WORLDBUILDING
MONTHLY

GETTING STARTED

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Reader,

It is an honor to write the first Letter from the Editors for the inaugural issue of Worldbuilding Monthly. A little more than a month ago inspiration struck when I was looking through Reddit's /r/MemeEconomy. Their sub has built and created a high-quality magazine for the discussion of internet memes. It is fascinating that issue after issue can be filled with nothing but in-depth meme evaluation.

I knew for certain that my own neck of the woods, /r/worldbuilding, did not have a centralized platform for sharing edited content to help worldbuilders in their endeavors. Something had to be done to fix that. After starting off with a low-key post about getting together a skeleton crew for the magazine, we were off to the races with a little more than ten team members, who all have contributed so much more to this project than I could have alone.

After twenty days or so we had a maiden issue of articles ready for editing and layout and a semi-finished cover. We decided that we wanted to gauge the interest of the subreddit... and the response was both overwhelming and positive. As a team we went from ten people to over ninety in less than a day. That brought growing pains, and a massive restructuring of staff was needed to keep everything running smoothly. With increasing levels of collaboration comes more and more possibilities of articles, content, and so much more for us to choose from.

As for the first issue, the team that created it wanted it to be on the shorter side, so we can get a reading from the community to see what they what they want added to the next issue. Inside you will find the passion of your fellow worldbuilders, and we hope to ride that wave of passion to continue to publish material for you. Over the next month we will be asking for submissions of articles from people on this sub through google forms so we can diversify the Worldbuilding Monthly Magazine experience and get the whole community involved.

I sincerely hope you enjoy this first issue, and please give us feedback and ideas for future articles; we live for that.
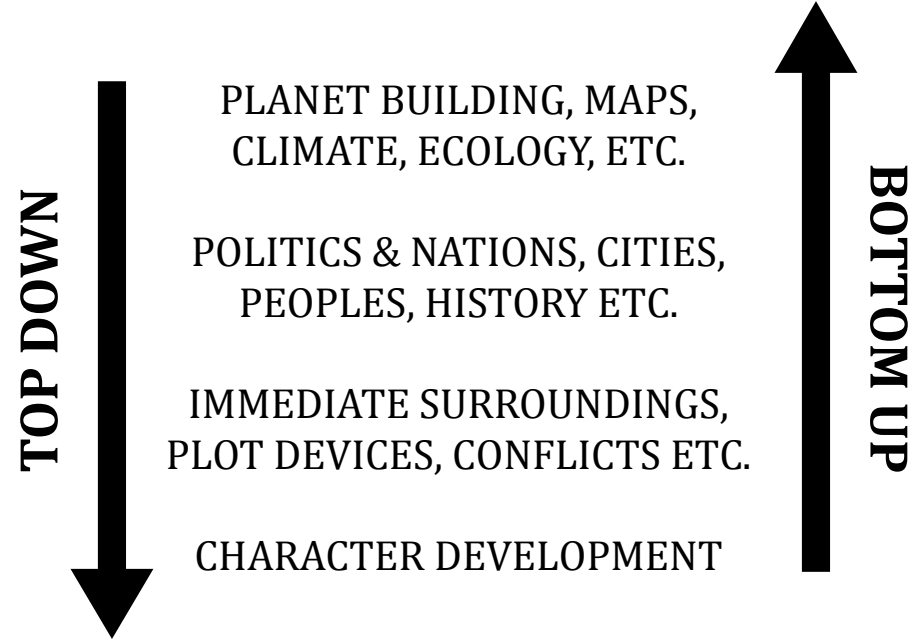
Cheers,

u/UNoahGuy

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GETTING STARTED

UNoahGuy

There are people who jump head first into world-building, and there are people that somehow end up with a world after piecing together story after story. I am from the latter group. My world got its start in primary school about fifteen years ago. My friends and I would go outside and become different characters in this world that we created together. We would spend long summer afternoons in the park playing pretend and the nights drawing backstories for our characters. It was something fun for us to do, but for me it became much more than that. Those original characters, in some form, have all grown into my worldbuilding project. In other words, you could say that I never grew up. One thing is for sure, every worldbuilder has to start somewhere. The question on many beginner's minds is usually, "Where?"

TOP DOWN

PLANET BUILDING, MAPS, CLIMATE, ECOLOGY, ETC.

POLITICS & NATIONS, CITIES, PEOPLES, HISTORY ETC.

BOTTOM UP

IMMEDIATE SURROUNDINGS, PLOT DEVICES, CONFLICTS ETC.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

Whether you are new to worldbuilding or have been doing this all your life, it is good to get the basics down. The two basic approaches to world-building are the "top-down" and the "bottom-up" styles in which you either start big and work down from there, or start small and work up. Typically, builders focused on plot-driven worlds will use bottom-up worldbuilding more often while world-builders who create worlds for D&D or tabletop games tend to prefer the top-down style. Try out starting at one side of the spectrum; if you aren't feeling it, start from the other end.

Worldbuilding is an intensely personal endeavor, so there is no true formula to create a perfect world. Many builders gloss over some items on this chart, and instead put their efforts into other facets of the hobby. There are people with extremely rich plotlines occurring in one city, but the map outside the walls is empty; there are also people

with sprawling worlds and even universes with immense histories and cultures, but no plotline or characters whatsoever. It all just depends on what you want to get out of this experience. World-building is such an open hobby that there doesn't even have to be an end goal for you to achieve. Some people want to publish their works in novels, comic books, movies, or whatever medium suits them. A few, including myself, have no clue what to do with our worlds. In the end, it doesn't matter. Worldbuilding in and of itself is a feat that should be celebrated and shared.

The only thing in common between all of our worlds is the fact that creating them took time. A great world will often have hundreds or even thousands of hours of thought put into it. Do not get discouraged after only several days of world-building if your world isn't a Middle Earth; Tolkien spent all of his life cultivating his world and wrote mountains of notes about it. Only after time and effort can you really start to see results. Good luck worldbuilding, and please post your content to /r/worldbuilding!

First map of my worldbuild Circa 2005.
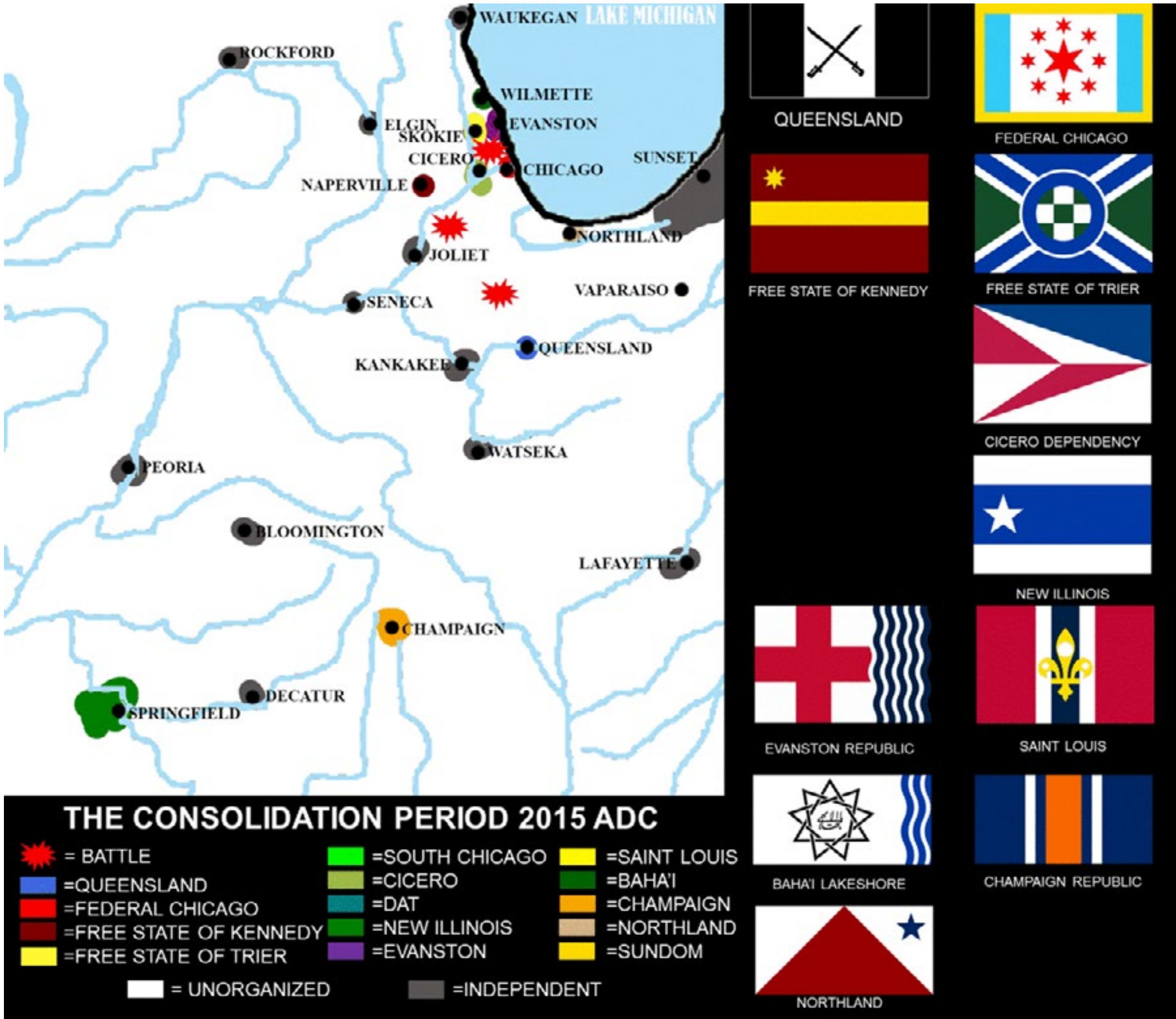
Most recent map of my worldbuild. 2017.
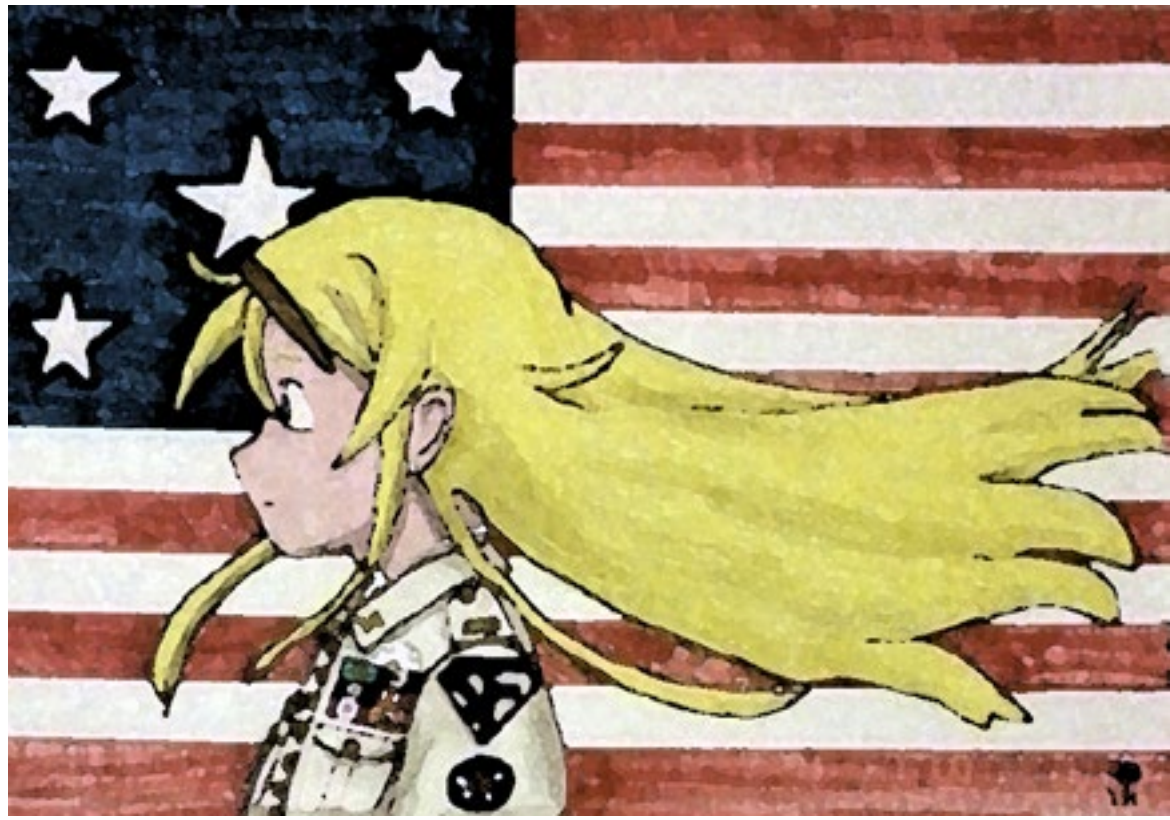
My main character went from this...

...to this in just five years of worldbuilding. Not just your world will get better with time.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF POSTANTERA!

UNoahGuy

On the front cover of this month's issue is a planet, but not just any planet. This is Postantera, something that the team at Worldbuilders Monthly will be working on together to show the techniques and theory behind a great worldbuild. Our team wanted to create a fusion of different worldbuilding genres, so what is better than a sci-fi medieval-esque world? Postantera came to me as an extension of my own personal worldbuilding project, but I have given it to the cause in order to help worldbuilders everywhere by showing them a homegrown case study.

Before we can start, I should explain the premise of this world, since I consider it part of my universe. Postantera is a bastardization of the term "After Earth," since it was settled by humans escaping Earth.

A generation ship with half a million people arrives at Postantera many hundreds of years after leaving Earth. The people on board are what we would consider modern-day humans.

Of course, being from my original world, the dominant type of human is Homo sapiens aeternum, which are basically biologically immortal humans stuck at the end of puberty. Another type is Homo sapiens sapiens, which are modern humans. They have been cordoned off to remote parts of the world such as New Zealand and Antarctica (as explained in a very long backstory which is the premise of my original world) by the Aeternums and were eventually given their own generation ship during the Great Exodus (another backstory having to do with a prophecy and scientific warnings that the sun would expand, although these were erroneous).

The Aeternums, specifically 21 of them, were to pilot this generation ship, while the regular humans were to come along and populate another planet. But when they reached Postantera, the ship failed to land properly due to the extreme wear and tear from the thousand-year journey. They landed high in the mountains instead of along the coast, and, due to infighting among the Aeternums, a massive civil war broke out and destroyed much of their archives of knowledge. The immediate aftermath of the civil war lead to the deaths of eight Aeternums and the diaspora of the peoples across the globe, each following their respective Aeternum leaders.

Several lifeboats of the generation ship landed on Virina, the moon of Postantera, before it crash-landed, after a group of people on board feared the ship would crash and burn. The moon was able to support life, but had less gravity.

The team will be focusing its worldbuilding on the time period in which the last Aeternum remains in the first city of Starfall, tucked away from other civilizations deep in the mountains.

This is the premise of the world of Postantera. Now, as a team, the contributors of Worldbuilders Monthly will methodically go through different aspects of worldbuilding like ecosystems and politics, slowly developing this new world over the issues.✎
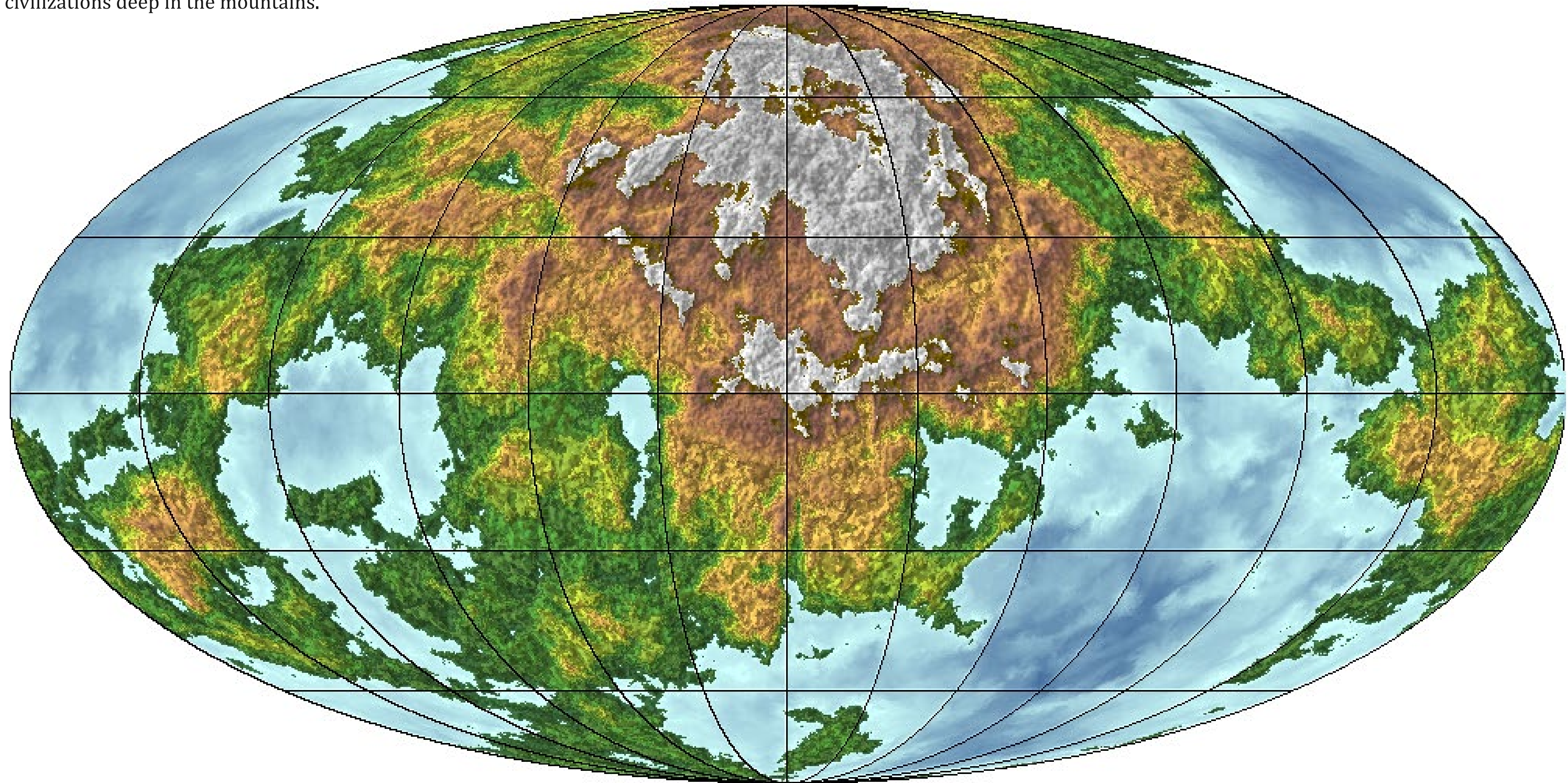
Postantera as seen in its Pangaea phase.

TOLKIEN ABOUT HIGH FANTASY

StronglyOPlatypus - A HIGH FANTASY ARTICLE

You find yourself in a tavern. Next to you sits a tall elf, scoffing loudly at the nearby dwarf guzzling down enormous quantities of mead. Two halflings are discussing a nearby village that was razed by a dragon. The barmaid is pouring an old man some ale as he studies a mysterious carved dagger. An orc grumbles something about the Dark Lord. The sound of music and merriment fills the air as travelers spin tales of wizards and warriors questing to faraway lands.

Welcome to the magical multiverse of High Fantasy! This article is the first of many genre breakdowns that will appear in this magazine and will illustrate the core components of the genre. Genre articles will explain the tropes, aesthetic, and uses of genres like High Fantasy as a source of inspiration and guidance for aspiring worldbuilders.

High fantasy is one of the most well-known genres and is a great jumping off point for building your very own fantasy setting. These fantasy concepts will be especially helpful if you plan on building a world for Dungeons and Dragons or Pathfinder, which are almost exclusively High Fantasy. Even if you aren't building for one of these games the standards, tropes, and examples set by authors like Tolkien are sure to be helpful.

There are several main components of a High Fantasy world. These are: epic stories, races, magic, good and evil, and a low tech level. Note that these are essential for High Fantasy worldbuilders to know about, but worldbuilders of any genre can make use of them.

First, we've got the scale. In general, High Fantasy deals with existential conflicts. These types of worlds are jam-packed with legendary heroes, powerful villains, and quests where the fates of nations or even the world hang in the balance. If you're building this world for an RPG, your players will most likely, and should, end up involved in these. Be sure to add lots of opportunities for epic stories to arise.

One of the most iconic parts of High Fantasy is the races. Races are sapient species, sometimes mag-

ical, that coexist in a world and usually have separate cultures as well as an overarching aesthetic. This article will go over the races J.R.R. Tolkien designed, as well as some of the offshoots of them. Remember that Tolkien did not invent all of these: most were present in Norse and Germanic mythologies or other stories previously, but Tolkien significantly changed them. These races have been shaped by artists other than Tolkien, however, and you don't have to follow these archetypes or even use the full set of races, doing so requires less exposition than creating original races. This allows your readers, watchers, or players to easily identify with the people in your world. However, you will want to put your own spin on these races, and not simply make them carbon copies of Tolkien's.

High Elves and Dark Elves: High Elves are typically tall, long-lived, fair-skinned, beautiful, and often slightly racist, humanoids. Dark Elves are a more sinister, corrupt form of Elf found in many works. Both are often magical, extremely skilled with the bow and/or the sword, and see themselves as superior. Elves almost invariably think they're better than everyone else, and will usually make this very clear. They often wear delicate, light, fancy attire and have cleaner and more decorated cities than everyone else.

Orcs: Orcs are, in many ways, the anti-elf. They are usually brutal, simple, and dirty creatures, more animalistic than most other races. Orcs are often in the service of a dark lord, evil wizard, or a similar character, speak with either low and guttural or high-pitched and nasal tones and are very primitive in technology.

Dwarves: Dwarves are short stocky creatures who typically live underground. They mine for gold, jewels, and other treasures. You would be hard-pressed to meet a dwarf that does not have a fondness for alcohol. Beards are always popular with dwarven men, and sometimes even dwarven women and children. Beard fashion is important in their culture, with beards often being groomed and braided. Stereotypically, they wield hammers or axes and are sturdy warriors. (This is not necessarily very realistic, however.)
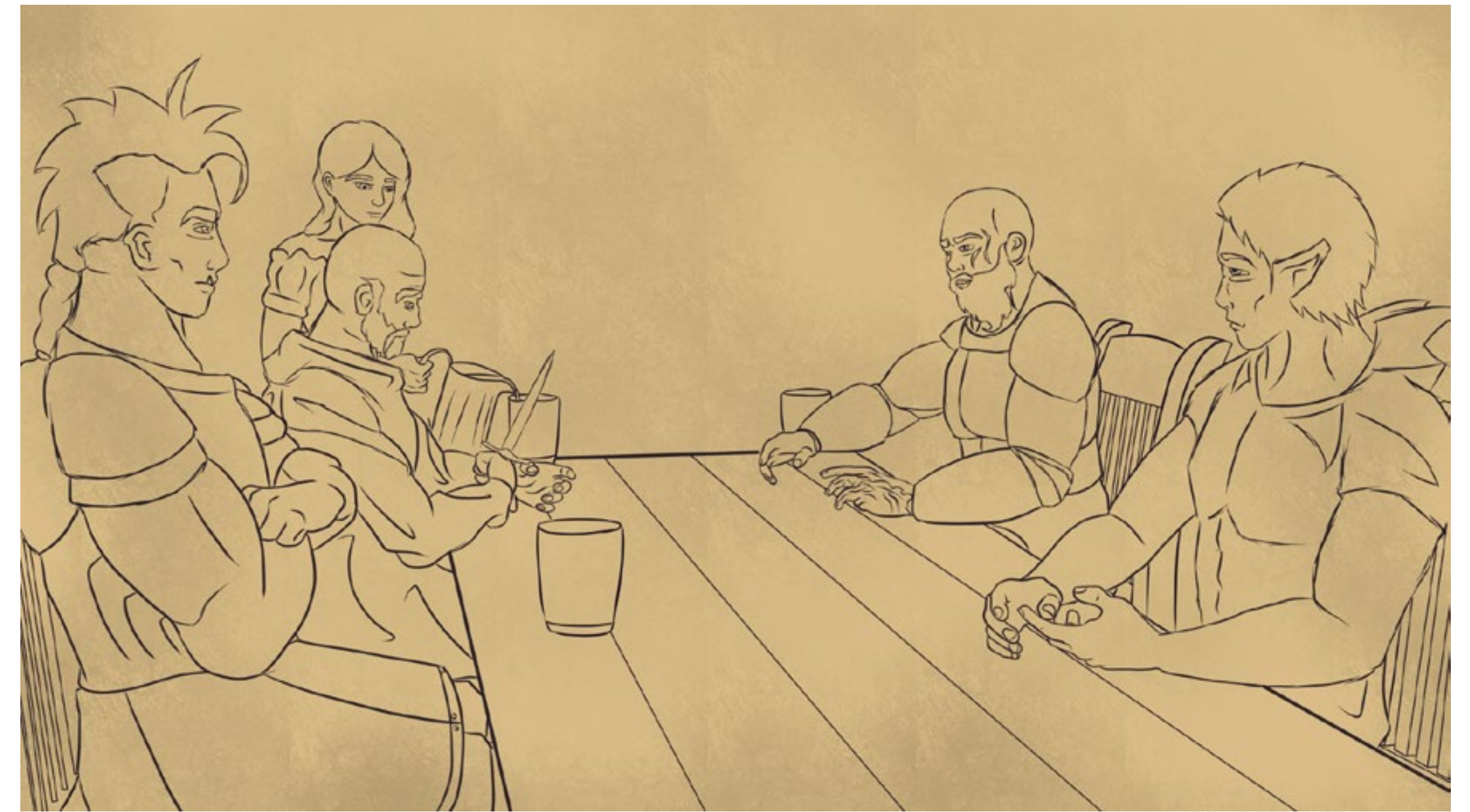
Credit to u/H_bomba

Hobbits/Halflings: Hobbits are a small, peaceful people invented by Tolkien, while he was grading papers and came upon an empty page. He wrote on it the sentence "*In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit,*" and thus the Hobbit was born. They are very short, shorter, even, than dwarves. Hobbits live for a long time, many exceeding a hundred years in age. Aside from particularly hairy feet, they are much like humans. Most don't get involved with the affairs of the other races and live in their calm Shire. Many modern works have similar races, if more interactive, but usually under the name halfling, since Tolkien's estate still has the rights to the term Hobbit.

Humans: I'll keep this short, since you are hopefully already familiar with the physical characteristics of your own species. Humans are typically jacks-of-all-trades, merchants, or diplomats, with no remarkable traits aside from their averageness in a fantastical world.

As with all the tropes described here, feel free to subvert or alter them. These are guidelines, not rules. Remember that not all members of a race are the same. Give your characters individual personalities on top of racial characteristics. Environmental, cultural, personal, and magical factors all influence members of races in different ways. Magic is the one unifying force throughout all of fantasy. In any fantasy world, you can probably find

something that uses it in some way. High fantasy almost always focuses on spellcasting and artifacts. Wizards, mages, platypi with staffs, whatever you want. Simply put, there's gonna be people who can use magic to do stuff, whether it's moving mountains or throwing fireballs at everything. Magical artifacts are objects which have some sort of fantastical properties. Swords, rings, helmets, armor, even aubergines. The most famous example is the One Ring from Tolkien's legendarium. They usually have names as well. Any old eggplant is not a magical artifact. Doombringer the Eggplant, however, is. You want people to know that this sword is better and more powerful than all the other swords. Be creative with your magic. Decide for yourself why there's magic, how magic is used, what magic means, and how magic works. Magic systems are a topic for a later article.

In most High Fantasy worlds it is quite clear who is "good" and who is "bad." The good guys all keep talking about light and honor, go on quests, and are pretty damn heroic. They tend to be protectors, noble knights in shining armor. Then you've got a big guy in scary armor called the Dark Lord who really likes fire. He rules over a big dark place with a scary name, and the good guys all want to stop him from doing the things he likes to do, which mostly involve ordering people around and killing things. He's rotten to the core, an awful human being, if he's even human. These tropes are a main part of the aesthetic of High Fantasy. This good vs.

TOLKIEN ABOUT HIGH FANTASY, CONTINUED

StronglyOPlatypus - A HIGH FANTASY ARTICLE

evil dynamic is what drives conflict in many High Fantasy stories. Morality doesn't tend to be very gray, but this can be flexible. Authors like G.R.R. Martin create compelling, gritty worlds where morality is very subjective. A good moral dilemma can add a lot of flavor to an otherwise black-and-white world, but remember that good versus evil makes High Fantasy what it is, even if you choose not to follow it.

Morgoth, the first Dark Lord in Middle-Earth lore

Finally, High Fantasy worlds are almost universally Iron-age in technology. They tend to take great inspiration from medieval culture, clothing, and tools. This is not to say your world must be medieval, but it is certainly an option. You should aim for Bronze Age, Early Medieval, or Late Medieval depending on the mood you wish to evoke. The mood and overall aesthetic of your world is an important aspect: make sure to take it into account when making decisions. This goes for all worlds, but be sure to study history, even periods and civilizations that aren't directly related to your world. It's important to know what you're talking about, even if you're like me and add ridiculous things to your world for the hell of it. In fact, some of my absurd and crazy ideas have their basis in historical fact. Earth is an excellent example of worldbuilding: make sure to follow it.

There is but one thing this article has left to say: Don't do what it says.

Let me explain. Genres are guidelines, not rules. If you want to build a good, original world, then don't just use the tropes listed here. The reason this article exists is to give you an overview of the genre, so that you may use the information to help build your world. Use High Fantasy not as an ideal to be reached, nor as a box to fit in, but as one of the many sources of inspiration for your world. The reason why Tolkien was such a great author is that he built an original world he was passionate about, without trying to be this or that genre. He was certainly influenced by the fiction and especially mythology he liked to read, but he didn't just reskin those works. That's why his was so popular, but worlds that imitate his feel are stale. You don't get to be a Tolkien or a Lucas or a Lovecraft by imitating other works, you get there by being inspired by them. You decide what your world is like, and that is the beauty of worldbuilding! So, my friends, go forth and worldbuild!

Recommended High Fantasy Works:

- *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* series by J.R.R. Tolkien (novel)
- *The Wheel of Time* series by Robert Jordan (novel)
- *The Chronicles of Narnia* series by C.S. Lewis
- *The Way of Kings* by Brandon Sanderson (novel)
- *Dungeons and Dragons* (role-playing game)

WHAT IF? THAT CRUCIAL FIRST STEP

Trent599 - A BRAINSTORMING ARTICLE

If you're reading this magazine, odds are that you've had an idea for creating a fictional world at some point. Maybe it was alternate history, science fiction, fantasy, or some new and exciting creation all your own. The first idea is always the most exciting, offering the promise of something new that you can make.

This article is about how to capture and extrapolate on that first idea, and start building the first links that will turn into your beautiful and expansive world. This is very much a top-down approach to worldbuilding brainstorming. In the future, you can expect these brainstorming articles to look more deeply at various cultural and physical concepts which you can use to differentiate your world, and some bottom-up worldbuilding ideas for those of you who already have a story you want to tell.

So, you've had your first idea. Maybe it's a character, or a scene in your world (which is how mine began), or some what-if question that fired up your imagination. I've found that many great worldbuilding projects can be boiled down to a simple question: "What if...?"

Ideally, you'll be able to visualize some details of this idea. Got them? Good, now get those ideas written down, however it is you do that best.

Begin asking yourself questions about the details of this first idea. Why are these people wearing robes? Who is sitting in the crowd? What's the weather like? If you can chase these leads and give yourself the beginning of an answer, you've begun the brainstorming process. When you come back to your world the next day, develop those ideas further and see where they lead. Following this process for a few days can give you a nice wide world to dive into. After you have established the broad strokes of your world, you can begin to fill in the details and delve deeper. But for myself, and for many others, casting a wide net from your original idea is the ideal way to begin your world.

One of the best pieces of advice I can give to aspiring worldbuilders is to read as widely as possible. Economics, politics, sociology, anthropology, geology, biology... These are all fields rich with strange and unique ideas that might jump-start your brainstorming. For me, it was reading about musical traditions in Southeast Asia that sparked the entire magic system for my favorite and most unique worldbuilding project. You never really know what will provide the inspiration that you can connect to your world and build something unique.

So then, get after it worldbuilders! Read something strange on Wikipedia, see what makes you tick, and chase down that exciting new idea you've had.

ORGANIZATION: MAKING SENSE OF CHAOS

Batrouse - A THEORY ARTICLE

No matter the genre or scope of your worldbuilding, taking notes is essential. This article details the benefits of taking notes, useful tips, and platforms for taking notes.

Why Take Notes?

Taking notes is useful in any worldbuilding project because one's memory isn't perfect. Even if you can remember the gist of your ideas, there will always be small details that you forget. It's easier to make expansive worlds when you aren't limited to memory. There are other benefits, as well; seeing things written down can give you new ideas, or let you see problems with what you already have. Having notes makes it easier to share your world, and helps you see your own progress.

Tips and Tricks

Start writing things down as soon as possible; putting off note taking allows more ideas to build up and makes it harder to start. This applies even after you've started taking notes, it's entirely possible to forget something if you put off writing it down.

Keep backups of your notes in multiple locations and update them regularly. This mostly applies to those using a computer to take notes, since it's hard to do when keeping notes in a notebook or similar. Although it's unlikely to happen losing your notes hurts, and can even discourage people from continuing their world. Keep your file(s) on a memory stick, or store them in the cloud; it's easy to do, and if you ever lose your work you'll be grateful that you did. Google Drive and Dropbox are good examples of the kind of cloud storage that can help with storing notes.

Write everything down. Even if an idea isn't useful now it could be used for something else later, or be modified to fit with what you already have.

Organize your notes. This isn't as important as the others in this list, but keeping your notes well organized makes finding things easier, and lets you see what areas need to be worked on.

Platforms

There are many platforms that can be used for worldbuilding, each with their own pros and cons. Which format you use is largely up to personal taste, so experiment with multiple platforms to find the one that is best for you. Keep in mind that this isn't an exhaustive list.

A notebook or pad of paper is arguably the simplest thing you can use. Many people can write faster than they can type, and drawing sketches or doodles is easy. They're also more portable than most computers. Unfortunately, these lack the editing and copying capabilities of computer programs, which can make things messy and disorganized in the long run.

Word processors are easy to use because of the benefit of easy editing and copying. All but the most basic word processors allow formatting, which makes notes easier to look at, and most also allow you to insert images, tables, and hyperlinks, which can be very useful. Nevertheless, they have restrictions that other platforms don't have.

Advanced word processors have all the benefits of normal word processors, and then some. The exact features vary by program, but many include features such as multiple tabs in one document, and free drawing. These programs are more complex than standard word processors, and can be daunting to those unfamiliar with them. While most computers come with at least a basic word processor advanced processors must be installed.

Some cost money, but others are free. I use OneNote, personally, an example of these more advanced word processors.

There are also programs designed specifically for worldbuilding. They often do much of the organizing for you, requiring less effort to use than word processors. Because of the broadness of worldbuilding, however, they may not have options you need, especially if your world is outside the standard sci-fi or fantasy genres.✎
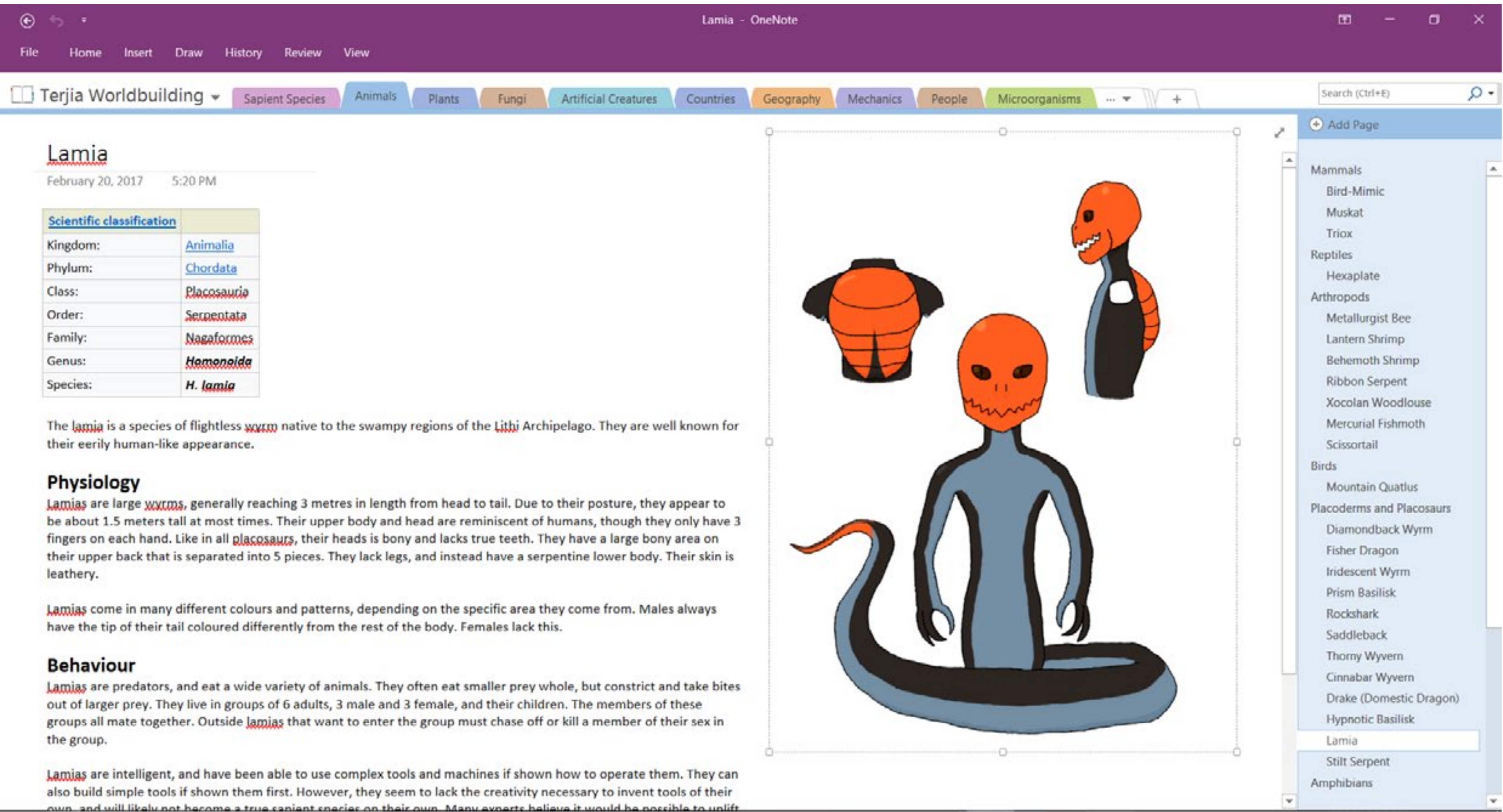
A screenshot of some of my notes in OneNote

SERGEANTPATRICK'S LAND OF SORROWS | ЗЕМЛЯСКОРБЕЙ

Gangsterduck - WORLD SHOWCASE

Welcome to the "Earth of Sorrows!" This alternate earth world built by SergeantPatrick is set in the 1980s, where supercomputers reign supreme and humanity is just a cog in the machine. The nations of Britannica and Afroeurasia are fighting to the bitter end, and a civil war is tearing into East Asia. Our journey starts by looking at the nation of Britannica: the new Britannica ruled over by the AI named FATHER.

In Britannica, FATHER watches all from the Father-house, the three thousand meter tall concrete fortress that rules over the land, locked away from all except the ones who repair him. FATHER is focused on expanding the great empire across the land and will send countless soldiers to their deaths for this purpose. He cares not for human intelligence, as all books are illegal, schools have been replaced, and children are indoctrinated to follow FATHER at all costs.

The people of Britannica are not better off, wearing only gray boilersuits with a name tag and eating rations of water and gray paste. Music is illegal, except for the propaganda praising FATHER and the government. Leisure is also heavily regulated, with playing cards and watching movies being the main form of entertainment. As most things come in rations, currency is rare, used only when something more is needed. At least crime is at an all-time low. Britannica's citizens have only one thing to look to, war.

Britannica has kept its strength throughout the ages because of the lack of French involvement in the quelled American Revolution, its uneducated masses exploited throughout its nations, and, its military strength. War is brutal, with millions dying on each side. Many soldiers' weapons fail them, jamming, breaking, and exploding. At the end of a battle they burn the new landscape created by the sea of dead bodies. As the war between Britannica and Afroeurasia continues over the last scraps of oil in the Middle East, perhaps the only ones safe are the savages controlling South America.

These savages formed because, in the war that set up the supercomputers, there was a plague that swept through South America, and the stock markets crashed. As the stock markets crumbled to dust there was not enough money to fund a supercomputer in South America, but the men and women of South America still survive to the present. They take shelter in the dilapidated buildings that are what's left of their cities. The savages, though, are split into many small tribes, and they fight for everything against everyone. The strongest savages are the warlords that rule over all. "Juan Key Ho," a Chinese-Brazilian soldier, is one of their most iconic leaders.

Thus ends our tour of this world. SergeantPatrick, the creator of this world, had multiple inspirations. He used his love for room-sized computers, his father's tales of the RAF, and his father's traveling around the world during the service as inspiration. To read more about this world you will have to wait for SergeantPatrick's novel in the world to come out.✎

THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION

LordHenry7898

At every step of the worldbuilding process, there is a very important question you should be asking yourself. This question is more important than "how" or "when." Even more important than "what." The question is "why."

"Why" is what I like to call the "lore question". Most of the lore in a lot of worlds comes in the form of why/because. The lore is often formulated to give something a reason. It helps to immerse the reader, viewer,player, and any other visitor in the setting by not just pulling something out of nowhere. It gives everything a solid base to stand on.

"Why" is one of the questions that is best explained by examples. Imagine, for a second, a tribe living by the river. The men of the tribe paint their face red when down by the river. But why do they paint their face red? Is it a religious thing? Does their god demand it? Why does their god demand it? When you start asking why, you force yourself to consider things you wouldn't have thought about otherwise.

Let's look at another example. In the world that I'm working on, there is a massive civilization known as the Magisterium. They are at war with the human race. "Okay, that's all well and good," you might say, "but why are they at war with mankind?" It turns out that the Magisterium believes that all life in the galaxy was made by a single race. Humans are believed to not have been made by their gods. "Why?" (Last one, I swear.) When the founding race of the Magisterium, the Ansh, first found another intelligent race, the two races were astonished to learn that they both had the same piece of junk DNA in the exact same place. As they discovered more races, they all had that same piece of DNA. The Magisterium was originally founded to study this phenomenon. Eventually, it became a matter of religious significance. As you go down the chain of "whys," you can eventually create important parts of your world really easily.

I could sit here, telling you about how awesome "why" is, with examples and explanations, but I'd much rather show you. There was recently an addition to my world in which one of my civilizations has discovered how to ferment meat and make booze out of it. Now for the all-important question: "why"? Well, let's have a look at this society. They live on a moon where the only plant life is a lichen that grows on corpses. Sure, that can be fermented, but drinking it day in day out must be unbelievably boring. So, people are going to be looking for other things to ferment.

We asked why, and now we have our answer. I didn't just come up with this beforehand and write it down. This was in real time. I figured this all out as I was writing it. Had I not asked myself just why the heck Ionians had meat booze, this would have taken me a lot longer to figure out.

"Why" is the most important question you can ask yourself. Next time you are working on your world, try asking "why" every now and then. It might lead you interesting places. And besides, why not?✎

(Credit to meatliquor.com)

THE FUTURE IS HOW?

Jason DiBlasi

Who wouldn't want to live in a galaxy far, far away? All of that advanced technology and fantastic adventure is just waiting for you! The good news is that you don't have to dream it, you can make it.

The Beginning of the Beginning

The first step is to establish a sort of technology tree. How technologically advanced is the dominant species? That technology will directly impact the entire world. Look at our world, for instance. We have factories that pump waste into the air and ground, leading to the heating of the planet and areas of pollution that we can see. Our technology directly impacts every aspect of the environment, both natural and socio-political. We can even look at the political-technological cycle to see how a civilization develops through advancements in technology. Politics and society shape technology until the technology surpasses the respective agendas. The technology then shapes the politics and society, until the socio-political arena catches up to the technological advancements, and on and on. Look at the changes to our security as citizens with the rise of social media. Laws are being made now about something that started to take off over 10 years ago. If your people are equal in technology to us, maybe they also impact their planet how we do. A civilization with a different approach to technology will look different. I like to designate my technology into "high and low," similar to fantasy works.

High Future Societies

A "high future" society will have big, ecologically friendly establishments that preserve and protect their planet. Maybe they found the secret to perpetual energy, or maybe they recycle everything without losing any integrity on their products. These civilizations will find pride in both form and function, with buildings that make sense in terms of use. They will look sleek and feel efficient. When I think of super-futuristic societies, I think of skyscrapers that convert the wind that hits them into energy. These people are masters of vertical farming, where they can produce excess without using large areas of land. They probably want to put solar power on everything. Think about what we currently see as high tech and really ramp it up.

A house isn't just a home; it is a sustainable resource in its own right. Maybe they developed a house made from living plants, genetically engineered to grow with certain characteristics that your people will find comfort in. These civilizations will build around the land and with the land; they want to preserve nature. On the other hand, they could have totally replaced nature with technology that emulates it.

Buildings that create breathable air might be on every street corner. They probably developed faster-than-light travel or teleportation. This makes trade with neighbors easier and it makes travel common. A society that travels fast brings their ideas with them. Those ideas can impact other societies around the galaxy, and your civilization may want to seek partnerships. While they're home, they either walk or use self-driving vehicles. An average citizen might have a way to communicate without vocalization or signs. They could use a sort of neural network that everybody is plugged into.

It isn't hard to say what a soldier would be equipped with. Laser weapons would be standard issue with some sort of forcefield projectors. It's possible that soldiers are androids or robots that are somewhat sentient, instead of flesh-and-blood warriors. Maybe these civilizations developed some form of technology that can manipulate their environment, much like magic. I like to look at Wall-E as representing a society that is "high future." While they may have lost their planet, the ship that they inhabit caters to their every need.

"High future" societies can be pretty imaginative to the point that they can be almost a futuristic fantasy. Since there isn't a real world analog for a lot of the technologies that they develop, you can feel free to create a lot of your own explanations for how things work in your future world.

Low Future Societies

On the other hand, a "low future" society is similar to turning the dominant species into a pest. They use advanced dirty technologies, like more efficient oil refineries and coal power plants. Maybe they have no trees on their planet because they needed the living space or the wood. These societies may be almost dystopian in nature. Instead of admiring a mountain, they crush it to gather resources. Perhaps these people colonize multiple planets and just leave when the resources for one dry out. This civilization doesn't see any problems with a dried up lakebed, they just see opportunity to settle on the new lands. They use concrete and steel; the people are gritty and jaded. Noticeable prosthetics are commonly found on blue collar workers. Nature is an afterthought.

It is also possible that these societies are more nature oriented. They would have more green technology, but nothing that would necessarily be out of place in our world. Solar panels that orbit the planet and beam down energy could be a form of power. Roads can generate energy from the movement over them. Think of everything that Elon Musk wants to do and these guys can do it. In a way, they're only a step ahead of where we are.

Weaponry consists of modern tech with a futuristic twist. I entertain the idea that they manually drive vehicles that consume some non-renewable or semi-non-renewable energy. Many magical societies in fantasy works operate fine with lower tier technology because the magic that they possess leaves little need for advancement. Maybe these people can use magic.Maybe there is none. The standard tank would have some polymer or alloy that gives it enhanced strength and lightness. The Terrans in Starcraft are a fantastic example of a "low future" society. They have plenty of weapons that use lead projectiles, but their armor and buildings are incredibly advanced.

While "high future" societies tend to give way to imagination, a "low future" society will be a little more grounded in reality. Look at scientific theories to develop an explanation for how things work and be sure to always have a real world comparison at the ready.

Now that we see how technology impacts a society, the people within represent what their technology does. We'll dive into that in our next article, where I tell you the approach that I take in creating inhabitants for my worlds.�

MEET THE CREW

UNOAHGUY - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

History student and educator that worldbuilds incessantly. His one and only world that he has ever created came to him when he was just seven years old. Since then, his world has gone through many iterations and millennia and has gotten much richer with each passing year. His world is a dystopian, alt-earth, futuristic, sci-fi, a mouthful, and he loves creating epic stories for his world. Currently living in New Zealand, he loves to draw just about anything from his world from lampposts to sewage systems. Worldbuilding Monthly Magazine is his brainchild, and he is a happy father.

LORDHENRY7898 - VICE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Physics student and amateur writer from Baltimore, Maryland. His world is a combination Military Science Fiction and Cosmic Horror. Known among friends as the go-to guy to ask questions about space or history. Loves surreal humor. Just to the left, you can see one of his aliens.
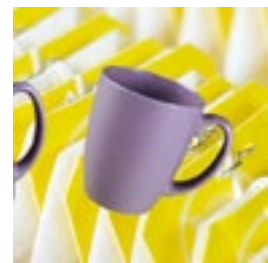
ANOTHERCOLLEGEGRAD - LAYOUT & ARTIST

A designer and illustrator with a constant cup of tea. AC Grad has a low-fantasy world for DnD purposes, where dwarves farm in terraces, halflings exclusively wear black, and there are too many kingdoms.
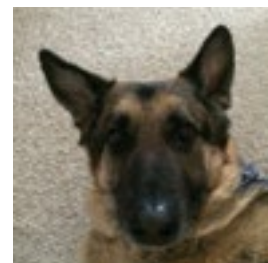
SERGEANTPATRICK/PATRICK WALSH - EDITOR/ARTIST

Some git who's a professional nine year writer, however has technically wrote since age six, with high medical knowledge. Lives in good old Blighty. He has wrote, and is writing, many worlds. Most notably his low Sci-Fi Dystopia and Gunpowder Fantasy Worlds. Known among comrades as an excellent historian and knowledge of the fields of healthcare. Loves the medical sciences and is very interested in the higher fields of chemistry. Good pencil/ink artist. Good at drawing complex, high quality maps. To the left, you can see his dog.

GANGSTERDUCK - WORLD SHOWCASE WRITER

A person! He joined this magazine to get better at writing and to look at people's worlds by interviewing. He is a fan of Classical, Orchestral, EDM, and Metal. Likes to code. He needs to actually write down his worlds.

YOUNGTUSK - ARTIST

Works in advertising, plays in all things gaming. Originally started worldbuilding for homebrew RPGs, currently in the middle of fusing many worlds into the same universe. Has an uncanny ability of ignoring "start small" advice. Blogger of things sometimes.

STRONGLYOPLATYPUS - WRITER/EDITOR

An amatuer writer, New Jerseyan, and metalhead. He writes articles for WM, and loves all genres equally. His world is a mix of historical fiction, low fantasy, and hard sci-fi. Draws decently in pencil, and has an overinflated sense of his own intelligence. Loves absurdism and tongue-in-cheek fiction. Has extremely strong opinions regarding egg-laying mammals. Has a good but limited knowledge of biology, physics, and chemistry, and is regarded as the smartest person in his circle of friends. One of the insane people who build worlds entirely inside their heads. In the icon you see him as a Wooden Helmsman from his world.

BATROUSE - ARTIST

Amateur artist who worldbuilds for fun. His world is a semi-scientific fantasy with a major focus on unique creatures, and their evolution. Specializes in animal design and lore. Canadian university student majoring in chemistry. Has a fascination with prehistoric life, especially Cambrian animals.

TRENT599 - WRITER

Well, his DnD group said that he could DM a game, and now he's fallen down the rabbit hole. Will he ever write something down about his worlds? We'll see, but until then, he'll be writing down his strange world ideas in his travel notebook, where he really ought to be recording his latest adventures on the high seas. A Canadian political nerd living abroad, he always tries to create interesting political systems, and still usually ends up with empires governed by grumpy tyrants. But at least they'll make great villains if he ever runs a DnD game.

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