

humans

- [Erickson, TX](#)
- [Binomial Nomenclature](#)
- [whats in a name](#)
- [Some Effects of First Contact on the English Language](#)
- [I'm a Person and I Have Personal Space!](#)
- [Friendship is Magic!](#)
- [Ludd Laws](#)
- [Cynoidomorphic Human](#)
- [A Yinrih Playing Human Video Games](#)
- [On The Light and Interspecies Ecumenism](#)
- [Latin Names for Yih](#)
- [Elephant Sanctuary](#)
- [Yinrih longevity and its effects on human-yinrih cultural integration](#)
- [Human wayfarers](#)
- [Human religious communities on Hearthside](#)
- [Some thoughts on the Split Horizon](#)
- [The Hard Problem of Unconsciousness](#)

Erickson, TX

Time for some more mundane worldbuilding. Erickson is the small Texas town that the *Dewfall* lands in. Rather, a park outside of town. It's just large enough to justify the presence of a small college. The residents are very protective of their little guests, and it's largely thanks to them (and their many, many guns) that the missionaries remain unmolested.

The town was historically an ethnic enclave for Lebanese immigrants who arrived in the US via Galveston. After WWII and the proliferation of air conditioning, an influx of Yankees results in the present ethnic makeup of both near-eastern and ethnically European citizens.

The religious demographics are divided between the Maronite Lebanese population attending Our Lady of the Cedars, and the Evangelical European population attending Calvary Bible Church. To these two groups are added five Wayfarers following the Bright Way, and one wanderer tagging along with them because they're his friends.

The college consists mostly of a veterinary school, but also has a few smaller departments, Linguistics being the most salient to the events of First Contact.

The Erickson Amateur Radio Club (EARC), specifically members Bob Williams, Mark Simmons, and Louis Shaheen, are the impromptu ambassadors of all mankind who meet the missionaries after they land.

Binomial Nomenclature

human zoologists eventually have to tackle the taxonomy of life on Yih. The first thing to do is give the yinrih a scientific name. Tree dwellers are in the same genus as yinrih, so they share the first scientific name.

For the genus, several names have been put forward.

Vulpithecus (latin *vulpes* (fox) + latinized greek *pithecus* (ape) seems to roll off the tongue the best, but other names are proposed such as alopecopithecus and vulpisimius. All of these are allusions to the yinrih's "monkey fox" nickname.

The yinrih's species name also has several candidates. *Sapiens* is the most obvious, but others are put forward as well. *fidelis* (faithful), *pious* (pious), and *adorans* (one who worships) are references to the missionaries who first discover Earth. The Partisans object to these overtly religious names for obvious reasons. Other candidates are *ignifex* (fire maker), *astutus* (cunning), and *sagax* (keen, shrewd).

The tree dwellers also get a species name, with *ferox* (fierce) and *horribilis* (horrible) being put forward in an (ultimately fruitless) attempt to discourage capturing pups for the pet trade on Earth*. *silvestris* (wild/of the forest) is also a candidate.

For now, the genus is Vulpithecus. The yinrih are V. *fidelis* and the tree dwellers are V. *ferox*.

* Yes that's right, humans try to keep a creature that lives ten times as long as them as a pet. The logic goes like this: if you get one as a new pup, they're in that more affectionate, docile youngster phase for basically the entire life of the original owner. By the time the tree dweller turns into an aggressive adult, the original owner has died and this animal that will live longer than the Western Roman Empire is now someone else's problem.

whats_in_a_name

There are two Commonthroat words that yinrih use to refer to themselves. The most basic is <qgKqg>, which is analogous to the word "man" or "human", it's a common name referring to anyone of their species.

the other is <sfq-Jq-g>. This word has two morphemes (not counting the deictic inflection). It's a combination of the word <sfq-g> which refers to the planet Yih, and the suffix <-Jq> which denotes a resident of a place or a member of a group, similar to the English suffixes -ese or -an. The word is therefor analogous to the English "Terran" or "Earthling". There is a bit of controversy surrounding the use of the word <sfqJqg> to refer to yinrih in general. The yinrih have been an interplanetary civilization for nearly 95 thousand years. Even though all yinrih descend from ancestors on Yih, the vast, vast majority of the total yinrih population has never had the soil of Yih under their palms. Many people who live on Yih, especially if they were hatched there, object to the use of <sfqJqg> to refer to yinrih in general, saying it should only refer to people from Yih.

Unfortunately for these objectors, <sfqJqg> has a certain sci-fi flare to it, just like the English "Terran". So in spite of the fact that none of the missionaries are Yih natives, they decided to introduce themselves to humanity with <h sfqJqI> "We are people from Yih". The word (minus the 1st person ending) is pronounced /yip, short high strong whine, huff, long high weak growl, huff/, which the very ad hoc human First Contact team hears as "yinrih".

In English the word "yinrih" is sometimes treated like the name of a species, and thus follows the English convention of zero plurals like "fish", "sheep", "deer", etc. It is also not capitalized, just as the word "human" is not capitalized. However, since yinrih are also sapient, the word is sometimes treated like a proper noun referring to a culture, and is thus styled "Yinrih". With all that in mind, the following examples are all considered correct usage:

I saw three yinrih resting in a tree.

The Yinrih speak many languages.

A yinrih is auditing one of my college classes.

The phrase "monkey fox" is also in common use. Many humans (the sort of people who get offended on others' behalf) regard it as a slur, but most yinrih themselves don't mind, especially given that both monkeys and foxes are known for their cleverness.

The word "cynoid" (dog-shaped) is favored in some circles. Many yinrih who are fans of human culture use the word to describe themselves since it has a pulp sci-fi ring to it.

There's also a taxonomic name as described in an earlier post, "Vulpithecus fidelis". If you want to refer to both tree dwellers and yinrih together, or to their common ancestor, the word "vulpithecin" is used, coined by analogy with "hominin".

Yinrih use the word <qMqmg> to refer to humans. The word is an onomatopoea of the English word "human".

Yinrih, especially Wayfarers, may use the word <sFsFg> (friend) to refer to humans. When the missionaries ask for the name of the country they've landed in, the humans respond "Texas". When asked for the meaning of the word "Texas", the humans say that it means "friend".

Some Effects of First Contact on the English Language

Here are a few subtle changes that First Contact has on the English Language:

- The words "person" and "people" no longer refer only to humans, but to humans or yinrih.
- The term "misanthropy" and related words shift meaning to refer to anti-human prejudice rather than mistrust or hatred of humans by other humans. While this attitude is rare among yinrih, it isn't unheard of, especially within Partisan Territory and some colonies within the Spacer Confederacy.
- Furthermore, some anti-human slurs find their way into English. *Caudally challenged sweat factory* is a particularly colorful one.
- A subtle dialect develops among yinrih when writing English. Since the first humans that the crew of the *Dewfall* meet and befriend are hams, some old-timey telegrapher slang finds its way into the everyday English of other yinrih. This includes "HI HI" for "LOL", "R" (whence "roger") for "OK" or "understood", and "fine business" for "that's nice" or "sounds good." Occasionally you'll see "73" for "goodbye".

I'm a Person and I Have Personal Space!

Much to some humans' dismay, yinrih do not appreciate being petted or scratched. They have a strong sense of personal space. The title phrase is seen on public service announcements reminding humans that, while yinrih may look like dogs, you shouldn't treat them like dogs.

Friendship is Magic!

“[Arayaz](#) wrote: 2024-05-14T23:05:42+00:00 That's a wonderful insult – it looks like it's straight out of Calvin and Hobbes! It does seem too long to be a regular-use slur, though.

“[Khemehekis](#) wrote: 2024-05-14T22:43:57+00:00 Heh -- these are great!

Thanks! I'm certainly a sweat factory right about now. Gulf coast summer has arrived.

Here's a random bit of trivia that's a bit more positive: I mentioned earlier that some yinrih use the word <sFsFg> (friend) as a generic name for humans. It's not just because we're the first and only other sophonts they've found after 100 millennia of searching.

The missionaries initially think that "Texas" refers to the whole planet, or at least a sovereign territory thereon. While they're swiftly corrected, they had already relayed the news about the <qLmrsFsFp> (nation/country of friends) that they find, and this name for Terra sticks, at least as a sobriquet, within the Commonthroat-speaking community.

There are rumors that some of the more patriotic hams that the missionaries first meet had actively encouraged the misconception.

Ludd Laws

Despite bearing a Terran name, *Ludd Laws* are laws put in place on Hearthside, the Allied Worlds, and other yinrih governments to prevent the export of monkey fox technology to Earth. They are so named because they were the brainchild of Dr. Staples and other academics at Erickson College who were the first humans to interact with governments at Focus, first with Wayfarers' Haven, then, via the missionaries, with the High Hearthkeeper on Hearthside.

The crew of the *Dewfall* are not economists, historians, or anthropologists (sophontologists?), and don't understand how unreservedly giving all their technology to Earth right away could be a bad thing. Even if Iris and the others *were* versed in those fields, the Yinrih never had an equivalent to the age of exploration where civilizations with vastly different levels of technological development came into contact for the first time. Throughout yinrih history, without exception, from the post-Theophany shamanists to the present-day primitive wayfarers, the only technologically primitive societies at Focus were born of a deliberate rejection of modern life or technological progress.

The missionaries initially hand over all their gifts: tailstone, star lanterns, fabricators, force projectors, neurogel, etc. to the human First Contact team and tell them to have at it. Sunshine is especially keen on giving humanity a leg up. However, Dr. Staples et al. very swiftly realize that handing Kardashev II technology to a not-yet Kardashev I civilization indiscriminately would almost certainly result in disaster of apocalyptic proportions. The absolute best case would be total economic upheaval as nearly every aspect of human life would be upended by the influx of new tech. A far more likely scenario would be Terran militaries swiftly snapping up the gifts and, if they weren't already weapons, figuring out ways to weaponize them. Earth would be one itchy trigger finger away from total annihilation, I mean, even more so than it already is.

And so, after politely but firmly asking the missionaries to kindly put away their toys, Staples and the others take advantage of the tiny window before yinrih governments figure out who's really in charge on Earth to literally beg the High Hearthkeeper to spearhead the passage of these export bans, all before the mass router even made such exports possible in the first place.

The high hearthkeeper is initially confused and saddened. "Why are you refusing our gifts? Do you reject our offer of friendship?" but after being brought up to speed on the perils of indiscriminately dropping tech into a primitive species' lap, she understands.

The mass router is perfected less than a year after First Contact, and by then most relevant Focus governments had passed such Ludd Laws. The nature of the Underlay and Tailstone made it much easier to enforce these laws, even against governments who did not recognize them, as states who refused, especially other colonies in the Spacer Confederacy, were simply not given access to the mass router trunk line between Sol and Focus, which was only accessible through Wayfarers' Haven and eventually Hearthside.

After FTL is well established, the High Hearthkeeper returns to the issue of uplifting humanity. If monkey foxes can't bring their gifts to Earth, than humans could come to them. She sets aside

large swaths of land on Hearthside to give to human settlers. There they could have access to all the benefits of yinrih technology. A separate initiative begins on the Terran side to establish a human colony within the Spacer Confederacy as a sort of vassal state to Wayfarers' Haven. Thus is born the *Split Horizon*, the first fully independent human colony at Focus.

As these human enclaves are exposed yinrih tech, governments on Earth are able to suss out the ramifications such drastic innovations have on human culture, and can plan ways to safely introduce this space tree doggo tech to humanity on Earth.

Cynoidomorphic Human

Image

Maybe yinrih draw humans like this just like we draw animals with human characteristics.

A Yinrih Playing Human Video Games

Image

Apropos of nothing, here's how I think a yinrih would play human video games. Kinda makes me wish I had five prehensile extremities too...

On The Light and Interspecies Ecumenism

The Light is the most common title given to the being worshiped by the Bright Way. It is a non-contingent incorporeal entity possessing a will and intellect that exists independent of the universe, outside of spacetime, and is said to have brought it into being.

It is neither male nor female. Possessing a gender would imply that there are others of its kind of the opposite gender with which it must beget young, and by extension age and die. Wayfarers consistently use the neuter *it* to refer to it when using English. The Light also has no name, as that would imply that there are others of its kind that must be distinguished with names. Indeed, it belongs to no broader category to which even a common noun can be applied. Very orthodox Wayfarers even hesitate to use words like *God* or *Deity* to describe it, though when pressed most will admit that those words fit well enough.

Wayfarers do recognize that monotheistic Terran faiths worship The Light as well, though they may disagree on its attributes. They regard assertions such as "Your God is not our God" as meaningless. If there's only one, then any disagreements ought to be over attributes rather than identity. Nobody would say you're looking at a different sun if you disagree on how much helium it produces per second.

Wayfarers reject Terran concepts such as Intelligent Design, at least in its most commonly presented form. By way of example, before embarking on the mission, Iris was given a relic of her namesake, Iris the Hearthsider, specifically her writing claw preserved in a small reliquary that the missionary leader keeps on her person. The claw itself is 33 millennia old, and even the reliquary that houses it predates the human invention of agriculture. Nothing is going to convince her that the universe is only six thousand years old. Wayfarers see The Light less as a watchmaker and more as a simulation programmer, setting up initial conditions so that things passively turn out a certain way rather than actively intervening.

The Light's purpose in creating the universe and granting sapience to living things is not known, though it does seem to regard its creatures with love, as it refers to them with endearing diminutives such as "dearest little ones".

Two major camps of Wayfarers emerge after First Contact: those who wish to preach to humanity, and those who want humanity to preach to them. Both sides are happy to have human religious institutions present on Hearthsider, as they both regard friendship with humans as paramount and don't want to upset their new galactic neighbors by refusing to accommodate them. The preachers also specifically seek out fervent believers, since they figure he who is lukewarm in the faith he was born into will make a lukewarm Wayfarer. They are also wary of those who would convert too readily, as that usually means the convert is either converting to gain social standing or that he

isn't taking his conversion seriously. They don't just expect pushback from prospective neophytes, they require it. Human Wayfarers, male or female, are barred from becoming hearthkeepers, mostly due to the ridiculous length of the training involved.

As for those seeking to join human faiths, Christianity and Islam see the lion's share of converts, as they won't turn down a potential catechumen no matter how many legs he has. (Synagogues have a fair few monkey foxes knocking on their doors, but the author isn't sure how Jews would respond, though he suspects there would be a range of opinions.)The subject of ordained yinrih is controversial, ironically for the opposite reason human hearthkeepers don't exist. Yinrihs' longer lifespan would allow them to accumulate power over time disproportionate to their numbers. Traditional Christian churches (Catholic and Orthodox) do not ordain aliens for christological reasons, but accommodations to vulpithecine psychology are made, such as allowing mixed-gender yinrih religious communities and blessing childermoots rather than requiring them to marry. One of the first yinrih religious orders to emerge after First Contact is a branch of the Dominicans.

Latin Names for Yih

Since the yinrih's star has been given a Latin name (Focus), here are a few candidates for a Latin name for Yih.

Yih /jɪh/ or /jɪ/ (like "yip" without the p) comes from the Commonthorat word <sfqg> /yip, short high strong whine, huff, short low weak growl/. The word refers to earth or soil, but also to the planet Yih itself, meaning <sfqg> is very close semantically to English Earth and Latin Terra.

Some possible candidates are:

Borrowing the English word Yih, which would look like *līha*, *līhia*, or even *līa* if we want to lean into Ecclesiastical Latin's ambiguous use of H when borrowing Hebrew words (Eva/Heva, Anna/Hanna). A possible adjectival form could be *līhensis*, *līhanus/a/um*, or *līhicus/a/um*.

Using a somewhat less common synonym for Earth, like Tellus or Gaea, which is meant to allude to Yih's status as the only other life-bearing planet in the galaxy.

Using the yinrih's scientific classification, yielding *Vulpitheca*.

More poetic options could reference Yih's ring, with *Terra Anulata* (ringed Earth) rolling off the tongue nicely.

Somewhat related: The vast majority of yinrih don't think of themselves as being *from* yih, just like how most humans don't think of themselves as being *from* Africa. This makes the word "yinrih", which refers to Yih, somewhat controversial among monkey foxes. Residents of Yih may regard it as watering down their unique identity by lumping all cynoids together under a label they regard as their own. Non residents of Yih, especially those who chafe under AW hegemony, see it as further chaining them to Yih.

Elephant Sanctuary

I've been thinking that the bright way would take an interest in elephants given elephants' apparent reverence for their dead. They'd probably want to set up an elephant sanctuary similar to the tree dweller sanctuary in Newman's Dale.

Yinrih longevity and its effects on human-yinrih cultural integration

You know that old joke about soviet citizens waiting 10 years for a new car? I bet a yinrih would hear that and shrug. "10 years? That doesn't sound so-- Oh wait, that's like over a tenth of your total lifespan."

This is why I sometimes think the two species wouldn't integrate well on a societal level. Humans would change too fast for yinrih, and yinrih wouldn't do anything fast enough for humans. Hearthside would ironically be the worst at this.

One of the reasons terraforming is economically viable for them is the original investors in a given terraforming project will live to see the fruits of their efforts. Sure it's not comfortable, but you won't asphyxiate, have your blood boil, or die from an uber sunburn when you go outside. And their pups may even live to see the project completed depending on the timing.

Human wayfarers

“[HolyHandGrenade!](#) wrote: 2025-09-18T20:49:59+00:00 Have any humans ever converted to or co-opted one of the yinrih religions?”

Humans raised by Claravian fostering orders like Sherman from the Multiverse Inn are raised as Wayfarers. As for adult converts, there exist two theological stances on the matter within the Bright Way. The Dativists believe in preaching the Bright Way to the species they encounter among the stars. Dativist missionaries are missionaries in the usual sense, preaching and accepting converts. Receptivists, however, believe that the Bright Way is incomplete by design, and that the species they encounter have important lessons to teach the yinrih. Receptivists are the most likely to convert to human faiths, though they see their conversion as a fulfillment of the Bright Way rather than a rejection of it. This is a spectrum rather than a hard delineation, and most Wayfarers fall somewhere in the middle.

Of the six missionaries aboard the *Dewfall*, Iris leans closer to the receptivist end of the spectrum, which is why she insists Pascal lodge with Fr. Shaheen. The others don't have a clear stance on the matter.

It's unclear what role human Wayfarers play within the Bright Way, and here too there are probably multiple ideas. Some may see the Great Commandment as being directed to the yinrih alone, and it is their sole responsibility to seek out and unite the Uncreated Light's far flung little ones. Others may see the Great Commandment as a universal call to all sophonts to actively come together in friendship.

I haven't developed other vulpithecine faiths enough to say how they feel about humanity and how humanity feels about them. Certain milder flavors of Atavism will certainly appeal to crazy prepper types, and if it were ever more than just a meme, to the "reject humanity, return to monke" crowd. the Agentivist branch of Neoshamanism will appeal strongly to hippies, neopagans, and other humans interested in new religious movements, as both sides focus on personal experience rather than systematic and codified philosophy. The reverse is also true as can be seen with Breezy from the Multiverse Inn. Certain corners of Reddit will get along swimmingly with the Partisans, I'm sure.

Human religious communities on Hearthside

The first permanent human religious institution to be established at Focus was a Catholic mission in the heart of the City of Eternal Noon, established by an order of Dominicans founded for the purpose of preaching to the yinrih. It would eventually grow to become a cathedral. The mission was originally going to be named in honor of St. Lucy, but when the High Hearthkeeper took Lucy as her human-pronounceable name, the mission's name was changed to St. Hildegard, an odd choice for a Dominican-run institution. It was thought that Hildegard of Bingen, as a female polymath, would resonate with Wayfarers interested in baptism. Christian monasteries from various churches also spring up in the desert surrounding the capital.

There are two Jewish enclaves on Hearthside, a mostly Orthodox community established soon after First Contact within the jurisdiction of the City of Eternal Noon, and a separate, mostly secular, autonomous region established later when swaths of unused land were granted to human settlers.

Islam is represented by a large Uighur community named New East Turkistan, established under the same land-grant program as the above mentioned Jewish enclave.

Other faiths are far from absent, though they are mixed in with other human settlements.

On the subject of land grants, these grants are quite large, with enough space and resources to support a modest self-governing polity. Hearthsider political philosophy has always emphasized subsidiarity, with a comparatively weak federal government and very strong local governments. These human communities effectively operate as nations unto themselves, with the Weremoot and Wifemoot only dictating interplanetary relations.

Some thoughts on the Split Horizon

The Split Horizon speaks English but they may use Shavian instead of Latin to write it. The colony was founded in part because some humans were concerned that they would not be fully independent if they accepted High Hearthekeeper Lucy's homesteading offer but still wanted to avoid the Ludd laws that prevented yinrih tech from proliferating at Sol.

The Hard Problem of Unconsciousness

The yinrih are incapable of fully losing consciousness, even during torpor or when in suspension. It is impossible to break a yinrih's stream of consciousness without causing brain death. Fortunately, it's REALLY hard to do this, thanks in part to the yinrih's heavily redundant neurology.

Naturally, this has a huge effect on the yinrih's theory of mind. While it's entirely possible some animals on yih experience unconsciousness as Earth animals do, the yinrih can't possibly know this due to the subjective nature of personal experience.

When they meet humans, who, as you know, lose consciousness for 8 hours every night, a huge debate erupts around the implications. Is the person who wakes up in the morning the same person that went to sleep last night?

This only adds to the yinrih's perception that humans got the short end of the stick, adding the fact that we spend a third of our lives unconscious to the facts that we live so much shorter lives, and we had to invent writing rather than having it built in from the start.