned to the spiritual world than the average person. The shaman was trained to be an intermediary, but he was not the only thing that straddled those worlds.

I keep saying "he" but shamanism was not necessarily a Men Only club. Some cultures had female shamans, and in some traditions women were even considered to be potentially more powerful shamans than men. Just as they straddled the boundary between worlds, they occasionally straddled the border between the sexes; some Chukchi shamans dressed or acted like the opposite of their

biological sex. This starts getting into tricky and technical territory, so I won't go too far out of my depth here, but there's plenty to read about cross-gender shamans and "two-soul" people in many native traditions if you're interested.

Well, shamanism sometimes was accompanied by certain substances. Though people sometimes associate *Amanita muscaria*, aka fly agaric (pic related) with Norse berserkers, that's really just speculation; the only real strong documentation of fly agaric use is by shamans in Siberian cultures (though not all Siberian groups used it). Where it was used, it was usually as a "trance shortcut," a way to communicate and move on a spiritual level apart from the usual drum, dance, and/or chanting rituals. Some RFE groups used it in a non-shamanic capacity as well, in ceremonies or celebrations. The Koryak people are often cited as commonly using agaric, so they might be worth a search if you're interested in learning more.

I've heard of some groups in which the shaman would eat the mushroom and pass it on to others via urine (that is, they would drink his urine, with the psychoactive chemicals in it), but I haven't read data on how common or widespread this particular practice was.

I think many cultures believed in multiple souls. The Chinese did (two souls, one reincarnated and one in the tomb iirc) and I think the Egyptians had five.

/tg/ on Mythology & Folklore— Slavic

An "everyman" kind of hero wouldn't be especially strong: there's a place for big strong heroes, but strength alone can't get you very far.

He knows when to run, and he knows when to fight, and when he fights, he knows how to win. He has some sort of trick, or he knows the enemy's weakness, or he's thought up a clever ruse with which to win. Almost always he has enlisted in some kind of supernatural aid: either with a magical item, or by gaining the help of some supernatural spirit that he's convinced or gained the favor of.

A hero's quest would probably involve gaining the favor or some supernatural entity, getting a magical item, or finding the weakness of his enemy. Any deals with supernatural entities will backfire, unless sufficient trickery is involved on the side of the hero.

The motivations for a hero would usually be "chosen by fate," although it could also be rescuing someone or something. Another motivation is fulfilling a task given to them by an elder (parent or ruler). The hero almost never sets out to gain power or dominion, although he may become more powerful as a result of his quest. He may set out to slay a beast, but only if the beast has wronged him personally. Returning to the status quo is more often the goal than improving his lot.

The hero is almost always humble. He probably won't give an inspiring speech, but he may taunt the enemy as he defeats it.

Look no further than Ded Moroz, Russian Santa and total badass. He delivers presents every year like your average Santa, but it doesn't stop there. He's also a fucking ice wizard with his own granddaughter sidekick who is kind of some sort of ice elemental or something. You know what he does when not delivering presents? He fights fucking Baba Yaga and freezes people to death.

OK, let me start with Domovoi. A few cardinal rules are (still superstitiously obeyed in some households):

- do not shake hands across a house entrance or throw food across a house entrance, domovushka will get angry

- build an izba (hut) only in springtime for good luck. Pagan slavs (and even Christian peasants afterwards) believed that the domovoi is created either out of souls of the trees killed to build a hut, or out of a sacrifice of an animal (pagan slavs would often sacrifice an animal prior to building a hut)
- If a hut burns down but some piece of foundation remained, then the domovoi could be saved and brought to the new hut. This could be done by carrying it in a well-worn lapt' (a sort of a woven shoe or sandal) or on an oven shovel.
- Domovois like it when people sing to them and leave them treats - sweetened milk, honey, mead, bread.
- If a domovoi became angry or felt disrespected he would start by playing annoying tricks and pranks, and graduate to hurting children and animals.
- in some slavic beliefs, domovoi also had a wife and children, so if your son is getting ready to move out and needs to get a hut of your own, you could ask the domovoi to lend one of his children to go with your son.

Warding rituals. Wow, there are so so many. Good and bad places to build dwellings, smithies, banyas (sauna would be the closest equivalent) and stables. Warding rituals for entering the house and leaving the house. Warding rituals for newborns and for the dead. Is there something in specific you'd like to know about? Maybe warding against unclean spirits (nechistaya sila)?

Sirin and Sereda were two "heavenly birds", with the body of a bird and usually chest and head of a woman. They are often depicted together, and although in some myths they bring the dawn and are generally associated with happiness and joy, they are not to be mistaken with the actual goddess of dawn (Zarya Utrennyaya). Ethymologically speaking, Sirin and Sereda are almost certainly descended from myths of sirens and similar creatures, but over time in Slavic mythology the Sirin's song became associated not with evil (the siren's song luring sailors to death) but with goodness and salvation. According to V. Dal', Alkonost and Sirin are sister birds who (in Christianized Slavic tradition) sit on the tree of knowledge in Eden.

Gamayun on the other hand appears to be a somewhat distinct creature from more western slavs. Its song, rather than being an angelic or heavenly song of Alkenost, Sirin/Sereda which inspires higher emotions in people, is a prophetic song, often foretelling calamity.

Warding the newborns and pregnant mothers was seen as incredibly important task with the whole community participating in protecting their lives. Some superstitions (that still exist in rural areas today) include:

- a young mother whose husband is travelling, should wear his belt
- during the last month of pregnancy the mother should not leave the house or its yard, and the fire should always be burning day and night (the fire is one of the most potent wards in Slavic traditions). Failure to do so would result in the unborn baby being stolen by unclean spirits or replaced with a fake (a changeling so to speak)
- The touch of a pregnant woman was considered lucky, and her touch was believed to be able to restore dead trees or bring good harvest, especially apples.
- In pagan Slavic households the birth never happened in the house itself, but in the banya (sauna). The husband would in some traditions stand inside the banya with his wife, and his friends were expected to stand guard outside, the blacksmith would also be invited to stand guard with his hammer (the blacksmith's hammer was another potent warding instrument)
- The umbilical cord would be cut with an axe or an arrowhead if it was a boy, or with a thread if it was a girl. The bellybutton, in some regions, was sown up with the hair of both the mother and the father

- The first thing the newborn should wear had to be the father's old shirt, the second thing the newborn should wear had to be the mother's shirt. Also worth noting that even pagan Slavs had a tradition of baptizing a newborn with water. After baptism, the newborn was raised to the sky, lowered to the ground, shown to the north, south, east and west, and the family hearth. So that all spirits and deities could witness that the child was alive and well.

Couple more things about newborns and protecting them include:

- the name of the child was not revealed for some time and was known only to the closest relatives. Often the child would be simply known by a patronimic or a family name. Even in adulthood, there were different verbal tricks to conceal one's true name. Even in modern Russian, when introducing yourself, you usually say "Menya zovut" (I am called, or They call me) rather than the more direct "Ya" (I am.....). That means that you say that people call you this, not that it is actually your true name. It's an interesting anachronism in any case.

<http://www.bakebooks.com/myth-and-legend-learn-russian-russian-words-and-language--PDF-40265641.html>

This one's more on general cosmology and deific hierarchy <http://www.bakebooks.com/damjan-j-ovsec-slavic-mythology-and-belief-for-example--PDF-40265643.html>

One thing to note, about monsters and nonhumans, is that Russian folklore has a preponderance of warped human forms.

The Rusalka, the leshii, the domovoi, the bannik, the vodyanoi, the vele, the vampire, the werewolf, Koschei the deathless, Baba Yaga, and more, are all basically human in shape. There's some bestial savage monsters, but they're in the minority.

Magic tends to be very primal and simple. Shapeshifting is a big deal, but so are visions, healing touches, speaking with birds and beasts, and weather control.

Gods come in two flavors. 1: a quasi Nordic pantheon with a thunder/lightning god in charge, a World Tree and howling apocalypse wolves. 2: a mysterious and little understood dualistic tradition that might be connected to Zoroastrianism, where you have a god of light and a god of darkness.

The protagonist of the first half of the book is Ivan the Fool and I think it's fair enough to count a depressed creative as a character of Russian Folklore seeing as nearly every Russian story i've ever heard contains one.

Abaddon, Azaello and Behemoth actually come from the Hebrew Bible, older than the New Testament, and given that the the Russian Orthodox church has had such an impact on the psyche of Russians since it's foundation in 988, i think it's fair to say that religious characters and iconography would have filtered into folklore over that period.

A pretty awesome not-Russia fantasy series by the way is Maria Semyonova's "Volkodav" (Wolf Hound). It incorporates a lot of Slavic folklore and it's a great example of a low-fantasy setting to boot. There are I think four books in the series and a spinoff by a different author. Just stay away from the movie adaptation. It's terrible.

Oh we [Russians] took to Western fantasy and myths like duck to water. Arthurian cycle was translated a long time ago and was pretty popular. In late 80s Tolkien was finally translated and oh boy was it ever

huge. I got Russian translation of Hobbit when I was 6, and the LOTR trilogy in 1991 I think. Western fantasy was huge with all my peers. I am pretty sure that Three Hearts and Three Lions by Poul Anderson was translated even earlier than Tolkien's stuff, and I think LeGuin's "Earthsea" books came out in Russian roughly at the same time as LOTR. I don't have my Russian books on me right now, but Zhelazny's Amber Chronicles I think were translated in 1991-1992 and they were hugely popular. Also, the earliest Russian RPGs or RPG-like products copied from the West were those Choose Your Own Adventures books, with flipping pages and stuff. Man there were a LOT of those in Russian.

During the 90s Western-style fantasy (both translated from English and Russian imitations) was the reigning king, but now there is a lot more Slavic-themed fantasy out in Russian, although Western fantasy is still just as popular.

There's an excellent RPG called Mythic Russia if you can find it. It's full to the brim with Russian and Eastern European and Siberian folklore and history and campaign ideas. Sadly, while I have a paper copy, I don't have a scan of it. Maybe /rs/ or torrent can help?

Idea of mage lords, who are also prisoners of their land stems from medieval conception of "allods", and that's how games of the series are named in original too.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allod>

Our spirits and other supernatural creatures are mostly neutral or benevolent. But >Witches are not always of sinister intent, and should therefore be treated with extra caution. If you can't trust them to be evil, you can't trust them at all. Everyone can be either an okay guy-spirit-tree-thing or it may have a really shitty day and try to eat you. There are rare exceptions, mostly undead (stay the fuck out of rusalkas, unless you have fetish for fatal tickling).

Is a very accurate description of Russian folklore in general.

Fantastical creatures are rarely fought, most often hero bargains with them or helps them in some way and gains their favor. In general, "punch problem in the face" should be the last solution (and often the worst one).

If you want a Russian FREEDOM elements try to incorporate those

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novgorod_veche

Like plutocracy city wide elections backed up by street vs street fistfights sponsored by merchant guilds.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaporozhian_Sech

And buffer frontier land where state laws do not apply and raiding is considered a national sport.

I always loved the architecture in Russian fairytale. Those colourful log houses look so pretty.

Get hold of a splat for Ars Magica called "The Dragon and the Bear", it has a shit load of stuff based on authentic Slavic religion and magic.

Hmmm, Not really, there is no Thunder god in charge, Perun is a war and lightning god, but he isn't really the one in charge, the one in charge is Svarozich (Or something like that) a Sun god, Son of the Smith Svarog who made the world and will unmake it when he gets bored, The gods in Slavic myth have several rules, like don't interfere with mortals, The thing is, they continuously do it. never heard of a world tree and howling apocalypse wolves tho. Also in Nordic myth there is no Lightning god in charge either, Odin is there, being the god of fucking everything.

Although his argument was poorly worded, all Indo-European pagan faiths have a lot of similarities. It's almost to the point where they worship the same deities, but reskinned for their climate and culture.

Holy hell, someone else noticed the Iranian connection in Slavic myth. I knew I wasn't crazy!

In Russian folklore heroes are not often brave or strong but resourceful and smart.

If you want to build setting with Russian folklore flavor, you'll need to create vast wilderness with villages and towns laying on trade crossroads.

Endless dark forests with hidden totems of ancient tribes, clearings, lakes, animals that speak like people. Also, there are a lot of mystery. Strange shapes at night, spirits that guard places of power, small invisible creatures that live alongside humans.

And as with most medieval states there is always some war going on.

Teutonic knights from northwest, Tatar-mongols from south and east, feuds between city-states.

Also, magic in Russian folklore is never an academic thing but more of gift of nature, or some divine entity, or powerful artefact.

>In Russian folklore heroes are not often brave or strong but resourceful and smart.

Not always true, as there is the idea of the Bogatyrs who are often very strong, but also resourceful.

They are also solemn, just like almost everything else. One of the signs of stupidity in Russian culture is smiling for no reason, especially the American toothy smile.

On that note, if you're going to have a Not-Russia setting, everyone in it should be superstitious, and these superstitions should be fact. Bird signs, house spirits, rules about crossing rivers and thresholds, appeasing spirits in the forest, following rituals strictly, that kind of stuff.

Motherfucking Koschei the Deathless man.

First, and craftiest, Lich. Motherfucker decides to escape mortality by putting his soul in an item. But just any old box? Hell naw, Koschei don't fuck around. Cunning fucker hid his soul in a needle. A needle you say? That's stupid you say? I'm not done faggot, and neither was Koschei. He put that needle in an egg, and the eggs in a duck, which is in a rabbit, which is in a magical chest, which is under a tree, on a random island in the sea.

You wanna kill Koschei? Find the random island. Dig the box from under the tree. Chase down the rabbit that flees from inside, then chase down the duck that flies from its corpse, fish an egg out of its body, and destroy the needle inside.

>random island

>not Buyan, home of the winds, disappearing at will like the dick supernatural landmass it is
Nigga you done fucked up.

Isn't the only thing anyone knows about Czernobog that you kept him away by spitting curses into a bowl?

Actual Russian here. That is a good start. Russian folklore is very rich in mysticism. There was a comic posted on /co/ about two brothers that go hunt a monster. It reminded me a lot of a darker themed Russian story.

There are some Russian fantasy vidyas (Eador, Rage of Mages/Evil Islands) that I've played that share similar setting elements: namely a planet that has been broken apart in some ancient calamity into

islands that float about in a sort of magical outer space. Said islands and their scarce resources are constantly battled over by immortal mage-lords who besides being generally powerful are the only individuals who can maintain the existence of the islands and prevent them from crumbling into the void.

Ivan the Fool is kind of like the everyman hero. He's not particularly strong or brave, but he can be resourceful and quick thinking. It's usually his foolishness that gets him into trouble and he then has to use his wits, and sometimes bravery, to set something right.

Ivan is portrayed differently in different stories, but the "hero" interpretation is someone who is young, sufficiently brave, and in possession of a magic item. Usually a sword or horse.

Not sure if it's quite what you're looking for, but there's a legend in the Balkans that if you leave your vegetables unharvested for too long, they'll turn. Into vampires.

/tg/ on Non-Euclidean Geometry

Good way to make a non-euclidian part is to make parallel lines that converge - the room that gets smaller, or bigger, as you walk further into it. You can have gravity twist on a relatively straight floor - walking along a hallway, gravity twists about 360 degrees, but as far as the players can tell, the hallway is completely straight.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poincar%C3%A9_disc_model This is a model of a hyperbolic plane. You can see that there are tiled regular heptagons (7 sided figure) in the picture. This CANNOT happen in euclidean geometry. If you put them in a cave structure, and let them map out rooms and stuff, but you take that image from wikipedia and map out your rooms as if the picture i have was tiled flat, (so each room thats the same size would be one of those red circles), then as they map out the rooms theyre in, theyll find that they cant link things the way you describe them on their paper. The hyperbolic plane is only one surface. You could make all kinds of crazy surfaces that looped and knotted on itself, in sketches or on a 3d modeler or whatever, and basically draw rooms on it. Take any weird shape, like a torus (donut shape) and draw your dungeon on it. If that's too in depth for you (it probably is) of a commitment, an easier way would be to just make rooms go to ones their not supposed to. Just draw your rooms with lines connecting doors, not paths, and make those rooms open into each other. (Essentially, making little teleporters between rooms that dont have to be next to each other).

The design of the building has a logic, but it is more like an escher sketch. Some halls do not end, others cannot be retraced without ending up somewhere else..... make up a system and stick to it. The gamers can pick up what clues they can. Perhaps several house designs depending on how aware the players are of the inconsistencies. So to start with it only has the smallest inconsistencies, but as you focus on them you move into a new house design with large flaws. Eventually leading to a design that has major rifts and energy/monster intersections with other realities

Don't make a map of the facility. Use random tables. List the rooms, list connecting tunnels. They leave one room from *roll a dice* the stone hallway and reach the *roll again* torture chamber.

So don't go on and on about how the building they're in is some sort of "non-Euclidian" thing of whatzits full of angles that go nowhere and monstrous unimaginable faces in the stone and inscriptions that make you go mad from reading them and blah de blah. Just add a single detail every now and then. Describe, but never explain.

<http://marathon.bungie.org/spoiler/m2/41.shtml> (In case you don't GET IT, the Marathon games had a very exploitable bit in the engine where you could nest rooms inside eachother, and they wouldn't interact. Most of the time, this was just used to make buildings that had multiple floors, or secret passages under or over maps, or even things like skybridges. However, some quirky mappers did things

like create "4+ dimensional" space where rooms are nested inside eachother at the same heights, creating environments where you could step outside a room, go down a short twisty hallway, go back into the same room, but it'll be different and populated with different things. It's a perfect example of utterly breaking euclidian geometry to make environments that are maddening to look at, let alone navigate and fight in)

Not even. More like they explore normally, but as you fill in whatever paper/board you're using to draw the map, the dimensions of rooms make it such that they start overlapping and shit. That's how it went down in Marathon. If you didn't look at your AutoMap thing, you'd never notice that something is amiss. And then you go and look and GAH ALL THE ROOMS ARE INSIDE EACHOTHER WHERE THE HELL AM I GOING ;~; And then I guess that's where the puzzles can come in, like you need to place the two Identical Key Item Objects in the same space, so you do it over the two rooms resident evil style etc etc etc I dunno just keep lots of different colored markers on hand for each room so that things don't get confused ooc

Another good way to mindfuck your players is to have them enter a room and then hve you describe it in grammatically correct but nonsensical ways. "Gelid mushrooms blither idly in the furiously static wall-space of your inner ear. Turid dumplings of long-dead-dust coagulate into rivers of unseemly grease long best left untouched. She is green. What is your action?"

IIRC the levels were even constructed so they wouldn't double back on eachother like that. And a lot of modern vidya do that too, to save memory. They'll only load in one room at a time, maybe the adjacent ones too. But for the most part, the only part of the world that truly exists in the engine is what the player can feasibly look at. Which presents its own philosophical implications, but still. It's a whole different thing

/tg/ on People— David Thoreau

Thoreau writes that a person does not have a duty actually to eliminate wrongs-- even the most serious wrongs. A person may legitimately have other goals and pursuits. However, at the very least, a person must "wash his hands" of injustice and not be associated with something that is wrong. He asserts, "If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting on another man's shoulders." Thus, it is hypocritical for a person to commend a soldier for refusing to fight in an unjust war while that same person continues to sustain the unjust government that is pursuing the war.

People have a duty not to cause evil, but they do not have a duty to work against evil that they did not cause. Morality does not require that a person work to bring about a "better" world. Rather, a person must simply not make the world any worse. Thoreau's distinction here is linked to his individualism: He argues that each person should live for himself and take advantage of his short time on earth to follow his own interests and goals

/tg/ on People— Lovecraft

See also: /tg/ on Immigrants & Racism

Lovecraft's true strength was as an epistolarian--over the course of his life he wrote more letters than he did stories, with some of those letters filling up one hundred pages, front AND back. His constant correspondence allowed him to establish a vast network of supporters despite basically being a complete shut-in, and it was that trait that allowed his torch to be carried on into the modern era.

Also, Lovecraft, his mother, his father and his Grandfather all died in the same hospital, all of painful and unpleasant illnesses.

/tg/ on People— Stephen King

Stephen King has mentioned meeting Jim Morrison at a random gas station. When asked why he wasn't dead, Morrison replied "Don't believe everything that you read", before driving off.

/tg/ on Psychology

>Milgram Experiment.

>Following orders is a legitimate defense for War Crimes.

>Assuming Orcs and Humans have a similar psychology.

Not according to Nuremberg it isn't.

>Milgram Experiment.

It just showed that people are likely to obey when ordered to do horrible things. It didn't excuse it.

This kind of shit is why psychological and sociological research is mostly garbage. Everything is based on assumptions. This kind of study, where the "right answer" is obvious, is especially likely to be pure garbage. If they got the "wrong answer" they likely would have thrown out the result and tried again, or done something different entirely.

Psychfag here...I find the perspective of "missionary gets old" interesting. statistically speaking, People try kinky shit for a brief time, and tend to rely on the old standby as relationships progress longer. Only if new partners are added/happen does occurrence of "kinky" sex come back. I believe the statistic was that only 20-30% of regular sex-having people engage in what they would define as "kinky" sex.

That's a problem with a lot of scifi/fantasy. Every non-human race can basically be summed up as "like humans except more logical/warlike/stubborn/spiritually connected". The issue is that, when you write them like this, they become caricatures.

We know the apes and the dolphins have 'senses of humour' at least.

As far as we know, for humans at least humour and laughter was extremely important as it allows larger social groups to exist. With manual grooming only two people are involved, if pre-agricultural humans used just grooming for bonding they would spend nearly 50% of their time doing. Whereas laughter lets three or more people bond at once.

laughter also allow to dissipate aggression. Almost all jokes involve putting someone (fictional character or otherwise) in an embarrassing situation, which is an aggressive behavior, and then laughing to show there is no harm done, which procure a feeling of relief since the confrontation didn't happen. That's why an inappropriate joke will make people uncomfortable (if they're intimidated by the joker) or angry (if they consider the joker as an opponent they can defeat).

>It is **weird** that we consider it a **good thing**.

Not really.

It's nice to flex your 'social muscles', test the waters with your audience, entertainment etc.

Any species with any kind of social behavior should be able to at least understand the concept of play.

As that is what it is more or less, just playing with words and language.

>It is **weird** that we consider it a **good thing**.

A sense of humor is a highly beneficial evolutionary trait. Its not weird at all: it exists for practical reasons.

Sure, in the context of HFY, we can imagine crippled, inferior aliens to soothe our ego who are lacking basic mental competencies, but HFY was never supposed to be about realism or believability, only about feeling better about your species.

Our sense of humor exists for a reason, but it's only one possible adaptation. Assuming that intelligences must evolve to be similar to ours because it's "the best adapted" is like a smilodon building an evolutionary ladder where "increasing development inevitably leads to larger teeth."

It [humor] expands the size of a social group, provides lubrication for social situations, reduces stress, etc. All of which are nice, generally beneficial elements. Bigger social groups (as long as its not, say, a pheremone-enforced social order which doesn't permit deviance) are a boon as far as any sort of technological advancement is concerned.

The Milgram Experiment disturbed me when I first read about it, but people have pointed out some flaws in it. One is that the person running the experiment was also a participant.

Another is that it ignores that most of human communication is nonverbal, and this results in a hilarious irony -- the test was intended to demonstrate how its bad that people trust authority figures to do the right thing and not lead people astray, but in reality, it was, in fact, totally harmless to trust the authority figure involved!

If someone does comply with a test like that, they should of course question themselves. At the same time, the unconscious cues of the victims and the authority figure can also be argued to have led the test participants astray -- as a result, the participants' intuition was that things would turn out alright, and they did.

Retests confirmed it though, and also showed that participation does go down the closer to the victim the participant is, with lowest participation being when they had to strap the victim into a chair.

That's interesting, though not exactly a complete rebuttal of it. The victim's cues were set to be about distress as much as possible as that stage was entered, and the authority figure being calm and if necessary stern but still being confident that everything is fine is not necessarily lacking in an actual situation like that. The only thing that might be lacking is tension/aggression.

The glass delusion was an external manifestation of a psychiatric disorder recorded in Europe in the late Middle Ages (15th to 17th centuries). People feared that they were made of glass "and therefore likely to shatter into pieces". One famous early sufferer was King Charles VI of France who refused to allow people to touch him, and wore reinforced clothing to protect himself from accidental "shattering". Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) touches on the subject in the commentary as one of many related manifestations of the same anxiety: "Fear of devils, death, that they shall be so sick, of some such or such disease, ready to tremble at every object, they shall die themselves forthwith, or that some of their dear friends or near allies are certainly dead; imminent danger, loss, disgrace still torment others, &c.; that they are all glass, and therefore will suffer no man to come near them; that they are all cork, as light as feathers; others as heavy as lead; some are afraid their heads will fall off their shoulders, that they have frogs in their bellies, Etc."

Humor also serves to form and express unusual mental connections.

You do also know that humor is a coping mechanism, right?

/tg/ on Secret Societies

>One of the earliest underground killing cults to be documented became known as the Human Leopard Society of Sierra Leone, on the west coast of Africa. The cult focused on the creation of medicines made out of human entrails. As long ago as 1607, a visitor to the region wrote of fierce, man-eating tribes who lived in the interior of the country and dressed as leopards.

>In 1807, coastal Sierra Leone became a British colony, but the leopard societies were so secretive that the authorities didn't get wind of them until 1891. A bill was quickly drafted outlawing the society. It stated: "Many murders have been committed by men so dressed to resemble leopards and armed with a three-pronged knife commonly known as a leopard knife."

>The bill made it a crime to possess a leopard skin shaped to resemble a leopard, a three-pronged knife and an unusual native medicine known as "Borfima". The police were given powers to search for such items without a warrant. The chiefs of the inland tribes were subject to harsh penalties if they failed to report Leopard Society activities. But the human leopards were not intimidated by the might of Britain. In fact it turned out they'd got allies: in 1902 a Human Alligator Society was uncovered, which worked in parallel with the leopards. An extra prohibition was duly added to the bill, outlawing the wearing of alligator skins shaped to resemble the reptiles.

It has been said that no one knows the real meaning of "Mau-Mau" other than a Kikuyu (also Gikuyu) tribesperson and that is because its name, like its origins, is shrouded in ancient African tribal mysteries and covered in blood. On the other hand, some authorities claim that the name was invented by European settlers and applied to the native insurrectionists in Kenya. At any rate, the name was first heard among the white population of Africa in 1948 when police officials in the British colony of Kenya began to receive rumors of strange ceremonies being held late at night in the jungle. These midnight assemblies were said to be bestial rituals that mocked Christian rites and included the eating of human flesh and the drinking of blood. Then came the reports of native people being dragged from their beds at night, being beaten or maimed, and forced to swear oaths of initiation to a secret society. In each case, their assailants were said to be members of a secret society called the Mau-Mau.

The Mau-Mau weapon of choice was the panga, the broad-bladed machete commonly used to hack a path through thick jungle vegetation. The society appeared to favor bloody and brutal attacks as a means of striking fear into the hearts and minds of all who might oppose them, but their choice of enemies seemed often difficult to comprehend. The first man to die at the hand of the Mau-Mau was a Kikuyu chief who spoke out against the secret society that had chosen to resort to savagery and barbarism to achieve its political objectives. In October 1952, a lone white settler was killed and disemboweled. An elderly farmer was found dead in November; in January 1953, two men who worked a farm as partners were discovered murdered by the Mau-Mau. A vicious attack on January 24, 1953, claimed the Rucks, a family of English heritage, who had always been regarded as dealing with their black employees in a fair-minded and charitable manner, even to the extent of supporting a clinic at their own expense. The bodies of the husband, wife, and their six-year-old son were found so hacked and ripped as to be nearly unrecognizable as human beings.

Later it was learned that native men and women who had been in the Rucks' employ for many years had been foremost in the slaughter of the English family. What seemed particularly insidious to the white population was discovering to their horror that employees who had been loyal to them for decades were suddenly rising up and butchering them without warning. When the Mau-Mau demanded that

blood be shed, long-standing associations and friendships between black and white were no longer considered something of value.

The citizens of Paris awoke one morning in 1622 to find that their city had been ornamented with posters which the Brethren of the Rosy Cross (Rosicrucians) had scattered to announce that their secret order was now moving among the Parisians to save them from the error of death. In the seventeenth century, the Rosicrucians were rumored to have accomplished the transmutation of metals, the means of prolonging life, the knowledge to see and to hear what was occurring in distant places, and the ability to detect secret and hidden objects.

Such announcements were met with great excitement. It was a time of reformation and enlightenment, and all of Europe was looking forward to the new world that the alchemists and magicians promised was about to emerge from the ashes of the old. And leading such a movement of a new appreciation of the arts and sciences and humankind's true place in the universe was the Illumined Father and Brother Christian Rosencreutz (1378–1484), a brilliant magus, who at the age of 16 had already gained secret wisdom teachings from the sages of Arabia and the Holy Land.

When Rosencreutz returned to Germany circa 1450, he became a recluse, for he could see that Europe was not yet ready for the complete reformation which he so yearned to present to it. For one thing, he claimed to have acquired the fabled philosopher's stone, which enabled him to produce all the gold and precious gems necessary to allow him to build a house where he could live peacefully and well. To share the power of the legendary stone of transmutation with the unwise, the worldly, and the greedy would be disastrous. Quietly, Rosencreutz accepted only a handful of carefully evaluated students to whom he imparted the knowledge that he had acquired in ancient Egypt and the connection that he had made with the mystery schools and the esoteric teachings of great masters. He was particularly enthusiastic about telling his students about Pharaoh Amenhotep and the monotheistic view of one God. At first there were only three disciples in attendance; then later, eight brothers, including Rosencreutz himself, swore to uphold the following precepts:

They would not profess any creed but the goal of healing the sick without reward; They would affect no particular style of clothing;

They would meet once each year in the House of the Sainted Spirit; Each brother would carefully choose his own successor;

The letters "R.C." would serve as their only seal and character;

The Brotherhood would remain secret for 100 years.

Rosencreutz died in 1484 at the age of 106. Although Rosencreutz had been buried in secret, one of the brothers happened by chance to discover his burial chamber and read the promise inscribed above the entrance that Rosencreutz would return in 126 years. The discovery of the illumined father's prediction inspired the brothers to work in earnest to spread the teachings of Christian Rosencreutz throughout the world.

No organized cult of killers has ever murdered as many people as the Thuggee. In the 1830s this Indian secret society strangled upward of 30,000 native people and travelers as a sacrifice to their goddess Kali, the "Dark Mother," the Hindu Triple Goddess of creation, preservation, and destruction. The name Thuggee comes from the Sanskrit sthaga, "deceiver."

Although the Thuggee probably originated sometime in the sixteenth century, they were not uncovered by British authorities until about 1812. Great Britain was beginning to expand its territories in India, and the British administrators were becoming increasingly alarmed by reports of bands of stranglers that were roving the countryside murdering travelers. At first there appeared to be no connection between the bizarre killings, but then the bodies of 50 victims were found hidden in a series of wells in the Ganges area. Such large-scale mass murder could not have been kept secret for so long unless special

pains had been taken to dispose of the victims' corpses. Examination of the bodies revealed that the murderers had broken all joints of their victims' limbs to speed up the process of decomposition and to prevent the swelling of the graves that would attract scavenging jackals and other wild animals. Such evidence convinced the authorities that they were dealing with one secret society, the Thuggee. The murderous craft of the Thuggee was hereditary. Its practitioners were trained from earliest childhood to murder by the quick, quiet method of a strong cloth noose tightened about the neck of their victims. This weapon, the "Rumal," was worn knotted about the waist of each member of the Thuggee.

The Thuggee gloried in silent and efficient acts of murder above any other earthly accomplishment, and they traveled often in the guise of traders, pilgrims, and even as soldiers marching to or from service. On occasion, the more flamboyant would pretend to be a rajah with a large retinue of followers. Each band of Thuggee had a small unit of scouts and inveiglers who would loiter about hotels and market places gaining information regarding travelers and the weight of their coin purses. The inveiglers posed as travelers headed for the same destination as their intended victims. They would worm themselves into the confidences of their prey, pleading the old adage of safety in numbers.

The mass slaughters of large groups of merchants and travelers were usually committed when all were encamped. Working in groups of three, one Thuggee would loop the Rumal around the victim's neck, another would press his head forward, and the third would grab his legs and throw him to the ground. In the rare instance when an intended victim escaped the nooses in the death area, he would run into scouts posted at the edge of the jungle. One hundred percent mortality of their victims was the goal of the Thuggee.

/tg/ on Space

BPM 37093 is a dying white dwarf star about 50 light years away from us. She's roughly the size of our moon, and is made up of 90% crystallized carbon, more commonly known as diamond. It is a purified diamond the size of our moon. Her name is "Lucy" after the hit Beatles song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds"

There is a nebula in our galaxy made up of pure ethynol. That's right, a celestial body composed of frat party grade alcohol. Imagine the joy in a space dwarf's eyes...

I once made a spider race on Spore. The second I got to space stage literally every adjacent civilization to me declared war.

Space racism is the worst ;_;

Temperature gets weird at very low pressures. The Sun's corona for example (the seemingly empty region above the surface) is a few million degrees warm, but since it's nearly vacuum the actual energy density per cubic meter, and the amount of heat and light radiated out from it, is next to nothing compared to the merely 5000 C warm surface.

/tg/ on Starships

I mean from the sounds of it, each commanding officer needs to have a physics degree to make informed decisions about war in space.

You can definitely have the thing at near-zero emissions, moving completely on inertia, until it's so close to the target that it doesn't matter that you found the thing. But that would kind of make it more of a mine than a missile.

All you need to do is have a material that does not transfer heat well (aerogel for example) between the cool exterior of the ship and your heat sink.

If you can get the temperature of the projectile below 3 Kelvin, it's completely masked by the cosmic microwave background radiation. Which means it'd be undetectable by at least infrared, which is presumably how you'd detect heat

Which means, no government in their right minds would probably never allow spaceships to be leased to anything but trusted corporations, and probably never to individuals, and all ships would have to come standard issue with self destruct devices, as well as the standard issue of somehow protecting a planet against rigne planetoids...

I don't care how the Starship Enterprise or the Battlestar Galactica is laid out. With a scientifically accurate rocket, the direction of "down" will be in the same direction that the rocket exhaust is shooting. In other words, a spacecraft will have the general internal arrangement of a skyscraper, not that of a passenger airplane. The floors will be set perpendicular to the axis of thrust, and "up" will be the direction the spacecraft is thrusting.

When deep space exploration ramps up, it'll be the corporations that name everything, the IBM Stellar Sphere, the Microsoft Galaxy, Planet Starbucks.).

/tg/ on Swamps & Swamp Cultures

Well if they're lizard folk then they don't mind getting wet. Otherwise you definitely want to build houses on wooden supports above the water line [in a swamp].

you need some way to get around and carry stuff, so boats. Even lizardmen probably need to keep things dry.

You won't be too worried about getting dirty, matter of fact that might wind up killing your immune system.

I live in southern Louisiana. While I'm not a Cajun myself, I have friends who are. They get by reliably. Lots of small game in the swamp, and lots of fishing. Fishing is pretty huge. And fowl hunting in the appropriate seasons. They can get by on what they hunt or trap themselves, really, though trade with the outside world is pretty common. I think there's a show on Discover Channel/Netflix about cajuns during Gator Season. Probably a good starting point.

Berlin is on a swamp. Hell, the name comes from a word for "swamp". Tall/heavy buildings are generally a bad idea because they fucking sink

swamps can have dry patches...

and there'll be plenty of bog iron to make into iron and steel

and plenty of trees for coal production

and if we use skyrim as a reference - then even cold mountainous regions can have swampy areas (the area between windhelm and the rift)

by that logic the black marshes will have dry areas too - and even the occasional hill... that can be dug into, or built upon

heck, in DORF FORTRESS it was possible to mine down through aquifers - and its equally possible IRL... you just need to pump out water

>historic fun fact: some of the first industrial steam engines were used to run water pumps to keep mines in england dry

Alot of clothing would be made from plant materials. Tons of small game and fishing to be done. Stilt housing would be used. Swamps have some of the freshest water because moss filters it rather well. Tons of natural edibles like cranberrys and cattails. Swamps are quite easy to live in if you dont mind getting wet and know what to eat.

Swamps are crawling with life, agriculture is possible with moving fields, settign up barriers draining a section of land planting in the exposes and very nutricios soil, harvesting, letting water back in and then moving on.

Heavy reliance on rubber trees for waterproofing footwear.

So far, I've got stilts, canoes, and low, light buildings. Presumably made of wood or clay.

heck, there's a reason that Holland is known as "Nedderland" - Nedder means lower... as in bellow surface level. they drained marshes and swamps to increase agriculture areas.

>When I first came here, this was all swamp. Everyone said I was daft to build a castle on a swamp, but I built in all the same, just to show them. It sank into the swamp. So I built a second one. That sank into the swamp. So I built a third. That burned down, fell over, then sank into the swamp. But the fourth one stayed up. And that's what you're going to get, Lad, the strongest castle in all of England.

Herding dugongs, harvesting tubers, roots, vines, pineapples, geoducks, and farming crayfish.

Bayou folk are a good place to start on the simple harsh end, on the other end of the spectrum look at Venice and Aztec Mexico city for inspiration .

either way - the point is that its possible to drain large tracts of lands to make it viable agriculture land would make for nice potential plot points between oldschool natives wanting to preserve the marshes - and more industrious imperial-friendly factions

Oh yeah! The.. Aztec? Floating farms..

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinampas>.

Hmm.. maybe even floatign citys, rasts cobbled together, ans staked into the ground then pushed on when resources need to recover.

Also makes them nightmares to attack, armoured footmen and mounted knights? meet quicksand, bottomeless holes and guard alligators/snake catapults.

You'd be looking at hunting, fishing, and subsistence farming. Most crops will be hardy vines or bushes, probably fruits and berries. Hunting and fishing will be the main source of food. Deer, rabbit, racoon, armadillo, nutria (tastes horrible but they breed fast), duck, goose, gator, any kind of freshwater fish, most kinds of shallow-water saltwater fish if they're near a coast, anything that can be hunted from the comfort of a boat.

Culturally, they're going to be somewhat insular, staying to their own communities a lot, but ridiculously friendly once you open a dialogue.

They're always eager to ask someone to visit their family's home (most families live in one building or a series of close-together buildings) for dinner, which is always a communal event usually involving large amounts of food being prepped and cooked on the spot. Food is a VERY big thing with them, and they take pride in family recipes and the flavors they can evoke from the simplest foods. Many have their own spice gardens with dazzling arrays of scents and flavors (that may just be a southerner thing) They're very giving, always glad to share some leftovers (seriously, i never leave my friend Jon's place without him talking me into taking a box of homemade jerky or venison. He'd have me take a whole side of venison if i had a freezer big enough) and they're always eager to help anyone who appears to need it. Whether it's building a building, digging a ditch, hauling in a day's catch, or tracking down a thief, the entire community can be expected to come together to assist, even assisting outsiders. They have a strong sense of 'we only get by because we're all friends'.

They tend to be master boat-builders. They won't build you anything ridiculously big or ostentatious, but they can build a small, fast, flatbottom craft that maneuvers in the swamps almost as well as the fish themselves. It'll be utilitarian, but very efficient at what it does. And usually built by hand (even the all-metal boats they use today). Simple though their tech may appear, they are by no means stupid.

Anything that can give them an edge is fair game, and many have developed their own complex winch systems of pulleys to help move 800 pound gator carcasses without assistance.

They're big on tradition, and many hunting techniques and other facets of life have remained unchanged for the last 200 years in the cajun swamps.

Despite their love of hunting, they're often animal lovers and you can guarantee that most families will have a dog or four on hand to help with hunting, home protection, and general companionship.

Clubs, Spears and Javelins as cultural weapons.

Keeps shit at a distance and/or keeps useful skins as intact as possible.

Cobblers and wise folk are reveres, cause foot-rot will kill you dead it will.

A lot of olden time major cities were build near rivers, oceans, cliffs and swamps. Access to water is vital, and of course, cliffs are attractive for an added fortress. Belgrade got fucked a lot in history because of its proximity near the Danube and the Sava.

I also recall that the Egyptians had crocodile leather armour. I think that would be perfect for swamp folk.

Washington DC was built on a swamp simply for the challenge. New Orleans was built in a depression in the middle of a swamp because it granted tactical and economic control over the mouth of the mississippi river, access to the gulf of Mexico, and access to a sizable lake.

Like I said earlier, swamp-folk will take any tech advantage they can get. If your world's tech accounts for crossbows, swampers will probably have them, either by trade or by manufacture.

>I also recall that the Egyptians had crocodile leather armour. I think that would be perfect for swamp folk.

depends on the nature of the swamps. If they're hot, humid pressure cookers like Southern louisiana, then there's no way that'd work. Too hard to swim in in an emergency, too hot during the summer (heat stroke is a very real issue), and the scent of the preserved hide would tip off gators and other animals that you're close. Maybe in a colder climate swamp or strictly as a town-guard thing.

Swamp inhabitants would benefit greatly from leather that's water resistant, but I can't find anything on it. Just that they would have to oil it.

Rome was originally built on swampland. Make of that as you will.

Fishing, houses on stilts/tall foundations, clothing that doesn't get ruined by being wet and likely a lot of waterproof clothing. Not very metal rich unless they trade with the outside a lot, so expect more spears and bows than anything weapon-wise, boiled leather and hide for armor. Everyone who's anyone knows how to swim because it's probably vital to survival, and knows how to do it well. Rice and other plants that grow in swamps would be harvested for food, probably a (negligible by most game stats) resistance to diseases due to the nature of their lifestyle. Probably more accustomed to amphibians and sea life than most land-based cultures, but only for species living in rivers and bogs. Boats like rafts, canoes and gondolas are likely to be in no short supply.

You want a swamp-based culture that didn't turn hillbilly? Look up the Acadians of Canada's East coast

There's agriculture that swamps can sustain (rice paddies & old-fashioned cranberry farms are in swamps, for example), as is animal husbandry in addition to hunting/foraging, so you can go any of those three routes or a combination of them.

You forgot to mention an important factor.

Is it a hot swamp or a cold swamp, or temperate? Are you imagining the hot, muggy marshes of Louisiana or the freezing, clammy fens that used to be so common in Europe but have been driven to extinction with the industrial revolution?

Or the doublehot, flooded swamps you get in India/Brazil/Indochina

Definitely. A lot of herbalism too, medicinal plants and swamps seem to be madly in love with one another.

Good point. Lots of unusual plantlife in swamps, and most of it useful in one way or another. And the natives will always find uses for everything. Simple herbal remedies, unusual or uncomfortable substitutes for things outsiders might think common but are unavailable in the swamps, and things that are just plain silly but seem to work.

Swamps have very poor soil so it's not good for agriculture, this is why carnivorous plants evolve in swamps.

As for a floating city, Venice of course.

Swamps have very fertile soil if I'm not mistaken, that's why swamps are usually drained...farmland

indeed. marshy ground and swampland is incredibly potent farmland once the water is drained away due to all the organic detritus that settles down and builds up over time.

Might it be wise to use an irrigation system to flood the plots in between seasons, similar to the Nile?

Southeast Asian feels like a good reference point. Straw hats, rice paddies, that whole deal.

Whoever asked, I was planning on making it a muggy, hot, marshy area, with some hunting and fishing further in the swamp.

Of course, I was also planning on having them be a developed, culturally advanced society, so working that out without any large, heavy buildings is going to be an interesting challenge.

I'd imagine they would value ascetism, or at least frugalism, because material possessions would be unwieldy, perishable, and mostly pointless.

Well that's the thing I'm wondering. Build a dam, drain the water out, and flood in between seasons so the fertile residue can settle and fertilize the soil. Soil, after all, doesn't stay fertile forever.

IIRC one of the main methods for mass-harvesting cranberries is to flood the field, letting all the ripe berries snap off and float with the current then accumulate in a pool to be scooped up. You could play off of that, alternating what water source and byproducts you flooded a field with to re-fertilize the area.

>not very metal rich

Dunno about the rest of the world, but medieval finns got most of their iron from swamps actually

As for clothing- I'm imagining light-ish, woven clothing with thick rubber boots.

Full sleeved shirts and coats, nothing too swishy.

Muted tones, to help them hunt.

Someone mentioned spears and bows. Those seem like the most useful weapons.

Pronged light spears for frog hunting

>I ask because I've never actually been near a swamp and trying to google any variation of swamp culture/people/civilisation always ends up as HILLBILLIES LOL

...Have you actually tried casting aside cultural prejudices to research life in the Bayou and Florida swamps or did you dismiss every last bit of it as "LOL HILLBILLIES"?

Well if they have access to iron, they WILL use metal armor of sorts. I would suspect that a light suit made of leather and steel would be ideal. A cuirass, a helmet, pauldrons perhaps. Shin armor. Everything else would most likely be leather. Or leather armor with metal scales, similar to the armor of Greek Hoplites.

Swamp iron is very expensive and time consuming to make (you need to make charcoal first), so they probably won't be making much armour.

Yes, poisoned weapons, arrows, horrible traps would be the norm. The deadly swamp environment itself (depending on how far you want to make it) can be an opponent in itself. You could look into the bog devils in A Song of Ice and Fire for some inspiration. They essentially hold a chokepoint halfway through a continent and no one has ever successfully marched a hostile army through their territory.

>So metal would mostly be used for weapons, I take it.

And not even the whole weapon. You'll see it mostly as spear-heads, arrow-heads, knife-blades, and axe-heads. Too precious to waste on large weapons that may not be all that effective, or only have one use and can't be pressed into service as tools.

> It has been suggested the fabric layers were bonded using animal glue. Although strong, this is water soluble therefore the armour would need protection against rain or sweat if this was indeed used.

"As well as its practical use as a hunting weapon, it [the atlatl] may also have had social effects. John Whittaker, an anthropologist at Grinnell College, Iowa, suggests the device was a social equaliser in that *it requires skill rather than muscle power alone*. Thus women and children would have been able to participate in hunting"

I heard that swamp gas can be dangerous.

Only problem is that, well, it's a gas.

I suppose you could just heap some rotten plant matter inside a hollowed out tree and set that on fire.

Depending on how explosive it is, precisely.

Soil, Plant refuse, Corpses and Excrement makes saltpeter mounds.

Charcoal is easily attained, and sulfur can be found in areas rich in natural gas.

>Olmec Diet

A nearby garden was used for medicinal and cooking herbs and for smaller crops such as the domesticated sunflower. Fruit trees, such as avocado or cacao, were likely available nearby. Although the river banks were used to plant crops between flooding periods, the Olmecs also likely practiced swidden (or slash-and-burn) agriculture to clear the forests and shrubs, and to provide new fields once the old fields were exhausted.[83] Fields were located outside the village, and were used for maize, beans, squash, manioc, sweet potato, as well as cotton. Based on archaeological studies of two villages in the Tuxtla Mountains, it is known that maize cultivation became increasingly important to the Olmec over time, although the diet remained fairly diverse.[84]

The fruits and vegetables were supplemented with fish, turtle, snake, and mollusks from the nearby rivers, and crabs and shellfish in the coastal areas. Birds were available as food sources, as were game including peccary, opossum, raccoon, rabbit, and in particular, deer.[85] Despite the wide range of hunting and fishing available, midden surveys in San Lorenzo have found that the domesticated dog was the single most plentiful source of animal protein.[86]"

If they're anything like Cajuns, leadership is less important. Each family looks to its matriarch and patriarch (Grampa/Paw and Gramma/Nanna/Maw). Trying to control groups of families is like herding herds of cats. They're going to do exactly what needs to be done as best they understand it, and you'd best phrase any advice you have as helpful suggestions because you do NOT want to insinuate that they don't know what they're doing. They do. They don't need a command structure, and they actually work best without them. If you absolutely need to settle a dispute, you take it to the family elders. If they're deadlocked or Paw can't make up his mind, you call in the family elders of the next closest family to help arbitrate over dinner. When it's done it's done, and everyone shuts their mouth and goes their separate ways.

Agriculture in a swamp is difficult, mainly due to all the water. So hunter-gatherer societies are probably the easiest.

That being said, there's two broad categories to make agriculture work. You either

A) Drain the land - this requires a lot of energy. The Dutch harnessed windmills for this mainly.

B) Breed crops that thrive in lots of water. Rice is a good example of a crop that thrives in a water-rich environment.

Likely you'd also see a lot of innovations that make getting around a swamp practical. Canoes or barges for long journeys are a must, as well as some sort of solid boot (likely made from leather) or alternately a raised platform shoe (maybe made from wood).

Also, swamps vary pretty widely the world over, so having a clear picture of the sort of swamp will vastly affect the sort of civilization you put in. You could have anything from marshy peat bogs to silent forests of forbidding mangroves. Swamps are a lot of fun and really an underrated sort of environment for an adventure. There's a lot of environmental hazards that are more subtle than a barren desert or tundra.

/tg/ on Swords & Knives

Swords are not particularly heavy. Single handed swords are usually between 2-3 pounds, and even two handed swords are usually between 3-4 pounds. Some two handed swords weight eight or more pounds (these were called greatswords - see pic), but they were used more like polearms than swords, and weren't particularly common.

The Katana had an advantage as a slashing weapon due to its curve, but the relatively blunt point made it useless as a piercing weapon and thus limited its effectiveness against armored opponents. And the method of manufacture is remarkable, if only in that it managed to produce swords of reasonable-to-high quality given the horribly shitty nature of the iron ores to be found in Japan.

In this picture you can see a man holding the blade half-way down the hilt; this is called "half-swording," and provides greater control and precision at the cost of reach. This is especially important to note with Longswords- ever noticed how many of them have a very long non-sharpened area in front of the blade (the Ricasso?) That was meant for gripping, for half-sword technique.

Assuming a simple standard high carbon steel you first normalise the blade (removing residual stress, lessening the risk of it warping or shattering when you quench it) To do this heat it, IIRC to perhaps 600-700 C, and then let it cool slowly.

Second step is hardening. First heat to about 750C, let it sit there for a short period of time (this changes the crystalline lattice in the steel to one called austenite, only asutenite can be hardened the way we want to). Then quench it, vegetable oil probably works ok (this turns the austenite into martensite, the hardened form of steel).

As-quenched the sword will most likely be hideously brittle. Drop it and it may shatter like glass. To fix this you anneal the sword, which trades a little bit of hardness for a lot of toughness. To anneal the sword, keep it at a few hundred C for a few minutes or so.

Most steels sued for swords will have similar demands on the heat treat, but more highly alloyed variants can be drastically different.

If you have to stick with a sword for whatever reason, I could see a falcata/kopis kind of thing being fairly useful, together with a shield. You're not going to fence much against an animalistic enemy, so the lack of a straight point/two edges isn't that big of a deal. In return you get a sword that excels at causing deep and, more importantly, very disabling wounds, even against something that would have a thick hide and strong bones.

Later period La Tene (southern european, gaulish france/southern germany, possibly a little into britain and spain) - blades transition from bronze-working to iron-working.

hilts remain cast in bronze, often in anthromorphic shapes

later La Tene period still, hilts start to become organic components.

At this point, La Tene culture is being infringed by the early Roman and lombardian cultures of the south pressing north, who proceed to copy and modify the design of these iron swords for their own forces

>the best type of sword for a duel against a similarly armed opponent

Depends on the armour both fighters are using. If neither fighter is wearing any armour, you should probably go for something relatively light and narrow. Keep your distance and go for stabs instead of slashes.

trade routes slowly become more precarious through western europe, making the sword blades produced in locations such as Noricum rise in value.

Swords become a status symbol, a mark of wealth and power, and are hilted accordingly, as marks of a warlord's power and riches.

around this time there comes a rise in popularity of single-edged weapons too, extremely long knives, or slightly short swords, under the name seax or sax. particularly popular with germanic tribes who are migrating westwards and settling in the british isles.

their love of the single-edged long knife would eventually lead to their culture's name - the Saxons
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into the 7th C, we start to see the rise of what're known as "viking" swords. Most arent actually viking, however - many are saxon, many more are southern european. Swords slowly fall in rarity, becoming more common as time passes and trade, by river and ship and by road improves.

Many blades are produced in the same regions of central europe as in the roman age, the area once known as Noricum has now become known as Passau and Solingen. Further along the rhine, at least one Frankish monstic settlement seem to have established trade routes through the holy land and into persia and india, where small supplies of a remarkable steel are sourced from - this homogeneous crucible steel producing some exceptionally high-quality swords.

many of the viking age swords consist of a 3-peice hilt, a lower guard (closest to the blade), and an upper guard, with a the pommel riveted onto the upper guard.

Often spirals of wire are used to decorate the junction between these parts. Later on, the parts are merged into a single pommel, but the wire grooves remain in place, as a fashionable relic of a forgotten production method.

>Oh, also, would there ever be a bonus in just having one edge, compared to two?

Production is one. Multiple Chinese dynasty, with their massive armies, managed to equip almost every footsoldier with a dao, to the point that it was synonymous as the soldier's sword, as opposed to the Jian which was something of the upper crust's sticker.

through the 8th-10th centuries, single-edged swords also continue in popularity, serving alongside 2-edged arms. approximately 40% of viking swords found in archaeological contexts are infact single-edged weapons.

Plate was only common for a fairly brief period in Europe so you had the development of specialized anti-plate weaponry. For the rest of the world big chopping blades were still plenty acceptable

there's marginal difference in ease of prduction between a single and double edged weapon really. Both take a lot of time and work. The single-edged weapon being a peasant's tool is just one of the myths surrounding the weapons.

Somewhere around the 10th Century there is a sudden change in weapon design that sweeps over Europe. It doesn't seem to be technological in basis, but in fact may well be a shift in the philosophy and thinking of the medieval mind. There are research theories that this may in fact be the shift in Christian thought - that numbers have philosophical meanings, and that therefore, numerical and geometrical proportions are influencing swords, just as they influence the shape and design of cathedrals. Maybe it's just fashion. Maybe it's just one of those changes as society shifts. However, from the 10th C we see a distinctly different weapon start to appear - the medieval sword.

The impetus of the longsword was its usefulness in defence to fend off multiple enemies and in offence to deliver a quick attack at longer range. Longswords developed before plate armour.

>The single-edged weapon being a peasant's tool is just one of the myths surrounding the weapons.

Except I didn't say it was a peasant's weapon and what I said did happen to China. During the Han dynasty, ancestors of the Dao blades (pictured) were initially used only by cavalrymen for its focus on slashing. Sooner, it became a preferred choice for infantrymen. By the Tang dynasty, it was standard issue & doctrine, with different bladeforms branching off which either focused on infantry or cavalry usage.

Europeans folded steel, and were in fact folding steel close on 500 years before the Japanese first created iron.

It would be totally redundant.

Furthermore, folding steel has absolutely nothing to do with sharpness, and sharpness has very little to do with how good a blade is.

Sharpness is determined by edge geometry, be it steel, shit steel, iron, bronze, or flint. In fact, flint or obsidian are far sharper than steel.

Sharpness in cutting performance is determined more by the edge angle - a V shape of the sides intersecting, is obviously sharper than a U shape with a more obtuse angle. But it's also determined by how thick the blade is: a blade 1.2mm thick but relatively blunt will cut far better than a blade 5mm thick but razor-sharp.

All a razor-sharp edge offers is a fine edge that will be damaged on impact, something that the Europeans appreciated because their weapons were more likely to be used on soldiers in armour, so they adopted a more durable edge.

Think of it as the difference between a scalpel, and a chisel. Both can easily take your finger off. But one is able to go through inches of wood, driven by a mallet, the other would break.

That's the difference between different types of sharpness - not how well it cuts, but how durable the blade is.

There were swords for hunting boars, too. pic related it's a German Sauschwert around 1520

Rapiers were invented for a different period of time, when armors were ditched because of the proliferation of guns, meaning what decided a fight was speed and mobility.

But, in a straight up fight, not only does the longsword have more versatility, you can wield it with 2 hands allowing for more strength in the blow, and the rapier simply cannot withstand such a blow.

Unless the guy with the rapier has god-like reflexes and manages to shaft the opponent first (which would happen with any other weapon), longsword wins.

Blocking with either weapon is largely pointless. The long sword isn't going to be able to effectively parry the rapier and the rapier can't parry the longsword

The problem with the rapier vs the Longsword is that even if the rapier strikes first, he needs to be able to defend against the after blow. And with the force of the Longsword I just don't see that happening very.

The Rapier is going to score a beautiful thrust to the chest, Return to a guard to parry, and watch as the longsword ploughs through and bury itself in his arm or shoulder.

>Rapiers were invented for a different period of time, when armors were ditched because of the proliferation of guns, meaning what decided a fight was speed and mobility.

In somewhat related trivia, this also eventually led to civilian duels becoming incredibly lethal. With more "traditional", heavier/broader blades it was usually fairly possible to just fight until either first blood or surrender and have even the loser walk away in fairly good condition.

But over time dueling blades like the rapier became ever thinner and longer, with the fighting styles adapting to become more focused on the thrust. The deep puncture wounds caused by this were often quite lethal but not very disabling, leading to duels going on far past the point of no return for both combatants. Essentially it turned to a fancier version of the old saying about knife-fights: The loser dies on the spot, the winner dies on the way to the doctor.

And there was a time that the longsword was used for dueling. Hell most of the old German fight houses specialized in dueling.

That's one reason that Fiore states in his manuals that everything he teaches he has seen done at least twice, or done himself on the battlefield. An obvious example is that the forehead cuts are almost completely passed over.

DUDE! A sword is a long knife. Making a sword isn't a matter of coming up with the idea, it's just a matter of metallurgy.

Regarding spears, let's not forget they were the main melee weapon everywhere in the world, not just swamps.

Swords were never true weapons of war, they were just fancy shit for nobles; their only uses were for cavalry and as backups for soldiers if the fighting got too close for effective use of their spears.

> Always wondered, what's up with the wavy-blade dagger designs?

A straight blade can "seal up" the wound behind it as the length of the blade fills in the wound and the blade's edges meet those of the wound, and the bleeding is limited so long as the blade is not withdrawn.

A wave-edged blade is irregular, and thus there is no "seal", so the blood flows freely even with the blade in place.

First a Tlingit copper knife. These were originally made from chunks of native copper using essentially neolithic technology, cutting and grinding mostly, with perhaps a light touch of cold hammering. As trade was established with Europeans and the European colonies, smelted copper became the most common material.

Somewhat interestingly, while the basic manufacturing methods remained, they [the Inuit] also started importing solder, which they learned to use with great skill to attach reinforcing ribs to the blades (with some copper pins to help the solder).

Right now, the generally agreed upon figure is 21 feet. An armed man within 21 feet can hit you before you shoot him.

If that man can run three times as fast, he's got probably 60 feet of 'kill radius'.

That doesn't account for enhancements to reaction time, admittedly, but then you get into bullet-blocking and shit.

/tg/ on Warfare & the Military

Most soldiers are not the brown-nosing type. But... most generals are. The meyers briggs test they take pretty much puts them all in the same personality type. Which is guys who dont want to rock the boat.

My favourite example of how these massive juggernaught vessels are obsolete comes from some wargames the US Military ran based in the Strait of Hormuz in the 2000s. The US General playing the opfor decided to field dozens of small dinghys running on outboard motors, crewed with a handful of guys with RPGs. They didn't show up on radar, could hide in reeds, were almost impossible to target, and if any of the Huge Murder Ships came near shore they swarmed out and mobbed them. There was no real counter as you could only detect them visually, they were a tiny fraction of the cost, and could rapidly sink a ship. The brass got all pissed off with him when he trashed the guy playing the Navy, and forced him to rerun the exercise but to play 'fair'.

>all electronics fried

A fair portion of military-grade electronics are shielded against EMP and there are measures to protect ordinary stuff against it.

>Soldiers... soldiers often -are- like that, even in modern times.

Helps you deal with all the death and killing certainly. It's a lot easier for one's mental health to make a joke about the guy flying 20 metres up in the air after a drone strike, than to dwell on the fact that the guy probably had a family to feed and had his own aspirations, dreams and fears.

>I just got to thinking about it because I re-watched GoT recently, and the soldiers sitting around the fire raving and laughing about people dying at the Red Wedding made them seem like sociopaths.

People are mean in war. Specially victorious soldiers.

>the soldiers sitting around the fire raving and laughing about people dying at the Red Wedding made them seem like sociopaths

Warriors often do end up that way.

>not realizing punishing war crimes is only to make the victor feel better

>not realizing you can't justify something that's an excuse to punish you in the first place

The conclusion On Killing draws is that most people just won't kill other people without a lot of extenuating circumstances, that most people will go to any length to avoid it and tend to have a host of spiritual problems if they aren't properly healed afterward. However, there's a vanishingly small percentage of people that can kill based purely on their own judgment, that don't need anyone's help to

stand up to the plate and can deal with the aftermath. Some of those natural killers are sociopaths, people that can kill because they were born without empathy. But aside from them, the book theorizes that there's another group of killers; killers that still have their empathy. These are the cool-headed champions of humanity, the ones that can use violence to end violence without becoming tainted or destroyed by it. They, I think, would be paladins.

/tg/ on Warfare— Medieval Europe

The medieval soldier, specifically the mid 15th century north-west European soldier, and at that, primarily the English ones in the first half of the war of the roses (apparently referred to at the time as the 'cousins war'). It can't hurt to be specific. The main type of soldier during this period of intermittent warfare was what is often referred to as the retainer. These were men who were retained by their lords under contracts of livery and maintenance, meaning that they wore their lords badge and did his work in return for payment. Payment could be in forms other than money, but mostly was in the form of cash. These men would generally be well provided for in terms of equipment as the culture of the time made a great show of generosity as a virtue, as well as displaying wealth and power through generosity. This, in combination with advances in creation of quality metals and other economic changes since the 1300s, meant that the typical retainer infantryman was surprisingly armoured, often with some form of plate body armour such as a brigandine or breast (and occasionally back) plate. Limb defenses were less common, and gauntlets downright unusual. Mail in this period was far less common, but when used it was mostly in addition to plate armour and mostly in pieces covering the arms, neck (in the form of what's known as a 'standard', similar to the later 'bishop's mantle' but much smaller) and a skirt to cover the groin. These men formed the core of large armies, but the common soldier was a different prospect. When large numbers of troops were needed, those involved would send out commissions asking for troops from the settlements in their control, where men would muster and be inspected, with their equipment and abilities noted in muster rolls, of which several survive. It seems that people would bring equipment they could not use or too much, probably expecting it to be redistributed to those who needed it and be paid for this in turn. It seems that when possible, only the better men were selected (as finances available were very limited), but necessity for simple numbers must have prevailed at points. Throughout the wars of the roses the archer was in a state of decline as fewer were available to hire, but when they were hired they received a notably better amount of pay. Foreign ambassador's letters note a general state of being impressed on just how well equipped English infantry was, with every archer apparently having a helmet and jack (a many layered fabric jacket form of armour) in addition to their bow, arrows and usually a sword and buckler (a small shield). Other apparent favorite weapons of the English were the Bill (a polearm derived from the farming tool of the same name), the pollaxe (for nobles at least, often referred to as just an axe or battleaxe) and the large bladed spear known by the moniker of 'Ox tongue' for its similarity in shape.

Contrary to popular belief, maneuver was an integral part of medieval european warfare, but due to the organization this was mostly on a small scale (there are surviving books which detail cavalry tactics and various ploys involving terrain and other elements of the army and so on) as whilst armies were typically divided into 3 segments or 'Battles', command had to be left to the leaders of each section as the structure and system for greater co-ordination past the initial deployment and plan, simply didn't and in all likelihood couldn't exist.

>In the middle of the thirteenth century, when outlaw bands and mercenaries roamed the lawless territory between the Rhine and the Weser rivers in Westphalia, Germany, the Chivalrous Order of the Holy Vehm (or Fehm), a secret vigilante society, was formed by free men and commoners to protect themselves from the marauders. In the beginning, the resistance group had the approval of both the

church and the Holy Roman emperor, but as time passed the Holy Vehm became a law unto itself, passing judgment on all those whom they decided should receive a death sentence.

Because the society began with only a handful of members and violent retaliation could be expected from any gang of outlaws who might learn the identities of those commoners who dared to oppose them, an oath of secrecy was imposed upon all those with the courage to join the ranks of the Vehm. During the initiation ceremonies, candidates vowed to kill themselves and even their spouses and children, rather than permit any society secrets to be betrayed. Once the oath had been made, one of the Vehm's Stuhlherren or judges, would move his sword across the initiates' throats, drawing a few drops of blood to serve as a silent reminder of the fate that awaited all traitors to the society. After this ritual had been observed, the initiates kissed the cross that was formed by the space between the sword's blade and hilt. Below the Stuhlherren in rank were the deputy judges, the Freischoffen, and the executioners, the Frohnboten. The deputy judges and the executioners carried out the various tasks of inquisitors, jury, and hangman.

Within a few decades of its formation, the Vehm had more than 200,000 free men and commoners in its ranks—each man sworn to uphold the Ten Commandments and to eliminate all heresies, heretics, perjurers, traitors, and servants of Satan. Once anyone was suspected of violating one or more of the Lord's commandments or laws, he or she was brought before one of the Holy Vehm's courts and was unlikely to escape the death sentence to be hanged.

I don't think we should confuse exceptions with rules. And the rule, in Europe, was that one did not conscript your peasants into military forces. That went entirely against the social contract and ended with a peasantry that now was pissed off and had martial experience.

actually instead of dumping let me just give you a giant compendium of european martial arts masters http://wiktenauer.com/wiki/Main_Page

Remember, op, as you read through all these interesting manuals and moves, that a particularly long duel would last for perhaps 30 seconds, rarely more.

Parry opponents oberhau, drop your point, and drive it through his throat. 8 seconds.

Bring a Hanging guard to your opponents oberhau and return the favor with your own oberhau to his neck. 7 seconds.

Counter oberhau with Zwerch, stab eyeball. 3 seconds.

/tg/ on Warfare— Women

>Female warriors are PURE fantasy

Aethelflaed, eldest daughter of Alfred the Great of England, was known as the Lady of Mercia. She led troops against the Vikings during her father's reign and was responsible for the construction of many fortifications. Her military achievements helped her brother Edward the Elder in his Kingship. She died 918 in AD

At the battle of Bravellir between King Harald War-tooth and his nephew Ring, three women, Hethna, Visna and Vebiorg led companies on the Danish side

Rusilla fought against her brother Thron for the thrones of both Denmark and Norway.

Sela was "a warring Amazon and accomplished pirate"

Stikla ran away from home "preferring the sphere of war to that of marriage"

Alvid also ran away from home and became leader of a group of male and female pirates.

Gurith, Alvid's daughter, also took part in a battle to help her son Harald after her husband was killed.

Source for those 8: "Women in the Viking Age" - Judith Jesch - Boydell Press - 0 85115 278 3
 Salaym Bint Malham "with an armoury of swords and daggers strapped round her pregnant belly fought in the ranks of Muhammad and his followers".

Urraca, Queen of Aragon became ruler of Leon-Castile in 1094 when her husband died. She remarried in 1098 and then spent 13 years at war with her second husband, Alfonso the Battler, to protect the inheritance rights of her son by her first marriage. She led her own armies into battle

Matilda, Countess of Tuscany (also known as Matilda of Canossa) was born in Northern Italy in 1046, learned weapons skills as a child, first went into battle at her mother's side in 1061 defending the interests of Pope Alexander II. When her stepfather, Duke Godfrey, died in 1069 Matilda commanded armies. She led her troops personally, and wielded her late father's sword. She spent some thirty years at war in the service of Pope Gregory VIII and then Pope Urban against the German Emperor Henry IV. She married twice, but had no children.

>Female warriors are PURE fantasy

The Order of the Axe (orden de la Hacha) was founded in 1149 by the Count of Barcelona, to honor the women who fought for the defense of the town of Tortosa against a Moorish attack

Petronilla, Countess of Leicester took part in her husband's rebellion against Henry II in 1173. According to Jordan Fantosome " she was armed in a hauberk and carried a sword and shield".

A Papal Bull of 1189 prohibited women from joining the Third Crusade, Because of the numbers participating in the 2nd crusade. Queens Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of Castile, Marguerite de Provence, Florine of Denmark and Berengaria of Navarre are known to have gone on Crusade.

Nicola de la Haye was in charge of Lincoln Castle when rebel barons and Louis, son of the French King Philip besieged it in 1217. She was the daughter of Baron de la Haye, hereditary castellan of Lincoln. She successfully defended the town against several rebel raids and was made sheriff of Lincolnshire in 1216. The Order of the Glorious Saint Mary was founded in Italy in 1233, and approved by Pope Alexander IV in 1261. It was the first religious order of knighthood to grant the rank of "militissa" to women. The Order was suppressed by Sixtus V in 1558.

In 1297 the Countess of Ross led her own troops during William Wallace and Andrew de Moray's battles with the English.

Isobel, Countess of Buchan: (A.D. 1296-1358) Isobel MacDuff left her husband, the Earl of Buchan (Taking the finest warhorses with her), to fight for the Bruce, a cause of which her husband did not approve. The earl went as far as to issue a warrant for her death. Captured by Edward and taken to England, the countess of Buchan was imprisoned in a small cage for four years. She afterwards retired to convent life.

>Female warriors are PURE fantasy

Jeanne de Danpierre, Countess de Montfort: (Abt. 1300 - 74). (also known as Jane, Countess of Montfort) During the defence of Hennebont (in which she'd had the misfortune to be besieged by her & her husband's enemies), she wore armour, rode a warhorse, and sorted out the defence of the city by observing the enemy from the walls. Jeanne also mobilised the townswomen to defend the ramparts with makeshift missiles. She broke out from Hennebont at the head of 300 horseman, during a French assault on the walls, and successfully fought her way to Brest. She later returned with 600 additional men to reinforce the town. Later that same year, she is reported to have taken part in a sea-skirmish off Guernsey; wearing a suit of armour at the helm of her ship, and wielding a sword.

Jean Froissart's Chroniques describes Jeanne 'with a very sharp sword to hand, fighting with great courage'

Isabelle of England: (A.D. 1285?-1313?) Daughter of Phillippe le Bel of France, wife of Edward II of England. She took up arms against her husband and his supporters. When Edward III came to the

throne, he forced Isabelle to flee to Scotland, where, during the ensuing war, she travelled with a defending troop of like-spirited women including two sisters of Nigel and Robert Bruce (Christian, Lady Bruce and Isobel, Countess of Buchan). Against this troop of noblewomen, Edward issued a formal proscription, and captured and imprisoned several of them. Isabelle he forced to retire to a convent life "lest she try further conquests".

>Female warriors are PURE fantasy

Black Agnes: Lady Agnes Randolph (A.D. 1300?-1369?), wife of Patrick the fourth earl of Dunbar and the second earl of March. In her youth, she fought for the Bruce, but is better remembered for the later defense of her castle. In 1334, Black Agnes daughter of the great Randolph, earl of Moray, successfully held her castle at Dunbar against the besieging forces of England's earl of Salisbury for over five months, despite the unusual number of engineers and elaborate equipment brought against her. After each assault on her fortress, her maids dusted the merlins and crenels, treating her foes and the siege as a tiresome jest.

Agnes Hotot, (A.D. 1378? - ?). The coat of arms of the House of Dudley shows a woman in war helmet, dishelved hair hanging out, and her breasts exposed, commemorating a female champion. In the fourteenth century, Agnes Hotot's father quarreled with another man and agreed to a duel with lances to settle the affair. Upon the appointed hour, Agnes's father fell seriously ill. Agnes put on a helmet and disguised her sex, mounted her father's horse and set out for the tourney grounds. 'After a stubborn encounter,' Agnes dismounted her father's foe. When he lay on the ground, "she loosened the stay of her helmet, let down her hair and disclosed her bosom, so that he would know he had been conquered by a woman."

Pope Boniface VIII wrote several letters in 1383 in which he mentioned Genoese ladies who were Crusaders.

>Female warriors are PURE fantasy

"From Petrarch to Cardinal Giovanni Colonna. 23 November 1343

Of all the wonders of God, 'who alone doeth great wonders,' he has made nothing on earth more marvelous than man. Of all we saw that day, of all this letter will report, the most remarkable was a mighty woman of Pozzuoli, sturdy in body and soul. her name is Maria, and to suit her name she has the merit of virginity. Though she is constantly among men, usually soldiers, the general opinion holds that she has never suffered any abatement to her chastity, whether in jest or earnest. Men are put off, they say, more by fear than respect.

Her body is military rather than maidenly, her strength is such as any hardened soldier might wish for, her skill and deftness unusual, her age at its prime, her appearance and endeavor that of a strong man. She cares not for charms but for arms; not for arts and crafts but for darts and shafts; her face bears no trace of kisses and lascivious caresses, but is ennobled by wounds and scars. Her first love is for weapons, her soul defies death and the sword.

She helps wage an inherited local war, in which many have perished on both sides. Sometimes alone, often with a few companions, she has raided the enemy, always, up to the present, victoriously. First into battle, slow to withdraw, she attacks aggressively, practises skilful feints. She bears with incredible patience hunger, thirst, cold, heat, lack of sleep, weariness; she passes nights in the open, under arms; she sleeps on the ground, counting herself lucky to have a turf or a shield for pillow.

She has changed much in a short time, thanks to her constant hardships. I saw her a few years ago, when my youthful longing for glory brought me to Rome and Naples and the king of Sicily. She was then weaponless; but I was amazed when she came to greet me today heavily armed, in a group of soldiers. I returned her greeting as to a man I didn't know. Then she laughed, and at the nudging of my

companions I looked at her more closely; and I barely recognized the wild, primitive face of the maiden under her helmet.

They tell many fabulous stories about her; I shall relate what I saw. A number of stout fellows with military training happen to have come here from various quarters. (They were diverted from another expedition.) When they heard about this woman they were anxious to test her powers. So a great crowd of us went up to the castle of Pozzuoli. She was alone, walking up and down in front of the church, apparently just thinking. She was not at all disturbed by our arrival. We begged her to give us some example of her strength. After making many excuses on account of an injury to her arm, she finally sent for a heavy stone and an iron bar. She then threw them before us, and challenged anyone to pick them up and try a cast. To cut the story short, there was a long, well-fought competition, while she stood aside and silently judged the contestants. Finally, making an easy cast, she so far outdistanced the others that everyone was amazed, and I was really ashamed. So we left, hardly believing our eyes, thinking we must have been victims of an illusion.

The story goes that Robert [of Naples], that noblest of kings, was once sailing along these shores with a great fleet, and, tempted by the stories of this woman, he came ashore at Pozzuoli only to see her. This does not seem very likely, since, living so nearby, it would seem easier for him to summon her. But perhaps he landed for some other reason and was eager to inspect this great novelty. He has a very curious mind.

Let the tale-tellers bear the responsibility for the truth of this story, as of many others we have heard. For me the sight of this woman makes more credible not only the tales of the Amazons and their famous feminine kingdom, but also those of the Italian virgin warriors, led by Camilla, whose name is celebrated above all. For what hinders us from believing of many what I could hardly have credited of one, if I had not seen it? And that ancient Camilla was born not far from here, at Piperno, at the time of the fall of Troy; while our modern girl was born at Pozzuoli. I wanted to give you this report in my little letter. Farewell and Prosper."

>Source: "The Voice of the Middle Ages in Personal Letters 1100-1500" Edited by Catherine Moriarty ISBN 1 85291 051 8, Lennard Publishing.

>Female warriors are PURE fantasy

Queen Margaret of Denmark (1353-1411) led her armies against Swedish and Norwegian forces. From "Treasure of the City of Ladies" (1405) written by Christine de Pizan : "We have also said that she [the baroness] ought to have the heart of a man, that is, she ought to know how to use weapons and be familiar with everything that pertains to them, so that she may be ready to command her men if the need arises. She should know how to launch an attack or to defend against one."

Jacqueline of Bavaria, Countess of Holland, Hainault and Zeeland (1402-1437) led her army to relieve a seige at the city of Gorkum.

Margret Paston took charge of the defence of her home in her husband's absence both before and during the Wars of the Roses. She asked him to send crossbows, poleaxes and iron spikes as well as more domestic items in a letter in 1448.

Isabella I of Castile (1451-1504) was married to Ferdinand of Aragon. She was heir to her half brother Henry IV of Castille and inherited his throne in her own right in 1474. This led to a war with supporters of his wife's allegedly illegitimate daughter, Juana. Later in her reign she and Ferdinand attacked the Moors and drove them out of Southern Spain. Isabella wore armour and led her army in the field, she also planned strategy and organised the supplies and field hospitals. Her importance to the army was illustrated by the fact that her illness after a miscarriage while she was in command of an army at Toledo in 1475 gave her enemies a respite.

Margaret of Anjou (1430-1482) was a leader of the Lancastrian forces during the War of the Roses. Her armies defeated the Duke of York and the Earl of Warwick.

(though it is noted that Margaret was commanding from the back in several of the battles)

>Female warriors are PURE fantasy

A group of 350 women constructed and defended fortifications for the Protestant Garrison in Guienne, France in 1518

Ameliane du Puget, the governor's daughter, led a troop of women who broke a siege at Marseilles in 1524 during a war between the King of France and the Constable de Bourbon. They dug a mined trench known as the Tranchee des Dames which became the modern day Boulevard des Dames.

Hernan Cortés' army in Mexico in 1521 included Spanish and Mayan women some of whom fought with the army.

Beatriz de Pardes was a nurse, but on occasion fought in the place of her husband, Pedro de Escoto.

María de Estrada was noted for her valor at the battle of the bridges on the noche triste.

Lilliard led the Scots at the Battle of Ancrum in 1545 She killed the English commander but was killed herself later in the battle.

Graine Ni Mhaille (1550-1600) was an Irish princess and pirate, also known as Grace O'Malley, and commanded a large fleet of ships. She petitioned Queen Elizabeth I of England regarding her various territorial claims, and the two met in 1593. Despite her own officers' reports that Grace was attacking English navy, shipping and coastal towns, the Queen accepted Grace's claims.

In 1568, two sisters, Amaron and Kenau Hasselaar, led a battalion of 300 women who fought on the walls and outside the gates to defend the Dutch city of Haarlem against a Spanish invasion.

>Female warriors are PURE fantasy

Marguerite Delaye lost an arm fighting in the battle which lifted the siege of Montelimar in 1569.

In 1584 a group of Dutch and English volunteers recaptured the city of Ghent from the Spanish. One of the volunteers was Captain Mary Ambree.

Tomoe Gozen captured the city of Kyoto in Japan in 1584 after winning the Battle of Kurikawa. She was described as being a strong archer and excellent swordswoman.

Dona Catalina de Erauso of San Sebastian left a nunnery in 1596 and travelled to Peru where she became a soldier of fortune. She used sword, knife, and pistol, and fought in battles and in duels. She died around 1650.

Madame de Saint-Belmont disguised herself as a man and fought a duel against a cavalry officer after he ignored a letter she had sent complaining of his discourtesy.

During the English Civil War Queen Henrietta Maria was actively involved in King Charles' campaigns and marched at the head of one of his armies.

King Charles issued a proclamation banning women who were with the armies during the English Civil War from wearing men's clothing.

Lady Ann Cunningham led a cavalry troop of men and women in the Battle of Berwick on June 5, 1639

The Scots Army which marched on Newcastle in 1644 during the English Civil War is reported to have included "women who stood with blue caps among the men" as regular soldiers.

In 1645 a Royalist corporal captured near Nottingham during the English Civil War was found to be a woman.

>Female warriors are PURE fantasy

Christian 'Kit' Cavanagh (or Davies), better known as "Mother Ross" was one of several women who served as dragoons in the British Army. She fought during the 1690's at first disguised as a man and later openly as a woman.

Anne Chamberlyne dressed in men's clothing and fought in a six hour battle against the French on board her brother's ship in June 1690. She died in childbirth in 1691.

A ballad written in 1690 by seaman John Curtin describes a woman who was discovered disguised as a man in the crew of the 72 gun vessel "Edgar".

A gentlewoman petitioned the Queen (Queen Mary II) for payment for serving on the ship "St Andrew" dressed in men's clothing and taking part in a battle against the French in the summer of 1691.

Julie d'Aubigny (1670–1707), better known as Mademoiselle Maupin was born in 1670 to Gaston d'Aubigny, a secretary to the comte d'Armagnac, the Master of the Horse for King Louis XIV. Her father trained her in dancing, literacy, drawing and fencing. While in her teens she became a mistress of the Count d'Armagnac and through him was introduced to court.

d'Aubigny gathered a reputation in Parisian courts, and fought duels with young aristocrats. She became involved with an assistant fencing master named Serannes.

About 1688, when Lieutenant-General of Police Gabriel Nicolas de la Reynie tried to apprehend Serannes for killing a man in an illegal duel, the pair fled the city to Marseille, where d'Aubigny and Serannes gave duelling exhibitions, sang and told stories in inns. When duelling, d'Aubigny dressed in male clothing but did not conceal her gender.

Eventually, she grew bored of Serannes and became involved with a young lady. When the girl's parents put her away in the Visitandines convent in Avignon, d'Aubigny followed, entering the convent as a novice. There she stole the body of a dead nun, placed it in the bed of her lover and set the room afire to cover their escape. Their affair lasted for three months before the young lady returned to her family. D'Aubigny was charged in absentia with kidnapping, body snatching, arson and failing to appear before the tribunal. The sentence was death by fire,

Escaping from Marseille, d'Aubigny made her way towards Paris, while also embarking on a career as an opera singer. In Villeperdue, she fought a victorious duel against three squires and drove her blade through the shoulder of one of them. The next day, she asked about his health and found out he was Louis-Joseph d'Albert Luynes, son of the Duke of Luynes. The next evening, one of his companions came to offer the duke's apologies. She went to his room dressed in female clothing and subsequently they became lovers.

After Count d'Albert recovered and had to return to his military unit, d'Aubigny continued to Rouen. There she met Gabriel-Vincent Thévenard, another singer, and began a new affair with him. They continued together towards Paris. In Marais, she contacted Count d'Armagnac for help against the sentence hanging over her. He persuaded the king to grant her a pardon instead.

In Paris, D'Aubigny began to use the name Mademoiselle Maupin, and eventually joined the Paris Opera. Several years later D'Aubigny once more became a professional duelist, when she fought three noblemen during a court ball around 1693, she fell afoul of the king's law that forbade duels in Paris, and fled to Brussels.

She later reconciled with her husband and lived with him until his death in 1701 or 1705. After she retired from the opera in 1705, she entered a convent in Provence, where she died in 1707.

I'm chatting with my sister, and she's pointed out things like "Nordic men let their wives run the household completely" and "several Native American societies wouldn't let women into the purifying sweat lodges because their magic was too powerful and would disrupt it".

>Female warriors are PURE fantasy

A woman soldier Christian Davies (or Mother Ross), already mentioned >>29614454 here from the 1690's was reported to have received a pension from the Royal Chelsea Hospital at the beginning of the 18th Century.

M. Cesar de Saussure of Lausanne Switzerland writes an account of a fight between two female gladiators using two handed sword, sword with dagger and finally sword with shield in 1720 Mary Reed (or Read) and Anne Bonnie (or Bonny) were sentenced to death for piracy in 1720.

Phoebe Hessel (1713-1821) was born in Stepney and joined the army at the age of 15 served for many years as a private soldier in the 5th Reg't of Foot (or Northumberland Fusiliers) in different parts of Europe including Montserrat and in 1745 at Fontenoy.

Ann Mills was British dragoon who fought on the frigate Maidstone in 1740.

Jean (Jenny) Cameron of Glendessary raised 300 men and led them to the raising of the Jacobite standard in Scotland on 19th August 1745

And though not an actual combatant, this one makes you wonder how interesting their marriage was: Lady Anne Macintosh (also known as Anne Farquharson of Invercauld and Colonel Anne) was married to the Laird of Macintosh who supported the Hannoverians during the Jacobite rising in Scotland in 1745-6. Anne sided with the Jacobites and raised several hundred men to fight for them, although she never led her men into battle herself. At various points both she and her husband were captured and were released into each others' custody...

Considering the sheer amount of history, female warriors were relatively common until something like 1000AD when they started to disappear. But you very often saw noblewomen before that fighting.

>Female warriors are PURE fantasy

Lady Lude fired the first shot of the Jacobite attack on Blair Castle, Scotland. This was her own family home and had been taken over by the Hanoverians.

Lady Margaret Oglivy and Margaret Murray (or Fergusson) accompanied their husbands who were officers in Bonnie Prince Charlie's (Prince Charles Edward Stewart or The Young Pretender of Scotland) army in 1745-6. Mrs Murray is reputed to have been directly involved in seizing horses and money for the army.

(source for those ones: "Damn Rebel Bitches - Women of the '45" - Maggie Craig - Mainstream Publishing - 1-85158-962-7)

Hannah Snell dressed as a man and called herself James Gray. She served in a regiment of the Royal Marines and fought at the siege of Pondicherry. In 1750 she revealed her secret to her comrades and was granted a lifetime pension. She died in 1791.

Source: Hannah Snell, The Secret Life of a Female Marine" - Matthew Stephens - Ship Street Press - 0-9530565-0-3

DEBORAH SAMSON (sometimes mis-spelled "sampion")

In October of 1778 Deborah Samson of Plympton, Massachusetts disguised herself as a young man and presented herself to the American army as a willing volunteer to oppose the common enemy. She enlisted for the whole term of the war as Robert Shirtliffe and served in the company of Captain Nathan Thayer of Medway, Massachusetts.

For three years she served in various duties and was wounded twice - the first time by a sword cut on the side of the head and four months later she was shot through the shoulder. Her sexual identity went undetected until she came down with a brain fever, then prevalent among the soldiers. The attending physician, Dr. Binney, of Philadelphia, discovered her charade, but said nothing. Instead he had her taken to his own home where she would receive better care.

source: <http://userpages.aug.com/captbarb/femvets.html>

>Female warriors are PURE fantasy

Margaret Corbin (or Cochran) helped with the artillery during an attack on Fort Mifflin. In 1779 she was awarded her a pension for her heroism.

Mary Ludwig Hays McCauley served alongside her husband, John Hays, in the Pennsylvania State Regiment of Artillery for seven years.

In 1771 Naval seaman Charles Waddall was found to be a woman when she was being stripped for a flogging.

(source "Female Tars" - Suzanne Stark - Pimlico - 0-7126-660-5)

In 1775 Jemima Warner took her deceased husband's place in the ranks during an American army expedition into Canada led by Brig. Gen. Richard Montgomery and Colonel Benedict Arnold Angelique Brulon - awarded the French Legion of Honor. She defended Corsica in seven campaigns between 1792 and 1799. At first she fought disguised as a man, by the time her gender was discovered she had proved so valuable in battle that she was allowed to remain in the military fighting openly as a woman.

Mary Anne Talbot (1778-1808) was a drummer in the army in Flanders in 1792 and a sailor on the "Brunswick" where she was wounded in action in 1794. She used the name John Taylor Mademoiselle de la Rochefoucault, a noted orator, rallied royalists and led guerrilla actions against the republican forces. She died in battle during the French Revolution.

Catherine the Great led rebels in a successful coup against her husband Tsar Peter of Russia. She wore a soldier's uniform and directed the tactics of her various wars up until 1796.

A report in the Naval Chronicle in 1807 describes a woman using the name of Tom Bowling who had served over 20 years as a bowsman's mate on a man-of-war.

and lastly, since the 20th C is packed full of records:

Edith Garrud opened a dojo for jujutsu close to Oxford Circus. She trained a group of "fighting suffragettes", the bodyguard unit for Mrs Pankhurst.

/tg/ on Warfare— WWI

>Sometimes enemy patrols would meet in No Man's Land. They were then faced with the option of hurrying on their separate ways or else engaging in hand to hand fighting. >They could not afford to use their handguns while patrolling in No Man's Land, for fear of the machine gun fire it would inevitably attract, deadly to all members of the patrol.

bacteria breeds super quickly in space and antibiotics have a hard time fighting them off

passchendaele shouldn't be used unless you want to kill off at least half the pc's that battle was one of the most horrific battles in the history of human warfare. 500.000 to 800.000 men died on that god forsaken piece of land. The allied commanders sacrificed 150.000 of their own men to gain 5 miles of terrain. 5 miles they lost not long after and the true number of casualties may never be known. The vast majority of corpses were never recovered and are still lying in those fields. Their corpses blown under the sand by artillery, sunken in the mud or just trampled under by the following waves of their own comrades

the trenches were some of the scariest craziest shit known to man. The fucking landscape was even mocking the men, covering the bodies of the dead in red cheery flowers

death quotas. On some part of the front line, soldiers on both sides had come to use artillery as a signal for upcoming attacks (I'm simplifying to the extreme, history buffs need not go mad at the liberties I just took), allowing the other side to leave its trenches before the actual attack occurred. After a while, Commanding officers couldn't but notice there suddenly weren't any dead anymore, so they decided to implement death quotas: if after an attack there wasn't any death, then soldiers would be selected randomly and executed by their fellows till the statistical number of dead per battles was reached

/tg/ on Warfare— WWII

Thinking of Stalingrad in WWII. Every 3rd man gets a rifle. The other two are given a clip of ammunition with the intent to grab a rifle from a dead fellow soldier. You aren't even armed, but expected to run into the fray and hope to 'acquire' a weapon.

/tg/ on Water

Salt Water explodes if enough electricity is passed through it.

/tg/ on Writing

"Plot is not just for the sake of developing characters (or getting them to bed with each other), but because there are things to be discovered, about that world, and what it means to have things like werewolves and horcruxes in existence."

/tg/ on Zeppelins

I want to bring back Zeppelins. They're safe, I assure you. But nobody has the balls to try it. You could fly from Portland to Seattle in 2 hours. In a safe, calm, quiet zeppelin ride and see all the beautiful sights of the bold pacific northwest. Or, a eight hour direct could get you to San Fransisco. Imagine it.. you and you're lady friend go downtown, take an elevator to the roof of a gleaming sky scrapper, and board my bold airship. Your served a tasty light lunch, maybe a london broil salad, and you enjoy a johnny walker black, as you sail over the hills, farms and through the clouds gently to your destination... for no more than \$200. Pleasure trips too, pick you and your friend up, fly you out over the ocean to watch the sunset from the sky, a wonderful dinner, maybe a band. Better design decisions and materials could result in a blimp where, even if one cell did ignite, it would not ignite every cell and could possibly vent the burning hydrogen in a non-explosive manner. Other considerations (inert gas blankets, etc.) could prevent most ignition scenarios save for lightning, which would need to be arrested through other means. Hybrid airships (rigid airships that have an airfoil shape) could glide into a fall and apply air brakes to recover from a loss of buoyancy safely.

/tg/ on Zombies

Real life police and military are trained to aim for the torso, since it is the largest body mass and therefore the easiest to hit. They will always shoot the torso, and never the face. Hence why they almost always get pwn'd in zombie movies.

And on that note I am spent. Hope you all enjoyed this little foray into odd, interesting, and disgusting cultures from around the world.

May the strippers at your funeral be buxom, and your body delicious.

— Anon

The *Cultures of the World* thread, 17 May 2014