

meta

- [1-Year Anniversary](#)
- [First Contact Brainstorming](#)
- [If I Woke up as a Yinrih](#)
- [The Infeasibility of Projectiles for Use in Spaceflight](#)
- [I squished it, and skewed it, and turned it all around!](#)
- [Miscellaneous Art](#)
- [3D Printed Star and Gear](#)
- [3D Paw Print](#)
- [3D printed Female Forepaw and Wind Fruit](#)
- [The Star and Gear in Color](#)
- [My Muse](#)
- [More 3D Printing Nonsense](#)
- [The inspiration for womb ships](#)
- [YPA \(Yinrih Phonetic Alphabet\)](#)
- [No Context for this one](#)
- [700 Posts and Counting](#)
- [The Headphone Jack Effect](#)
- [Some Snippets from the Discord server](#)
- [Yinrih article on Frathwiki](#)
- [Not quite a story](#)
- [FrathWiki Articles](#)
- [Update on the Commonthroat Title](#)
- [2nd Anniversary](#)
- [More story ideas](#)
- [Sketch of a yinrih in a tree](#)
- [Missionary in an Amnion](#)
- [External history of the setting](#)

- [More external inspirations](#)
- [Some Clarifying Comments on some of my stories](#)
- [More messing with Universe Sandbox](#)
- [Shower Thought: Yinrih in Warhammer 40K](#)
- [The Imperium vs the Partisans](#)
- [ASCII art of a male forepaw print](#)

1-Year Anniversary

So we're coming up on one year of this project. I thought I'd celebrate by posting my original overview of the setting that I posted on the worldbuilding subreddit. A lot has changed since then, and there's a ton of outdated lore. The taboo regarding eating in public was hard to develop, so I dropped it. The nature of the Bright Way and the purpose of the missionaries has been greatly expanded, as can be seen [here](#) and [here](#).

The Data Plane isn't really a thing anymore, as ansibles are far too low bandwidth to support a Matrix-like experience, although amnions can still pull it off locally as can be seen in my later stories.

Probably the biggest change is in their anatomy. Although I don't explicitly mention it, I still thought of them as bipedal at this stage. I didn't settle on their body plan until I was writing *The House of Friendship*.

You can probably date this by some of my attempts at topical humor. And yes, the exam I mention at the beginning is the same one I'm still trying to pass. (just failed my fifth attempt this morning [:(])

I wouldn't have been able to keep this going without the input and interest expressed by everyone here, so thanks for keeping this ADHDer going. Commonthroat is the first language I haven't scrapped in my 20+ years as a conlanger.

Anyway, here it is in all its unorganized glory.

I've been hyperfocusing on this all week, but I'm supposed to be studying for a very expensive certification exam, so I was hoping I could finally put this out of my mind by sharing it. It isn't part of a larger project or story, and likely never will be. I suck at drawing, writing, pretty much anything "creative". just the product of idle daydreaming when I should be studying. So I present for your consideration, the Monkey Fox! This was basically born out of me pondering the Fermi Paradox, and also feeling kind of lonely. I also wanted to play with some of the typical First Contact tropes, so instead of our rationalist heroes fighting off religious fanatics trying to blow them up (see *Contact*) it's the religious people desperately looking for aliens. I also think the idea of space Mormons is kind of funny in an endearing way. The aliens, while much further along on the tech tree, so to speak, aren't part of a galaxy spanning multi-species civilization that humans haven't found yet. They're all alone, crying out into the void just like us. I originally conceived of them as more dog like to signify their status as Man's new best friend, an intelligence that isn't our own that can walk through the hardships of life alongside us. It's not organized; it's just a bunch of ideas.

Anatomy: They're about 4 feet high on average, with bodies covered in fur save for the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet. They have two arms and two legs, as well as a tail. The hands, feet, and tail are prehensile, and the feet look like slightly larger hands. Speaking of hands, they

have six digits, with an arrangement like humans' but with an extra thumb on the other side of the hand. One of the digits on each hand contains an ink sac, with the claw being modified into a sort of pen nib. So they have a natural writing utensil. The torso and limbs are proportioned like a human's (hence "monkey"). The head looks vulpine (hence "fox") with a muzzle, rhinarium (wet nose), and erect, triangular, well-furred ears.

Yinrih are the sort of small, furry critter that triggers a human's nurturing instincts. After all, they look like a cross between a fox, a red panda, and a lemur. The only physical feature that mars this otherwise adorable image is the eyes. They're black, as in no pupil, iris, or sclera, and there's no reflection whatsoever. This appearance is due to the structure of the surface of the eye, which consists of millions of nanoantennas that couple with the ambient electromagnetic radiation the same way a radio antenna does. The result looks disquietingly like they have empty eye sockets.

Natural History: Before "asking 'why'", which is their term for achieving sapience, they were social tree-dwelling carnivorous animals living in large "family" groups, though see below for why "family" is in quotes. The natural pen finger was used to mark territory. They grouped together for protection from larger predators and to make reproduction easier, but they hunted alone and did not share their kills. Kits were expected to hunt as soon as they were weaned. This food strategy will have a huge impact on their culture later. They began asking "why" around the same time as modern humans, so around a hundred thousand years. However, they reached level II on the Kardashev scale (consuming 100% of their sun's output) around the time we discovered agriculture. The secret to their rapid development lies in the fact that they didn't invent written language, they evolved it. They've been able to preserve information between generations for as long as they've been speaking. This is in sharp contrast to humans, who only invented writing around 5000 years ago.

Reproduction: If you could come up with a procreation method that you could explain to a class of kindergarteners without blushing, this would probably come close. Monkey Foxes are monotremes (well, they evolved convergently into monotreme-like creatures). The females lay eggs and sweat milk from the palms of their hands to feed kits, hence the common oath "by the palms that nursed me!" The males also lay "eggs". Technically they're spermatophores, but they're still called "eggs". Female eggs have yolk sacs while male spermatophores do not. The males do not produce milk. Both genders have a cloaca and lack external sex organs. Upon reaching sexual maturity, members of the den will start laying eggs, and females will produce milk, all on a regular nesting schedule. When breeding season comes around, sexually mature den members put their eggs and spermatophores into a central nest. A protective membrane forms over the clutch and forms a sort of external womb. The eggshells dissolve, and the combined genetic material from all the contributing parents mixes into a soup, which is then used to form zygotes which eventually grow into a litter of kits. The kits feed off the yolk sacs from the female eggs while in utero. The number of kits in a litter depends on the number of contributing parents.

There's no intercourse, and Monkey Foxes completely lack a sex drive. This means that human concepts revolving around reproduction like courtship, marriage, or the concept of having a mother and a father that you can point to as your progenitors don't really compute for Monkey Foxes. Kits are raised by the grownup den members together. The phrase "It takes a village to raise a child" is literal in their case. Uninformed humans often mistake the Monkey Foxes' lack of "Eros", as C.S. Lewis would term it, to mean they're cold and emotionless, or that they're somehow an entire race

of uptight prudes. The fact that most Monkey Foxes interacting with humans are missionaries only reinforces this misconception. You can no more praise a Monkey Fox for his chastity than you can accuse a bald man of having red hair or measure the temperature of the vacuum of space.

Monkey Foxes do know what “love” is, in the sense of “willing the good of the beloved” and they are more than capable of forming friendships and acting selflessly for the sake of others. They do, of course, have their own cultural taboos and disordered appetites, and unfortunately some of those taboos intersect with human customs that we would find not only normal, but necessary.

Customs: Because Monkey Foxes lack the concept of modesty, and because they have fur, clothing is optional. Any clothing that is worn is utilitarian, like hats for shade or raincoats to keep dry. Monkey Foxes living and working on earth will wear clothes to better fit in with humans. We humans say a lot with what we wear, after all. When on their native world, the more communicative function of clothing is filled by perfumes. Their stronger sense of smell means they can detect individual volatile compounds that combine to make up a single odor. So, where a human police officer would wear a uniform and a badge to let others know what he’s doing and who he is, a Monkey Fox police officer would have a particular scent that communicated the same. Luckily for us what a Monkey Fox thinks smells good largely overlaps with what a human thinks smells good, so nobody’s strolling around smelling like a broken gas line.

The big “hangup” in Monkey Fox culture surrounds eating. Because their ancestors hunted and ate alone, they have a strong resource guarding instinct, and altercations around food can and do lead to serious injuries. Eating in public is shockingly taboo for Monkey Foxes, though that’s not to say there aren’t people who do it anyway. Normally, Monkey Foxes eat once every week or two, and enter a state of torpor for about 24 to 48 hours immediately after, which functions like sleep for humans. Monkey Foxes do not sleep in between meals. The food itself is bland, not unlike hard tack or, as technology progressed, a dietetically engineered flavorless nutrient paste. Drinking publicly is fine, although it’s also rather plain, with the only elaboration being the addition of alcohol for relaxation or caffeine for stimulation. Most Monkey Fox faiths have strict restrictions surrounding eating, not unlike how sex is seen in human culture. Even talking about your feeding habits is the sort of delicate conversation reserved for medical professionals and religious confessors.

This eating issue is a huge cultural barrier when Monkey Foxes first meet humans. Humans, as I’m sure you know, have a ton of social and religious traditions around food. Sacred hospitality is a very common human custom and naturally the first go-to for a human to make a guest feel welcome is to offer them something to eat.

First Contact: The dominant faith in Monkey Fox culture is called the Bright Way. The Bright Way can be traced back to nearly the beginning of Monkey Fox history, which again, is around 100 thousand years. It’s had its ups and downs, taking turns as persecutor and victim, with plenty of peaceful tolerance (in the sense of putting up with something you disagree with for the sake of social harmony) in between. Apologists will put forward, half-jokingly, that surest proof of the Bright Way’s divine mandate is that it’s managed to survive so long despite the profound stupidity of its leaders. However, around the time of First Contact, much of Monkey Fox society has secularized, and most who self-identify as believers are merely culturally attached rather than practicing members. The central tenant of this faith is that Monkey Foxes are to be apostles to the rest of the universe. “Go and spread your light to the stars, and ye shall become brighter yourselves.” is a

common scriptural quotation.

Religious doctrine requires that there be other sapient species out there, but much like humanity's attempts at finding aliens, the Monkey Foxes have had no luck thus far, even though they discovered radio while we humans were still squatting in a ditch poking berries up our noses. Being confronted with the Fermi Paradox is a big reason why The Bright Way has lost relevance. There's not much point in preaching to the blind infinity, after all.

Monkey Foxes who claim to have encountered aliens are the same sort of people who on earth would claim to see Mother Theresa in a cinnamon bun, and they're dismissed off hand even by the otherwise devout. That's not to say the faithful haven't made serious, intellectually rigorous efforts to find ETs. This pursuit occupies a similar cultural position as missionaries do on Earth. They'd been sending probes, launching manned vessels, and otherwise screaming into the void for longer than we humans could possibly imagine, and they were only greeted with empty, pitiless indifference.

A typical Monkey Fox missionary journey went like this: build a pod about as big as The Titan, except hopefully less implodey, stick a dude inside, put them into hypersleep, and yeet the pod in the general direction of a star system with a planet in the habitable zone. If the onboard AI doesn't pick up artificially generated radio signals after orbiting the planet for a while, begin the long journey back home. If, however, the computer detects artificial radio signals, the ship pulls the intrepid explorer out of hypersleep, whereupon he or she would put on their best ironed white dress shirt and tie (or cultural equivalent) grab their Good Book, and get ready to go door to door spreading the good news.

Of course, even at the relativistic speeds achievable by current Monkey Fox technology, these round trips take hundreds of years at a minimum. This might seem unmanageable, but Monkey Foxes regularly live at least 600 earth years, and don't age at all in hypersleep. Certain ground crew members would also be popsiced in parallel with their missionary charges in order to preserve institutional continuity. Also keep in mind that, to a species whose cultural memory extends back to the dawn of their very existence as a sapient race, it really isn't that long at all. They also have some tricks up their nonexistent sleeves for preventing "generation gap" from developing between the long absent traveller and the folks at home.

While it's called "hypersleep" it's really more of a way to halt metabolism while keeping the brain active and connected to the Monkey Fox version of the Matrix, which they call the Data Plane. While they haven't figured out how to send matter faster than light, instant information transfer is possible thanks to The Underlay, a kind of subspace that allows superluminal communication. Interstellar vessels are equipped with an Underlay tunnel endpoint, with a corresponding endpoint located back home. Missionaries are able to interact with mission control and their loved ones back home via the Data Plane, sort of like a Clarke's Third Law version of Zoom. Having said that, interstellar missionaries probably won't ever see their loved-ones in the flesh again, so it is customary to hold a living funeral for friends who are preparing to venture into the infinite unknown.

Language: Monkey Foxes and humans have very different vocal tracts, and cannot directly produce one-another's speech sounds. Any "loanwords" from one language to another, are thus more

properly seen as onomatopoeia attempting to mimic the other creature's speech sounds. Monkey Fox vocal articulation happens mostly in the chest, throat, and nostrils, with the mouth, tongue, and teeth barely involved at all. To a human, Monkey Fox speech sounds, rather adorably, like a dreaming dog, so lots of quiet growling, yipping, and breathing through the nose. It's also frustratingly quiet by human standards. The best approximation of a Monkey Fox's word for their own species is yinrih, which, again, sounds more like a pair of quiet yips ending on a sharp nasal exhalation. Rather unhelpfully, the word translates roughly as "of the earth" or "from the ground" or in other words "earthling", go figure.

As far as how we sound to the Yinrih, we're basically constantly screaming. If you're an American, you're probably used to this reaction anyway. It is possible for us to understand what the other is saying, although the yinrih are most comfortable when we're talking just above a whisper, and we have to be in a pretty quiet environment to hear what they're saying. Eventually humans and Yinrih develop a lingua franca sign language to communicate directly. Their body plan and ours is similar enough for this to work.

Yinrih aren't terribly strong compared to a human. An unarmed human could easily kill an unarmed Yinrih. However, it's a good thing to remember that Yinrih civilization as a whole reached level II on the Kardashev scale around the same time humans discovered agriculture. While they're not quite "sufficiently advanced aliens", some of their tech flirts with Clarke's Third Law, like the aforementioned underlay tunnel endpoints.

While the Yinrih are much further along technologically than us, the fact that they've been able to write since they became sapient means they've missed out on a lot of very hard lessons that we humans have had to learn. Since we spread out across the globe millennia before inventing written communication, we've had to "rediscover" our fellow humans. When we think about contacting alien intelligences, we often pattern the experience after these historical instances. Yinrih culture never sundered completely after the dawn of their species, so they're far more homogenous as a result. One could compare the full spectrum of Yinrih culture to that of the Romance-speaking areas of the former Roman Empire. Sure there are different languages and cultures, but they're all pretty recognizably related. There's no Yinrih equivalent to the Basque people or Native American groups. This lack of experience with culture shock means that the Yinrih have a much harder time meeting humans than we have meeting them. In spite of all that, the Yinrih are eager to get to know us better.

Even though first contact is established for religious reasons, the missionaries have made it clear that "conversion by the sword" is strictly off the table. The long history of The Bright Way means that believers have had plenty of experience as both persecutor and persecuted, and they don't want to repeat that cycle. Nevertheless, they are not indifferentists, and will happily debate those whose views differ from theirs. They may not change their mind, but they'll at least change the subject. Unfortunately there are other Yinrih factions besides the Bright Way, and they're not as eager to engage in peaceful cultural exchange.

The biggest of these less than friendly factions are the Partisans. Historians differ on why exactly they formed. Some say they were a hardline religious sect, others say they were anticlerical iconoclasts. Most likely it's a little of column A, a little of column B. If you think that's impossible, you've never heard of the horseshoe effect. The Partisans occupy a large swath of territory on the

fringes of the Yinrih's home star system.

First Contact Brainstorming

I don't think I've given much thought to how humanity handles First Contact, so here's some brainstorming:

This is how it plays out for Bob and the other hams in the park with him the night of First Contact:

- Bob attempts to make a contact through a recently launched amateur satellite (What hams call "squirting the bird").
- He tunes into the sat's beacon signal, which is just it's call sign repeated in Morse. Right after tuning in, the signal abruptly stops.
- Bob chalks it up to someone else hogging the transponder output power and starts sending his call sign and asking for a response from any listening station ("Calling CQ").
- After a minute or so of repeated CQ's he gets a response, which is just "CQ CQ CQ CQ CQ CQ" spammed over and over again.
- Bob responds with something along the lines of "You must be a new ham. Happy to see you working satellites, but this isn't how a contact is supposed to work." (I'm expanding what would in reality be a heavily abbreviated string of letters). [Here's how a CW QSO over satellite is supposed to go.](#)
- The mysterious other party spams CQ CQ CQ a few more times and then stops.
- Bob goes to bed.
- He wakes up well before sunrise to go to the bathroom but can't go back to sleep, so he exits the camper/tent/etc and just stands outside staring at the stars.
- Quick note about Bob. Like a lot of hams he's an odd fusion of geek and redneck. He was raised on his father's pulp sci-fi collection and golden- and silver-age comic books, and has the typical interest in tinkering common to all hams. He is also the typical friendly but uncomplicated and blunt sort of person you'd associate with semi-rural Texas. In short, he's a genre-savvy redneck.
- He sees a UFO land in a nearby clearing. It drifts to earth under a parachute, having dropped like a stone from orbit rather than landing like a shuttle. It's roughly the size and shape of a camper van.
- He stares dumbstruck at it, fearing to come closer. This state of affairs continues until morning twilight.
- He hears stirring from within the craft, and cautiously approaches, crouching behind some bushes to remain hidden.

-As the sun breaches the horizon, a hatch noiselessly opens and a white-furred creature the size of a large dog emerges, looks around, then re-enters the craft.

-Bob hears quiet yipping and growling coming from inside the craft, then the same creature re-emerges along with five others, one of whom is completely hairless. A rod surmounted by a decorated metal ball is wrapped in the white one's tail. The creatures look like monkeys with the head of a fox, and thus Bob mentally starts calling them "monkey foxes" in want of a proper name.

-The nekkid monkey fox starts looking over the other five, uttering louder yips and growls, which Bob has now deduced is their language.

-As this point Bob knows that aliens have landed, that there are only six of them, and that they do not appear to be making any effort to stay hidden. They appear to be unarmed (the rod born by the white-furred creature does not seem to be a weapon), so Bob cautiously emerges from the bushes.

-The aliens notice him approach, and all but the first white-furred one retreats back to the ship. It barks a few times in their direction, then turns to face him.

-It backs up a few paces, its ears pinned back, then it unceremoniously pukes a bunch of translucent yellow goop onto the grass.

-It shakes itself off in canine fashion, dropping the rod in the process. The metal ball at the top bursts open, and bluish white milky liquid spills out, soaking into the dry brown grass. The creature glances back at the mess, then back at bob, an unreadable expression painting its vulpine countenance.

-Bob notices the creature is craning its neck to meet his gaze, so he sits down in the grass to make it more comfortable.

-This seems to embolden the creature and it comes closer. It barks a few more times in the direction of the craft, and the others tentatively re-emerge.

-The creature rears up on its hind feet, pats its belly twice with its left front extremity, then sits back down. It repeats this gesture again, and bob mimics it, assuming it to be a greeting.

-The creature utters something, gesturing downward at its feet with its muzzle. It utters the same thing while pointing its muzzle at its conspecifics behind it. As with the greeting, it repeats this a few times. Bob catches the following repeated /yip, whine, huff, growl, huff/.

-Bob attempts to repeat the utterance, guessing its their name for themselves, but all his human vocal tract can manage after a few tries is "yinrih, yinrih".

-Bob pats his chest and says "Human, human". After a few repetitions, the creature manages /huff, grunt, huff, grunt/.

-At this point, Bob's fellow hams have approached, standing a ways behind him and the aliens. They express fear and skepticism about this encounter, suggesting that the authorities be called.

-Bob, as I said before, is genre savvy, and there's only two flavors of alien encounters he's aware of: Either they come in peace or they don't. If they do come in peace, the government captures them and cuts them up. They've shown no hostility up to this point, and besides that, they're fuzzy and cute, and it's always the adorable ones that end up on the dissection table. Bob delivers an impassioned speech along the lines of "This is America, they're innocent until proven guilty. If they are hostile, then we shouldn't be the ones to fire the first shot, Texas means 'friend', and we should greet them as friends," etc.

-Bob turns back to the white-furred one who he assumes is the leader and extends his hand to offer a handshake. It looks at his outstretched limb, its head tilted in puzzled bewilderment.

-Bob attempts to demonstrate, clasping his hands together and pumping them in a 'one man handshake.'

-The alien rears up and clasps its own forepaws together and pumps them in exact imitation of Bob's gesture. This elicits a chuckle from Bob, but he persists in demonstrating the correct way. He pulls one of the other humans forward and demonstrates a proper handshake with this second party, repeating several times.

-He faces the alien and extends his hand again. It reaches forward slowly. Bob notices the features of its forepaw: thick doglike pads, sharp red claws, six digits (inner thumb, four fingers, and outer thumb). The claw next to its inner thumb is flatter and broader than the others. Hand and paw finally grasp one another, and First Contact is achieved.

If I Woke up as a Yinrih

I was asked what I'd think if I turned into a yinrih. Here are my thoughts:

Pros:

- + Extra thumbs. I could open jars with one hand (paw) because I could use a finger and my inner thumb to twist the lid, and the rest of my fingers and outer thumb to hold the jar.
- + Prehensile tail: Do I even need to elaborate? It's as dexterous as a tail could possibly be. It has enough tensile strength to support my weight, and just enough compressive strength to act as a cane when walking on my hind feet. I'd be prehending the crap out of everything with that bad boy.
- + 2 extra li'l grabbies (my rear paws).
- + Built-in writing utensils. Random guy: "Do you have a pen?" Me, holding up my two writing claws: "All the dang time! Oh, you want to BORROW it? Sorry I'm not amputating my fingers." And you better believe I'd be sniffing my own ink. I love the smell of rain.
- + All the extra colors I can see thanks to my much wider visible spectrum. Oh, and I could actually see, too. That's a plus.
- + Built for an arboreal lifestyle. I'd brachiate all over the place making silly gibbon noises, or as near as my cynoid vocal tract would allow.
- + Prodigious sense of smell and hearing: Cancer detection let's go!

Cons:

- Covered in fur: I hate it when my hair covers my ears, and I hate having facial hair. Being covered in hair all over would be a sensory over-stimulation nightmare.
- Whiskers: Same as above, but on steroids.
- Wet nose: I don't think I'd like having a slimy mucus membrane at the tip of my face. Yes I know it helps with the sense of smell, but I'd dislike it all the same.
- Claws: With the exception of the writing claws, I think having sharp claws would be hard to manage.
- Humans trying to pet me: get your paws off me you dirty ape! Do you want an assault charge? because that's how you get an assault charge. This would only be a problem right after First Contact, though. I think after a while humans would wise up to the fact that yinrih aren't dogs and don't like being touched.

- No sweat glands: No more persistence hunting :(

Mixed:

~ My hands are now also my feet. Boo! (but on the plus side, my feet are now also hands, yay!)

~ Longer lifespan: NGL living for seven centuries would be both awesome and terrible.

~ Can't speak English anymore, but now I can finally speak Commonthroat!

~ Not being able to go unconscious. If my chronic insomnia translated into a difficulty going into or remaining in torpor, I think I'd go nuts. On the plus side, I'd no longer have the existential dread of wondering whether the me that wakes up in the morning is the same me that went to sleep, or just an exact copy that has the same memories.

On the whole, I'm happy to be a member of *H. sapiens*, but being a *V. fidelis* would be cool in its own way.

The Infeasibility of Projectiles for Use in Spaceflight

OK, Yih's escape velocity (really escape speed because direction doesn't matter as long as you don't hit the ground) is about 10.557 km/s. Let's assume the following:

1. a yinrih can survive a constant acceleration of 6G (relative to Earth gravity)
2. a projectile will continue accelerating at a constant rate until it leaves the bore of the cannon

If $\text{velocity} = \text{acceleration} * \text{time}$, and $\text{distance} = 1/2 * \text{acceleration} * \text{time}^2$, then how long does the cannon have to be to achieve escape velocity at a survivable acceleration?

First we need to find the time it would take to reach escape velocity at a 6G acceleration. Solving for time we get 179.5454472 seconds, or about 3 minutes. Now we need to figure out how far the projectile will travel in that amount of time. Solving for distance gives us about 948 km, which is just too dang long.

And this is with some generous fudge factor in the yinrih's favor. Yih's gravity is actually lower than Earth's, about 88%. If a human can withstand about 6 times Earth gravity, we'd have to scale that down for yinrih. Also, even if you could build a cannon that big, what propellant could possibly achieve a constant 6G acceleration.

The Bright Way eventually figures this out, but they go through a lot of martyrs. It's not that they don't know the math, but they don't know what conditions they can survive.

While I was in the middle of writing this, my dog (the very one I based Commonthroat on) flopped down under my desk at my feet, turning off the power strip my computer was plugged into, as if to say "O thou of little faith! We SHALL touch the stars!" Windows somehow recovered the state it was in when it lost power. Yay capacitors, I suppose.

I squished it, and skewed it, and turned it all around!

Image

I tweaked the Star and Gear a bit. It has a different color palette. The star is now gold instead of pure yellow, and there's an arch representing the Claravian halo. The normal star and gear sans arch is still the traditional holy symbol for the Bright Way, but I like the idea that icons would be framed like this.

Miscellaneous Art

Image

Not much justification for this one. I'm just playing around with Inkscape.

3D Printed Star and Gear

Image

Here's my first self-designed 3D printed project, or at least the rudiments of one. It's the star and gear symbol. I took the SVG file used to make my avatar and imported it into Blender. I gave the shape some thickness and then exported the model as an STL file.

3D Paw Print

Image

Here's a 3D print of the front left paw (male).

I'm surprised the claw marks managed to show up at all. I'm still learning a lot about how all this works.

3D printed Female Forepaw and Wind Fruit

Image

I got some white filament today and decided to test out multicolor printing. This is a female forepaw print, as well as a wind fruit a printed a few days ago.

Note the obvious polygons on the wind fruit. I know now that "shade smooth" in Blender doesn't mean "print smooth".

It's a good thing PLA a biodegradable bioplastic because 3D printing produces a ton of waste.

The Star and Gear in Color

Image

Here's the star and gear in color. It's the largest thing I've printed so far, at about 150 mm in diameter. There were some problems on the left side you can see, but since I'm not a 3D printing veteran and can't really see the details of the process as it happens I'm not sure what caused them. All in all I'm fairly pleased.

The downside of multicolor printing is it adds a TON of time to the print, since there's only one nozzle it has to purge the old color before it can start extruding the new color. My trick to avoiding this with a flat print like this is to have each color be a different height. The white outline/base is 1 mm thick, the blue gear is 1.2 mm thick, the yellow star is 1.4, and the red ring is 1.6 mm thick. You can see a blue-green "halo" around the star where it hasn't risen above the gear's 1.2 mm.

The bonus for me is that it makes the print more tactily interesting. I printed this with the standard 0.2 mm layer height, but with something this big I should have probably used thicker layers with a corresponding increase to the heights of each color. That would also cut the time down.

Not sure if y'all find this print stuff interesting or not, but I'm happy to bring some of the 3D models I made in Blender into the real world. All of these flat prints started out as SVG files I made in Inkscape. Then I imported the file into Blender, converted the Besier curve paths into meshes, and added some height. I have to do the coloring in the slicer before sending it to the printer.

My Muse

This fellow currently cowering in fear of the scary noises outside is my guide dog. He is the inspiration for Commonthroat and to a lesser extent the yinrih as a whole.

I posted a spliced-together sample of his sleep vocalizations, the ones that inspired the sounds of Commonthroat, over in that thread some time ago.

Anyway, I thought I'd finally share a photo of my fuzzy red muse.

Image

More 3D Printing Nonsense

More 3D printing nonsense. Here's an improved star and gear... coaster? IDK it's way to big to serve as a keychain. The old version is on the left and the new one is on the right. I used a different coloring method and larger layers to make it print faster.

I feel a bit egotistical printing my avatar over and over lol.

Image

The inspiration for womb ships

Image

I may or may not have mentioned before that womb ships are based on the *Titan*. I started the Lonely Galaxy around the time this was in the news. The Bright Way's cavalier attitude toward death in pursuit of the Great Commandment during the Golden Age is inspired by OceanGate CEO Stockton Rush (I couldn't think of a more posh name if I tried), or at least my impression of the man when the scandal first broke--not malicious but reckless perhaps to the point of culpability.

YPA (Yinrih Phonetic Alphabet)

Now that I'm working on Outlander, and since I want to start working on Hearthsider in the future, I decided I want to create a universal system for referring to yinrih speech sounds. Here is one candidate. Yinrih language is highly tonal. Plenty of Terran languages (Sino-Tibetan especially) like to refer to tones by number. So I've expanded this system to encompass not just tone, but all the features of a vowel. Consonants are indicated by letters (case insensitive).

Vowels

Timing

- 1 short
- 2 long
- 3 early
- 4 late
- 5 overlong

Tone

- 1 low
- 2 high
- 3 rising
- 4 falling
- 5 peaking
- 6 dipping

Strength

- 1 weak
- 2 strong
- 3 strengthening
- 4 weakening
- 5 cresting
- 6 troughing

Phonation

- 1** whine
- 2** growl
- 3** grunt
- 4** plain hiss vowel
- 5** trilled hiss vowel

Consonants

- h** huff
- c** chuff
- y** yip
- p** plain hiss semivowel
- t** trilled hiss semivowel

The system meets my criterion of only containing ASCII characters, but it's not compact in the slightest. Just the word `<rnqg> paw` is `<c1213h1112>`.

Thoughts?

No Context for this one

Image

I was just playing around with the shape builder tool in Inkscape.

700 Posts and Counting

I'm impressed I've been able to keep this up for so long. I didn't even notice the 700th post at the time. Almost nobody IRL knows about this little project of mine. I feel ashamed to bring it up. I aggressively separate my online persona from my meatspace self, which is probably why I'm so averse to sharing the Lonely Galaxy outside of the internet.

Sometimes I feel like conworlding is what you get when you strip away all the curb appeal from speculative fiction. There's no plot and there are no characters except those that serve the history of your world. It's pure setting. If you're like me, you *love* the sort of trivial details that make a setting feel more alive but don't move a story forward. There are some media franchises I know almost solely through extensive wiki walking, without ever having read the books or played the games. WH40K and D&D being the foremost examples I can think of. I guess you can think of the Lonely Galaxy as a fan wiki for a franchise that doesn't exist.

I also compare my artistic attempts for this project, both visual and literary, to getting your hair cut at a barber college. You're definitely not going to have a huge range of fancy styles to choose from, and you're taking a risk that the experience may not be perfect, or even satisfactory, but you're helping someone learn, and the price is right. I think there's a bit of joy to be had from seeing someone's raw unfiltered imagination. No focus groups, no test audiences, just the stuff rattling around in someone's brain.

The thing is, I'd never want this to be my job. With pay comes expectations, and expectations breed stress. Here there are no expectations. We owe each other nothing beyond common courtesy. I write when I feel like it, draw when I'm in the mood, etc.

The Headphone Jack Effect

I feel like I should explain a bit of my own personal philosophy that has informed some of my worldbuilding. It's something I like to call The Headphone Jack Effect, which is a reference to Apple's controversial removal of the headphone jack from the iPhone 7.

A person is a complex and sometimes contradictory mess of wants and needs and ideas. Everyone has their own goals and their own idea of how the world ought to be. If one person is already a mess, an organization, made of many messy people, is even more of a mess. Sometimes people want the same thing, but have very different motivations for doing so.

What does this have to do with Apple or headphone jacks? Apple is not a person, it's an organization made of many people, who, as above, are all straining in their own direction trying to accomplish their own goals. I have no doubt in my mind that some people at Apple wanted to get rid of the headphone jack to increase the sales of wireless headphones. However, there are also legitimate reasons why one might want to eliminate it. A jack is a potential ingress point for dust and liquid. The jack itself as well as the DAC it connects to take up room in an already cramped chassis. That same space-hogging hardware also adds manufacturing complexity to a device that already has a bluetooth radio which serves the same purpose.

I can see some engineer making a sincere and impassioned argument for the jack's removal just as much as I can see C suite executives tenting their fingers and salivating over the potential profits.

What does this have to do with the Lonely Galaxy? I sometimes feel like I make some groups out to be a lot worse than they actually are. For example, I made it sound like the founding of the Knights of the Sun was a cynical move to exploit the zeal of pious young men who were too stupid to realize they were being used. And yeah, some clerics were acting in bad faith, but plenty of others genuinely cared about the people who used the infrastructure the clergy controlled, and wanted to see them safe from harm. Were some knights hiding behind religion to go on a power trip? Sure. Were other knights trying to defend the weak and help the helpless because that's what their faith said was important? Also yes.

What do I think about the headphone jack? Honestly I think the increased liquid resistance isn't worth the loss of what was an inexpensive and simple solution that lasted for a hundred years precisely because it was a good idea.

Where am I going with this? I honestly don't know. It's just been on my mind for a while.

Some Snippets from the Discord server

Here's some stuff I wrote on the Discord server.

Responding to Egerius while discussing yinrih bathroom habits:

“ You manage to position yourself over the toilet. This bathroom is mercifully empty, and the hallway outside is deserted. The stall is something out of a nightmare, no door, walls barely two feet high, not even tall enough to obscure a yinrih’s head. Just as you start to relax, you hear the telltale tap-tap of claws on tile. Someone has entered the bathroom.

To your horror, he takes up residence in the stall next to you. You notice a flash of red and flick your eyes to the side without moving your head to get a better look at him. Atop his head is a red baseball cap, his ears sticking out of holes cut into the sides. The words “Make America Great Again” are written across the front. The other red garment is a tee shirt, his forelegs slid through the sleeves and the care tag barely visible amidst the white fluff of his chest fur. Che Guevara’s face is emblazoned across the alien’s back, glaring defiantly at the ceiling.

The yinrih turns and notices you.

“Wow, a human!” he synthesizes, tapping the partition between you with a claw.

You stare even harder at the far wall as sweat begins bedewing your brow. The monkey fox does not take your silence the way you had hoped, launching into a breathless monologue, thankfully steering clear of the topics broached by his clothing.

You push the tinny voice of his synth as far back in your mind as you can, though snatches of his soliloquy breach the surface of your consciousness.

“...But then I took an arrow in the knee...
...And he turns himself into a pickle...
...The cake is a lie...”

At this point you’re drenched in so much sweat that you don’t need to pee

anymore.

Then something he says drags you back to reality. "...And they have these stripes running across their back. Other than that they look a lot like we do. They can even stand on their hind legs. I saw vids of one in one of your zoos. Shame they went extinct..."

In response to Artaqunrxes commenting on Spacers eating "kibble":

“ Angry yinrih "Hey I find that offensive! We're not dogs."

Other yinrih: "Oh, don't be so sensitive, dogs are cool" *holds up a Welsh corgi while giving it ear scratches* "yesyouare whoseagoodboy?"

Angry yinrih: "Yeah, just wait till a human thinks you're a dog and tries scratching YOU behind the ears."

Other yinrih: "We don't look THAT much like dogs. See? They have four digits, we have six, they have digitigrade feet, ours are plantigrade. A human's not going to mistake me for a dog."

Angry yinrih: "Oh you poor licker, I envy your blissful ignorance." *gestures to a vid screen showing a human spending entirely too much time trying to pull open a door clearly marked 'PUSH'* "For creatures that rely almost entirely on vision they sure miss some obvious signs. All they see is a furry face and a wet nose."

Yinrih article on Frathwiki

I spent WAY too much time on this considering it doesn't say anything new, but here it is, an article on the yinrih for Frathwiki.

Edit: and here's a link to the [article](#)

The yinrih (/ˈjɪn.ri/), commonly called the monkey fox, is an arboreal animal native to the tropical rainforests on the continent of Damsback on the planet Yih. It is notable for being the only other species besides humans to achieve sapience.

Name

The English word **yinrih** (plural **yinrih**) comes from the Commonthroat word **sfqjgq** (/yip, short high strong whine, huff, long high weak growl, huff, short low weak growl/), meaning *a person from the planet Yih*. Some yinrih reject the use of the word to refer to the species as a whole. Many residents of Yih regard it as diminishing their unique identity, while others who oppose the cultural and economic hegemony of the Yih-led Allied Worlds see the name as an example of cultural imperialism. Nevertheless, the word is used by most yinrih themselves with no intended ideological meaning.

The crew of the *dewfall* introduced themselves to the small group of humans gathered around their landing site with the phrase **h sfqjql** (*we are people from Yih*), which was imitated onomatopoeically by the humans as **yinrih**. The Commonthroat word **sfqjgq** carries a similar connotation to English terms encountered in science fiction such as **Terran** or **Earthling**, and so was deemed a fitting self-designation by the crew despite none of them being Yih-natives.

The word **monkey fox** is a common name for the species, which has inspired the honorary scientific name ***Vulpithecus fidelis***. The genus name comes from Latin *vulpes* (fox) and Latinized Greek *pithecus* (ape), which in turn has given rise to the adjective **vulpithecine**. **fidelis** (Latin *faithful*) is a reference to the Claravian missionaries who made First Contact with Earth.

Other names include **cynoid** (dog-shaped), popular among yinrih fans of human science fiction; **dog possum**, now rare; and **tree doggo**, used affectionately or as an insult.

Appearance

Yinrih are often described as having the head of a fox and the body of a new world monkey. They weigh between 50 to 80 pounds on average, with males being larger than females. They stand about 30 inches at the withers, and are about 6 feet from the tip of the nose to the tip of the tail.

Fur and Skin

Yinrih bear fur in a variety of patterns, including solid black, piebald (white with black or brown patches), solid white (with or without biscuit pointing), blue (either a diluted black or black with white ticks), fawn (tan with or without a black face mask), fox red (either solid red or red with black ears and black socks), and liver (brown).

The underside of the paws as well as the distal portion of the digits is furless, revealing grayish-black skin underneath. The skin of the muzzle is also grayish-black. The skin across the rest of the body is ruddy, though piebald yinrih also have patches of gray skin under their brown or black fur.

Head

The head is variously compared to that of a fox, wolf, or coyote, with a wet nose, whiskery muzzle, and erect ears. The brain-case is surprisingly small, with the yinrih's high intelligence achieved through nerve density rather than brain size.

While yinrih possess normal eyelids suggesting eyes with a size, shape, and placement similar to Terran canids, their eyes are unlike those of Terran animals. When fully open, the eyes appear completely black, giving the impression that yinrih have empty eye sockets. This appearance is due to the structure of the eye, which consists of an array of millions of organic nanoantennas on a shared ground plane. The eyes function like radio receivers rather than cameras. Electromagnetic waves induce a varying voltage in these nanoantennas. This voltage is converted to nerve signals that are processed by the brain.

Behind their primary eyelids are four pairs of nictitating membranes that function as bandpass filters. These membranes have a specular appearance and are usually colored red, blue, silver, and gold, though may vary in color depending on ethnicity. Hearthsiders, in particular, are noted for possessing a pair of deep glossy blue bandpass membranes.

Body

The back and shoulders are broader than those of Terran canids. The limbs are dense with musculature, and the rear feet are plantigrade. All four paws have six digits, with the lateral-most and medial-most digit of each paw being an opposable thumb. The distal end of the digits possesses a sharp orange-red claw used for climbing and combat. The digit next to the inner thumb on each forepaw is known as the **writing claw**. The claw itself is flatter and broader than the other claws, shaped like the nib of a fountain pen, and is connected to a duct leading to an ink sac located near the knuckle.

The palms and digits have pads, with the palmar pads of the forepaws being sexually dimorphic. Males have three large pads, two near the thumbs and one along the base of the other digits, while females have the same two large pads near the heel of the paw, the distal area of the paw has several smaller pads surrounding a lactation patch which sweats milk when exposed to saliva. The rear paws are slightly longer than the forepaws, and both males and females have the same

pattern of several large palmar pads.

Tail

The highly prehensile tail is slightly longer than the rest of the body. It contains no bones, but is strong enough under tension to support the entire body, and has enough torque and compressive strength to lift small objects. The tail is often held erect, with the end curled up, and is laid across the back when carrying burdens and when eliminating waste.

Reproduction

The yinrih's reproductive strategy resembles that of Terran salmon. They are semelparous (only reproducing once in their lives). While often described as oviparous, they are more accurately termed exovoviviparous. Both females and males lay very large unfertilized eggs. When two to twelve eggs are combined into a clutch, with an equal number of male and female eggs, the eggs merge together to form a complex egg sac known as a womb nest. This womb nest possesses a simple heart and circulatory system. An artery runs down the ventral interior of the womb nest, with branches feeding individual amnions in a bus configuration. The dermal layer is highly vascularized to aid in gas exchange. Gestation takes around 144 days. The process of emerging from the womb nest is informally referred to as **hatching**, though the term **yeaning** is preferred.

A single yinrih may have between two to twelve biological parents divided evenly between males and females. Mothers are called **dams** and fathers **sires**. A group of parents is called a **childermoot**, and a group of offspring is called a **litter**. Offspring are called **kits** from the time of conception until they are weaned. From weaning until reaching sexual maturity the term **pup** or **puppy** is used. All yinrih cultures reckon age from the time of conception, with the entire litter considered to be the same age. It takes roughly 53 years for a pup to reach sexual maturity.

Because yinrih are semelparous and because reproduction does not involve physical contact, yinrih completely lack a libido in the human sense. The drive to reproduce manifests as broodiness, which is the desire to raise children. Sires and dams do not feel romantically attracted to one another. The relationship among parents in a childermoot is frequently compared to teachers in a school.

Childrearing strategies have varied widely through place and time, but three strategies are common at the time of First Contact. The entire childermoot and litter may share a single home, with all parents contributing to the litter's upbringing. Parents may live singly, watching small groups of pups in rotation. Parents may also live alone while caring for the same few pups throughout their puppyhood, with other parents and siblings being viewed by the pups like very involved aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Behavior

As sapient creatures, yinrih cannot be pigeonholed into a neat set of behaviors any more than can humans. However, some comparisons are useful.

Humans are bipedal, largely furless, social, persistence hunters adapted to a tropical savannah environment. Yinrih are quadrupedal, arboreal, and built for strength rather than speed or endurance. With a coat of fur and no libido to give rise to the concept of modesty, yinrih do not wear clothing. The communicative function played by human clothing is instead filled by perfumes.

While humans rely almost exclusively on vision, yinrih perception is divided more evenly among the senses, with smell and hearing being exceptionally keen. Touch is also prevalent, but taste is fairly weak compared to humans. Yinrih cooking emphasizes mouth-feel, aroma, and visual presentation rather than flavor. When taste is the centerpiece of a dish, compounds analogous to menthol and capsaicin are used liberally.

Yinrih are omnivorous, and diet varies widely from culture to culture. Alcohol is just as prevalent as it is among humans, both as a social lubricant and as a drug of abuse. Food and drink-based stimulants such as caffeine are much rarer due to the absence of sleep, but stimulants in the form of drugs, both legal and illegal, are very common as a means to improve concentration and reaction time.

Drug and alcohol abuse, gambling addiction, and thrill-seeking behavior, is far more common in yinrih than in humans. This is thought to stem from yinrih hedonists having to substitute their lack of libido with other indulgent activities. "There are more than enough drug dens at Focus to make up for the nonexistent brothels" is a common human comment on the matter.

Bathing and eliminating waste are not considered private activities. Yinrih restrooms are optimized for hygiene but not privacy. Most yinrih cultures consider bathing to be just as much a social occasion as eating, and public baths are as common as restaurants. Since yinrih lack sweat glands, bathing is less frequent but more involved than in humans.

Yinrih do not sleep, and are incapable of fully losing consciousness without dying. The regenerative function of sleep is instead filled by a period of torpor that lasts for around 24 hours every 12 days. Torpid yinrih are still aware, but experience dulled sensation and a feeling of detachment. Yinrih liken the experience to a human being sedated.

Natural Lifecycle

Yinrih are very long-lived compared to humans. The most often cited average lifespan is 724 years, with some individuals surpassing 8 centuries. Puppyhood lasts for about 53 years.

early in yinrih history, as well as among the yinrih's closest nonsapient relatives, the tree dwellers, several childermoots gather together into a larger group called a **shire**, which controls a defined territory and its resources. Sires instinctively guard the womb nest as kits gestate. After weaning, dams take charge of the kits, nursing them and carrying them on their backs. When the kits are weaned, responsibility is divided more evenly between the genders, with parents from other childermoots as well as older pups from other litters in the shire contributing to a litter's upbringing.

Upon reaching sexual maturity, young adults are ejected from their natal shire and enter an interstitial group of nomadic maids and bachelors. These young adults are called "sojourners",

“wanderers”, or sometimes “teens”. Their parents remain in the shire as empty nesters, assisting new parents with their litters. Teens seek out others to form their own childermoot, and may join an existing shire, which may or may not be the natal shire of one of the parents, or may elect to become a **lone childermoot** unaffiliated with a shire. This group may or may not form the nucleus of a new shire.

Shires are led by the oldest males, who are called **sheriffs, reeves, or patriarchs**.

Males hunt while females forage. When pups are old enough, sires take their sons on hunts and dams will take their daughters to gather edible plants. The role of female as gatherer allowed presapient females to develop zoopharmacognosy behavior. As yinrih approached the threshold of reflection, females also learned to control fire. Upon achieving sapience, this role flowered into a shaman who tended a fire and served as a healer. This shamanate complimented the male-only patriarchs, with males in charge of worldly matters and females possessing spiritual authority.

Tree dwellers lack this spiritual component, indeed, the presence of religious ritual, along with language, are the two criteria used by most yinrih to determine whether a creature is sapient, as it indicates the creature is asking existential questions that go beyond survival and reproduction.

Early History

The single common ancestor of tree dwellers and yinrih diverged after the river running through their rainforest home widened, separating them into a northern and southern population. The northern population became the tree dwellers while the southern population became the yinrih.

Both tree dwellers and percipient yinrih deposit small amounts of their ink on surfaces as they walk and climb, passively marking a shire’s territory. In presapient yinrih this developed into a more complex active scent marking behavior, with shape, position, size, and orientation of markings carrying different meanings. Males would mark favorable hunting grounds, and females would mark plants bearing fruit that was safe to eat. Both genders would place marks to warn others away from potential predators, and teens would mark to indicate their desire to form a childermoot.

The dawn of sapience is referred to by many yinrih faiths as **the kindling of the fire of understanding**, and occasionally by humans as **crossing the threshold of reflection**. Sapience emerged polygenically, with sapient pups being born to nonsapient parents across the yinrih’s range. This event coincided with the emergence of behavioral modernity in humans on Earth.

Much like isolated communities of deaf human children, language developed very quickly, with sapient yinrih usually encountering one another after entering the nomadic young adult phase, improvising a simple written language from their scent marking behavior along with a spoken language from their vocalizations. If multiple pups from a single litter were born sapient, or if older sapient pups encountered younger ones in the same shire, they would develop these languages much earlier.

The effect that this innate ability to write has had on yinrih history and culture cannot be overstated. While a definitive time for the appearance of language, and thus sapience, is hard to

establish due to the fragile nature of the writing surfaces used, the first extant samples of writing occur while sapient yinrih were still being born to nonsapient parents, meaning that yinrih have a written records stretching back to the very dawn of their species. The earliest extant samples of writing are dated to 100 thousand years before First Contact, around the same time humans started burying their dead.

While yinrih are not and have never been a true monoculture, they also never sundered completely into isolated populations as humans did. Distinct cultures and national identities emerge and grow, but all share a common baseline. This more cohesive culture allowed The Bright Way, the oldest existing and most historically powerful religion, to become nearly ubiquitous across the yinrih species, serving at times as a unifying presence and at other times as a center of power that superseded nation-states.

Not quite a story

I sometimes post on a worldbuilding community on Lemmy. It's far less active than the CBB, but I tried starting a free form roleplay like the Multiverse Inn to drum up activity. The thread never went anywhere, but this, posted below the OP explaining the concept, was my attempt to get it started. I've thought about tying up this story, but I already have a bunch of unfinished stories. Maybe I'll introduce him to the Multiverse Inn proper.

The smell of decades of second-hand smoke emanates from the threadbare carpet and faded walls, mixed with the faint smell of chlorine from the indoor pool down the hall. Stale donuts and cold coffee sit at the continental breakfast bar. There are a few small tables and chairs. A coffee table is surrounded by a few overstuffed armchairs and a sofa. A check-in desk stands across the entrance hall from the breakfast area, but the night auditor is nowhere to be found. At the end entrance hall, door-lined corridors stretch into the distance to the left and right. The parking lot can be seen outside the windows, lit by the monochromatic light of sodium vapor lamps, but the darkness and driving rain obscure everything beyond. If there even is a beyond...

A low thump can be heard from behind one of the nearby doors, followed by the quiet clicking of tiny paws on the tile floor. The door creaks open, and a wet nose framed by whiskers pokes out, twitching a few times as its owner scents the air.

"Yay!" yips the little stranger "We're on Earth. Finally I can meet a human!" Overcome with excitement, the creature trots into the hallway, nose to the ground drinking in the mélange of aromas. It's covered in earthy brown fur. Its only clothing is a backpack stuffed to bursting. Its head is vulpine, but its body appears more like a new world monkey, with a broad back and thicker limbs. Its sinewy tail, long enough to touch its nose, is held aloft with the end curled up. It walks on all fours, but all four six-toed paws look like grasping primate hands, save for the extra thumbs.

It prances over to the glass door to the pool and rears up on its hind feet. It presses its forepaws against the glass. The tips of its digits are hairless, with grayish-black skin like an orangutan. Each digit is tipped by a sharp iron-enriched claw. The underside of each digit possesses a carnivoran paw pad, and there's another arrangement of pads on its palms. The three palmar pads indicate the creature is a male. "Ooh, mama Redclaw, can I go swimming? Please?" He suddenly realizes there's no one else around.

"Mama redclaw? Papa Sunfire? Mama Moonshine? Papa Hearthfire?" He runs back to the room he came out of. Finding nobody, he tries knocking on a few of the doors with his tail. Eventually he walks into the check-in area and puts his paws up on the counter, his pointed ears and wet nose barely visible from behind. "Anyone?" He begins crying, rills of crimson lacrimal fluid dribble from the corners of his black lips, matting the brown fluff of his chest. "Anyone?" He lets out some ugly gurgling sobs, which echo unheard down the halls.

FrathWiki Articles

I have started organizing the Lonely Galaxy into articles that I'm posting on [FrathWiki](#). I also have a separate self-hosted private instance of Mediawiki that I'm pulling those articles from to form a Lonely Galaxy wiki. I may or may not make the LG wiki public. For now it's just a backup.

Update on the Commonthroat Title

Image

It's "the lonely galaxy" written using the newer "dajba" system. I'm pretty pleased considering I did it with a mouse.

2nd Anniversary

It's been 2 years since I brought my various worldbuilding ideas together into this weird little paracosm. I'm afraid I don't have anything really big to mark the occasion. I will say thank you all again for indulging in this grown man's silly make-believe world. I've stated elsewhere that this has primarily been a means of self therapy for me. My joy, anger, love, sadness, fear, and melancholy have all been poured into this project.

It has also been a little over 24 hours since the passing of one of my muses, my friend and guide dog of over 10 years. She was the direct inspiration for the yinrih's longevity, and along with her successor, Mr. Commonthroat, for the yinrih themselves.

More story ideas

I've mentioned the idea of a previous missionary team landing in North America prior to the arrival of humans before. Here's another spin on this idea: Yinrih arrive in the New World during the ice age, but for whatever reason humans never migrate across the Bering land bridge, leaving monkey foxes as the only sophonts in the western hemisphere until the arrival of Europeans during the age of exploration. The missionaries decide to set up a colony. More womb ships arrive, childermoots are formed, litters are yeaned. Yinrih are aware there are other sophonts across the sea, as they've launched observation satellites and seen cavemen doing their thing in Afro-Eurasia. They decide that the gap in technology between the two species is currently too great to introduce themselves, so they let humanity progress until they are found naturally.

They monitor humanity's progress in secret, picking up languages as they arise and documenting the flowering of human cultures. Inspired by an 11th century Icelandic saga describing a far-off land populated by cynocephali who possess wonders beyond human imagination, a Spanish explorer charts an expedition across the Atlantic, eventually landing in present-day Florida. The sailors are surprised when the stories are true.

Sketch of a yinrih in a tree

Image

This is probably the last edit I'm making to this drawing. I was bothered by the fact the branch his left forepaw is holding was thicker than the trunk.

“ [lurker](#) wrote: 2023-08-02T16:09:36+00:00

“ [Visions1](#) wrote: 2023-08-02T07:08:14+00:00 I like the species idea a lot. Honestly I would love to see art of it.

Thanks! Probably won't happen because I'm legally blind lol.

Aaand this is now no longer the case. I posted this picture on a few pixel art communities on Lemmy, so I at least think it's worth something on its own.

Missionary in an Amnion

Image

Much better than my first attempt.

External history of the setting

Random factoid: very early on, when I was just starting to explore the Pious Aliens concept, long before I merged the idea with my main conworld to create the Lonely Galaxy, I was also interested in octopi, specifically the giant Pacific octopus. I often pictured the aliens as aquatic and octopoid. They had to wear environmental suits to go on land, which consisted of the alien's octopoid form haphazardly flopped on top of a vaguely humanoid robot body (the form chosen to interact with human tools and infrastructure). Of course any humanoid with a whole octopus for a head can't help but look like Cthulhu. So the yinrih could have been based on octopi rather than monkeys and foxes.

As for why I chose monkeys and foxes, the kobolds from the Last Grand Adventure started out as your standard anthropomorphic animals, with subraces based on different dog breeds. Their main quirks were their lack of a tail and their prehensile feet. As for why their feet were prehensile, I often imagine scenarios or little stories that happen within my conworld and build lore around them. One such scenario was a team of adventurers being bound and tossed in a dungeon by a generic bad guy. They're bound by their wrists and anchored to the wall. The kobold in the party quips that they forgot he has two extra hands and proceeds to untie himself and the rest of the party using his feet.

I'm not sure if kobolds had six digits yet, but they did also reproduce via womb nests. No idea where that came from, honestly. Maybe it started out as laying eggs like a monotreme and just evolved from there.

The nudge from generically canine to specifically vulpine was likely influenced by the game Tunic. I played it a month or so after getting Mr. Commonthroat, right at the beginning of this certification misadventure I've been mentioning. As for the monkey connection, I realized I had no good in-universe explanation why a humanoid race would have prehensile feet, so I made them arboreal. Then I wanted to make them more unique, not just another race of beast folk. The train of thought went like this. "Your typical beastfolk race is just an animal head on a human body, right? So what's a human, cladistically speaking? A primate, of course. Kobolds already have prehensile feet, let's go all the way and return them to monke."

This all happened in stages of course, at the same time I was changing genres from fantasy to sci-fi. The genre shift happened after I read some HFY stories on Reddit, which coincided with me mulling over the Fermi paradox. I always wondered why First Contact stories always involve humans stumbling into a vast galaxy-spanning meta-civilization that we somehow haven't discovered yet. The Doylist explanation is easy, so there can be an interesting story, but conworlding runs on different principles than storytelling. The Last Grand Adventure already revolved around the concept of there being only two actual races, humans and kobolds, with

"elves" and "dwarves" along with baseline humans being mutual subspecies able to intermarry. This two-race concept was me playing with the ideas surrounding the relationship between humans and dogs, not in the usual tropey sense of dogs who can talk but still act like dogs, but more along the lines of man's best friend. We're all alone in this world, and dogs are our only companions, etc.

So I'm thinking about the Fermi Paradox, my brain is running on amateur sci-fi, I've got a conworld with just humans and cynoids, and in the background, mostly untouched for the past few years, is the Pious Aliens scenario. The catalyst that birthed the Lonely Galaxy proper was extreme stress. A family member was hospitalized with sepsis, and the only sentence I can ever remember hearing after "He got sepsis" was "and then he died." So I'm mentally grappling with the possible death of a family member (thankfully it didn't turn out that way, but I didn't know that at the time), and at the same time I'm gearing up for a very expensive certification exam. Just the process of signing up is hair-pullingly frustrating if you have a disability. I won't go into the process but suffice it to say it's much more difficult than what an able-bodied student has to endure. And that's on top of normal test anxiety. So in this crucible of mental turmoil, when I couldn't handle the real world, I dissociated from reality and invented my own, one that made sense, at least to me. And the rest is history.

Yeah it's probably maladaptive daydreaming, but eh.

More external inspirations

I have a mild fear of losing consciousness. It's mostly related to anesthesia. I often have nightmares of being anesthetized in preparation for surgery. The second part of *Beating the Heat* originally had Sarah awake but unable to move or speak as Sunshine attempted some [anatomically ignorant healing](#) inspired by said nightmares. It got really dark really fast, so I scrapped the idea.

When the depression gets really bad that fear blows up into hypnophobia (fear of falling asleep). I'll jolt awake hyperventilating just as I start nodding off. I also find the fact that we spend a third of our lives asleep to be existentially unsettling. That largely inspired the yinrih's torpor cycle.

Lodestar is my idea of the ideal older sibling. Iris is the idealist in me, Pascal is the (much louder) pessimist in me. Stormlight is my job as a character. Sunshine as a person doesn't have a whole lot of inspiration behind her, but I was interested in the inner workings of the human body as a kid, and the ubiquitous "Fantastic Voyage" plot where characters would shrink down and enter someone's body to fix or retrieve something featured heavily in my imagination, which in turn inspired the idea of micro mechs, an arguably more plausible and inarguably more sensible alternative to shrinking down and going in yourself. Sunshine's name was inspired by a coworker of mine who went by that name. I'm not sure if it was her legal name or a nickname, but I remember being initially put off by it only to remind myself that it perfectly fits my criterion for an ideal name in that it holds meaning rather than being a stylish collection of phonemes. I also personally love literal sunshine, as I have seasonal affective disorder. So the name grew on me.

Tod is also pretty light on inspiration.

Some Clarifying Comments on some of my stories

“ [YoungConlanger](#) wrote: 2025-10-11T16:39:06+00:00

Spoiler:

Oh hey I forgot I had Universe Sandbox on Steam. I should try to build out Focus. I don't have anything defined other than Yih and Focus itself. I've been thinking I'd just keep it simple and have all the rocky planets be more or less identical to Yih, maybe varying by 10% in some aspect here or there.

One tidbit about Hearthside is that they use aerosols in the atmosphere to keep the day side cool. I mentioned in the Outlander thread that, at least to people at Moonlitter and in the Outer Belt, planets and other bodies are divided among those that cannot be terraformed at all, those that can be terraformed and can also be actively climate-controlled, and those that can be terraformed but are too big to allow active climate control. Gaseous bodies like gas and ice giants and brown dwarfs have another word.

On another topic, here are some clarifying comments on some of my stories. In the House of Friendship, Aurora has to stop herself from returning the priest's smile. Especially in the early days, yinrih would try to mimic human facial expressions to compensate for the fact that humans don't pick up on yinrih pheromones. Yinrih unfamiliar with human customs would also default to mirroring human body language where possible "just to be safe". Since yinrih have very canine features their attempts at smiling look like a snarl. Yinrih already use their ears as secondary indicators of emotion, and learn to be more deliberate about ear position to clue humans into how they're feeling.

In The Spacer Confederacy, the representative from the Federal Council floats across the threshold of the colony and into the airlock of his own shuttle before beginning his lecture to Graypelt. That's because he's technically no longer inside Wayfarers' Haven and isn't subject to its norms and can speak freely. If, hypothetically, Wayfarers' Haven had something akin to blasphemy laws (which don't exist in the Bright Way but the councilman doesn't know this) they could kill him with no repercussions if he said something wrong as long as he's inside the colony. The Spacer Confederacy is made up of mutually antagonistic groups who only agree on one thing, that they want self determination, and they hate each other just little enough to come together to protect that singular common goal. I often think of the SC as a federal system with an authoritarian federal government but libertarian state governments. The Federal Police are how the SC maintains that delicate balance, and their methods aren't gentle as can be inferred by the scar on the

Councilman's muzzle.

Exactly how this works out, how colonies manage to keep to themselves and don't grab more than their fair share of resources, especially under such a hyperlibertarian system, is yet to be determined, other than that the Police keep everyone in line through fear. Like the councilman says, if you stay in your corner and obey what few laws do exist, you won't get a visit from the cops. And as I said before, it's entirely possible this system is just as dysfunctional as it probably sounds, but I hope it's dysfunctional in a way that makes for fun worldbuilding and not just breaks the suspension of disbelief.

More messing with Universe Sandbox

More messing with universe sandbox. I put a copy of Earth in place of Yih and messed with the density and radius to match Yih. I was previously trying to do it from scratch. This is much easier since Yih is "like Earth unless noted".

What I've discovered:

Yih has a lower environmental lapse rate, meaning temperature decreases more slowly with altitude, meaning severe weather shouldn't be as common (fewer tornadoes, boo!)

The surface air pressure is higher by about 100 mb. ~~Given I had a hard time adjusting to Denver after living near sea level, I assume this means yinrih will have a hard time breathing on Earth, at least at first.~~ Assuming (early) spacecraft try to mimic surface pressure that means a slightly stronger pressure differential between the inside and outside, though that might be negligible. As an aside, humans don't detect a lack of oxygen, we detect an increase in CO₂ levels in our blood, that's what causes the stifling feeling when you stick your head under your bed sheets for too long. It's easy to asphyxiate in, say, a pure nitrogen atmosphere because there's no increased CO₂ in our blood to warn us. Yinrih CAN sense hypoxia in addition to hypercapnia. This means they can differentiate between a lack of good ventilation (hypercapnia caused by their exhalations not being vented) and a lack of oxygen.

Edit: Never mind on the hard to breathe part. While this may be true of yinrih on Yih, the atmosphere on a terraformed dwarf planet will be thinner, perhaps equivalent to the cabin of an airplane at cruising altitude, so the missionaries that find Earth won't have any issues, as they were born on a dwarf planet.

I'll probably mess with the ratio of CO₂ to N₂ in the atmosphere to compensate for the lack of insolation vs Earth.

Shower Thought: Yinrih in Warhammer 40K

The Algorithm has been serving me a lot of "What if [character from other franchise] was in WH40K?" fanfic readings on YouTube, and I've been listening to them as background noise at work. That naturally made me wonder how monkey foxes would fare in the grim darkness of the far future. I'm not sure it would go well. Just as a comparison:

Imperium of Man:

- aliens must be purged
- innovation is heresy
- spans the galaxy

Yinrih:

- aliens must be sought out and welcomed
- innovation is worship
- confined to one star system

Most yinrih would regard the Emperor of Man as another lichlord. Some flavors of Misotheists would go all in on chaos worship. The more superstitiously inclined would see the demon-infested immaterium as confirmation that the Underlay is in fact hell, and in this case they may be right.

Yinrih tech is far beyond that of the Imperium, albeit without mass interstellar travel. But the Imperium has sheer numbers. Focus MIGHT get along with the Tau depending on what part of Tau fluff you pay attention to.

Yinrih would not see the Tyranids as sophonts and thus not attempt to introduce themselves, but they would likely attempt contact with the Orks and it would not go well.

The Imperium vs the Partisans

I have nowhere else to put this, but this has been stuck in my head all day.

Inquisitor of the Ordo Xenos standing on the bridge of a void ship, hailing a yinrih outpost,: "In the name of the God-Emperor of Mankind, you filthy xenos must be purged!"

Yinrih, in a friendly tone, "The Bright Way teaches that all Wayfarers must welcome star folk as friends." He pulls a lever off camera with his tail and a massive rail gun swings into position and begins powering up. "Unfortunately for you, we aren't Wayfarers." He cuts the camera, revealing the black paw of the Partisans.

0000000000

000000000000

0000000000