



WORLDBUILDING MONTHLY

GOVERNMENT

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

I am proud to announce that the sixth issue of Worldbuilding Monthly has finally arrived! During these past two months our team has been hard at work writing, editing, and compiling articles into a magazine about governments that I truly hope you will enjoy.

After much debate the Department Heads and I have decided to shift our publishing schedule to a bimonthly basis, giving our writers and editors more time to pore over each piece. Additionally, to allow for a wider variety of submissions, articles will no longer be required to relate as strictly to the main theme of the issue.

The team has also decided to come together and, on the off months, create a mini-magazine or “mini-mag” pertaining to the topics covered in the previous month’s Worldbuilding Monthly. In these issues we will bring to life and apply the advice present in the main magazine, diving into the practicalities of building a world with one that the team is creating together: Postantera.

We will continually strive to provide the community with content that is useful and entertaining. With that in mind, our next issue revolves around gaming!

Lastly, Debug200 has been working hard to put together a website that will host all of our magazines! Feel free to check out www.worldbuildingmonthly.com.

We are always happy to meet new creators who are part of this community; if you are interested in worldbuilding and want to help out in any way contact me via reddit or at contact@worldbuildingmonthly.com.

Cheers,



u/UNoahGuy



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THE GRAND SCALE: GOVERNMENT (HOW TO BUILD A GOVERNMENT)

Hexarch

The nature of governments changes in response to the people and society they govern; governmental institutions and their functions emerge from the sum of prior political developments. For a worldbuilder trying to create a polity from scratch the task of naturally evolving a government, as they do in real life, is unrealistically complicated. By defining the following three features of a setting, and thinking about how they affect the organized societies present therein, worldbuilders can get a leg-up on crafting governments in their world—whether they be small tribes of hunter-gatherers or a galaxy-spanning empire.

The first feature is the *size* of both the territory and administration that governs it. As a rule of thumb the larger the territory the greater the population within it will be, requiring governments to also be larger in size. However, regardless of population size, if a government has few official duties the amount of officials in its administration will not vastly increase even as it takes on more territory and people. Bureaucracies' sizes will be influenced more by the amount of administration that they do than by the size of the population or territory they administer. The American government in 1790, for example, had few responsibilities; war, diplomacy, and customs were the most prominent tasks it saw to and thus it required fewer employees than it now does. The modern federal government still oversees those same duties but over the years has added functions like environmental protection, healthcare, and the regulation of industry. As governmental oversight spreads new jobs will be created, and the institution as a whole will grow. To put it simply, the size of governments in your setting will have increased slowly when adding new population and territory, and quickly when adding new functions.

No matter what the size of a government is it will continually need to justify why it has the *authority* to govern to its people, and in general this is done with one of the following four claims. First and foremost is justifying one's right to rule

with force. The concept of the right of conquest, whereby the most fit to rule is defined as the strongest and therefore most apt protector of the people, is an outdated principle that fell out of use at the time of decolonization. This concept has been used to justify the conquering and administering of foreign territories, on the basis that the strongest is the best equipped to protect the conquered. The modern evolution of this concept, that of the state's monopoly of violence within its territories, recognizes violence as a means of protection but not accumulation of land. Most governments, unless they are very recent conquerors, will downplay military might as their right to rule. However, it will always be there backing up more "official" claims to power. Another source of authority is the divine, when the ruling body claims that stewardship over its territories has been ordained by a higher power. In European monarchies the divine right of kings was established to justify the supremacy of the monarchy. Democratic forms of government in turn justify their actions with the concept of popular sovereignty, whereby the people hold supreme power and exercise it during free elections. This type of government can be traced back to ancient Athens, which practiced a very direct form of democracy where even generals were elected. Finally a government can derive power from the merits of its leaders, whether they be battlefield prowess, lineage, wealth, or experience, among a myriad of other qualities. What makes an individual meritorious enough to wield power, however, depends greatly on the society and culture they are a part of. A government will reflect the society it governs, so its source of authority will reflect the values of that society.

The third feature is the *delegation* of power from the higher to lower tiers of the administration. There will always be one person, or a small group of people, who wield the most power. It is in the delegation of these powers that a government becomes unique. As with *size* the amount of people, territory, and responsibilities your government has will determine how many officials it

needs to delegate power to, while the method of delegation itself will vary depending on the type of government you've chosen to portray. The most common form of delegation in fantasy literature, as an example, is that of feudalism. This system is often conceived of as a pyramid of power with the Monarch at its head, supported by landed nobility and the Church. The King gives out land and titles to subordinates in exchange for troops during his campaigns, surplus agricultural output yearly, and unconditional loyalty forever. Those who support him are powerful landlords thanks to his munificence, taking the forms of military aristocracy and ecclesiastic orders. In turn these powerful landowners do the same in their own lands, called fiefs, by carving out smaller fiefs from them and subletting to their own tenants in a process known as subinfeudation, 'I can't do this, so you do it in my name' is the core concept behind delegation. Another distinct form of delegation is that of Chinese Imperial Civil Service, a collection of officials responsible for carrying out government policy and administering China. European nations borrowed heavily from the Civil Service when building their own administrations in the 18th century. This form of delegation places importance on knowledge of the law and reduces the power of civil servants by making positions uninheritable and subject to a meritocracy. Additionally, compared to feudal vassals, civil servants cannot as easily overthrow their superiors by force of arms. The final question that comes along with considering the

delegation of power is the transfer of it upon death. Jayzonny's article *Transfer of Power: The Choice of Stability or Chaos* goes further into this topic, but for the purposes of creating a government from scratch what is most important to how power is passed down is the longevity of the regime. If a government is old then there is a good chance it has long standing rules on the transferral of power, if it is young they may not be so well delineated.

It is possible that the nature of a species, magic, or advanced technology might render one or more of the aspects of your setting completely alien to how we understand the world today. Your world may, for example, have a species that lives for thousands of years or one that hibernates for half its life. A setting may have technology that allows people to teleport instantaneously between star systems, or magic that compels people to speak the absolute truth. Any one of these aspects would create cultures wildly different than anything we've ever known on earth, but by taking into consideration Size, Authority, and Delegation—three parameters that have factored into the development of governments throughout the last five thousand years of human history—a worldbuilder can begin to create dynamic and organized societies for their worlds. 🐉

SHARING YOUR WORLD WITHOUT WRITING A NOVEL: RULES AND FORMATS OF NONFICTION

Bokai

The transition from building a world to sharing it with other people is one that has stymied worldbuilders for as long as worldbuilding has existed. While many people still worldbuild to provide a setting for another creative project, like a tabletop campaign or novel, a large and growing number of worldbuilders see their projects as ends unto themselves. On the one hand, not being bound by the current tastes in fiction means that worldbuilders can direct their creativity in new directions. On the other, many of us still want others to see and enjoy our work, and figuring out how to make an entire world a consumable product is a real challenge.

Typically worldbuilders have tried to solve this problem in two ways. They either resort to narrative media, thus subjecting their process to the general demands of that artform and sacrificing a great deal of detail, or they offer chunks of exposition, sacrificing narrative and human interest for a parade of dry facts. But there is a better way. By replicating the formats and stylistic rules of real-world nonfiction one can provide a great deal of information while still remaining engaging and interesting. Below are some things to consider when you want to share your world but are looking for alternatives to writing a novel, RPG campaign, or other tangential project.

The Rules of Writing Still Apply

Nonfiction may not be subject to the same expectations as fiction, with the latter's emphasis on character centric plots, action-based narratives, and satisfying conclusions, but there are still common practices that separate the good nonfiction from the bad. A worldbuilder who wants someone to read past the first sentence of their introduction should familiarize themselves with them. Nonfiction writing is a craft like any other, and must be practiced and developed.

Grab Them Fast

The only writing that doesn't need a hook contains information so important that its intended readers must read it, no matter how dry and boring it is. This applies to no worldbuilding material at all, ever. This means that you need a hook. Examples of useful hooks for nonfiction pieces include leading with a strong assertion ("The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles"), using in medias res to report on the immediate action before explaining the more boring context, raising a question that will be answered later in the piece, or promising certain content later on with "clickbait" headlines ("Learn these five tricks to bend ghosts to your will!").

Have a Bias

There is almost no piece of writing that does not come from a place of bias. Even material that claims to be objective comes from a particular frame of reference that its author may be unaware of. An innocent looking book on the history of Tibetan art, published by a state-run publisher in Beijing, will be riddled with clear instances of bias. Examples include framing all dates in terms of Chinese Imperial eras rather than the native Tibetan dating system, ignoring historical place names and borders, and constantly referring to Tibetans as a Chinese ethnic group.¹

Bias need not be damaging, incorrect, or blatant, but even when you are trying to give the reader clear information about the details of your world, consider either writing from the perspective of someone in-world or offering multiple angles through which a fact can be interpreted.

Make an Argument

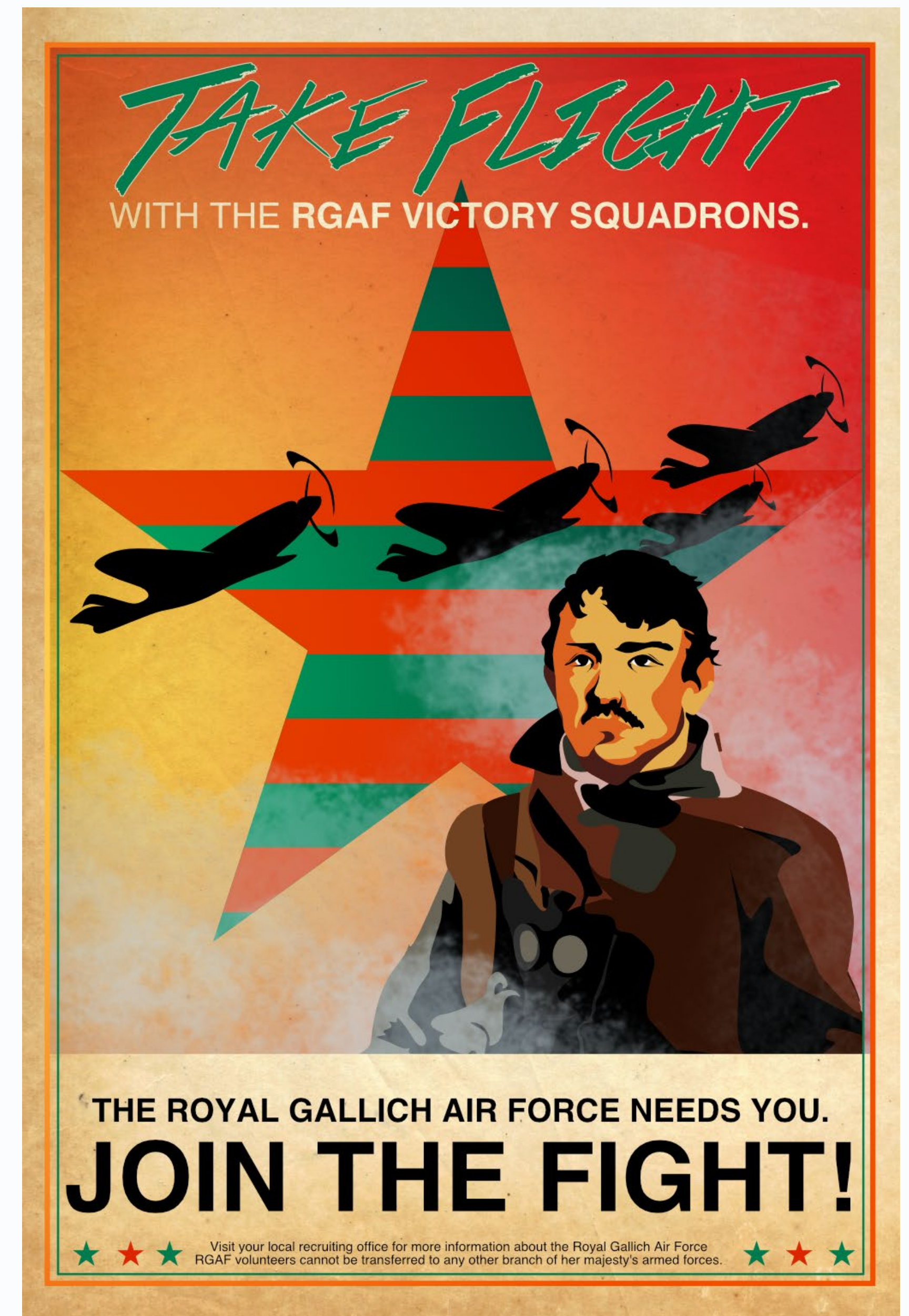
Once you know where the bias of a piece is coming from you can establish the sort of argument

it is trying to make and the audience it is trying to reach. Arguments mean dialogue and dialogue is engaging. An argument can be as direct as a letter condemning a politician, it can be roundabout and humorous, or it can selectively withhold information to lead the reader to a desired conclusion.

If you are trying to explain something from an omniscient and objective standpoint it is beneficial to make note of ways in which people within that world would argue about it. Even if the reader doesn't have enough context to pick a side by the end of a piece, by seeing multiple positions presented they will begin to think about opposing viewpoints and complexities in the setting.

Keep it Personal

It is a fundamental edict of journalism that a personal story is more engaging than a broad account. One death is a tragedy, a thousand is a statistic. Effective writers of nonfiction almost always bring the larger argument down to the individual level. Sometimes this means writing long biographies of great men and women who had direct influence on important moments in history, and other times this means writing about the otherwise anonymous everyday people who are affected by their particular circumstances of time and place. Even when you are writing about broad trends or situations a single line about how generalities play out at the individual level will ground your descriptions and make them feel more real to the reader.



Artist: Adam Bassett

Keep the Narrative in Mind

This doesn't mean that one must "write a story" but that there should be a story hidden in everything you write. Our modern idea of fiction is unfairly limited to clear beginnings, middles, ends, and a certain way of progressing between each. Nonfiction, however, is much more open, even though a narrative can still be present. A close reader of history books will recognize that the author must pick and choose what to include based on the story they are trying to tell with their numbers and facts. The more concise a history book is

¹ Zhou, Liming. *Thangka Paintings of the Tibetan Oral Epic King Gesar*. China Intercontinental Press, 2013.

the more essential it becomes to make the broader narrative explicit, because the reader will not be able to make connections themselves without the tools that they would otherwise have had if the text were longer and the pattern were clearer.

Show, Don't Tell

The bane of many a fiction writer, the adage "Show, Don't Tell," remains a truism in nonfiction too. If you are describing an oppressive regime, don't simply call it an oppressive regime and move on. Instead explain exactly what it has done to earn such a label. If there is an era in your world that is particularly tumultuous, describe the tumult and let your reader come to their own conclusions about just how bad it was. Doing so will keep the reader's brain engaged as they're forced to make connections for themselves.

Not All Nonfiction Is Created Equal, But it Has its Place

An exposé about the scandalous behavior of a celebrity will be more interesting than a census report for a farming district, but that doesn't mean that there is no place for census data in your creative output. Consider all of the nonfiction you

write as a single body of work, and use the more interesting pieces as hooks to engage readers. The drier material can then serve as supporting information for those who have already become invested enough in your world to want to dig further.

There are a great many resources that help one learn how to effectively write all manner of non-fiction, and I've provided a few of those resources below. If sharing your world with others is a goal, but you do not have any interest in the usual avenues of creative writing, studying non-fiction models will help you write material that can still be read and enjoyed.



Some quick reference links for nonfiction writing:

- [Writing News Articles](#)
- [Hooks, Leads, and Endings](#)
- [Crash Course in Learning Theory](#)
- [Writing Persuasive Essays](#)
- [Speech Writing](#) 🗣️

PENNIES, PROMISES, AND POINTED STICKS: A GUIDE TO POWER AND POLITICS

StronglyOPlatypus

A crowded room of men in suits yelling over one another about the latest law proposal; a beloved queen, feeding her husband a poisoned meal as his advisors eagerly watch him die; millions of people, casting their ballots in a heated race for a high office; a space station refusing to let a ship dock due to a war that broke out while the crew was in stasis. All these scenarios, chaotic or orderly, cruel or just, major or minor, have one thing in common: politics.

Politics, at its core, is a game of power. It's more than just a game though, it is an inevitability. Any system which divides power between people, that is to say any system of governance at all, will have a thriving network of politicians who all aim to bend the governmental apparatus to their will. That is, for better or worse, what politics is. Everyone who wishes to make a change, whether they are Eddard Stark or Emperor Palpatine, must levy their power and influence to affect the actions of a government, one of the most important aspects of any world. Many worldbuilders wish to imbue their creations with the intrigue and shadowy machinations demonstrated in both the real world and fictional worlds such as in Game of Thrones. Power and the struggle to obtain it are the basis of all of these conflicts, and serve as the basis for many interesting stories and settings.

Power comes in three main forms: money, weapons, and words, all of which are interrelated and dependant on one another.

Money

Money is straightforward; one party gives someone coin, or credits, or cattle, and the other party does what the first asks. Bribing a politician, or someone with comparable wealth and influence, would require a lot of money and last only as long as the bribed party thought the money was worth earning. Even then politicians involved risk being arrested for corruption. The upside is that a politician is a valuable asset, and a wealthy individual

can buy enough votes to sow discord in an opposing party, or even occupy another person's position of power, using them as a proxy. Influential people can be paid off to say almost anything with sufficient funds.

Politicians aren't the only people who need money though. Private citizens can perform many services too, are often cheaper, and usually need the money a lot more. They can act as assistants, making tasks easier and freeing up time for manipulating the political landscape, and in many cases they can vote too, though it's typically harder to pay off enough people to make a difference in an election or referendum. If it's in someone's interests to fight a war they can convert that money to weapons and hire a mercenary army. If a particular person really needs to die, an assassin works for pay as well.

Finally, currency itself is a form of power. Whoever controls the source of money controls the economy, and the economy is rather important. Someone in control of a bank that issues banknotes can inflate and deflate the currency at will. If a currency is backed by some good securing a monopoly on that good puts one in a *de facto* position of authority and respect. And with control over these economic factors one can manipulate the markets to make their own investments pay out, concocting schemes and forming companies to make their personal estate filthy rich.

Weapons

In politics weapons function like money does, except that instead of rewarding compliance they punish defiance. Often just the threat of violence is all that is needed to get people to toe the line, but those people must believe their government is capable and willing to carry out their threats, otherwise they hold no weight and no power over anyone. Typically, when dealing with weapons, money is a cost paid to obtain them, a more tangible asset. Soldiers, mercenaries, and assassins all need to be

kept happy, lest their spears and knives be pointed in the wrong direction. Feeding, clothing, sheltering, and most importantly paying them goes a long way toward doing that. Before anyone can exercise any of the numerous benefits provided by employing armed forces one has to make sure they're pointing their weapons at one's enemies.

The greatest of the benefits weapons provide is insurance. Anyone with political power is a potential target for violence, but armed bodyguards and the like will go a long way towards deterring assassins. As politicians pursue their goals they will get in other people's ways and may find themselves at the center of a major scandal. One can try avoiding the latter by not doing anything wrong, but sticking to their principles in the cutthroat world of an interesting fictional political setting will often get someone betrayed, killed, or worse. Anyone who wishes to stay alive has to make sure whoever may wish to kill them fears their weapons more than they hate them.

The defensive benefits to an armed force are only part of the picture, however. Along with money the military will form the bulk of a nation's power in international politics. The ability to wage war on opponents is essential, whether with the smallest tribal societies or the largest empires. In addition to the numerous benefits that come with conquering other nations, the threat of war can help bend weaker nations' will.

Of course, there are downsides to this form of power as well. In peacetime maintaining a large army can be a boon to the economy by providing jobs and services. Excessive use of the military can also interfere with civilian life by taking up land, food, and money. Soldiers are people too, and if they are underpaid or homesick morale will drop like an anchor, so providing for them is a must. Always remember that even if a leader is great in war, when the gunsmoke clears and they have to deal with administrative and public work they could very well be incompetent. One must keep all fronts in mind, economic, military, and political, or you may find one's self trapped in a corner, even after winning the war.

Words

This brings us to the final form of power: words; promises and crossed fingers; bits of information exchanged between hooded figures in the dead of night; rousing speeches given in front of an enormous crowd. Money and Weapons help directly influencing others, and while words are no different they are tougher to wield effectively. A well-spoken politician is a formidable one.

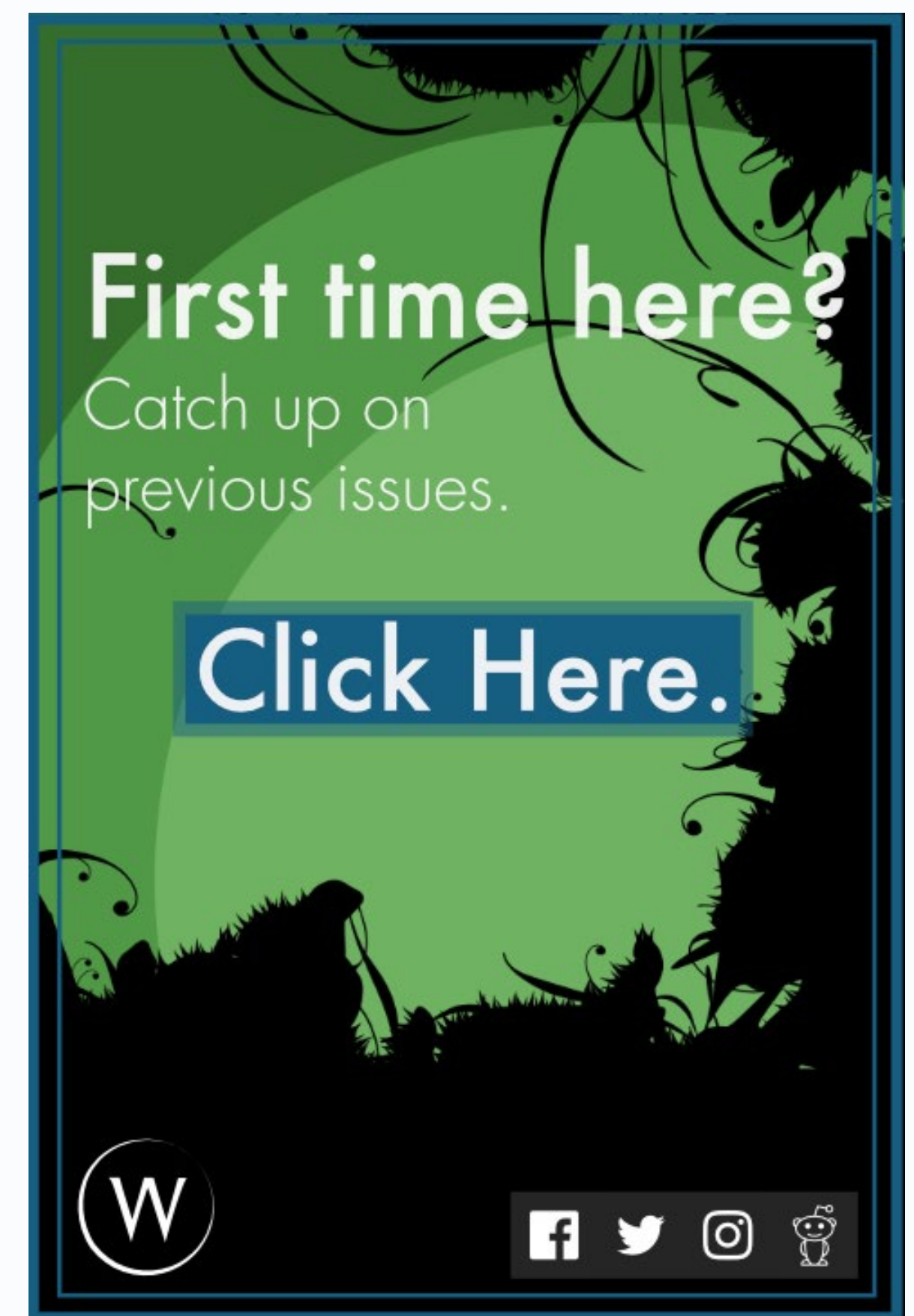
Some choose to enlist the common people to their cause, convincing them for good or ill that they are on their side, and will help them if given the political power to do so. This works especially well in republics, where the people choose their leaders. Politicians who can sway the masses must exist in any government, for an unpopular government is one destined to fall. The length of time that someone holds onto power for if they choose this route depends on them helping the people while in office, or at least how good they are at making them think they're helping. The public giveth power, and the public taketh power away.

The people don't represent the only need for promises and speeches, however. Politicians are people and an eloquent speaker can convince a politician to work with them. Making promises is a good way to get one's agenda going and to make some friends on the inside. Relationships are very valuable assets in the political world, so one mustn't break their promises without very good reason for doing so. You wouldn't work against a like-minded friend, or a spouse, or a family member, would you? Assuming there are human characters in a setting, your world's politicians can be expected to be similarly reluctant. Surrounding one's self with others who share a similar goal is a great way to combine their collective assets and become a much more powerful entity. Such political bonds range in nature, and can take the form of a bilateral deal between two politicians, a simple political marriage, or the largest political parties, though these are just a few examples. The power of words is not limited to forging alliances through promise, information also holds power and value in politics. If a political player obtains dirt on a

rival, the logical course of action would be blackmail. Information is like currency: if a first party has something the second wants, and the second has information the first wants, a trade is mutually beneficial. The same applies for the reverse, of course, and one should always be wary of other people learning things they shouldn't know.

Conclusion

One need only look to the First Triumvirate of the late Roman Republic for a real-world example of these three outlined powers working just as described. Players involved included the exceedingly rich Crassus, whose power lay in his financial empire; the military leader Pompey; and Julius Caesar, whose charismatic populism helped him gain power through the people. Together they formed a powerful informal alliance in order to achieve their individual and common goals. They financed each other's programs, helped each other pass their bills, gained offices, and forced the Senate, their common opponent, into tough positions. This example also speaks to the fragility of alliances. Crassus died while making an attempt to conquer Parthia, and the familial bond shared by Caesar and Pompey broke down with the death of Pompey's wife and Caesar's daughter, Julia. Civil war broke out between the two former Triumvirs. The Second Triumvirate rose from the first one's ashes, this time between Lepidus, Marc Antony, and Caesar's adoptive son Octavian. This alliance, too, broke down into civil war, this time tearing apart the Republic and leaving an Empire in its place. What are the lessons that worldbuilding can learn from this? Powerful people working together can drastically affect change, but the same holds true when working against each other. When worldbuilding it is important to remember stories like these, for alliances, rivalries, and the way relationships fall apart are the silk from which the ever-intriguing web of politics is woven. 🕸



ON SOVEREIGNTY, AUTHORITY, AND GOVERNANCE

Dheolos

Government is a complex institution that must perpetually battle both internally and externally for control over its polity. I will focus on three key areas of government: sovereignty, authority, and governance, and their relation to each other. All three are necessary for a government to run its polity and all three introduce avenues for fascinating and intriguing worldbuilding.

Sovereignty is simply the ability to make one's own decisions without outside influence. A government is sovereign when it has the authority to govern itself without foreign influence, and/or when it is recognized by other governments as sovereign. But sovereignty does not apply only to countries, various government institutions can also be sovereign. Historically, monarchs, such as Her Majesty the Queen of England, Elizabeth II, are sovereign. This is because their right to rule comes not from the people, but from God. A sovereign is nominally unrestrained by a constitution, rule of law, or any Earthly force. A recent debate has begun in the British Parliament over whether Parliament itself is sovereign. This is crucial to resolve quickly because if it is sovereign, that implies the Brexit referendum may be invalid, as the sole right to decide Britain's future in the EU lies with Parliament and not directly with the people.

When designing any government in your world, decide which institutions are sovereign and which are bound by the will of others. Also consider this question when creating countries and their historic and current relations with others: how important is international recognition in your world? Always remember not to have any issue be a simple "yes" or "no" answer. Government is one of the most complex and intriguing aspects of society, and your world should reflect this (or have a legitimate reason not to reflect this). There should be subjectivity and friction at every decision.

Authority is the ability to realistically enforce decisions in the territory you control. Enforcing laws, enforcing borders, building public infrastructure, and collecting taxes, among other government activities, all rely on the government having authority over territory. We don't consider

authority much because it is a non issue in most of the West. However, governments throughout the world have problems operating and exerting authority. One of the biggest threats to a government's authority is rebel groups which attempt to seize territory, thus giving them authority over it. Countries engaged in devastating wars often lose authority over territory that they do control after reallocating critical resources to the war effort, resources that would otherwise have been used to govern. Impoverished and underdeveloped countries can also have difficulties exerting and retaining authority, they cannot get the resources to govern their territory even when not facing threats.

Consider that a country's ability to enforce laws is based on how developed it is; some underdeveloped or less wealthy countries may have difficulty enforcing laws in rural areas. Consequently these areas may become bastions of crime and other



Artist: UNoahGuy

illicit activities, outside of the oversight of government. In more urban areas a spike in illegal practices can occur if the government is weakened. If your government is sufficiently weakened, what does it choose to enforce, and what does it let get away?

Due to advanced networks of infrastructure, modern technology has allowed us to, in some ways, transcend geography when it comes to authority. This is crucial in modern or futuristic worlds. A great example of the use of technology to govern is visible in the Middle East today: the Iraqi government is still paying public servants who live and work in ISIS occupied territory. In this case Iraq still holds some aspects of authority in territory it does not control, because the internet allows for the transcendence of geography. What the government is able to do with this authority, however, is harshly limited.

Governance is the intent behind the choices that a government makes, and how it wishes to run and rule over its territory. When a law is passed it does not immediately start enforcing itself. The government must allocate its resources to enforce that law in every location in the country. Consider Robert Mugabe's land seizures in Zimbabwe as an example. Currently many farmers are taking the government to court on grounds of the law being unconstitutional due to its haphazard enforcement. This, in conjunction with the legal uncertainties present in Zimbabwe, makes this case a fascinating example of the inner workings of governance. The Zimbabwean government only enforces land seizure laws when it wants to. Many Rhodesia-era* farms continue to operate today, paying taxes, employing people, and exporting crops, even though they are possibly illegal under Mugabe's regime, simply because the government has not gotten around to seizing their land.

When a government in your world passes a new law, consider the logistics of enforcing it. For

instance, if a government decides to ban prostitution, they must first publicise this to the country. If there is some variant of the internet this should be easy. However, if your setting exists before mass media, it becomes a more challenging task. If people are mostly literate, notices would need to be placed in key locations of every city, town, and village in the country. Alternatively, if literacy is not common, town criers will be needed to go up and down every street in the country shouting the new law. The next major step is to dismantle what prostitution infrastructure exists, mainly brothels. Manpower must be used to force every brothel in the country to shut down. It could be done peacefully, or with violence if needed or desired. From then on the government must continue to indefinitely monitor every area of the country to stop any practice of prostitution. Governments will never be able to fully enforce a law, as some practices always fall through the cracks, practised in dark alleyways or in basements. It is the government's sovereign prerogative to decide how far it is willing to go in enforcing its laws.

In order for a government to administer a polity it must have sovereignty, either by being recognized by other governments as rightfully having their territory or by being able to stop others from annexing or influencing them. A government must have authority, meaning that it must have the resources and ability to enforce domestic decisions it makes. Lastly, a government must govern: it must make decisions and have institutions to help it in doing so. For a government to be an interesting and dynamic part of your world there must be challenges to overcome at every step of the way. It must actively fight to uphold its sovereignty, either through diplomacy or through military force. The institutions that give it authority such as police and public servants must face challenges and resistance, and lastly there must be debate and reasoning behind why it governs as it does. 🐦



Rhodesia was a country in Africa which broke from colonial status in 1965 declaring independence under a white minority government led by Ian Smith. The internationally unrecognized "rogue state" steadily lost ground to insurgent black nationalists until, crippled, it enfranchised its black population in 1979. It was dominated electorally and militarily the following year by Robert Mugabe's ZANU group, who promptly renamed the country Zimbabwe.

TRANSFER OF POWER: THE CHOICE OF STABILITY

Jayzonny

The process of transferring power, no matter the form of government, can be used to lead a worldbuilding project in a multitude of narrative directions. Changes in leadership can be the backdrop to other important events in a world, but they could also be the focal point of the entire project, or anywhere in between those extremes. In general, transferring power from one group to another changes pre-existing political relationships between key players in a world. Whether it be monarchical succession, democratic elections, or anything in between, this process is the only way for interest groups to continue to hold onto power. Peaceful transfers of power leads to stability and predictability, allowing for the story or world to develop unhindered. A contested transferral of power leads to chaos and conflict, which allows a worldbuilder to focus on this power vacuum, a story in itself. By alternating and exploring the two different paths in a setting one can add depth to a world and expand on the roles of government, such as making laws and declaring wars.

In a hereditary monarchy the transfer of power process takes the form of succession, where an heir is pre-established before the passing of the current monarch. In patriarchies throughout history male relatives of the current ruler have had priority in the path to power, while female relatives had less opportunities than their male counterparts. Unforeseen consequences and random chance, however, have led to rulers such as Queen Elizabeth I to reign despite not being the original heir to the throne. The meteoric rise of Elizabeth to the Queenship, and the circumstances around it, caused England to focus on the ensuing power

vacuum and distracted the country from other important affairs for years. The power grab by Mary, Queen of Scots, was possible because of Elizabethan England's turmoil. Queen Elizabeth, distracted by such calamitous internal affairs, nearly waited too long to defend against the incoming Spanish Armada, threatening the safety of her country.

Some monarchies have maintained a king or queen without hereditary rule involved. The Holy Roman Empire, for example, was nominally an elective government for centuries. Control of the throne was in the hands of a group of hereditary prince-electors who would vote on the next Emperor. In theory this system would have represented the diverse groups within the Holy Roman Empire, but in reality males from the Habsburg line won the throne for 287 years straight, effectively ending the elective government. The monopoly over succession and continuity of power by

one group allows the government to continue to focus on foreign affairs, keeping the polity stable. Similarly, for a worldbuilder, keeping sections of their world stable in this way leaves room to focus on other aspects of their setting. Habsburg control of the Holy Roman Empire allowed them to become involved in the European scene and abroad in an unprecedented way. The Empire's leadership process demonstrates not only the imperfections in governments, but also that the result of these imperfections is not always negative.

Like the real world your setting should include unforeseen circumstances and consequences. Our own reality would not be the same without a king who went through six wives trying to produce a

male heir. Henry VIII is a great real life inspiration for many parts of worldbuilding, as his actions and personal reasons for taking them still affect our world today. In order to be allowed to remarry, which he wanted to do simply because his wife could not produce him a male heir, he single-handedly created a new religion. The King's actions demonstrate the importance of the human element and self-interest, going as far as effecting leaders' decisions. By accurately representing the unpredictability of reality and the shortcomings of those in leadership positions, a worldbuilder can add depth to a government through "what-if" scenarios. However, these unforeseen events should be used in moderation; the worldbuilder's creation should have some elements that perform reliably. The turmoil that occurred in England during Henry VIII's reign turned the country in on itself, rather than seeing it become involved in more international affairs.

A republic, on the other hand, is the opposite of a monarchy. While a monarchy is a government with an heir apparent, a republic is a government in which all power resides in a body of citizens. These, in turn, are entitled to vote and imbue power in elected officers and representatives responsible to them. The transfer of power between leaders of a republic occurs naturally because of the existence of term limits. In most countries today leaders do not have a direct impact on who will be their successor, although they can pledge their support to one candidate or another. In other cases, like that of Dmitry Medvedev and Vladimir Putin, those in power can designate their successor. Both Russian politicians have dominated

their country's political landscape in the 21st century, holding the positions of Russian president and prime minister since 2005. After Putin reached his term limit Medvedev rose to become President, appointing Putin as prime minister immediately. Putin, in turn, would go on to become president again after Medvedev's single term, appointing Medvedev as prime minister. The pair's monopoly over the top "elected" positions in Russian politics has led to the creation of the term "tandemocracy", in reference to how the two hold onto power in tandem. This degree of control over the transfer of power process is obviously an outlier in the modern world, but serves as a reminder that no government is black and white. Medvedev and Putin function as agents of predictability in domestic affairs that allows for a focus on foreign interaction.

The roles of proper and improper transfers of power add depth to a setting and allow a writer to focus on certain predetermined aspects of his or her story. The matter of who holds control after a leader's time in office ends can be in the hands of a select few, of the people, or anywhere in between. A peaceful transfer of power adds stability to a world that is constantly changing, but this stability does not mean that succession needs to be cut and dry. An inclusion of deaths, assassinations, wars, and scandals can affect the path to power and the values desired in a leader. A combination of these things can lead to anarchy and an interesting story in itself, as seen in George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire*. Having reliable and predictable transfers of power, or sudden and chaotic successions, can provide a writer with the predictability (or lack thereof) that is needed in their world. 🐉



Artist: Wynter

FEATURED ARTISTS:

ALEX STORER, CAEORA, & TADAS SIDLAUSKAS

Worldbuilding is not describing a place or mapping out a region - it is doing so in a believable and (if possible) beautiful way. Worldbuilding is a tool in the arsenal of an artist, be they creating visuals or stories. The magazine has not done enough to showcase the art of the community we, the members of its staff, are a part of. Starting now that will change.

Welcome to the first featured artist showcase, where we present three exceptionally talented worldbuilders.

We intend to continue this practice in all future issues of the magazine. If you have some work that can be related to worldbuilding - the process of constructing an imaginary world - please reach out to us over [email](#) or [social media](#). We would love to see what you've been working on, and it just might end up in the next issue of Worldbuilding Monthly!

Thank you for your continued support. We develop this magazine out of a love for it and the community that we belong to.

Sincerely,
Adam Bassett
Writing Department Chair &
Worldbuilding Monthly Artist

Last Patrol. Digital. 2011

ALEX STORER

A huge spacecraft hovers above a landing site. It is bulky and seems cumbersome – its complex construction shows us that this is a transport vessel, designed to move large quantities of freight, or possibly people, between the planets and the stars. It may be arriving, or possibly leaving – we cannot be sure, but the large number of people waiting at this terminal implies that they are anticipating its arrival, and what it brings.

Torrential rain and grim clouds tell us that the weather system on this planet is not attractive for humans like ourselves. It may be the norm on this world, or perhaps it represents a rapid deterioration in what was once a pleasant and idyllic land, and many are trying to escape it while they can. Now they eagerly await their chance of rescue from an impending catastrophe.

Yet a lone figure watches the scene from a balcony. He is not part of this mass reaction to events, but calmly observes the flow of humanity. Does he know something they don't? Or maybe he has simply accepted that life on this world is more acceptable than the alternative that may be found elsewhere..

Richard Hayes

See more work at:

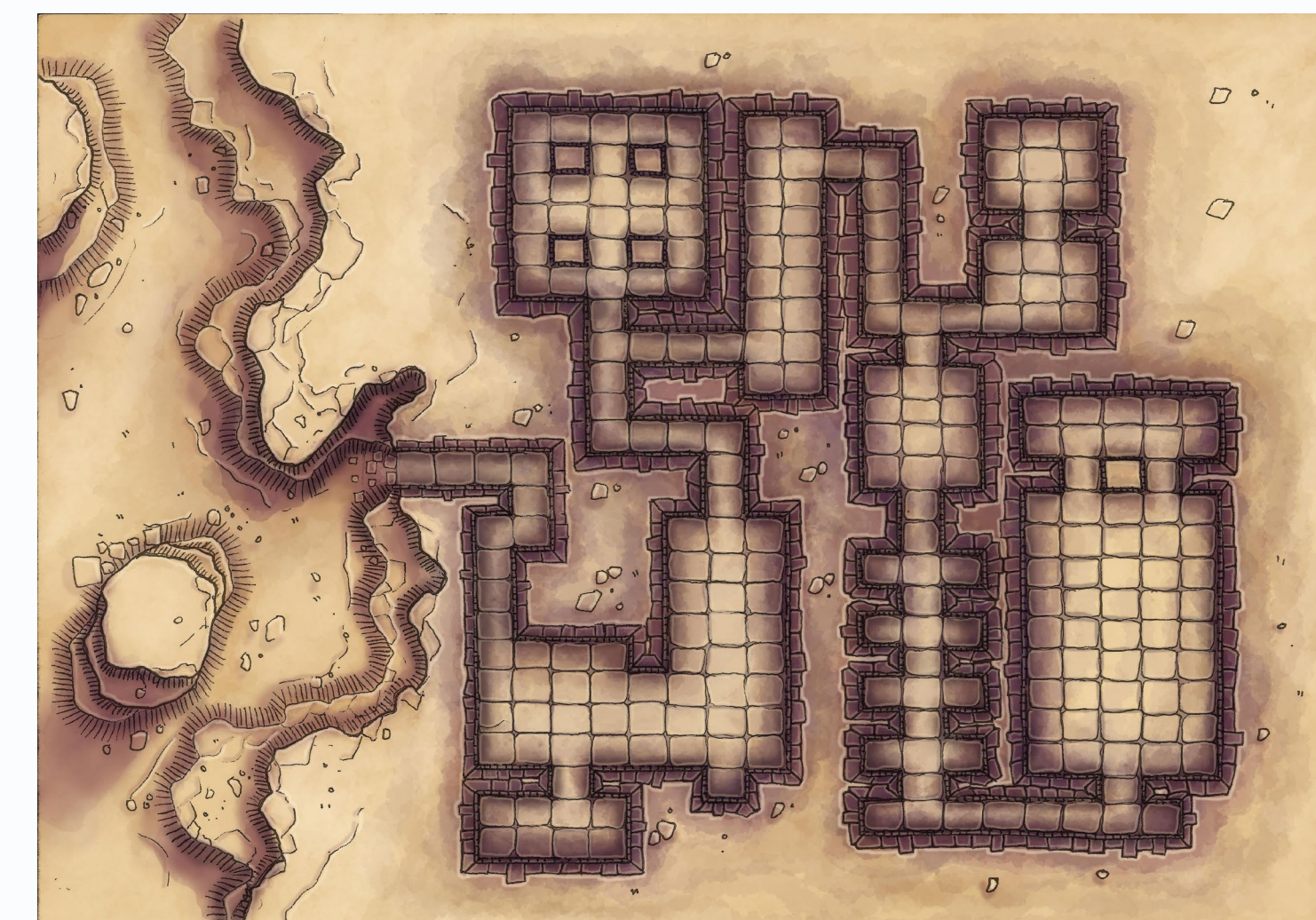
- [The Light Dream](http://thelighdream.net)



Terminal. Digital. 2016



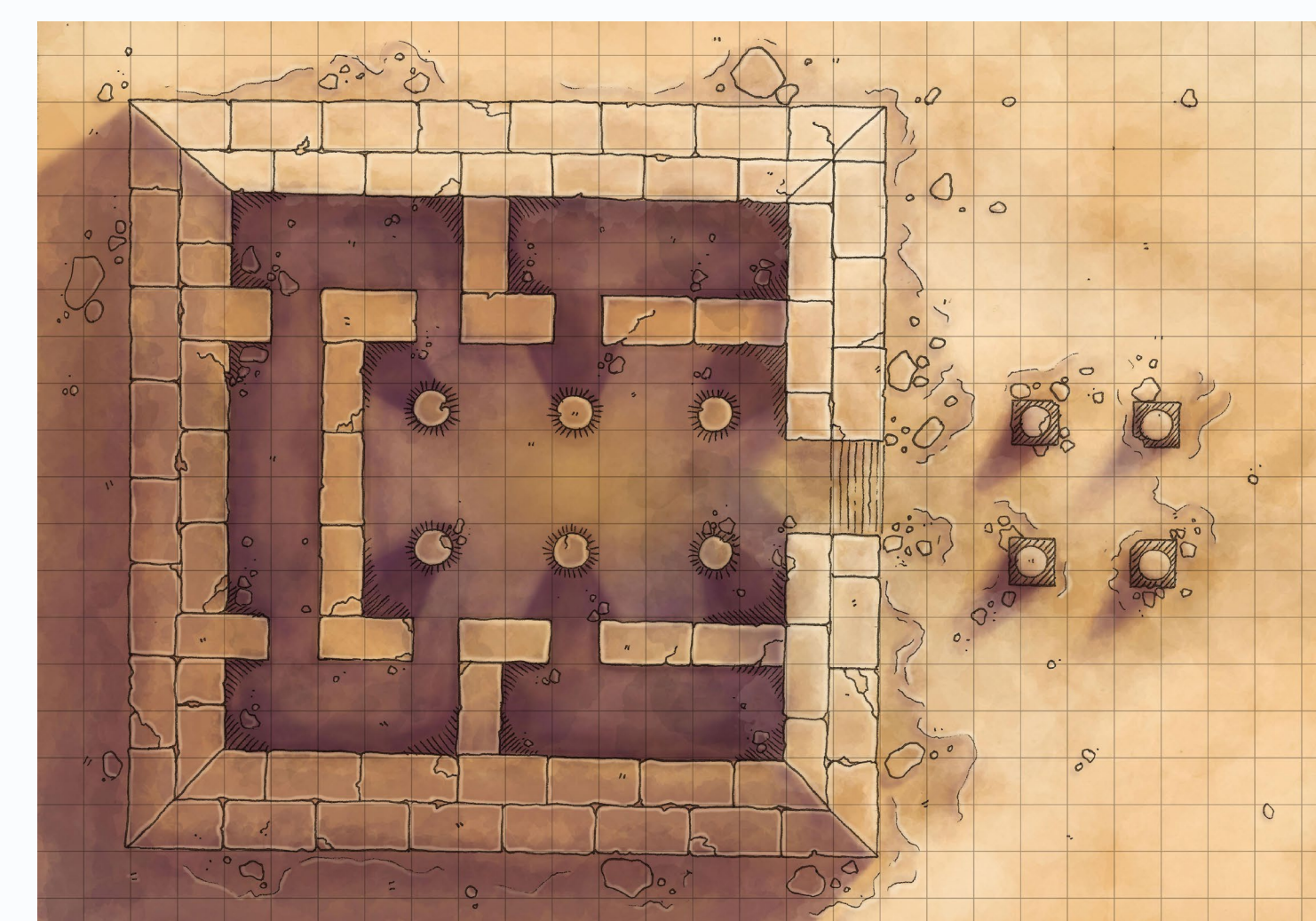
Desert Maps: Tribal Camp. Pencil, Photoshop. 2017



Desert Maps: Tomb. Pencil, Photoshop. 2017



Desert Maps: The Maw. Pencil, Photoshop. 2017



Desert Maps: Pyramid. Pencil, Photoshop. 2017

CAEORA

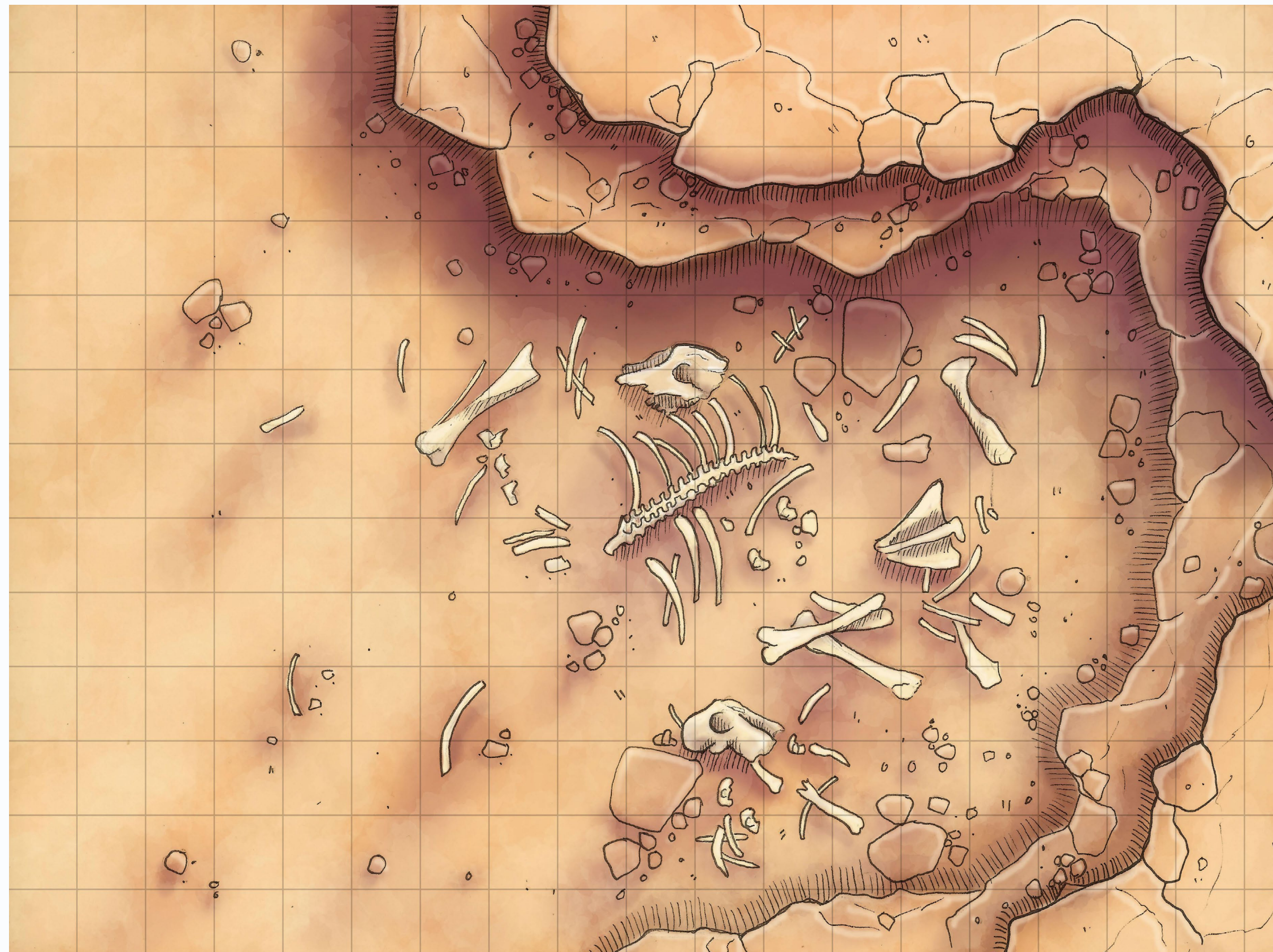
I don't really consider myself to be an artist. I draw, ink, paint and spend a great deal of time thinking about colour palettes, highlighting and how to invoke themes and emotions with the maps that I make. But for a very long time, I've called myself a worldbuilder. Maps are my way of creating a visual window into a setting, a place in a world that can be explored with your eyes. People might use my maps as battlemaps for RPG's but that is not their primary purpose, instead I want to create thought provoking content that helps stimulate and encourage worldbuilding and story creation.

With this in mind, I've currently drawn twenty desert maps, all with a purpose and unique look into the desert climate, places like desert canyons, obelisk's, boneyards, pyramids and camps. After

colouring them all, I'll be drawing and coloring another twenty maps for another climate, grasslands, mountains, swamps, tundra or oceans. I will continue until there is huge library of content that people can use for inspiration and fleshing out their own worlds.

See more work at:

- [Blue Sword Games](#) - Indie Game Company
- [Patreon](#)



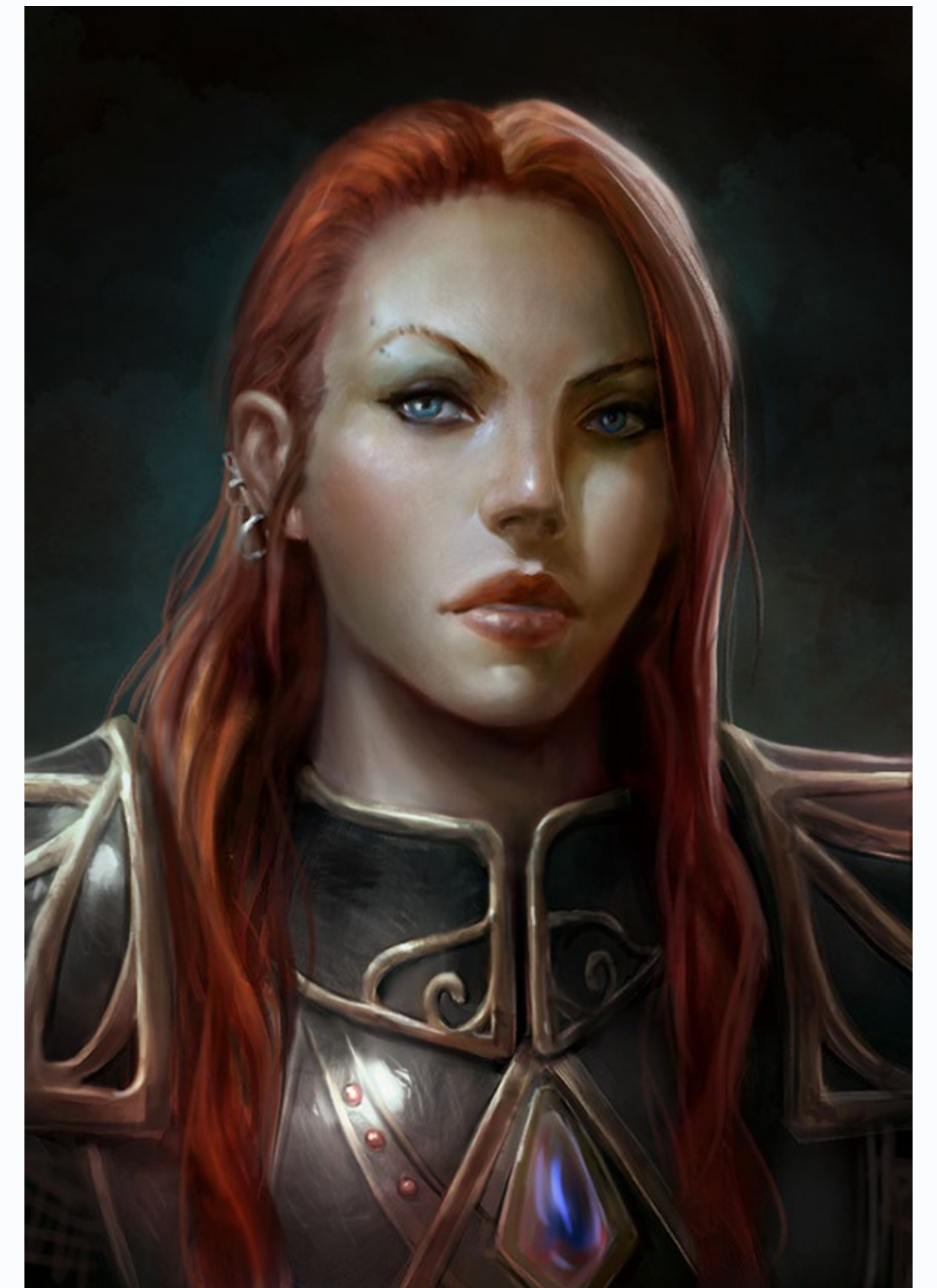
Desert Maps: Boneyard. Pencil, Photoshop. 2017

TADAS SIDLAUSKAS

My name is Tadas Sidlauskas. I work as a free-lance illustrator and concept artist. I mostly do fantasy related artwork. I find it fascinating how there are endless ways to design and interpret things. If there's some written description of a character for example - no two people would see it in their mind exactly the same. Everybody would have their own slightly different version. I find it very interesting to translate those ideas into visual images and to show my own interpretation of them.

See more work at:

- [ArtStation Portfolio](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [DeviantArt](#)



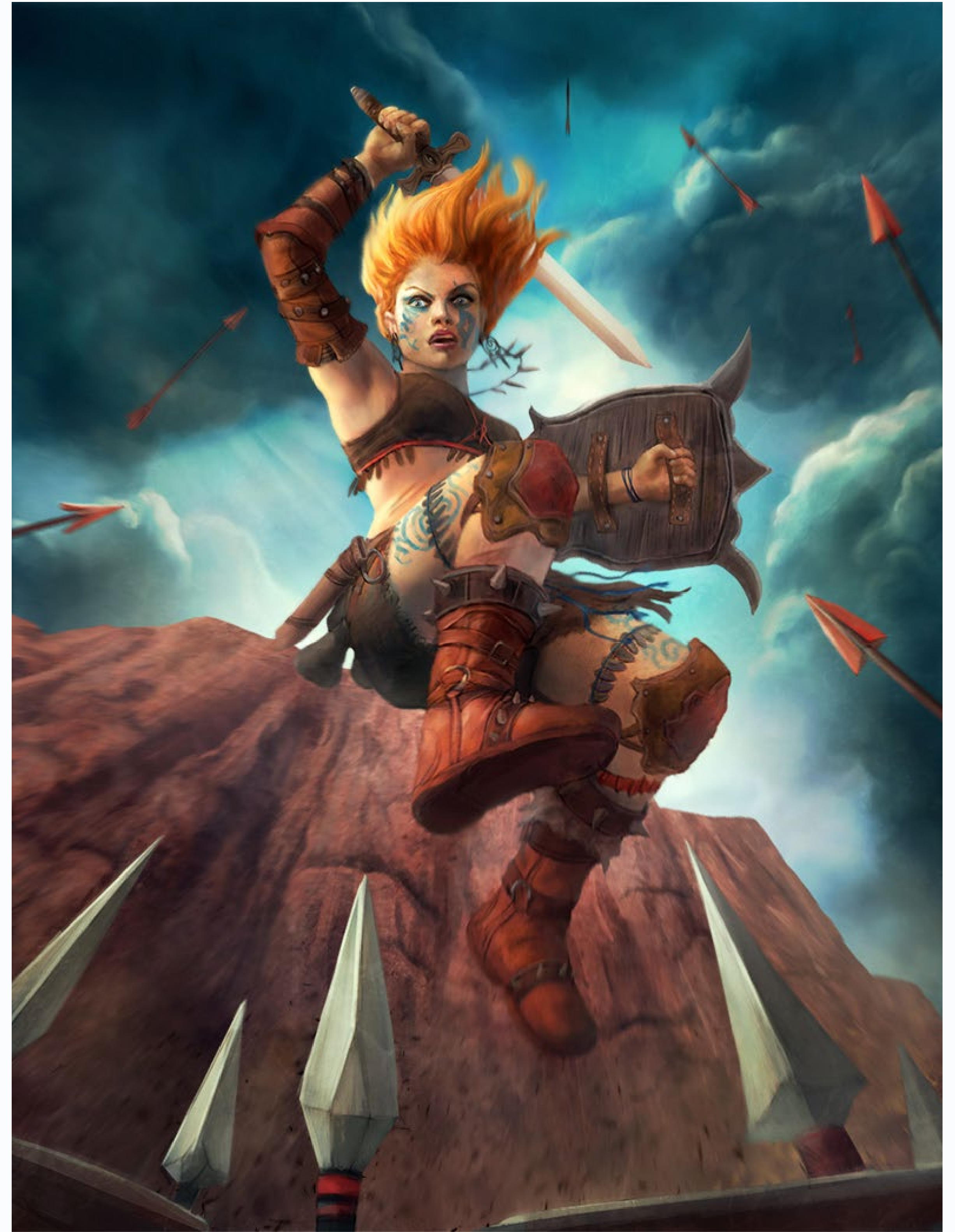
Portrait. Digital. 2016



Ifrit. Digital. 2016



Witch. Digital. 2017



Jump. Digital. 2015

BUREAUCRACIES GALORE...

HOW TO MAKE GOVERNMENT REALISTIC

uNoahGuy

Most imagined worlds have multiple forms of organized government within them. In a perfect world governments would run efficiently and without corruption, but a flawed world is often more interesting to imagine, perhaps because it feels more believable that way. After all the real world is chock full of flawed governments, ripe for the picking of worldbuilders in need of inspiration.

A classic real-world example of imperfections in government is the maddeningly complex bureaucracy that can surround seemingly simple issues. Government size depends on the level of organization a world has achieved, and how much power institutions within it can exert. Highly advanced worlds could host governments with hundreds of redundant departments, whereas this might not be the case in post-apocalyptic settings; if there aren't enough vehicles, or people to drive them, there will be no need for a Department of Motor Vehicles. This, however, does not mean that a world set in earlier ages cannot have complex governments with massive bureaucracies; China had a robust meritocratic bureaucracy since at *least* the 6th Century BCE.

On the other hand government agencies only arise when there is a need for them to. Recently the United States has been debating whether or not to form the "Space Corps," another branch of the military, as humanity's horizons expand towards space. Take a look at your world and take note of what needs to be regulated, asking yourself if it should be. You can even incorporate government organizations into your world and explore the conflict and friction against people that believe these agencies are superfluous. Here is a list of agencies that might exist in a speculative fiction setting with powerful governments: Dragon Control Unit, Department of Genetic Modification, Ministry of Magic and Wizardry, Thought Police, and The Royal Academy of Happiness.

After having created these agencies one must detail what makes them work, as well as the inefficiencies making these processes arduous and slow. Government agencies in constant contact with the public might operate slowly because of the miles and miles of precautionary red tape put in place to protect themselves, or because of excessive documentation required by law to remain transparent. You must provide a reason why these agencies exist; it all has to make sense in-world.

What is a government if it does not build or embellish itself? Governments throughout history have been obsessed with grandiose monuments that offered little if any benefit to the masses. Take the lavish palaces of Europe and the pyramids of Egypt: these projects used vast amounts of surplus resources and manpower that could have been used instead on welfare or practical infrastructure. In a fictional setting, such actions by the government could stir up resentment toward the ruling class, reinforcing rebellious sentiment present within the populace. Ask yourself what your world's most wasteful palace or monument is. The project, depending on the type of government, could be anything from an over-budgeted public stadium, to a colossal monument, to the leadership carved into a mountainside using slave labor. Government waste doesn't end there though; there can be agencies that spend all the money in administrative bonuses, while other more vital agencies have to survive off of budgetary scraps.

Consider whether an agency is truly meritocratic or if government employees are only there because there is some kind of favoritism involved. Determining who wields power and how they take hold of it can be important to creating realistic governments. If your government is a monarchy the heads of each agency may be personally appointed and removed at the ruler's discretion. If your nation is an egalitarian democracy it won't make sense for government officers to be nobility that



Artist: UNoahGuy

rules for life without any check on power. Although any type of government can employ anyone however they please, it is all up to you.

Finally, corruption plays a defining role in many governments and is present to varying degrees in every system, no matter how perfect the structure might seem. The root cause of corruption is often the desire for money and clout that can not be found in the current system. Many communist nations have a culture of bribery because government officials interacting with the citizenry are not paid what they think they are worth. Bribes offer a means to improve the squalid conditions that the officials and their families might live in, an opportunity not present to the rest of the populace. In more capitalistic societies the cause is the same: officials want to make money — everyone wants to make more money. With more robust economic systems come more complex forms of bribery, such as kickbacks for corporate partners or inside information on the market, all to increase the official's wealth and power beyond the conventional limits of their position. Sometimes corruption reaches to the levels where basic forms of government cannot

function without it, rendering the whole system ineffective in what is known as institutionalized corruption. Corruption is something that one must take into account when creating a government for any setting; it is human nature to desire more. However in a world with more than one species, it could be interesting to see how other races react to bribes. Maybe the concept is completely foreign to them, or maybe their bribes take a unique form. Every realistic government needs some form of corruption.

The more realistic a fictional government is the more the world feels tangible. Immersion is in the details. Governments are reflections of their cultures and they operate as a living apparatus, connecting intangible laws and regulations with the everyday person. Next time you work on your world take a look at the government structures within, try to see the gears in motion behind the ticking hands of the government clock. 🐉

GOVERNMENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Adam Bassett

When determining the government of a nation one should look to its past. As its creator you have a unique insight into the history of your world, and the ability to change it when necessary. Consider whether the government has historically had a single ruler, such as in a monarchy, or if it was more democratic. Were the kings or officials good to their people? The answer will determine the natural flow of the polity’s power; a series of good rulers may maintain the monarchy, while a series of bad rulers may erode it. Cruel rulers cause others to think they can reign better better, fomenting rebellions or dissent. Kind rulers can also experience resistance and revolts, of course, but the motives behind why are slightly more complex—and a discussion for another time.

According to Aristotle people are political by nature, wanting to form bonds and structures within their society. This theory suggests that governments occur naturally, having been born out of the situations a people find themselves in. These governments have a history, which as a world-builder you may use to help create their present views. This concepts applies to governments in all genres, so when building a government for your space-savvy society you will need to ask yourself similar questions to those that you asked while designing a government for a 13th century-inspired kingdom.

In an effort to inspire worldbuilders creating polities in their settings I have compiled a small list of governmental types that existed, exist, or have been theorized about in real life. While worldbuilders may create complex governing systems to suit the needs of fictional settings, we should always be trying to learn more about the real-world subjects used to create our worlds. There should be an academic foundation to a worldbuilder’s knowledge. Remember that a territory, given enough time, eventually changes forms of government so that it could exhibit properties of a few of these generalized governments all at one time. For example, after the 2011 Egyptian revolution against the dictatorship in power the military took over, following which a new democratic state was founded. Similarly, a single government may have members who represent differing socialist, authoritarian,

religious and other beliefs. Consider the following governmental systems and feel free to do some extra research on your own about those which intrigue you. Look into the way these forms of government were implemented in existing nations and consider how your futuristic space-elf society constructed their own version of it.



Anarchy

N/A

This is a tricky one. Anarchy is, by definition, the lack of a government. It belongs on this list, however, because of its close relationship to the absence of government, no matter the type. Anarchy can arise in any government in decline, as it is considered by some political theories to be the natural state of humanity. When Anarchy arises the existing government is questioned, and there is some form of fight for control.

Authoritarian

Bahrain, the People’s Republic of China, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea...

Defined by a political and/or economic submission to authority. That authority may take the form of a person, party, or class of people. Citizens of an **authoritarian** state exist to serve those in power, who may in turn choose to ignore their own laws.

Commonwealth

Jamaica, South Africa, Uganda...

A group of sovereign states linked by choice and with common objectives or interests.

Communist

The People’s Republic of China, The Republic of Cuba, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam...

Communism is not a form of government, but rather an ideology applied to them. Governments can be based upon communism, a theory or social

system based upon the idea that property cannot be held by an individual, belonging instead to the community or state. The idea was begun by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their co-authored text *The Communist Manifesto* (February 21, 1848). Communism, as they outlined, has not yet been successfully achieved. Despite that many socialist nations exist today, attempting to reach a perfect communistic society. China’s version of communist government, for example, is actually **Maoism**. This is a splinter form of Marxism-Leninism developed in large part by Mao Zedong, and while it has similarities with Marx and Engels’ text, as well as Vladimir Lenin’s interpretation of Marx and Engel’s teachings (**Leninism**), Maoism is a separate practice which stresses small industry and agrarian culture.

Democracy

Canada, Norway, The United States of America...

A government put in power through elections by the people. In a **constitutional democracy** the government is based on popular sovereignty, that is to say it is created and upheld by the will of its citizens, which is explained and set forth within a constitutional document.

Dictatorship

Azerbaijan, Laos, Venezuela...

A government headed by a dictator: a single individual with absolute power. This may also take the form of authoritarianism, fascism, totalitarianism, or other forms of absolute rule.

Ecclesiastical

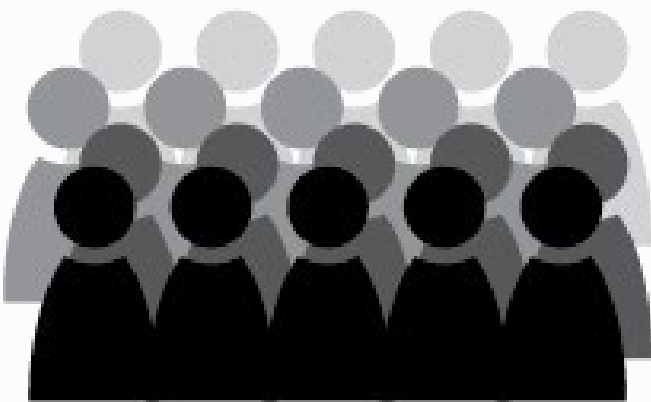
Iran, Vatican City, and the former Roman Empire...

A governing structure which is operated by the church. It also indicates a strong relationship between church and state, one where the governing officials may in some respect be treated as deities or at least as high-ranking clergy. Note that while similar to a **theocracy** these are differing terms. Theocracies identify a single law-giver whereas an ecclesiastical society has ruling conducted by an established institutional religious leadership.

Federal / Federation

Argentina, Switzerland, United States of America...

A union of states under a central government distinct from the governments of the various states involved in the union. A **federal republic** differs just in that the federal government has a constitution and self-governing subunits.



Artist: withbestintentions

Monarchy

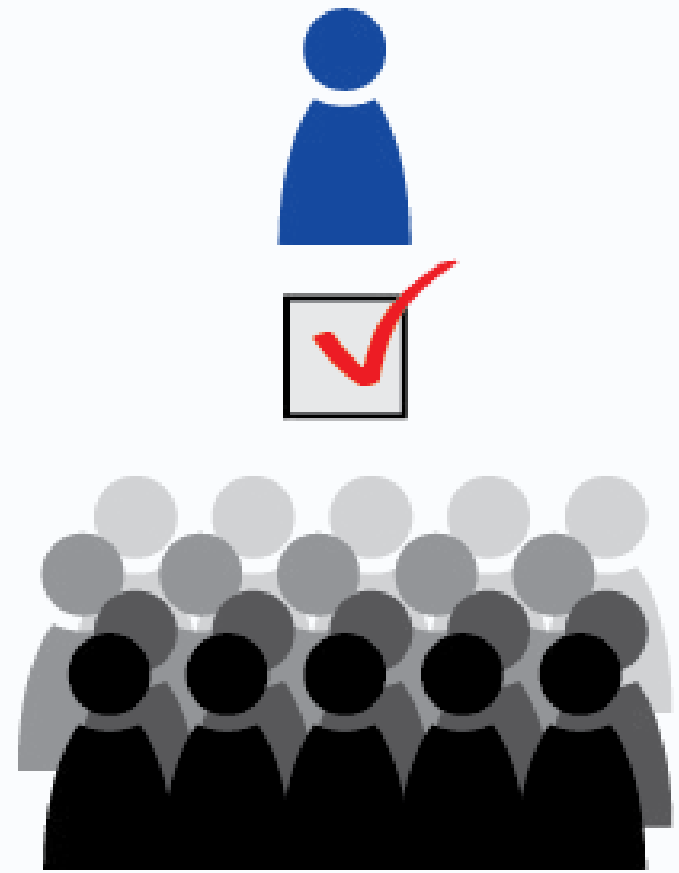
Jordan, Denmark, Saudi Arabia...

A state or nation in which supreme power or sovereignty is held by a single person, with the power usually passed down a familial line. **Limited monarchies**, such as **constitutional monarchies**, have a sovereign who is limited by established laws whereas **absolute monarchies** have no restrictions on the ruling sovereign.

Oligarchy

Saudi Arabia, Russia, Turkey...

A small group of wealthy individuals with absolute power over a nation. While there may be a presidential figurehead they are still just one of the few of the oligarchy, simply the first among equals. Note that Saudi Arabia was mentioned for a second time, this is because the government can be classified as both a monarchy and an oligarchy. The



Artist: *withbestintentions*

wealthy hereditary nobility which rules the nation are all tied by blood to the founder of the kingdom, King Abd Al-Aziz bin Sa'ud, who left behind a large number of children when he died.

Parliamentary

Great Britain, Israel, Pakistan...

A government which contains a parliament, a legislative body made up of officials who often serve to represent certain people within their nation. Certain members of the parliament may also serve as a prime minister, chancellor, or don another title of importance. A **parliamentary democracy** is the democratic form of this government, whereas the **parliamentary monarchy** is very similar to the aforementioned limited monarchy.

Republic

Armenia, Cape Verde, Zimbabwe...

Any state in which supreme power is held certain groups of people through elected representatives, and which has elected or nominated a president rather than a monarch. A **democratic**

republic is both a republic and a democracy, where authority and power comes from the citizens of the nation but the government is run through the officials whom they choose.

This is not to say that there are only ten forms of government, if none of these broad stroke systems fit in your world feel free to invent your own or modify these to your heart's desire. The countries of Earth already have, as many of them have governments that exist in between a few of those listed here. I would advise that you don't let reality dictate your decisions but I do suggest you learn all you can about the world we live in. It's quite a strange place, and people have been trying to out-do one another for thousands of years.

What you decide upon doesn't need to be like any government we know of. There are no limits to exploring what is possible when defining polities in a world that is all your own, but the best way to get started is to be informed about what is already in existence. With that knowledge you can choose to select one of those governments knowing more about it, or you will have the insight to avoid specific ruling systems. Either way, it is important to have a foundation upon which to build the governments around your world.

Further reading:

- [Aristotle's Political Theory](#)
- [CIA World Factbook](#): List of Countries and their Governmental Types
- [Encyclopedia Britannica: The Functions of Governments](#) 🐞

THE IMPLICATIONS IN GOVERNANCE OF COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION

Dheolos

Communication and transportation are of vital importance to any government. The speed with which a nation, or civilization, can send information, people, and resources from one place to another will have drastic effects on how government can operate and rule. The faster a polity is able to do this the larger the nation can be. In classical societies roads and shipping were revolutionary, and they helped many empires achieve the size that they did. Rome, despite their impressive road network, preferred expansion along coastlines because of the advantage of shipping.

As technology progresses communication and transportation become faster. Railways allowed for the mass transport of resources inland, providing breakthroughs in commerce for many inland cities that once had difficulties staying in touch with coastal networks. Before modernity we were only able to transport information as fast as we could people. With the exception of courier pigeons information had to travel on foot, by ship, or on horseback, spread by travellers or trade.

Prior to railroads, inland locations were harder to access. In worldbuilding consider the wide-reaching effects of what you include: economically, the shipment of goods inland will be more difficult in a pre-modern setting, while socially it will most likely cause a cultural divide with coastal territories. Aspects of governance, such as taxation, will also be harder, or more expensive, to carry out. The relevant economic principle is called the 'economy of scale'; the concept that as one upsizes their venture, the cost per each unit of activity decreases. Without better technology there's no way to improve the economy of scale, therefore the movement of large quantities of goods will remain difficult. Consider how governments in your worlds manage areas which they have little access to. Also consider the economics of more isolated locations, such as their need to be more self sufficient, for example. Less access to exotic goods and cheaper building materials will be more widespread in remote communities. Consider the unconventional or capricious

solutions of governments as well; France, prior to the French Revolution, actually privately sold the rights to tax collection to private parties, thus leaving the logistics to others.

To offer one example, the Kingdom of France in the 16th and 17th centuries had a huge divide between north and south that influenced the development of French culture as we know it today. Because ships were unable to reach inland cities it proved too difficult for the French crown to efficiently move resources to and from such cities. Artificially isolating communities from each other accelerated the evolution and diversification of culture; people from southern France were called "*provençal*", meaning rural, and spoke in a funny accent, putting them at odds with the "Parisian" French. Any trade in between the metropole and the provinces was dominated by small merchants, and up until the French revolution roads built by the Romans were still the dominant infrastructure for inland transportation in the kingdom. This lack of roads certainly helped further this divide.

The digital revolution and globalization have had permanent effects on governance. It has paved the way for cyber politics, the digitalization of currency, transnationalism, and more. Note, however, that there is now a huge divergence between the amount of time it takes to send information from the time it takes to send resources. It takes, nominally, a fraction of a second and a fraction of a penny to send an idea from one side of the world to the other, but it is orders of magnitude more difficult to send people or resources. Someone can go from one side of the world to the opposite in less than a day but for a huge cost. Resources can go the same distance in the same amount of time for a significant cost as well, but older and slower methods of transportation (rail and ship) continue to dominate the movement of resources because of less expense.

We stand today in the first sliver of light at the dawn of the space age, and though space travel will inevitably improve in cost and speed, let's look at

how developed it is now. It takes a few seconds to send information to the moon and with minimal cost, but it takes three days (at best) to send a person there, at an obscene cost. Likewise, it takes about an hour to send information to Mars at little cost, but months to send a resource (or person) there at an even more exorbitant cost.

This is incredibly important to note for world-building because up until space travel we've seen only decline in the time it takes to communicate and transport resources. However, with the introduction of space, we're seeing a reverse; as we extend our reach farther and farther from Earth, the time and money it takes to send information and resources is actually increasing.

Let's consider the implications of a permanent settlement on Mars. Communication with it would be trivial, the settlement would be able to keep in contact with Earth to exchange not only vital information about the settlement, but also for leisure and entertainment. A forty minute delay would make the internet inaccessible to Martians, at least with its current configuration, leaving them out of things like online gaming, IM chats, and the like. The internet would almost certainly be modified to allow Martian access to webpages and downloads on Earth, and local networks could be set up on Mars for instantaneous communication on the planet.

I'm sure some sci-fi enthusiasts will be screaming "FTL!" as they read this, but we can expect to begin colonizing other planetary bodies before we achieve faster than light transportation or communication. Thus we will, in the real world, see a dramatic spike in the time it takes to move people from one end of our civilization to another, but in your worlds this may not be the case.

To relate back to the subject, there are two areas worth exploring here. The first is the implications of this spike in terms of governance. A hypothetical Mars colony would likely not need or want independence from Earth at least for some time. The ease of communication means that the decision making process would not be any faster if the colony were independent. The colony would also be very dependent on Terrestrial resources, but that would change as it became self-sufficient, which depends on how its ideas and politics evolve.

As the breadth of human civilization gets wider and wider, and communication and transportation of resources becomes more and more difficult, the desire and need for self governance would grow. Terrestrial nations would have a harder time maintaining control over their extraterrestrial colonies, and after a few centuries sovereign, thriving extraterrestrial nations might forget their terrestrial origins and eventually establish colonies of their own, stretching the breadth of humanity further. This is the transition from a geocentric setting to a space opera setting.

If your setting consists of multiple planets consider how the sheer size of outer space, and the difficulties that brings, will affect government. How do governments maintain rule over planets perhaps several light years away? What do you think would be the average size of a sovereign nation, or would the inhabitation of space outright demolish the nation-state paradigm?

Another area worth exploring is what will happen when FTL transportation is obtained. Suddenly distances that formerly took years to traverse now take only a few hours (or even less). Consider how politics will be affected, and which groups might not want FTL to become widespread. Transportation companies, freighters, and myriad other economic sectors would certainly be overhauled. Also, self-sufficiency would become unnecessary; settlements could economically specialise in industries that their planets or systems might have a natural advantage towards. Someone whose job it is to mine iron on a planet with little iron will be out of work when iron can be imported in great quantities from a different system.

At the same time, who will want more widespread FTL? This will open up new opportunities as well. Businesses will have the option to grow in new ways, peoples will want the ability to travel great distances in feasible times. New unions, federations, and so forth will be forged.

Communication and transportation of resources and people are one of the ways that governance is tied to technology of a civilization, and they have a significant effect on the way governments (as well as economies and society) can operate. When designing the technology of your setting consider how communication and transportation restrain and enable governments.🐼

PROMPTS

It's easy to get stuck, hit writer's block, or overlook small details. We would like to try and combat these troubles by asking questions about your world that you may not have thought of, as well as by offering writing prompts. If you would like to write a short story based on one of the writing prompts, or have a prompt you would like to share with us, please submit it to us at contact@worldbuildingmonthly.com or [social media](#). Submitted stories must be based on the following prompts in order to be eligible for reproduction in the next issue.

File Requirements:

- The file must be no longer than 5,000 words
- The file must include title and author(s)

Worldbuilding Prompts:

- What lies in the deepest part of the world?
- Who takes care of the trash in your cities? Where does it go?
- What sort of creatures have been domesticated? If any are the same as what we are familiar with, are there any new uses your people have for that creature?

Writing Prompts:

- *The forest cried out with the souls of the damned, warning off any explorer who dared pass through.*
- *Magic was a mysterious force which no one understood for most of history. Until she came along.*
- *She picked up the shovel and walked out into the night.*

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