

FORGING THE HERO
Who Does More Is Worth More

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by John Mosby

**A Tribal Strategy for Building Resilient Communities and
Surviving the Decline of Empire**

Warhammer Six Press



Idaho Falls, ID

A Tribal Strategy for Building Resilient Communities and Surviving the Decline of Empire

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Now this is the law of the jungle,
as old and as true as the sky,
And the wolf that shall keep it may prosper,
but the wolf that shall break it must die.

As the creeper that girdles the tree trunk,
the law runneth forward and back;
for the strength of the pack is the wolf,
and the strength of the wolf is the pack...

--Rudyard Kipling

The Law of the Jungle

*As always, this one is for my wife and children, first and last.
Equally though, this is—from the first ancestor of my line, to the last of my line,
generations from now--*

For Kith and for Kin.

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Forward
by Jack Donovan

As it turns out, the world probably isn't coming to an end. And revolution isn't going to happen. It's not 1776. The state has drones. No one is going to march on Washington D.C. and roll back American history to some thirteen star sweet spot. And the South ain't going to rise again. The Empire is in decline, but it is probably going to be a long, slow grade.

John is one of a new group of thinkers, and I count myself among them, who are coming to the realization that living tribally -- building loyal, interdependent communities of people who are increasingly independent of the state -- is the best and probably the most "spiritually" rewarding way to survive and thrive as this thing drags on and on. His work is a challenge to preppers waiting for doomsday to start living, and to men who are still emotionally connected to a fantasy of America that can't -- and shouldn't -- be saved. That challenge is to start living *now*, to start building a tribal future *now*, or as I say -- to "start the world."

Talk of rediscovering tribalism, from the modern perspective, seems somewhat paradoxical in that what is advocated is universally against universalism, or perhaps a kind of "universal particularism." Human nature is universal, but it is more human to live tribally -- and therefore we universally look for reasons to separate into competing human-scale tribal groups of insiders and outsiders. This may be troubling to men who grew up in the age of the global travel and trade and the Internet, but our ancestors probably would have shrugged their shoulders and looked at us like we were idiots for struggling with basic human truths.

The Western tribe-building principles in *Forging the Hero* are universal in the way that the wisdom from Eastern classics like the *Hagakure* or Musashi's *Book of Five Rings* or Sun Tzu's *Art of War* will naturally appeal to anyone fighting anything, anywhere. Every tribe, everywhere is going to have some way to identify those who are within the circle of trust, *innangarðr* and outside the circle, *útangarðr*. They are going to have some sense *frith*, of trust and obligation to each other. Anyone, with any background, can understand these concepts and how important they are to conceptualizing and building a functional tribe.

However, the Germanic context of these particular words is going to have a particular appeal to people with Germanic blood. People who look like Vikings are going to find themselves particularly at home with Northern European words and ideas and lore. Again, our ancestors would have laughed at us for worrying about something so obvious, though Western men have been trained to make excuses for it, or to seek out wisdom from the histories and lore of any people but their own -- so no one can call them "racists." The need to engage in this kind of hang-wringing is a symptom of modern sickness.

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Would we blame a Japanese man for being proud of and particularly inspired by samurai, or an Indian for framing arguments with stories from the *Bhagavad Gita*? No. Because that would be asinine.

I met John for the first time a couple of years ago when he came to Oregon to teach some firearms classes. He has a red beard, like Thor. (Thor is only blonde in comic books and movies). On his second visit, I tattooed a giant Anglo-Saxon *gar* rune on his shoulder. It is similar to and possibly derived from the rune for "gift," and means "spear." To call a spear a "gift" is certainly consistent with the dark Germanic humor of the eddas and sagas, and one must assume, Germanic warriors. The *gar* rune is particularly associated, at least in modern heathenry, with Odin's spear, *Gungnir*, which always struck its target. When I asked John why he chose that rune, he explained that while many picture vikings wielding battle axes, historians believe that the spear was a more common weapon at the time. The spear was the most primary weapon of their age, and John argued that the rifle is the primary weapon of ours. As a man who has mastered and who teaches rifle skills, this rune seemed particularly meaningful and appropriate. Even more so, given the association with Odin, who makes sacrifices himself to himself -- *sjálfur sjálfum mér* -- for knowledge and wisdom.

Many of the men attracted to Germanic lore and the runes are attracted to the esoteric, generally. So a lot of the writing on the subject has an air of mystical "woo-woo." Either that, or they want to grow beards and picture themselves as vikings, because everyone knows vikings are badass. Alas, drinking mead out of a horn, sharing sexy valkyrie memes on Facebook and wearing a *Mjolnir* t-shirt doesn't make you a dangerous man -- pecially if you've done so much feasting you can't make it up the stairs without getting winded and you have to inquire if that fancy "authentic viking" tunic comes in XXXL.

John is a trained warrior, who trains people in fighting skills. As such, he has a refreshingly functional take on Germanic lore and the concepts that his forefathers (and mine) used to talk about the social dynamics of their own tribes. As he puts it, "myth is history, told better." We can read between the lines of epic poetry and see the practical wisdom of the men who came before us, who were solving many of the same human problems we face today.

Forging the Hero isn't about fantasy role-playing, it's about learning to live differently -- taking inspiration from ideas that worked for our ancestors and applying them to our own lives today, in a modern context. It's not about running around in chain mail brandishing axes and spears. Warriors today fight with AR-15s and Glocks and body armor, because they want to win using the best tools and skills available to them, just as their ancestors did. The technology and accouterments have changed and we have different resources at our disposal. Our ancestors would have taken every advantage, and so should we.

What is timeless is the philosophy -- the "why." Building deep, meaningful connections with friends and family, and doing what is necessary to protect them and their interests -- that's timeless. And that is what has been lost in the modern world -- this slowly crumbling Empire of Nothing.

(Jack Donovan is the host of the ***Start The World*** podcast, and has authored several best-selling books including, ***The Way of Men*** and ***A Sky Without Eagles***. His website can—and should—be found at www.jack-donovan.com.)

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One
Shit Just Ain't Right

"We already know that the earthquake of the past few years has damaged Western economies, while leaving those of emerging countries, particularly Asia, standing. It has also destroyed Western prestige. The West has dominated the world economically and intellectually for at least two centuries. That epoch is now over. Hitherto, the rulers of emerging countries disliked the West's pretensions, but respected its competence. This is true no longer. Never again will the West have the sole word."

--Martin Wolf, commentator for **Financial Times**

Once upon a time, in a land not so very far away, there was an idea. It was an epic idea, new to the world, but founded on—and forged from—very ancient ideas. This was an idea steeped in the ancient traditions, customs, and values of humanity. This was an idea of a place called “America.” That idea was the dream of a place where people could be free to live their lives, according to their consciences and within the dictates of their ability, as they saw fit, absent the control of kings, clergy, and potentates.

It was an idea of a place where people would not have to rely on the largess and questionable “protection” of men who would be their masters, but instead, a place where people could create self-reliant, autonomous communities where neighbor aided neighbor, not by decree or threat of violence, but by choice, because they valued both those neighbors and their shared traditions and customs. It was an idea of a place where families could grow strong, raising generation after generation of hardy yeoman freeholders, free of serfdom and servitude, each raising to their rightful station in society, based on their ability and aspirations, just as their ancestors had once done.

That dream is dead. What remains is a pathetic facsimile of the original. There is a growing realization of dread across America, and the world, that “*shit just ain't right*.”

Like most people in our society, I find myself in constant social and professional contact with people from the entire span of political persuasions, and the entire spectrum of age from children and teenagers, across my own middle-aged demographic, to the elderly. Universally it seems, whether young or old, Progressive, Conservative, or Other, the consensus I observe is that everyone understands that “*shit just ain't right*.”

It's been said that discussing societal collapse is a conversation killer. It's a sure way to not get invited to the next cocktail party. Social inertia can be an awe-inspiring thing, after all. People are

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inherently social. In addition to—but generally far more powerful than—any internal conversations, much of our motivation, self-image, and even self-worth, are derived from our interactions with other people, and the vast majority of human beings exhibit an entirely human condition that is an aversion to even the thought of discomfort.

While many so-called “preppers” seem to harbor some sort of internal sense that collapse will be some sort of grand adventure, releasing them from the misery of their failure to fit into society, finally rewarding them for being social pariahs, most people actually understand the truism penned by famed Western pulp fiction writer Louis L'Amour that “*adventure is just a fancy word for trouble.*” Thus, for most people, the discussion of the potential—let alone inevitable—collapse of society and civilization, is a serious *faux pas* in polite company. It makes people uncomfortable, and people who enjoy being sociable do not make people uncomfortable.

This has changed significantly in recent years though, as preparedness has apparently gone mainstream. People *are* talking about it. Movies are being made about the subject. Books are being published, by mainstream publishing houses, and sold in major bookstores, on the subject of preparedness. All because everybody is beginning to recognize that “*shit just ain't right.*”

The discussions range from what form the coming doomsday will take, to what methods can be used to survive different elements of it. Will it be terrorists, or the Russians, or the Chinese setting off some sort of Electro-Magnetic Pulse (EMP) weapon? Will it be terrorist dirty bombs in the cities? Will it be government crackdowns on “domestic terrorists” and gun owners? Will it be the crossover past Peak Oil and the resulting price inflation of everyday consumer goods? Will it be melting ice caps and coastal regions being flooded because of Climate Change? Will it be....will it...will.....?

What nobody—or almost nobody—has worked up to bring into the conversation, is the real question: “what are we doing about the collapse that we are already in?”

“Ain't nothin' new under the Sun, boy.”

As a youth, I once tried to explain some new social trend to my grandfather. Although I genuinely don't recall what this critically important novelty was, some three decades later, I do recall his response to me, verbatim: “*There ain't nothin' new under the sun, boy. It's all happened before.*” This is particularly true in the case of history, including social collapse.

The experiences of the human species have been recorded in the written word, in one form or another, as *history*, for over four thousand years¹. *Prehistory*, defined as that portion of the collective human experience that predates the written word, is also available for study, through the archaeological and paleontological record, for hundreds of thousands of years, back to—and preceding—the first appearance of anatomically-modern human beings, in the form of Cro-Magnon Man, some 200,000 years ago².

1 While the Greek Herodotus is credited in the popular imagination as “The Father of History,” this is cultural hubris. History is defined as the written record of the human experience, and historians generally agree that the writing of language began, in it's earliest forms, in Sumer, circa 3200 BCE.

2 I will use the term Cro-Magnon in the generic sense, to describe what is academically labeled “Anatomically Modern Human Beings.” Cro-Magnon is convenient, easily remembered, and generally recognized in the common lexicon. The earliest fossils that have been found of anatomically modern human beings are from Ethiopia, and date to the middle

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While it is popular, in our increasingly myopic society, to dismiss the past as unworthy of note, except as plot devices in blockbuster cinema, if we bother to look objectively at such broad expanses of time, across as many different human cultures as possible, we begin to discover a striking similarity between the patterns of development and behavior of peoples, across vastly different conditions of climate, culture, and religion. Such a study necessarily leads the inquisitive and insightful to recognize the importance of the questions, “*if we study these patterns calmly and impartially, might we not discover some Truths of human nature, but also, possible solutions to the problems that our culture faces today?*” We can, after all, recognize in these recurring patterns, the same things occurring, over and over again, throughout the entire span of human existence. The patterns, of course, are particularly clear over the four thousand-plus years of written human history; we just have to be able to recognize them for what they are.

It has been said, “*the only thing we learn from history is that man never learns from history.*” While that is a disturbingly broad generalization about humanity's foibles—that is, after all, the point of studying history—when one views the chaos engulfing our society today, and the solutions being proposed for that chaos, through the lens of history, it becomes blindingly obvious that the political and cultural schism being used to tear apart the fabric of our society have all been experienced before, for the exact same purposes. That gives us a pretty solid basis for hypothesizing the probable outcomes.

There are numerous causes that can be blamed for our collective failure to learn from history. Most of these are the result solely of culturally-created cognitive biases. First and foremost however, is the natural human condition of *xenophobia*. Properly defined as “*an intense distrust of the foreign or unfamiliar*,” xenophobia is a completely natural part of the human condition. It has played an important instinctual role in the evolutionary survival of the species, and still offers benefits, despite the whining pleas of collectivists to ignore it.

Unfortunately, xenophobia also has drawbacks, since it leads to a failure of the ability to learn from the entirety of the human experience, leading to a myopic limitation on our study of history. All that came before is foreign and unfamiliar to us, never mind the idea of looking to other countries and cultures for valuable lessons to be learned. It is a common understanding in some preparedness and “patriot” circles that “most” Americans have no consciousness of their own history. My own experiences however, have amply demonstrated that, even among that small number of Americans who do study history, all too often, the evidence pretty clearly indicates that they believe history started sometime around 1774. We don't give a damn about the history of “others,” so we don't study it, and look for parallels to our own experiences. This limit on the available patterns for comparative study however, within the entire human experience is, obviously, detrimental to our ability to learn from history and prehistory.

Even within our xenophobic approach to history, we form a limited narrative of our own national and cultural histories, due to cognitive biases. We focus on those periods of history that allow us to recognize our ancestors as heroes and “*the good guys*,” according to our own contemporary definitions. We tend to focus on those eras when they were prosperous and victorious, ignoring their defeats and roguery. We ignore the entirely too human traits of our forebears that we view as negative, and we

Paleolithic, some 200 millenia ago. For those readers with religious prejudices regarding the Biblical age of the Earth who find the use of such scientific concepts offensive, well....tough shit.

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overlook their defeats, turning them into idealized morality plays, by redefining the definitions of cultural values like courage.

A perfect example of this can be seen in the treatment, within the general education system—and thus the public imagination—of George Washington's administration during the “Whiskey Rebellion.” Having led the Continental Army to victory in a struggle for independence from the British crown over taxes, as the head of state for the new American government, Washington suffered no qualms about calling out the federal army to crush a rebellion over taxation. Now that the figurative crown was on his own head, he was more than willing to crush an effort that was almost identical to the rebellion he had led against the British Crown. Too often, because our popular histories overlook this in their zeal to applaud the Founders for their “*divinely inspired*” crusade for liberty, people are completely unaware of these events that occurred less than three years after the new constitution was ratified.

At the same time, we dehumanize and belittle our foes, making them subhuman in our imaginations, rather than looking at the story objectively, and including their points-of-view and perceived reasons for their actions. We create, in our own minds and within the minds of our people, a national propaganda, rather than an objective history that would allow for the ability to conduct a well-balanced, educational investigation of the past.

When we do manage to tear ourselves free of the grandeur of our own idealized national/cultural mythology, and look outward at world history, we focus only on certain, relatively short, generally disconnected epochs that serve to reinforce our own myths. Following the typical curriculum of world history in the American education system—assuming that subject is even still taught today—we might look at the city-states of ancient Greece, to try and find connections between our own culture and the mob democracy of Athens, even though more accurate comparison would be made with the oligarchy of Plato's hypothetical **Republic**, for the model that our current system seems to be based on.

Within the militarization of the populace in support of the Global War on Terror (GWOT), we've seen the emphasis switch, in the popular imagination, to the idealization of the warrior-caste of Sparta, with near deification of Leonidas and his “three hundred” at the Hot Gates of Thermopylae. Conveniently, this new found awe for the actions of the 300 ignores several salient facts: 1) there were actually somewhere in the vicinity of 15,000 Hellenes at Thermopylae, and 2) Sparta was a slavery-based economy allowing for the male citizens to do nothing except train for war every day—the antithesis of what our contemporary culture is supposed to actually reflect—and far contrary to the soft, doughy, laziness of the vast majority of American life.

We look to the Roman Republic for the founding myths of our system of republicanism, defined as a system of governance through representatives elected by the people, without a central monarch. We see the decline of the Roman Empire labeled as the “Dark Ages,” and look for parallels that herald the perils that face our own culture. We ignore the “barbarian” tribal origins of the Roman Republic, and ignore—except in their role as the uncivilized antagonists to the culture we choose to adore—the Celto-Germanic peoples of the rest of Europe, despite the fact that most of what we consider the greatest “*traditional American values*” are actually derived from those cultures, and not from the licentious, reprehensible, profligate, government worshiping debauchery that was Rome, even after Christianization.

In order to begin to gain any real value from the study of human ancestral paths however, to

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discover potential solutions to our current social and political conditions, it is essential that we manage to force ourselves outside of our culturally conditioned cognitive biases, and look at the story of the entire human experience from a broader perspective, rather than limiting ourselves to our own short, idealized national mythology. This is not a suggestion to ignore—or worse, discredit—our own ancestral cultures, as has become ever more popular in the myopia of academia and the popular imagination, thanks to the efforts of our modern oligarchs to create a “one world, one (consumer) culture” intended to increase their control and profit margins.

On the contrary, as we will see, within the context of our purposes—surviving the decline and collapse of an American empire—each of us owes it to ourselves, our families, and our communities; even to the idea of America itself, to look first towards our own ancestral cultures, for the universal answers we seek. The validity of that approach moreover, is proven by the objective study of the broader human experience.

The prehistory and history of humanity is a constant, cyclical process, developing, changing, and rolling backwards over itself. Contrary to the beliefs of progressives and Utopians of all flavors, once we manage to step outside of our cultural comfort zones and temporarily set aside our xenophobia, we can easily recognize the absurdity of the notion that we are on some sort of evolutionary progression upwards in human development. Any useful ideas however, can only be extracted when we observe them within the context of the whole, rather than through the selection of short periods, here and there, within a single cultural and environmental context, specifically selected to reinforce an already extant cultural bias. This becomes doubly critical when those biases are demonstrably false.

The experience of the mythology of the American empire is firmly rooted in the transition of the Roman Republic into the Empire, with Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, and its subsequent dissolution, but is paralleled in other imperial experiences as well. While the political structures we cling to are derivatives—at best—of the Republic and Empire, many—if not most—of the cultural values we hold sacred are actually “barbarian” values of the Celto-Germanic tribes³ that were adopted by the decaying Empire's citizens during the decline and fall.

The Imperial Legacy

The parallels between the decline and fall of modern, American imperialism, and that of Rome have been discussed and analyzed countless times in the past, even though most contemporary Americans, comfortable in the passive ignorance they are spoon-fed by the media have, at best, only a passing familiarity with the idea. Perhaps most famously, the late Sir John Baget Glubb (1897-1987) wrote **The Fate of Empires and the Search for Survival**, in 1978. **The Fate of Empires** is a short essay that describes and explains Glubb's interpretation of the cyclical parallels of human empires ranging from the ancient Assyrians to the United States.

As the cultural inheritors of the Britannic imperial legacy, most Americans view an empire in that limited context alone, and thus do not recognize our own imperialism. An empire is imagined as a political home state, like England, with far-flung colonies of emigrants around the globe, making the home state rich by paying taxes, buying manufactured products at retail, and shipping natural, local resources “back home” at lower, wholesale prices. Obviously, there is some validity in that definition of

3 And really, of most other tribal structures in the human experience as well.

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an empire, since our own history is such. It is however, a very short view of history that uses that as the sole—or even primary—definition of the term.

Throughout most of the human political experience, the term empire had a much simpler, albeit more encompassing meaning. An empire was a nation with an overwhelmingly strong military presence, surrounded by subjugated peoples and nations, within the span of the empire's ability to project that military force, who paid tribute to the imperial power. This tribute could be in the form of gold and silver, and often was, but it could—and did—come in other forms as well. It might be through the exploitation of natural resources and goods, or it might be through the forced servitude of slaves and soldiers in the interest of the Empire. The only colonists would be soldiers garrisoning the imperial outposts, to protect the wealth and to preclude or put down rebellion, as well as a small number of experts in the service of the empire that were needed to extract the local wealth more efficiently.

The governance of the local people would more often than not, be left to the local indigenous leaders, subject to the guidance of imperial decree through the mouthpiece of the local garrison commander. As long as the local puppet government kept the wealth flowing into the imperial coffers, their position—and whatever wealth they managed to skim off the export—was safe. Ultimately however, the goal of empire is—and has always been—to gain wealth from the subjugated peoples. If the local indigenous government fell short in that, they were deposed and replaced with more accommodating and capable local puppets, or an imperial governor might be placed in power.

Today of course, even though we complicate things with moralistic jingoism about “installing democracy,” the same basic organization and behavior can be observed. We have imperial powers, with a few “allied” nations that support the empire in return for a share of the plundered wealth. Outside of these, we have the subject nations who serve, ultimately, as nothing more than a source of wealth for the imperial power.

Beyond these “*spheres of influence*,” we have unaligned nations that are not subject to the imperial powers, for whatever reasons—typically a lack of recognizable or easily exportable wealth, combined with little or no strategic value in relation to opposing empires—and hostile, opposing imperial powers. One of the problems that ultimately arises for any empire—and that we face today—is that the natural resource wealth of any given nation is finite. At some point, it becomes more expensive to get those resources from the local environment than the profit potential they offer the empire. At that point, the empire has to begin looking elsewhere for the resources it needs to support itself and the standard-of-living that its people have grown accustomed to, or it faces internal strife and rebellion. Further, the allied nations start looking for a new sugar daddy.

This ultimately—invariably—leads to war, since the choices for new wealth are really limited to a) projecting military force further out, and invading unaligned countries that might have some exploitable wealth, or b) encroaching on the territory of other imperial powers. Even if choice a) is made, that indirectly places the imperial powers on the path to conflict with other imperial powers—or aspiring imperial powers—who recognize that they too will need those resources shortly. This is a particularly relevant issue today, as opposed to the ancient world, since we can now circumnavigate the globe in hours and days, whereas historically, something days away might as well have been a different planet for most people.

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If we look to Sir John's essay⁴, we can learn from his study that we are demonstrably an imperial power, and are within the last days of greatness within the natural life cycle of empire, both chronologically and historically. History provides us with a considerable amount of information on the many empires that have existed throughout humanity's existence, and an overview of the major imperial powers of the western world's experience led Sir John to compellingly argue that human empires have a common pattern of experience, and a shared lifespan of roughly two-and-a-half centuries, if not shorter.

<i>The Empires</i>	<i>Dates of Rise and Fall</i>	<i>Duration</i>
<i>Assyrian</i>	<i>859-612 BCE</i>	<i>247 years</i>
<i>Persian</i>	<i>538-330 BCE</i>	<i>208 years</i>
<i>Macedonian (Greek)</i>	<i>331-100 BCE</i>	<i>231 years</i>
<i>Mauryan (India)</i>	<i>322-185 BCE</i>	<i>137 years</i>
<i>Roman Republic</i>	<i>260-27 BCE</i>	<i>233 years</i>
<i>Roman Empire</i>	<i>27 BCE-180 CE</i>	<i>207 years</i>
<i>Caliphate of Baghdad</i>	<i>634-880 CE</i>	<i>246 years</i>
<i>Mongol</i>	<i>1206-1368 CE</i>	<i>162 years</i>
<i>Ottoman</i>	<i>1320-1570 CE</i>	<i>250 years</i>
<i>Spanish</i>	<i>1500-1750 CE</i>	<i>250 years</i>
<i>Romanov (Russian)</i>	<i>1682-1916 CE</i>	<i>234 years</i>
<i>Britannic (England)</i>	<i>1700-1950 CE</i>	<i>250 years</i>

The list of empires included in Baget's monograph requires several comments. First of all, it obviously does not list every power that has ever been labeled—or labeled itself—an empire. Many national “empires” have been imperial only in the modern sense of the word; they held control over one or more overseas colonies for some period of time. These generally only existed following the establishment of the modern European nation-state concept developed with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648⁵.

Second, the dates listed are relatively arbitrary, and are ongoing sources of academic debate among historians. For instance, saying that the Roman Empire “fell” with the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 CE, seems false on the face of it. After all, there were Roman emperors for several more centuries, and both the Eternal City and the Legions continued to exert influence for long after. Setting aside, for the moment, that this is itself a large part of the point of this book, it's important to note that this date marks the end of the imperial legacy because it was the beginning of the total implosion of Roman imperialism, not the end of claims of imperial hegemony. After 180 CE, what survived of the Roman

4 It's 25 pages, and readily accessible, although still under copyright by Glubb's estate, as a free .pdf file, via a Google search. I suggest reading the damned thing multiple times.

5 The “First French Empire,” under Napoleon Bonaparte, as one example, lasted only from his coronation in 1804, until his defeat at Waterloo in 1815, and arguably less than that, since he had been dethroned previously, before regaining control of the French government.

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Empire was being rent apart by internal strife and constant civil war, as well as foreign invasion on all sides. There is no way—outside of the professional arrogance of tenured academia—to say conclusively, “this empire began on this date, and ended on that date.” There is typically a period of expansion and growth as the imperial culture expands its growth and power, rising from a small, localized band of aggressive tribesmen, until they have consolidated power, during the formative years, before it can even be labeled an “empire” legitimately. During the decline, there may be years, decades, or even centuries⁶, of disintegration and increasing failure in control of the populace and the infrastructure, indicating the impotence of the empire, while the imperial government still possesses the trappings of power. The above example of Rome, following the death of Aurelius, is the example *par excellence* of this. Together, these factors make it categorically impossible to place an exact date on the birth or death of most empires that will be universally agreed upon by historians. Trying to do is either intellectual convenience—as in Glubb's case—or intellectual chicanery to reinforce a preconceived bias.

Finally, there are some arguably longer surviving empires missing from Glubb's list. The Byzantine, for example, is not on the list. The Byzantine, or Eastern Roman Empire, existed however, solely as a result of the schisms that marked the destruction of the Roman Empire, and although the throne would be held for centuries, the requisite consolidation of actual power over the claimed imperial territory was already disintegrating at the time of those schisms. The Byzantine, like later “national” empires, was largely nothing but a figurehead in most of the regions it declared hegemony over, from the beginning.

While the Chinese dynasties of the Middle Kingdom are often viewed as if they were one continuous imperial line, and this view is encouraged by the xenophobic superiority complex that the Chinese possess in spades, the pattern of human experience, and even a passing familiarity with Chinese history, tells us that, with the possible—albeit exceedingly unlikely—exception of the prehistoric Xia (2070-1600 BCE) and Shang (1600-1046) dynasties⁷, the history of Chinese dynasties in fact, belies the title empire, in large part due to the fractious tribal nature of the culture and the rampant warlordism that has defined most of its cultural history. Between “dynasties” like the Sui (581-648 BCE) that lasted one lifetime, to eras like the “Three Kingdoms” (200-581 CE) that preceded the Sui, in which the Chinese were anything but one homogeneous political entity, China has rarely existed as an empire in the classical sense of the word, except with the last century, under the Communist regime.

What is noteworthy about empires, across the breadth and depth of the collective human experience, is the remarkable similarities in the duration of those empires. The human experience is subject to the vagaries of luck, environment, and fickle human whim, and cannot—despite the attempts of philosophers like Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677), be calculated and foretold with mathematical formulas. Nevertheless, the remarkable similarities in the survival and life patterns of empires bears scrutiny, especially within the context of this work, considering the current life span of the American experiment at 226 years,⁸ and the similarities with the lives of previous imperial powers.

6 Conveniently ironic, the average seems to be—at least according to some historians' analyses, 250 years.

7 While we label these as imperial dynasties, it is more likely accurate to recognize the distinctions between the Xia, the Shang, and the subsequent dynasties as differences in cultural motifs, rather than as changes in ruling families.

8 Thus, the reason for making this point. The dates are approximations and largely hypothetical. The American Empire is a perfect example of this. Do we begin the rise of the American Empire at the ratification of the Constitution, or the signing of the Declaration of Independence? Perhaps we should push it back to the landings at Plymouth Rock, when the

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Observant Biblical scholars will notice that we've ignored the Babylonian Empire. This is because, despite Nebuchadnezzar's infamy for his maltreatment of the Hebrews, as described in the Hebrew tribal chronicle of the Old Testament, that empire lasted less than a century before it was conquered by Cyrus of Persia, and never attained imperial power in anything but name. Like the Napoleonic Empire, it was more a cult of personality than an actual empire.

It is a prejudice common to every generation of humans to see itself as something special, set apart from history and the past. One of the defining traits of mankind seems to be the egoism of seeing himself as something very important, even indispensable, to the advancement of the world at large. The rapid advances made in technology over the last century has made that view all the more inviting to modern man.

In my four decades alone, we've seen the development of the personal computer, and the subsequent rapid miniaturization of technology, to the point that I can now access the entire record of accrued human knowledge, over the last 200,000 years, in the palm of my hand, on a “smart phone.” We've seen man achieve the self-perceived status of a god, through the successful achievement of genetic cloning in the laboratory. We've witnessed the realization of humans wielding the mythical thunderbolts of Zeus, in the form of successful, missile-armed, remote-controlled drone aircraft, in less than two decades. We've seen humans develop the ability to turn night into day, at the individual level, through the development of night-vision and thermal imaging devices. We've seen the fortunate creation of the science fiction fantasy of the Bionic Man, in the form of prosthetic limbs that mimic—and even surpass—the strength and agility of the missing limbs. Indeed, it is very enticing to view ourselves as separate from and superior to, history. This attitude that we have nothing to learn from history though, no matter how alluring the flattery may be, is fatally flawed. When we look back, objectively, the irrelevance of technological advancement to the lifespan of empire becomes self-evident.

The Assyrians marched to war on foot, and fought with archery tackle and spears. Their conquests were limited to those neighbors whose countries they could walk to—and maintain a supply and communication avenue to. Their only use of cavalry was the chariot, because they had not sufficiently mastered the equestrian arts to allow mounting and riding in combat conditions⁹. This severely curtailed the effective application of their “cavalry” however, since chariots were/are of limited use in rough terrain that a horseman can traverse with relative ease. The Assyrian Empire lasted 247 years.

first Anglo-Saxons arrived with permanency on these shores, since that became the dominant cultural motif in American history? Or, do we move it forward to the beginning of the westward expansion into the Ohio River Valley? Do we hold off labeling the birth of American imperialism until our first overseas military adventures? If so, do we count the Barbary Coast excursions under Thomas Jefferson, or do we wait until the Mexican War?

The same applies to the Decline of Empire. Do we count American independence as the death knell of the British Empire, or do we count the loss of the last major overseas colonies that are not still part of the Commonwealth, in the 1950s? Do we wait until the 1970s, when the British still had some level of control in Oman and other realms, or do we count the British Empire as still extant, since they maintain control of Scotland and Northern Ireland, as well as the Commonwealth countries that still swear allegiance to the Crown? Would any intelligent person today still consider England to be an imperial power?

- 9 Admittedly, a gross oversimplification, since there were already cultures and tribes that did fight horseback. The Assyrians had simply not assimilated this into their way of war yet. It serves the purpose of the illustration however, so bear with me.

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Fast forward to 1700 CE. The British soldier of the Line, at the beginning of the British Imperial period, had the ability to strike with massed musket fire. He could strike his enemy with “thunder and lightning.” He could circumnavigate the globe aboard a sailing ship. His cavalry could ride circles around a charioteer, had anyone still been fighting from chariots. It's fair to say that, in many ways, the Assyrians would have viewed the British soldier of 1700 like a god, or at least possessing some of the powers of a god. We can see a similar situation with the initial Mesoamerican response to the arrival of the Spanish in the Americas.

Leap forward through time in our phone box TARDIS time machine though, to the end of the British Imperial experience, in 1950 CE. Now, not only can the British soldier circumnavigate the globe on a ship that doesn't even require the gods to provide favorable winds, he could actually fly through the air! He could strike with thunderbolts from the sky! On foot, he was armed with a “spear” that could fire twenty thunderbolts in seconds, and strike his enemies at three or four times the distance that the most powerful bows the Assyrians could have ever even heard of were capable of reaching!¹⁰ He could communicate instantly with someone hundreds, or even thousands, of miles away, with his own voice, through the use of radios. It is fair to say that, if the Assyrian might have seen the soldier of 1700 as something approaching a god, the British para or RAF pilot of 1950 would have *been* a god.¹¹

The British Empire lasted 250 years...

To even suggest the potential—let alone the inevitability—of the fall of American exceptionalism though, is to risk raising the ire of both Left and Right. To the progressive of the Left, seeking the support of the uneducated mob, labels such as “*reactionary*,” or even “*racist*,” seems to be the standard, as does the accusation of being “*opposed to the egalitarian, democratic ideals*” of America. The pseudo-patriotic neo-conservative Right, on the other hand, considers it seditious to proclaim anything less than total, unwavering, blind faith in the immortality and divine guidance of the government of the United States...at least as long as the Congress and Presidency are firmly in the hands of the Republican Party. They begin sounding as much like a bunch of spoiled children as their political rivals, throwing temper tantrums, with their fingers stuck in their ears, tongues out, and eyes clenched tightly shut, as they scream, “*USA! USA! Divine inspiration! Jesus loves America! USA! USA!*”

Both sides of this spectrum choose to ignore the fact that every other imperial power in the human experience has viewed its own existence as divinely inspired and immortal. We are no more the zenith of human social and political achievement than the Assyrians, the Romans, or the Muslim Caliphate were.

10 Arguably, the most powerful “primitive” bows in history were the Turkish composite bows, constructed of layers of wood and horn, bound together with glue. Modern recreations can cast an arrow 300+ meters, so it's completely plausible that the ancients might have achieved the same. We just don't have the evidence to prove it. The FN/FAL is capable of striking at 800-1000 meters, with its 7.62x51 caliber round.

11 The point has been made to me, regarding this comparison, that this would have lasted right up until the Assyrian got a close-up look at the para or pilot, and that the mechanism of flight could have been understood, if taught, at least well enough for the ancients to fly as well. The Island in the Sea of Time trilogy, from alternative history/sci-fi author S.M. Stirling, actually does a superlative job of speculating on this very subject, dropping the populace of Nantucket, and the crew of the US Coast Guard's USS Eagle training ship, back in time to the age of the Assyrian Empire, conveniently. It still doesn't negate the fact that technological advances that approach magic don't alter human nature.

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The Life Cycle of Empires

Outburst and Conquest

Glubb described the life cycle of empires in stages. When one looks at the parallels between the experiences of various major empires, these similarities become obvious. The first stage, Glubb labeled “*The Outburst*.” This is when a small nation or tribe, often viewed as culturally backwards by its more powerful neighbors, emerge suddenly from their small homeland and overrun significant portions of the Earth.

In 600 CE, most of the western world fell within the sphere of influence of one of two major imperial powers: the remnants of the Roman Empire, in the form of the Byzantine, Eastern Roman Empire, and the Persians. For a modern parallel, think of the state of affairs that existed during the Cold War between the United States and the former Union of Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR). The Arab world, at this time consisted solely of a bunch of backwards goatherds, eking out survival on the Arabian peninsula, surrounded by those two imperial powers. Modern-day Iraq was part of the Persian Empire, while Syria, Palestine, and all of North Africa were Byzantine Roman provinces. The Arabs were nomadic tribesmen with no central government or army. They were a bunch of barbarian tribes.

In 613, an Arab dude named Mohammed (570-632 CE) had a religious awakening, and began preaching about the supremacy of the old moon god, Allah. He died 19 years later, in 632 CE, having largely consolidated the different bands of Arabs under the banner of his new religion. In 633, the year after his death, the rest of the world learned of his legacy. The Mohammedan Arabs burst out of their desert lair, attacking both the Eastern Roman Empire and the Persians, simultaneously. Two decades later, the Persian Empire was a memory. By 700 CE—less than 70 years after the Arab outburst—their religious and political empire, known as the Caliphate, extended from the frontiers of China, all the way to the Atlantic Ocean. In another decade, they would conquer the Iberian Peninsula.

At the beginning of the 13th Century, there were a bunch of dirt-poor horse herders eking out a subsistence survival existence on the plains of Mongolia. In 1211, an outcast from one of their tribes who had renamed himself Genghis, brought the different bands of the Mongols together under one banner, and decided to invade China. Forty years later, the Mongols controlled the largest geographic empire the world has ever known, stretching from Asia Minor to the China Sea.

In 1607, a small band of English adventurers settled on the Atlantic seaboard of North America in a small community they named Jamestown. Almost starving as a result of crop failures their first year, they relied on the naivete and beneficence of the local indigenous population.

169 years later, the descendants of those colonists declared themselves a new nation, and within a century of that, had conquered not an ancient empire, but an entire continent, and had already begun to impose their will across the oceans. They didn't get the luxury of conquering already built cities and agricultural areas. They had to chop down forests, quarry mountains, and forge the imperial civilization out of what was basically raw wilderness.

Glubb makes the point that the outburst stage is characterized by the display of “extraordinary” energy and courage by people who are typically poor, but hardy, enterprising, and—most important—aggressive. Meanwhile they are generally—although, as in the case of America, not necessarily—fighting a decaying superpower in the decadence of decline. These new nations are not just notable for military successes however. They are adventurous and heroic in every field. The Arabs crossed the

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Straits of Gibraltar in 711 CE with 12,000 men, slaughtered a Gothic army of double their size, and then marched 250 miles, across hostile country, to capture the capital at Toledo. At the same stage in British history, Cook had sailed far enough away from England to discover Australia. In the US, our ancestors were hacking places like Lexington, Kentucky out of hardwood forest, and building the world's first transcontinental railroad.

The conquering pioneers of new empires are not held back by the constraints of traditional methods. They are willing to improvise, adapt, and overcome through experimentation. “*Action is their solution to every problem.*” Just like the pioneers of America, often half-starved, and ill-clad in whatever garb the environment will provide, they abound in courage, energy, and the initiative to go out and overcome anything that stands in the way of gaining what they want.

The reasons that these outbursts happen are difficult to determine, since they have been so varied. Glubb argued that the easiest explanation was simple jealousy. The poor and obscure nation simply coveted what their neighbors had. When Attila died in 453 CE, his people simply took their plunder from Europe and went home. Much of the barbarian tribal conquest of Western Europe, on the other hand, occurred because the local tribal chieftains admired the technology of Roman civilization and wanted to acquire that for their own people.

Underlying all of these however, I would argue, is religious fervor. From the monotheist drive to conquer and convert for The One True God, witnessed in the advance of the Caliphate, the British Empire, or American expansion, or the ancestral faith of the barbarians of Europe, and their need to strengthen the fortunes of the tribe, while the drive for wealth is always present, often there is a strong undercurrent of religious destiny involved as well.

Mercantilism

The successful conquest of large areas, and the hegemony of control under one governing power acts as a stimulus to the merchants of the newly empowered tribe. The speed of modern transportation makes us think of “interstate” commerce as a new creation, but this is the ultimate in cultural hubris. Archaeological excavations indicate regular commercial exchange between far-flung cultures like the Middle East and Scandinavia, or China and Eastern Europe, dating back thousands of years. While obviously much slower to transport than a diesel-fueled ocean going cargo ship, or an intercontinental flight, commerce within ancient empires was freed of shackles that modern trade suffers, such as import permits, customs inspections, boycotts, and political interference.

Glubb uses the Roman Empire as an example. At its height, it extended from Syria to the Scottish border with England. In a direct line as the crow flies, that is almost 3000 miles. It might take six months to travel from England to Damascus, but throughout that journey, you would be in the same nation, with the same laws, currency, and form of governmental administration.

Even savage, militaristic empires have encouraged and promoted commerce and trade, both for the benefit of taxation, and because the leaders want nice things for themselves and their families. The Mongols were among the most brutal military conquerors in history. They put the entire population of some cities to the sword. But, in the thirteenth century, the trade caravans between China and Europe were the pinnacle of the concept of free-trade—the whole journey was in the territory of a single government. For free-trade advocates, seeking to be able to sell their produced goods to the largest market share, imperialism is a huge advantage, because it does away with, or at least reduces the

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disparity of various national laws, politics, customs fees and bribes, and currencies.

The Age of Conquest, that expansion of the military strength and resulting territorial control of the new power, overlaps the beginning of the Age of Commerce and the rise of mercantilism within the imperial culture. The pride in military strength still holds precedence, as does avid public support of the military standing guard on the frontiers and pushing the boundaries of the empire's reach into new lands. At the same time though, the desire to make money, with considerably less risk of life and limb, begins to dominate the public imagination. While glory and honor were the principal objects during the warrior-centric phase of the imperial expansion, to the merchant those ideas are meaningless, since they do not add to his bank account.

Instead, those of a mercantile leaning look to ways to take advantage of the empire's new wealth to grow wealthy themselves. The first portion of the mercantile age of the imperial life cycle actually tends to strengthen the empire. The founders' virtues of enterprise, strength, courage, pride, and duty are still valued, and every effort is driven by the patriotism behind those virtues. This is the epoch within the empire when exploration occurs and new sources of wealth are sought out. Whether it's a military leader conquering a new land to take advantage of its resources, a merchant leading a trading caravan into foreign lands to seek trade, prospectors and miners looking for mineral wealth, entrepreneurs building roads or railroads to transport goods and people, or families carving farms and ranches out of conquered wilderness, everyone is trying to leverage the wealth of the empire's resources for their benefit, convinced—rightly so—that their efforts to grow wealthy are strengthening and enriching the empire. The drive for wealth, by any legal means, is seen as patriotism, and no one minds paying some taxes to help strengthen the empire.

Unfortunately, that same wealth, and the drive to amass more of it, is also the agent that creates the decline of the imperial culture. To begin with, decisions are no longer made by the warrior-statesmen that put their own blood and lives on the line to create the empire. Instead those decisions begin to be made by—and for the benefit of—a select class of wealthy merchants, bankers, and descendants of the conquering heroes of old. The quest for money begins to replace the quest for honor and adventure. Greed takes over. Men no longer seek to enrich their country and community, but just themselves and their families. Gradually this affluence crushes the spirit of patriotic duty in most of the population. The youth of all classes are no longer educated to live lives—and create career—that value honor and service, but instead, are taught to seek wealth.

Colleges and schools of higher education no longer focus on general civic education—what we would recognize as a general liberal arts education; how to think clearly. Instead, they focus on what the parents and students seek: simply meeting the requirements to obtain the job with the highest salary. The virtue of service is replaced with the virtue of selfishness.

It is popular in some circles to blame the troubles of our current situation on the self-interested manipulations of secret cabals of super-rich oligarchs who control the wealth—and thus the politics—of our nation and world. While this is undoubtedly true, and only a jackass would argue otherwise, it is also not any sort of novelty. Whether you are discussing Rockefellers, Carnegies, Gateses, Waltons, or others in our own time, or the Patrician class of ancient Rome, every empire has resulted in the creation of a class of super wealthy oligarchs who gathered enough wealth to their families that they could control the political decision-making cycle for their benefit and continued enrichment.

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Conspiracy theories make it possible to believe, “*if we could just get rid of 'them,' then everything would go back to 'normal.'*” The problem is not the existence of a patrician class of oligarchic aristocracy however. The problem is when the virtue of service is replaced with the virtue of selfishness, and both the oligarchs and the common man begin caring more about themselves than they do about their nation and their community. The problem is that the patricians—like the rest of society—lack the long-range vision necessary to recognize that what seems beneficial to them in the near-term, even though it might be detrimental to the rest of society, is also detrimental to them in the long-term. You can't continue to make money off a society that no longer exists.

The problem is when the common man, hoping to benefit from government largesse, allows greedy, selfish men, susceptible to corruption, into positions within the government, where the patricians can afford to bribe them. The blame is not just on the oligarchs. It is on every man. The problem is greed, and during the mercantile phase of empire, greed is the virtue of the culture. Commercial interests continue to applaud consumerism as “patriotism,” even as they do everything in their power to avoid supporting the nation and their communities with taxes. The common man sees those around him apparently doing better than him financially, with all their material belongings and begins to believe in this new virtue. Now, he'd rather work long hours and extra days than spend time with his wife and children, teaching his children the values of their forefathers that made their nation great. His children thus learn, “*working for the man in the big house on the hill is patriotism!*” and “*if you don't go to the mall and go shopping, the terrorists win!*”

The people, and thus the nation as a general whole, are no longer interested in honor and glory. Their only interest is in retaining their wealth and their luxury. Whether it's China's Great Wall, Roman emperor Hadrian's Wall along the English-Scottish border, France's Maginot Line during World War Two, or the proposed wall along the US border with Mexico, Arnold Toynbee, one of the greatest historians of the modern era, and author of the 12-volume masterpiece **The Study of History**¹², makes the very valid point in that work, that the moment when an empire decides that building walls to protect their wealth is a good idea is the moment you know that empire is done. The people are no longer willing to risk their wealth or the blood to continue to expand, content instead to just keep what they have.

Wealth, being more abundant than courage in the empire at its peak, during this Age of Affluence, money and material goods are used in an attempt to buy off enemies. After all, “*if I or my sons go off to fight a war, we might die. Then we won't be able to make any more money!*” Who wants to die to make other people rich? Of course, admitting such a reason, even as they justify it as “patriotism,” while hearing or reading the tales of the heroism of their ancestors would lead one to feelings of cowardly inferiority. To avoid that, justifications are made, both individually and collectively at the social level. Militarism, violence, and imperialism are denounced as primitive, unfair, and immoral. Civilized people solve their problems with ideas and words, rather than with fists. Violence is never the answer!

The problem with this pacifist approach to the world of course, is that it's utterly stupid. It is demonstrably false and ignorant of reality. There are many people in the world who are aggressive, and no amount of education as to the inherent superiority of the imperial culture is going to change their

12 There are one- and two-volume abridgments of the work that are adequate for any but the professional historian. Honestly, they should be on every adult's bookshelves.

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minds. You can't convince them to like you by showing them how much better your life is than their's and their family's. They still value service to their family and their culture as more important than their own individual comfort.

We can see this ignorance in our own culture, of course. People are content to sit on the couch and watch other men fight their nation's battles, even as they pontificate on convincing members of other cultures through material largess, of the superiority of western democracy and capitalism. They feel superior to the outsiders, even as these aggressive foreign cultures invade our lands and attack and rape our women. *“Well, at least it isn't happening to me!”* In Glubb's own words, *“...history seems to indicate that great nations do not normally disarm from motives of conscience, but owing to the weakening of a sense of duty in the citizens, and the increase in selfishness and the desire for wealth and ease.”*

The mercantile oligarchs of the Age of Commerce seek to gain the fame, praise, and immortal renown that their ancestors won through valor and achievement, by spreading a small fraction of their wealth. They create endowments for the arts, and they found or endow universities and colleges and scholarships. Like the criticisms of the secret cabals controlling the puppet strings of politicians, it is popular to denounce people like George Soros, Michael Bloomberg, the Walton family, and Bill and Melinda Gates, not so much for the endowments themselves, but for the ideological strings they seem to attach to those endowments. It is interesting however, when one notices the regularity with which this happens—in every empire, even centuries apart. It is also interesting how precise an indication this is of an empire in its final death throes.

In the eleventh century, the Caliphate was in complete decline. Its frontiers had been pushed back drastically, and it was no longer an empire of warriors, but of intellectual dilettantes. Under Sultan Malik Shah, the Arabs were the intellectual leaders of the world. These are the people who invented Algebra, after all. Building universities and colleges became the passion of the rich. A university appeared in seemingly every moderately-sized city.

In our own time, we see the same phenomenon in the US. At the height of our glory, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and a handful of other colleges seemed to meet our needs. State colleges focused on agricultural and mechanical/technical educations, and most people gained their education through some form of apprenticeship in their trade. Now, even a state like Idaho, with a population of just 1.6 million people¹³, has at least fifteen different colleges and universities¹⁴! These of course, are not counting professional licensing schools like hairstyling “schools,” nor interstate “universities” that teach via correspondence or online, like University of Phoenix.

It is important to point out, I feel, that while this rise of intellectualism is, as we will see shortly, the final harbinger of doom for the imperial power, almost all of the pursuits sought after with such fervor, throughout the life cycle of the empire, have the potential to be “good” by any objective metric. The cult of hardiness, courage, and truthfulness¹⁵ of the Age of Conquest during the Outburst, produces

¹³ 2014 data from the US Census Bureau.

¹⁴ College of Southern Idaho, College of Western Idaho, Eastern Idaho Technical College, North Idaho College, Boise State University, Idaho State University, Lewis-Clark State College, University of Idaho, Boise Bible College, BYU-Idaho, College of Idaho, New Saint Andrews College, Northwest Nazarene University, Stevens-Henager College, and McCall College

¹⁵ Glubb makes the point that lying is cowardice, because it is a symptom of fear of facing the situation.

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heroes that we honor centuries later, even from other empires. The opening of natural resources and the peaceful accumulation of wealth during the mercantile phase, allows for the advancement of technology and the sciences during the Age of Intellect. We cannot label any of these as “good” or “bad” in themselves however. It is the application of them that matters, and ultimately, outside of religious and cultural prejudices, the definition of any of them as “good” or “bad” is entirely subjective.

What is noteworthy about these stages is that they follow the exact same course, one after another, across the imperial legacy of various human cultures, even across centuries and millenia. The argument of course could be made—and is, regularly—that *something* will make this time different. Unfortunately, that argument has also been made, every single time, and always with the exact same lack of result. What is noteworthy is the accuracy with which these stages can be seen to foretell the decline of every empire, including our own.

Harbingers of the Apocalypse¹⁶

Internal Strife and Division

The first of the warning signs of the demise of empire that Glubb noted was an intensification of internal political divisions and hatreds. These are a result of the impact of the Ages of Affluence and Intellectualism, as people struggle to maintain their hold on their possessions and wealth and luxury. In the fourteenth century, the long weakened Byzantines were already dominated by the Turks of the rising power that would become known as the Ottoman Empire. When one would expect that every citizen of the Eastern Roman Empire would set aside his personal interests to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with his countrymen, out of self-interest if not patriotism, the opposite actually occurred. The Byzantines spent the last half-century of their cultural and imperial existence in an ongoing internecine civil war, right up until the Turks delivered the *coup de grace* that wiped the empire from the face of the Earth.

Today, as I write this, we see the same things happening in America. I watch both sides of the standard political spectrum spew absolute filth from their mouths to describe their countrymen, over differences in political opinion and interpretation that ultimately can always be followed back to the desire to keep or gain wealth and luxury. Even as we face internal and external threats—with the stated purpose of destroying our culture—we see even the moderate Left label those on the Right as terrorists and worse. Equally nefarious however, we see the True Believers of divine inspiration on the Right label their political rivals with accusations ranging from communist and socialist to the utterly ridiculous “satanic.” In an era when our nation faces threats from resurgent Russian imperialism, growing recognition by China of its own imperial needs, and a growing resurgence of Mohammedan¹⁷

16 While we think of it as the “End of Times,” per the book of Revelations in the Bible, the term Apocalypse actually derives from the Greek word *apokálypsis*, meaning “uncovering.” It refers to the lifting of a veil, and uncovering knowledge. It is a disclosure of something hidden. In Revelations, the uncovered knowledge of course, is the ultimate victory of the will of Yahweh over Satan, at the end of the present age. The word Apocalypse, in English, originated in 1175, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, and that is the primary meaning of the term. In popular vernacular today though, it is used in reference to any so-called end times scenario, or as it is often phrased in Doomsday Preparedness literature, the acronym TEOTWAWKI (The End Of The World As We Know It). It is in the latter sense that I use it, although, as we will see in the next chapter of this book, it also ties directly into the original Greek word.

17 The third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, when faced with the scourge of Islamist piracy against American commercial shipping interests along Africa's Barbary Coast, regularly referred to the desert religion as Mohammedanism, and labeled its adherents as Mohammedans. Since I despise the existence of that religion as much as

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expansionism that looks very much like the beginning of a successful New Caliphate, you would think that every thinking person, with any interest in saving America would be coming together in a bipartisan effort to salvage what is left of the idea that was America. Instead, we seem to be more than willing to watch a re-run of the Fall of Byzantium.

There is a greater threat than just the external however, that actually increases the threat from outside. This results from the intensification of these internal political schisms within the declining imperial power, and is every bit a result of the virtue of selfishness created during the Age of Affluence. In the Roman Republic, a schism erupted within the Senate as two factions battled. The Optimates were the “conservative” party, striving to hold to traditional forms of Roman governance, while the Populares were the “progressive” party that stressed the importance of recognizing the growing strength and importance of the Plebeian Assembly of the common citizenry¹⁸. By the second century BCE, there was enough discord within both the Republic and the Senate to terminate centuries of essentially peaceful governance. We can see the same thing in the encouragement of class and racial divides, and the resulting angst and violence in our own society today.

Reforms that had taken place under Tiberius and Gaius as consuls looked to address the conditions of the disenfranchised, but much like similar reform attempts within our own government, the result was instead a growing animosity—and even outright enmity—between the Patrician and Plebeian “haves,” and the poorest Plebeian “have-nots.” By the end of the Punic Wars with Carthage (264-146 BCE), wealth had concentrated towards the more powerful of the Patrician clans within Rome, while middle-class citizen-soldiers found themselves landless, as their untended lands, laying fallow as they campaigned abroad for the “*greater glory of Rome*,” prevented their ability to repay creditors. Those lands, in most cases, were then bought from the creditors who had possessed them in lieu of repayment, by the more wealthy, oligarchic clans, who had kept their sons at home, rather than risking them on the battlefield. This created an even wider gap in power and wealth, favoring the Patricians. This small, wealthy, oligarchic class, recognizing the benefits they were accruing from the situation, and believing naively in the immortality of Rome, focused on their own greed, rather than on the security and welfare of the Republic, and strove to maintain the *status quo*.

The situation grew increasingly desperate, with more and more of the limited arable land tied up in the hands of a small number of well-moneyed families. By 107 BCE, Gaius Marius was appointed consul, and opposition to land reform was a given in the Senate. Despite this, Marius opted to reorganize the army, allowing—for the first time in Roman history—landless citizens to enlist, enticing them with promises of valuable land grants as a pension. This allowed him the manpower and the finances needed to develop it into a professional army, with standardized training and equipment suitable for waging the increasing number of extended campaigns required by the growing expansionist efforts of the empire. Land is, like so many other things, a non-renewable resource. As the cliché goes, one thing you can be certain of about land—they're not making any more of it. In order to attain more of any limited, finite resource, the empire has to expand its reach and influence.

The problem with Marius' effort was, because their pensions—their futures and the futures of their

they despise my heathen, infidel, non-Abrahamic ass, I find it ingratiatingly entertaining to use this extremely insulting term, rather than the more respectful Islam (“submission to God”) and Muslim (“one who has submitted to God”), that they would prefer. If you're a Mohammedan, and don't like that? Go fuck a pig.

18 I would hope the parallels would be blindingly fucking obvious...

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children—were tied to the conquered territories, the soldiers' loyalties were tied to the generals that led them to victory and their new homelands, rather than the Republic and the Eternal City itself. The legions thus became essentially private armies of the generals, considering themselves not beholden to the citizens of Rome, but to their comrades and leaders. In fact, the view was that the citizens of Rome were beholden to them instead, because of the riches they sent back. Meanwhile, the citizens of Rome felt this arrogance were driven into the arms of rival factions within the Senate who wanted to curtail the power and influence of the generals. As the conflict grew within the Senatorial Patrician class and became open confrontation, this web of divided loyalties that was created was the trigger that initiated the coup that resulted in the final death knell of the Republic and the imposition of the dictatorial imperial government under Julius Caesar.

The parallels between ancient Rome and our own contemporary situation is not just the blindingly obvious schisms between conservative and progressive, Left and Right, and rich and poor. The veterans' community, especially in the last decade, has come to pride itself on its separation and uniqueness from the general American population, pointing out proudly that only 0.45% of the American populace has served in the GWOT, and only 12-15% of living Americans have served in the military at all. This meme is parroted repeatedly in social media and on both the Left and the Right, encouraging the schisms between the military/veterans' community and the general public. Key figures in the “patriot” movement and even in the more mainstream “neo-conservative” Right call for military generals to oust the legally elected President¹⁹. The military and veterans' community, sadly too often completely unaware of the historical parallels, are themselves reinforcing the schisms with a self-imposed loyalty to their comrades and wartime leaders, before their loyalty to the nation and constitution. Even across social media, we see an increasingly serious campaign for “Mattis for President!” and calls for David Petraeus to run for the office, despite his recent legal troubles, as veterans of the recent campaigns demonstrate a very Roman loyalty to their generals first.

The Right encourages this by extolling the virtue and self-sacrifice of veterans—including the complete fabrication of the theme that 22 veterans of the GWOT commit suicide every day—all of whom, I feel obligated to point out, that are currently serving, not only volunteered, but volunteered in wartime no less, “*fully knowing the hazards of my chosen profession.*” No one that I've ever met, who served in the military—including myself, I hasten to add—has ever volunteered to forfeit their salary out of patriotism.

The Left encourages the same schisms however, between veteran and public, by too often labeling veterans as war criminals and PTSD victims, trivializing their efforts for a cause—the expansion of American imperialism—that they were socially indoctrinated to believe in by the very educational system that the Left so ardently supports. The government itself, much like the Roman government, under the control of both sides of the oligarchic political class, pushes the schism even wider, encouraging veterans to feel abandoned and alone in society, denied the benefits they were

¹⁹ Look, I get it. Some people still don't believe Barack Obama is a “natural-born” citizen, because they don't understand the fucking law. POTUS, despite a foreign-citizen father, and regardless of where on the planet he was born, is still a natural-born citizen because his MOTHER WAS A CITIZEN! Others are concerned that there must be chicanery afoot—and here, I concede they probably have a point—because of the blatantly fraudulent birth certificates and social security number issues. We know the guy is a lying, crooked piece of shit. Welcome to modern American politics. A military coup however, is a tool of totalitarianism that no one who takes their oath of enlistment seriously would ever seriously entertain supporting.

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contractually promised in return for their service²⁰.

The political divisions and vitriolic name-calling and insults are not what any sane man would want for his nation, but the oligarchs of the modern Patrician class—just like their Roman predecessors—encourage it, because they know it helps them consolidate their control and power, separating the potential power of the military from any real fraternity with the populace it is sworn to protect and defend. Further, by keeping the people themselves at each others' throats over the encouraged perceptions of unfairness on both sides, there can be no unity among the American people to return to the natural equality under the law of our constitutional system. The oligarchs—again like their predecessors—do not recognize the parallels path of destruction they have put themselves, and all of our nation, on.

Multiculturalism is Collectivism

The second great harbinger of doom that Glubb described was the influx of foreigners into the capital cities and the political center of power. He cited complaints by Roman citizens of the vast numbers of Asians and Africans that had settled in Rome. Baghdad likewise, in its prime as the capital of the Caliphate during the ninth century, was as cosmopolitan as New York or London are today—Persians, Turks, Egyptians, Sub-Saharan Africans, and Greeks; all mingled with the indigenous population in the city's cafes, coffee shops, and universities.

America is of course, the melting pot. We have long celebrated our assimilation of diverse ethnic origins into a harmonious, homogeneous, distinctly American culture. That has long been heralded as one of America's greatest strengths. Today however, we see the metaphor of the melting pot, a term first coined in the 1780s, transformed into the contemptible, intentionally divisive celebration of multiculturalism.

The idea that we should celebrate the contributions of the individual cultures of different ethnic communities in the greater American culture is nothing new. As early as 1762, Irish soldiers serving in the British Army in New York staged a St. Patrick's Day parade, and this ethnic/religious holiday honoring a saint of the Catholic Church, despite a Protestant, Anglo cultural majority, has been observed for all of American history. The difference of course, is that people who celebrate St. Patrick's Day have done so for one day out of the year, sporting “Kiss Me! I'm Irish!” t-shirts, shamrock pins, and horrendous fake Irish accents, and then go back to being Americans the very next day.

The idea that we should elevate the individual cultures of different ethnic communities in America above American culture in general, is actually antithetical to the conceptual metaphor of the melting pot. The original idea, that we may choose to appropriate some of the best cultural traits and traditions that different immigrants have brought with them from their native lands, and assimilate those into the homogeneous culture of America, worked well. The inherent divisiveness of trying to elevate the importance of outside cultural values and celebrations however, can be seen throughout American history. As new groups of immigrants came into this country, those who wanted to succeed outside of their urban ethnic bastions, otherwise referred to as “ghettos,” had to quickly shed themselves of as many markers of their native culture as possible, or face violent recriminations from nativists who

20 I feel obligated, lest I be labeled a whiner or cry baby over the matter, to point out that I have personally never even attempted to collect any veteran's benefits whatsoever. Further, while both my father and grandfather have utilized those benefits, neither of them had any complaints about the services they received from the Veterans' Administration.

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might be only one generation removed their own homelands.

There is nothing wrong with celebrating one's ancestral culture, regardless of what that ancestral culture is. Doing so is, in fact, central to my personal belief system. The melting pot concept however, is central to the control of the empire. Looking at ethnic/tribal groups that have traditionally/historically refused to integrate actually illustrates this: gypsies/Rom, Orthodox Jews, Amish and Mennonite German Baptists, and others, have long existed within the imperial boundaries, as outsiders. This can only be allowed however, for small groups, and even those groups are generally persecuted in any empire but our own²¹. Allowing everyone to maintain their tribal/ancestral culture means no one adopts the imperial culture, and results in a lack of loyalty to the state that the empire needs for patriotic service and sacrifice for the greater good of the empire.

The problem with post-modern multiculturalism however, is the elevation of one—or more than one—group's ancestral cultural values over those of others, as well as over the homogeneity of American cultural values. We “celebrate diversity” even as it tears apart the very fabric of our culture. This divisiveness is the undoing of the unified culture that allowed the empire to grow to greatness. It is not a matter of the inferiority of one culture or another. Rather, it is that the differences between them, if not buffered by the acceptance and elevation of shared cultural values through the homogeneity of the imperial culture, or—in a more ideal world—the equal protection under the law, of all different cultural groups, leads to the impossibility of peaceful coexistence.

Historically, we've seen immigrants, during the affluent periods of an empire's existence, who felt—and expressed—great pride in becoming imperial citizens. Even Mohammedans in America, during the peak of American imperial power in the 1940s and 1950s, were proud to be Americans and part of The Great Experiment. No one is more patriotic, or fervent in their support of the empire, than the immigrant who found success and fortune in his new homeland. When decline sets in and reaches a state that can no longer be ignored though, the memories of every slight—real or imagined—is suddenly recalled by those who have held on to the vestiges of their ancestral cultures, instead of integrating successfully and totally into the imperial culture. While the empire is affluent, and there is money to be made, all the diverse cultures seem to be equally loyal and filled with patriotic fervor. As soon as the decline begins to steepen however, and wealth and luxury begin to become harder to find and hold on to, because it is consolidated in fewer and fewer hands, and the rungs of the ladder are harder—if not impossible—to scale, ethnic enclaves begin reforming, in the form of self-segregating communities, and tribalism naturally finds a resurgence in a reversion to the naturally xenophobic state of mankind, within the borders of the empire, as people focus on looking out for their own.

We see this occurring before our eyes, in America today. Even a mere 46 years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, we see a deepening, voluntary resegregation of American society, as black Americans separate into their own neighborhoods and ghettos, and strive to create and recognize a specific, separate, black American culture within the larger American culture²².

21 And let's face the Truth...even in our own, all of those groups have received rather egregious persecutions at different times in our own history as well.

22 While politically incorrect to point out, the term “African-American” is completely disingenuous for the description of Americans whose ancestors were brought to America during the slave trade era. With zero ancestral memory of specific African ancestral ties, they have—outside of genetic testing—no way to tie themselves culturally, to any specific region or culture of the Dark Continent. It is the parallel of claiming that a Navajo, an Absaroka, a Yupik, and a Mohegan are

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We can see the same things happening among other ethnic groups and national ancestral groups as well though. Within the Asian communities in America, the Chinese have always, to some degree, segregated themselves, with the establishment of Chinatowns in larger urban areas. We also see Laotian, Hmong, Korean, and—to a far lesser extent—Japanese ethnic enclaves beginning to form as well though.

Among Hispanics, we can see Salvadorans, Mexicans, Guatemalans, and other Latino immigrants—both legal and illegal—segregating themselves, not only from the greater American culture, but from other Hispanic ethnic cultural groups, putting the lie to the racist idea of “Brown Pride” as a pan-Hispanic political movement. One example of this can be seen in the resurgence of interest among Americans of Mexican descent, in returning the southwestern states to Mexico, with the rise of the Azatlan movement and the Reconquista. The best example of this in recent memory though, may actually be an interview with a young American soldier serving in Afghanistan. When asked by a reporter why he performed an action that the reporter felt was particularly courageous, the soldier responded with, “Because I’m a Mexi-CAN, not a Mexi-CAN’T!” This was a US citizen, serving in the Army of the United States of America...

We see Mohammedan immigrants separating themselves not only into religious enclaves, but specific ethnic religious enclaves. Mohammedan religious groups and leaders try to establish the legitimacy of Shariah law in their communities, as superseding American constitutional law and jurisprudence. This fracturing of the imperial social culture into tribal societies is one of the most critical of Sir John's markers. It is—both figuratively and literally—the incursion of the barbarians into the very borders of the empire. It is also one of history's great indicators that an empire is past the point of salvation.

While most of the few Americans with any knowledge of historical affairs preceding 1774 think of the sack of Rome by the Germanic Visigoths under Alaric in 410 CE as the “Fall of Rome,” too few recognize that it was actually Caesar Augustus (63 BCE-14 CE) that first brought in large numbers of Germanic warrior tribesmen to serve as his imperial bodyguards, because he did not trust Roman legionnaires to do the job. Although he shunted them off to lesser, more remote postings following Arminius of the Cherusci's destruction of a 20,000 man Roman Army at the Teutoburg Forest in 9 CE, he quickly reverted to the practice, and his successors followed suit. Additionally, even by the time his predecessor and uncle Julius Caesar (100-44 BCE), famously crossed the Rubicon and took control of Rome by force of arms, a significant portion of the Roman Army was comprised of foreign-born troops with—at best—questionable loyalty to the Eternal City.

To reiterate an important point however, this is not about race and pigmentation of skin. It is not about the inherent superiority or inferiority of one racial group or ethnicity over another. It is about cultural hegemony within the imperial culture—in this case, what we define as “western culture.” These foreign cultures may not be inferior. In fact, in their natural environment, and for their native people, they can be said to be superior, or they would not have survived and thrived as they did. They

“all the same,” because they are all descendants of “native” American tribes... While I am—on some levels—opposed to the hyphenation of Americans anyway, I find it particularly dishonest to encourage it among this particular demographic. It creates a false sense of some sort of pan-African culture that is demonstrably untrue, and interferes with both a) assimilation into and success within the greater, general American culture, and b) establishing a legitimate “black American” tribal culture of shared values, customs, and traditions in the manner we will be discussing within this book.

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are certainly different though, and that difference, within the borders of the empire, leads to the schism in the homogeneity of the national culture—if the outsiders refuse to assimilate—that means the empire cannot maintain its hegemony over even its own populace.

Games Are For Children

The third indicator of cultural decline is the rise of what Sir John referred to as “frivolity.” This is seen as the companion to the pessimism that accompanies the unconscious dawning realization of the end of affluence. “*Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die!*” is the classic Roman example cited by Glubb. The Roman mob insisted on their *panem et circenses*²³, even as their world collapsed around them.

The parallels between gladiatorial games, violent chariot races, and other entertainment spectacles, to the contemporary American fascination with watching—rather than participating—in professional sports, blockbuster movies, and five hundred channels of satellite television programming, need not be explicitly pointed out to any thinking reader. We see the youth—and even most so-called “adults”—of America today proclaim their adoration for celebrity singers, actors, and other performers, hanging on their every word and action, no matter how ridiculous, rather than the cultural icons of the American Outburst. They would rather emulate some ridiculous “twerking” than the actions of the heroes that made America great; men like George Washington, Francis Marion, Daniel Boone, Simon Kenton, Thomas Edison, and more are instead, castigated as “*dead white men*” who were probably “*murdering rapists and racists*.”

We see people that are considered “mature” adults culturally, basing their entire political world view on the public statements of entertainers, many of whom never even managed to finish high school, rather than making the effort to educate themselves to understand the political system they live under, and who refuse to use basic critical thinking skills to determine what their own beliefs are on matters. It's easier to simply re-post the illiterate memes of social media as “political statements.” We have, it seems, been convinced that being fashionable is more important than being intelligent. We have been convinced to ignore and forget our cultural mythic ancestry, in favor of the popular fashion entertainment of the moment. The capitalist-collectivist idea of course, is that in three months, there will be another “new and improved” cultural idol we “simply must” follow the antics of. The socialist-collectivist idea, on the other hand, is that, since “*everyone is of equal value*,” then the message of the famous celebrity, who spouts the same nonsense as their side of the political equation—no matter how ridiculously assinine it may be—is obviously valid, regardless of their lack of qualification to even open their mouth on the subject.

Divine Providence

The fourth indicator of decline is the rise of the fervent belief in the inherent superiority of the culture, above all cultures that have ever existed before in the human experience. This includes a belief in the divine inspiration and favor of the gods towards the imperial culture, that will allow the culture to last for the rest of time, regardless of the historical indicators otherwise. Rome famously billed itself as the “Eternal City.” The Caliphs of Baghdad believed that Allah had appointed them to rule magnanimously over all of mankind until the Judgment Day. At the beginning of the 20th century, any Englishman, of any age, would proudly declare with absolute certainty, “*Britannia forever!*”

23 “bread and circuses.”

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Today, even as more and more Americans turn away from religion in general²⁴, and especially divine inspiration as the result of divine inspiration as the reason behind the constitutional republican system, the idea of some sort of inherent superiority as a result of our progressive advancement over previous cultures, combined with our ability to develop new technologies, has led to the idea that progress is automatic, requiring no effort to maintain, other than blind faith in the inherent superiority of our liberalism. It is completely unfathomable to Americans that the world could exist without America. We see again, the eternal conceit of every generation of man, that they are somehow so indispensable that they are, somehow outside of and immune to, history.

We have been engaged, for well over a decade, in a half-hearted “war” effort to bring American “democracy” to failed states in parts of the world that have zero experience in representative government, since the dawn of time, and have evinced no real indication of any interest in it²⁵. We pour scorn on any petty tyrant who refuses to embrace the idealism of our defaced, commercialized rendition of republican representative governance, no matter how well his rule has served his people, in their own minds. At least, we scorn them when we don't come right out and depose the poor, misguided bastards for not conforming to our own definitions of good and evil.

We sit, secure in our programmed, juvenile obedience, ignoring the realities of the world around us, blindly accepting the gospel that “*America is eternal so quit worrying and keep spending!*” We accept—even clamor for—the message of fairy tale solutions to the problems that we are forced to acknowledge. Americans are optimists, after all. We are patriots, and we want to believe in the inherent, divine righteousness of our constitutional system. We want to believe that, if we could just get “our guy” into office, then things will change for the better. In our optimistic, blind patriotism, we strive to continue believing in the rule-of-law and egalitarian justice, even as we watch them trampled and destroyed before our eyes.

This is ironic to the objective historian, because the life expectancy of an empire bears absolutely zero apparent relationship to the form of government instituted. The Roman Republic lasted the same two and a half centuries that the dictatorial Empire did. While the House of Windsor still “rules” England, the “*divine right of kings*” did nothing to stop the loss of their empire. Previous empires in the human experience illustrate almost every possible imaginable variation of political system, and still, each of them experienced the same life cycle and patterns of decay. Yet, somehow, magically, we alone are immune?

We—America—have become Rome, as the city burned. Do not think, for even a moment, that the citizens of Rome did not feel the same righteous loyalty towards their empire, even as Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon²⁶ and overthrew the Republic, taking on the mantle of dictator. Like modern Americans, the people of Rome viewed their culture as the zenith of social, legal, and political

24 <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>

25 Looked at objectively, every group in the under developed world that has ever asked for, and received, US military assistance in overthrowing tyranny has, once they gained power, reestablished what we would perceive as a corrupt governance themselves. The only real problem they had with the old system was that they weren't in charge.

26 *It occurs to me that perhaps, having mentioned it several times now, I might need to explain exactly what the fuck the Rubicon is. A small, shallow river in northeast Italy, just to the south of Ravenna, it was, in historical times, the border between Italy proper—controlled by Rome—and the province of Cisalpine Gaul. The legions were not allowed to cross into Italy proper, for fear of coup attempts. Julius bringing his legions across the Rubicon did exactly that, and promptly overthrew the republican system.*

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development in the human experience. Even as the legions stood on the frontiers, and looked homeward over their shoulders, watching the destruction of the empire they represented from internal discord, this proto-patriotism existed. No one thought Rome could fail, let alone that it would.

Moral Degeneracy and the Religious Revival

Directly tied to the idea of the immortality of empire, due to divine guidance, is the fifth indicator in Glubb's thesis, the rise of moral degeneracy and a subsequent religious revival. This is a popular aspect of the thesis among some evangelical Christians today who are students of preparedness. All too often however, in their attempt to make political headway, or perhaps—to be generous—out of pure cognitive bias, this indicator is often horribly misrepresented. One obviously evangelical Christian summary of **The Fate of Empires**, hosted on the website of the United Church of God²⁷, states the following:

“Glubb describes developments like these: 1. Rampant sexual immorality, an aversion to marriage in favor of 'living together,' and an increased divorce rate all combine to undermine family stability.”

Unfortunately for the credibility of the author of the article, and the United Church of God for hosting it, obviously none of whom actually read Glubb's essay—or they simply assumed none of their readers would ever bother reading it—Glubb said absolutely nothing of the sort. He said nothing at all about sex, marriage, or divorce in this context.

In fact, despite presumably being a Christian himself, Glubb's words on the subject had absolutely nothing to do with Christianity or “Christian values”²⁸. His actual words however, included:

“Historians of periods of decadence often refer to a decline of religion, but if we extend our investigation over a period covering the Assyrians (859–612 BCE) to our own times, we have to interpret religion in a broad sense. Some such definition as 'the feeling that there is something, some invisible Power, apart from material objects, which controls life and the natural world.' We are probably too narrow and contemptuous in our interpretation of idol worship. The people of ancient civilizations were as sensible as we are, and would scarcely have been so foolish as to worship sticks and stones fashioned by their own hands. The idol was for them merely a symbol, and represented an unknown, spiritual reality, which controlled the lives of men and demanded human obedience to its moral precepts.

“We all know only too well that minor differences in the human visualization of this Spirit frequently became the ostensible reason for human wars, in which both sides claimed to be fighting for the true God, but the absurd narrowness of human conceptions should not blind us to the fact that, very often, both sides believed their campaigns to have a moral background. Genghis Khan, one of the most brutal of all conquerors, claimed that God had delegated him the duty to exterminate the decadent races of the civilized world. Thus the Age of Conquests often had some kind of religious atmosphere, which implied heroic self-

²⁷ Although I am painfully loathe to send web traffic their way, and thus perhaps support such abject intellectual fuckery, the original article can be found in its entirety at: <http://www.ucg.org/united-states/life-cycles-empires-lessons-america-today>.

²⁸ of which, if UCG is any indication, “honesty” is apparently not included

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sacrifice for the cause.

“But this spirit of dedication was slowly eroded in the Age of Commerce by the action of money. People make money for themselves, not for their country. Thus periods of affluence gradually dissolved the spirit of service, which had caused the rise of the imperial races. In due course, selfishness permeated the community, the coherence of which was weakened until disintegration was threatened. Then, as we have seen, came the period of pessimism with the accompanying spirit of frivolity and sensual indulgence, by-products of despair. It was inevitable at such times that men would look back yearningly to the days of 'religion,' when the spirit of self-sacrifice was still strong enough to make men ready to give and to serve, rather than to snatch.

“But while despair might permeate the greater part of the nation, others achieved a new realisation of the fact that only readiness for self-sacrifice could enable a community to survive. Some of the greatest saints in history lived in times of national decadence, raising the banner of duty and service against the flood of depravity and despair.

“In this manner, at the height of vice and frivolity the seeds of religious revival are quietly sown. After, perhaps, several generations (or even centuries) of suffering, the impoverished nation has been purged of its selfishness and its love of money, religion regains its sway and a new era sets in.”

At no point in his essay, particularly under the heading of religion, did Sir John say anything at all about “an aversion to marriage,” or “an increased divorce rate.” He wrote nothing at all about undermining “family stability,” or in fact, anything related to any particular religious creed. These are projections by others who lack Glubb's ability to step outside their own world view and look at the author's writing objectively. The underlying theme of this portion of Sir John's essay is actually almost completely contrary to the spirit of evangelical propaganda in the UCG article, especially considering his comments about “...we all know only too well, that minor differences in human visualization of this Spirit frequently become the reason for human wars, in which both sides claim to be fighting for the true God, but the absurd narrowness of human conception should not blind us to the fact that, very often, both sides believed the conflict to have a moral background...”²⁹

The moral of looking at “religious decline” as an indicator of the decline of empire, in Glubb's thesis, has nothing to do with the morality of a particular religion's morality, or even with a particular god. Instead, it refers to a morality that has been common across cultures, throughout the collective human experience, regardless of epoch or declared religious beliefs. The morality in question is one

²⁹ I have, due to my own willingness to admit that I am not Christian, and my willingness to point out the hypocrisy of many modern Christians, been accused of being “anti-Christian.” Nothing could be further from the truth. While I do despise much of the greed and hypocrisy of what passes for modern Christianity, as well as the modernist interpretation of Christianity as a “pacifist” belief system, and while I do doubt the historicity of the existence of the man Jesus Christ, and believe the idea that a book that we KNOW has been translated inaccurately at different times, in pursuit of political leverage is “the divine word of God,” is utterly ridiculous, I am not, nor have I ever been, “anti-Christian.” For those believers of the faith that leverage it into a readiness to serve and sacrifice for family and community, I have the utmost respect. Ultimately, I believe religion is—and should remain—a subject of personal, family, and community belief.

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that arises in the early epochs of empire, during the Age of Conquest. This is a morality of heroic self-sacrifice for the benefit of the tribe. This is eroded during the mercantile phase of empire, as the quest for individual gain and profit take precedence over the spirit of community that allowed the tribe to gain dominance over its rivals and decadent predecessors. The simple fact is, as Glubb stated, “*people make money for themselves, not for their country,*” regardless of labeling it “patriotic.” He defined the erosion of religious fervor as a decline in the moral supremacy of the spirit of service, and a rise in the spirit of selfishness.

This selfishness eventually pervades the community, weakening the fabric of society by destroying the bonds of mutual self-sacrifice and sense of community, until total disintegration threatens. During this time of despair, “*...it is inevitable that men should look back yearningly to the days of 'religion,' when the spirit of self-sacrifice was still strong enough to make men ready to give and to serve, rather than to snatch*³⁰.” It is out of the reawakened yearning for some “*ol' time religion,*” and a morality of community service, that the seeds of a 'religious' revival are sown, Sir John argued. Unfortunately, as we can see in the excerpts above from the UCG article, too often, people with a vested interest other than the good of the community are more than willing to twist that yearning to fit their own goals and agendas, doing nothing of real substance to remedy the problem.

In America today, even as the more militant evangelical Christian element within the body politic seeks a “return” of the “*ol' time religion*” of their particular brand of fervent Protestantism, and a theocracy based on Biblical Law that—too often—they apparently don't even understand, despite their professed support for the “*natural, God-given right*” of “*freedom of conscience,*” we are actually seeing a resurgence of the type of 'religious' revival that Glubb was actually referring to; that is, a resurgence in the longing for—and actual action towards fulfilling that longing—a sense of real community, even as the mercantilist factions of our society continue to push the capitalist-collectivist meme of “*the rugged individualist*” to keep people focused on wealth and luxury instead.

Americans have begun—in ever increasing numbers—to recognize the concerted efforts being made against them to weaken their communities, their families, their spirits, and their bodies, in the imperial grasp to maintain hegemony. More and more people are beginning to recognize that the “*bread and circuses*” they are being offered are intended to fatten them into the docility of sheep, rather than allowing them to act on their recognition that “*shit just ain't right!*”

The commercialized and politicized push for multiculturalism and globalization are really nothing more than the destruction of ethnic historical cultures, in order to replace them, not with the homogeneous American culture, but with a “*one-world, one (consumer) culture.*” It is a synthetic religion of the marketplace, where people are expected to worship whomever or whatever the celebrities and politicians tell them they should like this week. Money and material gain have become the primary aim of society, with family, children, and service to the community of kith and kin, becoming nothing more than burdens that interfere with that self-indulgence.

Like Plato, Marx, and Engels, the imperial class today views family, motherhood, and traditional gender roles to be as much a hindrance to the imperial global economy as they consider nation-state borders a barrier to world trade. In 1884, with the publication of **The Origin of the Family, Private**

30 As some astute readers may have noticed, yes, this is as much a denouncement of the greed of modern capitalism as it is of communism.

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Property, and the State, Friedrich Engels argued—inaccurately—that in man's barbarian, preliterate past, there had been no difference in gender roles. This is as nonsensical—and science proves it daily—as the rest of his socialist nonsense was³¹.

Since the beginning of human evolutionary development, the sexes have had distinct roles. Men were the providers and women stayed home and took care of the household. This contributed both to family stability, and the survival of the culture. Civilization during the Age of Conquest, is built as much on the ability of the conquering culture to breed new generations of soldiers as it is solely on the might of the sword arm. In the American experience—mirroring that of its parental British Empire—the necessity to replace the recalcitrant, indigenous “barbarian” tribes with colonizing families was equally important. When the first explorers, fur trappers/traders, and soldiers arrived on scene, the Indians managed to maintain control of their territories, even if they lost some—or most—fights. Many of those first adventurers even ended up marrying into the indigenous tribes and adopting their culture. It wasn't until settlers began showing up—with women and children in tow—that the expansion of the imperial culture was brought to bear³².

It is during the mercantile Age of Commerce of the empire, following the consolidation of the Age of Conquest, that the power brokers of the imperial oligarchy begin realizing the importance of breaking down family loyalties and replacing them with a primary loyalty to the State. In ancient Rome this started with the lionization of pleasure: from orgies and accepted infidelity and pederasty, anything that weakened the fiber of the fabric of family—destroying the natural bonds between father, mother, and children—was encouraged. Following Christianization, the State used the Scriptural admonition of Luke 14:25-26, “*And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, if any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yeah, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*”³³, to encourage the same thing, through the medium of the State Church.

In our own time, we see the drive to bring both parents into the workforce, “liberating” women from the traditional bonds of home and child-rearing. By doing so, they double the potential workforce, allowing wages to be driven downward through competitiveness, even as the advertising market pushes parents to “*spend, spend, spend*” to replace the nurturing and caring of an absentee mother with material goods. We see commercial television encouraging it, by showcasing programming that features youth rebelling successfully against their parents with rewarding outcomes.

The children find themselves shuttled off to preschools, grade schools, and secondary schools, where they spend 13+ years of the most formative portion of their development being indoctrinated

31 Those who are offended that I would bundle Plato in with Marx and Engels, and believe that the term “republic” automatically infers a superior form of government, should do the entire world a favor and shut the fuck up until they've actually read Plato's **The Republic**. In that work, the first two classes of citizens, the rulers and the protectors, would be forbidden families, because they divide one's loyalty from the duty to the State. The third class, workers, would have their family life strictly overseen and controlled by their betters. So, yeah, if you are the type to point out, ad nauseum, “We are not a democracy! We are a constitutional republic!” because you think it is ipso facto, an superior form, simply for being labeled “republic?” Fuck off and go read some classical literature.

32 There are some very strong—and obvious—parallels with the current rise of Mohammedan jihadist expansionism, as well as Hispanic expansionism from the South, that can be seen here, with their unwillingness to stop breeding, while Europeans and Americans seem to want to limit themselves to the average 2.5 children per family...

33 King James Version, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+14%3A25-35&version=KJV>

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into a collectivist, commercialized culture of materialism, without ever really having the opportunity to know their parents as anything beyond “*the people who gave me stuff.*” They are locked into artificial restraints of age-peer groups, and conditioned via Pavlovian techniques and fear, to blindly obey the commands and decrees of strangers, lest they incur the penalties of detentions, expulsions, or bad marks on their “*permanent records!*”

Fortunately, more and more people seem to be experiencing Glubb's 'religious' reawakening. We see this in the growing popularity of the ancestral health movement, despite the vehement protests of industry-financed “scientists” extolling the importance of genetically-modified organisms (GMO) and the monopolization and industrialization of modern agriculture. We see young families from mainstream, WASP America, willing to bypass the budgetary convenience of the global supermarket chains like Wal-Mart's SuperCenters, preferring instead to search out and purchase—even at greater expense that negatively impacts their ability to collect more of the “stuff” that society tells them they should want—locally grown organic meats and vegetables produced on small-scale, sustainable family farms. Suburban, white-bread, minivan-driving soccer moms are recognizing that at least three generations of Americans have been weakened, physically, mentally, and spiritually, through the contribution of processed, industrialized “foods” that offered no real benefit, instead simply weakening and fattening them, keeping them pliant and ready for the economic fleecing and slaughter by their betters.³⁴

These typical, normal Americans—from all walks of life and all classes of society—are leaping, wholeheartedly, into the struggle to seek a healthier, more natural way of life in an attempt to return strength and vigor to their families, even as they move away from the conditioned urge towards profligate spending on meaningless, commercialized “stuff.” People are waking up to the weakening of their physical and mental health, and the health of their communities, through the intentional dulling of their natural physical competitiveness—the very spirit that ensured the survival of their ancestors and the growth of the American empire—by replacing their natural physical vigor that were hereditary gifts of their ancestors, with the artifice of the “ethic” of supporting “my team” of overpaid performing clowns in professional sports.

They have embraced fitness and competition, even in the often criticized “*Sport of Fitness,*” as Crossfit bills itself. For all the negativity that so many heap onto the ancestral health movement in general, and Crossfit specifically, it should be apparent that they are revolutionary, in the literal,

34 Three notes here: 1) Any scientist who blindly accepts “what is” as “Truth,” is not a fucking scientist. 2) I get it. Mass industrial agriculture is critical to the growth of empire. It's what makes the standing military force of the empire possible. I also recognize that without the benefits of modern, petrochemical-based fertilizers and GMO science, the yields of worldwide agriculture would not support the current population of the planet. Famine and disease would result, with massive population die-offs. First, that should tell us something of the value—or lack thereof—of industrialized agriculture, and the propaganda that arises against “whack-job environmentalists” concerned with human overpopulation issues. Second, even if you support the survival of unsustainable human populations out of some sort of misguided humanitarian belief that near-starvation in culturally endemic poverty is better than death, that is really only benefiting large, industrialized multinational agricultural corporations, there is nothing wrong with individuals, families, and communities that have the ability to support such efforts, choosing to return to what they perceive to be a healthier, more natural mode of living. This would also serve to free more of the available industrial agricultural output to feed those people without those resources. 3) Cross-pollination of different strains of the same species of plant or animal is not the same fucking thing as 'genetic modification' by injecting foreign species DNA. Injecting pig DNA into a fucking tomato plant or some suspected yield benefits is not the same damned thing as cross-pollinating different strains of corn.

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political sense of the word as a “turning back.” The entire ancestral health movement has long since passed the stage of development that would allow it to be accurately dismissed as a mere fad. The oligarchic class certainly recognizes it, and we can witness that recognition in their attempts to subvert it. From the availability of organic produce and grass-fed beef at Wal-Mart, to the purchase of the Crossfit brand by sports apparel giant Reebok, and the arrival of “natural foods” supermarket chains like Whole Foods Market and Natural Grocers, the mercantile class is not only trying to subvert the ancestral health movement, they are trying to do so by leveraging it for their own financial benefit.

These are 'religious' revivals in the sense of religion that Glubb was referring to. The word religion is derived from the Latin word *religere*, meaning “to reconnect.” These “religions” are attempts by people to reconnect with their cultural past, that they intuitively recognize as more resilient than the falling facades of the decadence of declining imperial grandeur. They restore a sense of community and tribal connections in people. Look at the proclivity of outsiders to label Crossfit and the Paleo/Primal diets as “cultish” for example. Even many of the most avid Crossfit athletes I know refer to the other members of their “boxes” as “family” and “tribe.” These religions reflect the reborn yearning for “*ol' time religion*” not in the sense of worshiping a particular deity, but in the seeking of traditional values of family and community identity. These are movements that actively encourage the intentional reconstruction of community, by encouraging the participation of the whole family.

None of this however, should be taken as an insult to religion as it is generally recognized—worship and veneration of a particular deity or a group of deities. Religion—genuine religion, in the sense of a reconnection to something greater than the self—is a critical part of surviving the decline we're experiencing, as Glubb noted in the excerpt above, and as we will discuss in greater detail later in this work. There are churches that offer this, and it is my firm conviction that, for believers, those churches and the community they provide will form an important bridge for connection.

Welfare Dependency

The final indicator of imperial decline that Sir John discussed was the rise of the welfare state. He explained that the decline of empire is often brought on during the period of decadence, when the people—comfortable in their own wealth, and smug in their inherent superiority over the rest of mankind—feel an urge towards philanthropy, and sympathy towards the “less fortunate.” This was expressed during the colonial periods of European empire as the “*white man's burden*.” The Christian nations of Europe accepted their duty as a result of their “*inherent superior values as civilized peoples*,” to go forth and not only subdue the barbarians of the world for economic exploitation, but to convert them to the True Faith of Civilization, that peace might reign on Earth...how'd that work out?

This impression of eternal superiority due to divine favor, and a belief in the never ceasing increase in wealth, thanks to the beneficence of technology, leads the people of the climactic empire to lavishly spread its wealth on all those unfortunate souls so unlucky as to have not been born the natural inheritors of the inherent superiority conferred by natural-born citizenship—whether those unfortunate souls recognized their misfortune or not. On the domestic front, this is characterized by the obscene largess of the political patricians giving away other people's money to buy votes—while conveniently, keeping their own positions of wealthy control—while on the foreign front, it is most often characterized either through foreign aid to hostile regimes, or wars of intervention to overthrow local governments, in the interest of spreading the control of imperial hegemony—in the modern, American

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lexicon, “*spreading democracy*” is “*the white man's burden*. ”

The Left views this absurdly suicidal benevolence towards others as a moral imperative, to balance the “unfair” blessings bestowed on our inherently superior American culture by Progress³⁵. The opposition on the Right meanwhile, views the same benevolence as either a “Christian Duty,” to spread the profit of Faith or as a form of capitalist charity, to bring the blessings of commercialized, material culture to the unwashed heathens, in order to get them to spend money to make corporations richer.

Ironically, the Mohammedan Caliphate was even more generous with other people's money than the modern American government. By the ninth-century, the ruling, pure-bred Arab class had become outnumbered by the very cosmopolitan population of the empire. State assistance however was still very generous to both the young and the poor. University students were given government grants to fund their very extravagant lifestyles, while they partied their way through their studies. The coffee houses of Baghdad were open forums for collegial debates, much like Starbucks has become in our own epoch. The poor received medical care from tax-funded “free” hospitals that the government built and funded, from Spain to what is now Pakistan. It was their “*Islamic Duty*,” as servants of Allah, for the Mohammedans to demonstrate the beneficence of the blessings of Allah to their less fortunate neighbors and countrymen.

The same welfare state culture exists in America today, except we've taken it one giant leap further, and actually fund the very enemies of our empire as we send unimaginably vast amounts of money, food, and even military equipment, to the very countries—full of poor, hungry, marginalized, and aggressive barbarians, chomping at the bit to wreak havoc and take over—that call for our destruction.

There is an important distinction that has to be made of course, between imposition of the welfare state, and the spirit of service to the community. The pioneering, conquering spirit of service to the community is not about handing shit out for free to others in your community and nation. It's about creating opportunities for them to advance themselves, through their own efforts. Certainly, a short-term helping hand can be seen in the pioneering age of every great culture. That is not the same thing as providing a subsidized living for the lazy and stupid.

The End Of The World As We Know It

There is a growing recognition at a visceral level, that “*shit just ain't right*.” At both a conscious and unconscious level, people are beginning to awaken to the fact that the current situation is simply unsustainable. From the social phenomenon of zombie culture to the increasingly mainstream popularity of dystopian fiction adventures like the **Hunger Games** and **Divergent** series of books and their spin-off movies for young adults, we can see the recognition occurring in even the most childish acolytes of both progressivism and nationalism, that “*shit just ain't right*.” Even within the oligarchic reaches of the Patrician classes of our own society, there is recognition of this. These blockbuster novels and the film adaptations are not being produced to encourage the overthrow of the system. Rather, they are the same *panem et circenses* as professional sports—a pressure-relief outlet for the growing feelings of anger and disenfranchisement, via vicarious rebellion.

We can recognize intellectually, the occurrence of the common indicators of imperial decline that

³⁵ Ignoring the fact that those unfair blessings were the result of hard work, industriousness, and self-sacrifice by people is apparently irrelevant to The Narrative. More humorous to me though, considering the “anti-racist” meme that drives such thinking, is the inherent racism of believing those other cultures are so inferior that they need our help...

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parallel events in historical imperial cultures. All of the signs indicate that the American Empire is dying. We can feel to the depths of our marrow, in the growing disquiet and unease that are ever more apparent in the social discourse, that “*shit ain't right*.” The question that must sensibly arise then, is “*so what?*” Not in the frivolous sense of “*who gives a shit?*” That answer is self-evident. I care, or I would not be writing this. You care, or you would not be reading it. Others care, or the discussion would not be arising with increasing frequency in every venue.

No, the question that arises is, “*so, what....can we do to remedy the situation?*” The short answer, of course, is “*not a fucking thing*.” The decline into decay is so far along that any attempt to return to “America” would require methods that would result in a very different “America” than any of us would care to experience. That's what happened when Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon and the Roman Republic became a dictatorial empire overnight.

I suppose, if it fits your belief system, you could pray for a return of divine favor and intervention. I would hasten to point out—again—however, that every great culture has resorted to attempts—sometimes absolutely horrific attempts by our moral standards, to propitiate the gods, as they recognized that their culture was dying. Even if you believe their failure was because of a lack of belief in your “One, True God,” I would hasten to remind your that both the Roman Empire and the British Empire were Christian empires. I can guarantee you, as the decline of their empire became self-evident, a huge percentage of good, god-fearing Christian housewives of Britannia prayed fervently for a divine reversal of fortune, to no avail. It's a given that the faithful of the Caliphate made their five daily prayers, hoping for some sort of emergency intercession from Allah. The Caliphate still found itself tossed so far back into savage darkness that it's just now recognizing its ability to spread aggressively again. Do you want to wait a millenium for America to be resurgent? Perhaps, rather than looking for divine intercession, we should be looking for more proactive solutions.

The Solution

It is interesting that, in **The Fate of Empires**, Glubb hastens to point out that the decadence that signals the collapse of culture is a decadence of the civilization, and not necessarily of the individual citizenry. The character and vigor of the society is corrupted and softened by the comfort of its riches. The people—as a culture—become selfish, lazy, and idle; a community of selfishness necessarily falls into a cultural state of indolence and apathy about anything except the division of the rapidly diminishing available wealth. The people become far more concerned about increasing—or at least maintaining—their individual material wealth and comfortable luxury than they are in recognizing, let alone displaying, the ardor that their ancestors displayed in building an empire through the strength of blood and iron³⁶. Within this torpor of moral and physical vigor however, there is no way for the people to redirect their thoughts and energies. There are exceptions though. In Rome, a school of philosophy arose called Stoicism, that recognized this weakening and sought, within its adherents, to reverse those trends by encouraging them to not become overly focused on the luxuries.

When individual members—or small groups of individuals, such as families or companies of companions—of the declining culture emigrate however, and find themselves in new surroundings,

³⁶ Of course, in the case of pre-Iron Age empires, it was through blood and bronze, even blood and stone, rather than blood and iron. Despite the obvious alliterative value of blood and bronze however, “blood and iron” possesses both a cultural cachet, as well as a certain flavor of brawn and might that the others seem to lack.

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where the material luxuries are not as readily accessible, they do not remain discernibly dissolute. Once they have separated themselves from the depravity of their native culture, and have endured a short period of integration into the new ways of thinking mandated by their new surroundings, they discover—from the necessity of sheer human survival instinct—a renewed vigor and thirst for the necessary virtues of community service, energy, hardiness, and other pioneering virtues.

The decline into decadence then, Glubb argues, does not necessarily undermine the inherent cultural character of its members, despite the common complaint among seemingly every generation as it ages that, “*today's kids are useless*.”³⁷ He posits that, transported out of the decadence of their old environment, they soon discard the corruption of laziness, and prove their worth as the equals of their ancestors.

There is further hope in Sir John's conclusions that the degeneration of decadence is not physical. While the citizens of an empire are often criticized by internal critics as being too physically emasculated to bear real hardship or endure great efforts, the reality seems to be that any emasculation is simply a moral and spiritual shortcoming. The citizens of Rome, when compared the Celto-Germanic hordes, being one of the exceptions that proves the rules—sort of³⁸—typically, Glubb points out, the citizens of the empire are actually of a larger physical stature than the enemies at the gate.

While this is obvious in the fleshy corpulence of modern America, Glubb specifically cited the experiences of the British Army in World War One, when young men of the gentry, raised in the luxury of late imperial wealth, found little difficulty in accommodating themselves to life in the trenches³⁹. Men who were accustomed to easy, comfortable living in the parlors of modern homes in England managed to display a hardiness and endurance to equal the natives in riding camels across the deserts of Arabia. If ever a milquetoast product of decadence made good as a man of action, it was T.E. Lawrence of Arabia. Of course, looking back at my previous comment about the corpulence of Americans, we can see—some of us were—the self-indulgent youth of post-modern American imperial decline, go on and rebuild themselves into the physical and mental image of the mythic heroes of epic history, and achieve astounding feats in combat.

Therein lies the answer to “so, what?” The masses of the Plebeian class may sit idly by, comfortable in their decadence, blindly hoping for a postponement of the inevitable, satisfied—even as the world burns around them—the the reassurance of their Patrician leaders that “*Progress will never cease!*”

37 The next time I hear a 60-something American say that about today's 20-somethings, I'm going to throat punch the motherfucker. It's 20-somethings that all these patriots are sending to fight the jihadists. It is not 60-year old has-beens that are taking up the yoke of rebuilding connections in their neighborhoods and communities, it is young people. It is the youth who are willing to look outside of the imperial cultural paradigm for the religious awakening of a return to community, rather than scrabbling to hold on to their retirement funds and 401K, or to maintain the fraud of the Social Security Ponzi scheme, heaping more debt on the backs of their descendants, because they were too stupid to recognize the fraud and work to change it, before it was too late.

38 This comparison, described by Diogenes, Tacitus, and others, referred to the general Patrician and Plebeian citizens, and not to the Roman soldier—who, chances are was probably of recent barbarian descent himself—who was, if not as tall, was at least as physically robust as his counterparts, and had more to do with the agricultural Mediterranean Diet as compared to the more—dare I say, it—primal, meat-based diet of the northern Europeans of antiquity as it did with the depravity of their lifestyle.

39 Glubb was commissioned as a lieutenant of the Royal Engineers in 1915. He served on the Western Front until wounded with a shattered jaw.

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and/or “*We're protected by the blessing of Almighty God!*” As people awaken to the visceral reality of the crumbling infrastructure of empire however, more and more people are beginning to feel obligated to act towards the preservation of their traditional customs and values. Any person who values their family, and is unwilling to see their family destroyed on the altar of the invasion of alien, foreign cultural values overtaking our way of life, bears the burden of releasing themselves from the comfortable fantasy that ignorance equals avoidance. They must take up the yoke of the hero. We cannot place the fate of our futures, or the futures of our children and grandchildren, or the legacies of their pasts, in the hands of some ephemeral, fantastic “hope.” We must grab the opportunity presented by the decline of decadent imperial culture and the degeneration of the individual, and “emigrate” outside the decadence of the collapsing culture, to either rebuild the culture, or—more valuable—to build a new culture that enshrines the best of the old, while being more resilient. The barriers that present themselves are fear and ignorance, but those are walls that are easily scaled and breached.

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Two
An Inconvenient Whimper

“This is how the world ends, not with a bang but a whimper.” --T.S. Eliot “The Hollow Men”

One of the great enduring myths of the contemporary preparedness culture has actually been a part of apocalyptic visionary predictions for centuries, and across various now-defunct civilizations and empires. That is the fervent belief that TEOTWAWKI—The End Of The World As We Know It—will be some sort of conveniently sudden, immediately catastrophic, easily recognized event. In this regard, most views of collapse possess some shared elements in common. The belief is that at one time—before the fall from Grace in the Eden, or before the rise of Marxism, or before the evil Jews gained too much power through the corrupting influence of their creation of money and banking—the “good” people of the world lived in some form of Golden Age, in harmony with nature, each other, and themselves. Some sort of Fall happened however, and that Golden Age ended. History, according to this legend, has been one long, downhill slide into a shit hole ever since. Whether it's the loss of capitalist Liberty due to the subversive influence of the Communists, the loss of financial freedom due to the evil influence of money-wielding, usury-collecting Jews, or the loss of Paradise because Eve flashed her tits at Adam to get him to disobey the one damned rule he was supposed to follow, the idea forms that, unless everyone makes a sudden U-Turn morally, there will be a great cleansing. Whether that projected cleansing is via a great civil war, the Rapture, or a financial collapse of world civilization, only the Chosen—those smart enough to recognize the theory *du jour* for the inspired wisdom it is—will survive and thrive.

This would be convenient. You would know, upon hearing the news, seeing the mushroom clouds on the horizon, or waking up without electricity when the “*lights go out*,” that, “*Hey, it's time to gun up, motherfuckers! Hell yeah!*” You would know that when you woke up the next morning, it would be time to pull on your Crye Precision Multi-Cam Operator trousers, strap on your matching plate carrier, war belt, and bump helmet. You would know that you could walk past the sensible minivan in the garage and remove the protective tarp hiding your lovingly restored 1967 Jeep Grand Cherokee “*Bug Out Vehicle*.”

You would not need to go to work that day. There would be no more cubicle-bound wage slavery for the prepared operator-to-be; the world has ended! No need to worry about paying taxes, or taking the kids to soccer practice or their orthodontist appointment; the world has ended! No need to worry about

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the obnoxious next door neighbor who keeps reporting you to the HOA for not keeping your grass mowed short enough; the world has ended! You can just shoot that bastard for not minding his own business!

The problem with these Instant-Apocalypse-in-a-Box theories though, is that there is no historical precedent in the human experience, for them. It didn't happen with the decline of the British Empire. It didn't happen with the decline of the Roman Empire⁴⁰. It didn't even happen with the Black Plague, and that resulted in a death toll estimated to be as high as 200 million people!

Even through the xenophobic lens of a myopic view of history, the events of the 20th Century—two world wars resulting in well over 100 million casualties, the Great Depression, and the brutal excesses of various tyrannical governments—have pretty clearly demonstrated the resilience of human civilizations. In fact, the historical record indicates that for the most part, no matter how bad things get, and no matter how hard times are, people are far more likely to rationalize doing exactly what they're told to do, and simply hoping for the best. Especially when those orders are clothed in promises of some “*better future*,” it doesn't even matter if that future is obvious bullshit and completely unbelievable, people generally don't become the mindless, marauding hordes of zombie that are the central theme of modern apocalyptic fiction these days, whether literally or metaphorically.

The simple fact is, fantasy is far more appealing than reality much of the time. Survivalists and preppers pay lip service to the idea that “*TEOTWAWKI will be Hell! I don't want the world to come crashing down!*” even as they masturbate over online, action-porn photographs of their latest preparedness purchase, whether it's their eighteenth carbine—for their family of four—or sixteen cases of MRE. They ignore the fact that they are 50 years old, have done nothing more physically strenuous than bending their secretary over the desk since they played one year of college football thirty years ago, and the most stressful thing they've ever done was hide the affair from their wife. It'll be great, because they've got all the cool stuff! After all, “*he who dies with the most stuff wins!*”

Ultimately, the appeal of the instant apocalypse though, is that it makes it possible to place the blame on someone. Since it's all part of “The Plan,” all you can do is prepare for it. You can't do anything to change the will of God, the Jews, or COMINTERN. Blaming “*them*” for the weakening of the social fabric of your culture means you don't have to take responsibility for it. It doesn't matter that you were not willing to volunteer to go fight the enemies of your culture! You were busy making a living! It doesn't matter that you raised a kid who turned to selling tricks, sucking dicks from the passenger seat of some stranger's car to pay for his cocaine habit. The communists on the school board changed the curriculum to let that teach him that shit was acceptable! It doesn't matter that your daughter rejected your absentee parents' career-focused lifestyle, and joined a pot-growing, free love, neo-hippie commune in northern California. You gave her everything she ever wanted in her childhood! It's the damned government's fault for not eradicating marijuana with their Drug War!

Further exacerbating the ability of preppers and survivalists to recognize the “Instant Apocalypse” for the fiction plot device that it should remain, is the fact that decline is generally not a simple, downward slide, at a steady, predictable pace. There are certainly sudden, horrifying crises, but those moments of chaos are regularly interspersed with periods of relative calm stability, offering the illusion

40 Even the most apologist modern historians, like Niall Ferguson, who disagree with the Glubb/Toynbee/Gibbon long descent view, agree that the collapse of Rome was the result of decades of decay.

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of normalcy. That normalcy bias present in most people is exacerbated by different regions declining at different rates. As somewhere like Chicago erupts in lawlessness⁴¹, or places like Baltimore, MD and Ferguson, MO erupt in race-riots, those who live in more homogeneous locations can mistakenly draw the conclusion that, because they live in a place or area that is not as far down the slope, they must be doing things right, or else everyone is just blowing things out of proportion. *“This 'Black Lives Matter' crap is no different than the race riots in the 1960s! The politicians need to get on the ball and clamp down on them!”*

Even as a catastrophe occurs—9/11 fifteen years ago, Hurricane Katrina a decade ago, the Great Recession seven years ago, or Mohammedan refugee riots now—the existing social, political, and economic institutions are not washed away in some Great Cleansing. At best, when they are not replaced with new iterations of the same, they are simply replaced with new forms that often develop a rather robust degree of institutional resilience themselves.

It is not one great “Instant Apocalypse” that destroys a culture, civilization, or empire. Rather, it is what can be termed—and has—a convergence of catastrophes.⁴²

In his 2013 book, **The Five Stages of Collapse**, Dmitry Orlov described five stages that he believes a society goes through in the process of a fall. Each stage represents the breach of a specific level of trust in the culture's structural systems. Society is after all, a social construct that is based completely on trust. A successful society that hopes to last, must have trust between individual members of the society, between members of the society and society as a whole, and between members of the society and the institutions that define that society. Orlov's five stages include financial collapse, commercial collapse, political collapse, social collapse, and cultural collapse. As Orlov conceives this theory, the five stages tend to occur in sequence, based on the breaching of particular boundaries that the people of the society believe to be inviolate. These begin with the least personal, like banks and government, and proceed to the most personal; family and gods. As Orlov points out in his book⁴³, the theory is about *“not whether collapse will occur, but rather what it looks like, what to expect, and how we should behave should we wish to survive.”* In historical political terms, we refer to this as the loss of legitimacy of the culture, in the view of members of that culture.

Financial Collapse

Orlov describes the the first stage as Financial Collapse when, *“faith in 'business as usual' is lost. The future is no longer assumed to resemble the past in any way that allows the risk to be assessed and financial assets to be guaranteed. Financial institutions become insolvent: savings are wiped out and access to capital is lost.”*

In the historical context, we recognize this as a loss of legitimacy in the eyes of the average person, of the financial systems of their society. We've watched decades of economic and financial chicanery result in a financial collapse that was averted only by the fiscal sleight-of-hand magic of “creating” more money through “quantitative easing” that has, despite the current claims of recovery coming from Wall Street and the government—has left millions of Americans unemployed and destitute.

According to the US Government Accounting Office, savings in the United States have dropped

41 In 2015, Chicago has 2995 people shot, resulting in 443 shooting fatalities. Total homicides for the year was 502.

42 Faye, Guillaume; **Convergence of Catastrophes**; 2012

43 His excellent blog is also highly recommended....www.cluborlov.com

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consistently over the last six decades. As a percent of annual income, savings have dropped from an average of 12.1% in 1951 to a mere 1.9% in 2009. On a grand scale, we can see this is a result of a loss of confidence in financial promise within the empire as a whole.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a nation is the total sum of all material goods and services produced within the borders of that nation. The GDP *per capita* is the GDP of the nation, divided by the population of the country. Over the forty years of my life, since the mid-1970s to today, the average GDP *per capita* of the United States has been \$39,484. That average however, represents a range between \$26,405 in 1976, and \$51,304 in 2014, per resident of the United States. That represents an average growth of 2.32%. Here's where it starts getting interesting however; since the beginning of the 2008 Recession, the average growth has slowed to 0.33%.

Before we begin dogpiling on President Obama and the Democrats however, let's look at those numbers more closely. From 1976-1980, under President Carter, the average growth rate was 2.8%. Under President Reagan, the growth rate was 2.5%. Under President GHW Bush, that plummeted to 1.015%, before leaping back over the average, under President Clinton, to 2.656%. Under President GW Bush, it dropped again, back to 1.148%. Under President Obama, the average growth has been 0.50%⁴⁴.

It would be easy enough to say, *"Oh shit! Obama has ruined the economy! Fucking communist Democrats!"* Or, we could say, *"Huh, look at that! The Democrats have actually held a far better record for the economic improvement, before the fuck-ups of the Bush Administration that Obama has been trying to fix."* Sadly, neither of those simple answers is complete. Who is President has little to do with the current economic situation.

In response to the 1929 financial crash that resulted in nationwide bank closures and the deepening Great Depression, Congress passed the **Banking Act of 1933**. Commonly referred to as the **Glass-Steagall Act**, after the two sponsors of the bill, this act most notably separated investment banks, involved with stock issuance and investment, from commercial banks that accepted deposits. Overzealous commercial bank involvement in the stock market was widely recognized as a major factor in the collapse. Commonly seen in conservative circles as another example of FDR's socialist program for the country, interfering with *laissez-faire* capitalism, this separation actually made sense, and did a lot of good. If Granny has deposited her life savings in the local bank, counting on a very reasonable, but steady interest rate return as her retirement fund, she's not expecting to lose her nest egg because Bartholomew Small-Town Banker decided to play the fucking lottery of the stock market, hoping to use her money to fund his new yacht and vacation home, instead of doing what his grandfather had done when he started the bank, and investing depositors' money into reasonable investment ventures like construction and mortgage loans in the local community.

In 1999 however, after decades of skirting the fringes of legality under Glass-Steagall, the banking industry convinced Congress to pass the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, repealing those provisions of Glass-Steagall that created a division between investment banks and commercial banks, once again allowing Bartholomew IV to lay fast-and-loose with Grandma's life savings, just as his grandfather had done in the 1920s.

44 The Recession of 2008 actually started in 2007. 2008 saw a negative growth rate of -1.22%, before President Obama was even elected, and shit didn't really go off the skids until 2009, and the growth rate dropped to -3.63%.

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Another issue that arises however, is the reality of FDIC insurance on commercial bank deposits. Allowing these banks to engage in investment gambling means that the taxpayer serves as the guaranteed insurance that, regardless of their poor investment judgment, those banks will be bailed out. If you know you don't have to pay for any losses, gambling ceases to be a scary venture. It's a no-lose scenario for the banker. If he chooses well, he makes a profit. If he chooses poorly, he's not out anything, because the FDIC will cover his depositor's losses.

Beginning shortly thereafter, the Federal Reserve Bank under Chairman Alan Greenspan, artificially suppressed interest rates, allowing for wild speculative investments by the whole range of investment and commercial bank companies. Among a host of other misdeeds, which could—and undoubtedly will in coming years—fill several hundreds of topic-specific books, such as the Fannie Mae/Freddie Mac housing scandal that resulted, in late 2008, in a near-collapse of the international financial industry. This began with the discovery of attempts by investment house Lehman Brothers to hide losses of investment money.

By autumn of 2008, Lehman Brothers' losses could no longer be hidden in the shadow banking system that the corruption of collusion within the banking industry and their federal regulatory agencies had fabricated, and including options like repurchase agreements that allow companies to take securities off their books and hide them somewhere else in the accounting temporarily, like a short-term loan. This served to make quarterly reports look more favorable, buffering investor confidence and fraudulently portraying a more worthwhile investment than companies actually represented. When the news did start leaking out about the losses, Lehman Brothers' stock price shit the bed, badly. Conveniently, then Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson—former CEO of Goldman-Sachs—did nothing at all to arrest the imminent failure of this major competitor to his former employer. As Lehman imploded however, the stock markets convulsed. Lending seized up, especially of the short-term type that large institutions count on to maintain the flow of revenue needed to keep the financial system afloat. It was basically a giant heart attack of the global financial system, and other major multinational banks appeared doomed to follow Lehman's example and collapse. At that point, Paulson, Fed Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke, and New York Federal Reserve Bank Chairman Timothy Geithner started working with their “crisis team” to create a rescue package to present to Congress.

If the flow of revenue within the financial system was not quickly restored, in the infamous words of then-President George W. Bush, “*this whole sucker could go down.*” The crisis team managed to convince Congress⁴⁵ that the bailout was necessary, and Congress approved a \$700 billion dollar program of using tax revenues to prop up the “*too big to fail*” banks. A 2011 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request from the Bloomberg News Service revealed that the total aggregate bailout from the Federal Reserve was \$7.77 trillion, with a substantial amount of that going to foreign banks like Barclay's and Credit Suisse.

Finance in the US underwent a dramatic tectonic shift. The greatest of these was probably the fact that the consequence for malfeasance was shifted from the managing executive officers of transnational banking corporations to the taxpayer, who was now on the hook to repay the Federal Reserve's \$7.77 grant to these companies that were “*too big to fail!*” The very idea of course, is antithetical to the

45 I am not so naive as to believe that it required much concerted effort to convince the patricians in Congress that it was in their best financial interest—as much as anything—to back the plan.

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laissez-faire capitalism that the corporate oligarchs of Wall Street profess to prefer. This public/private forced partnership was supposed to “help restore the economy.” While senior executives at the largest banks received exorbitant bonuses for their failures, and one bailout after another funneled astronomical sums of money into their vaults—well, their computers anyway—the taxpaying public entered an ongoing nightmare of financial insecurity.

Today, nothing has been rectified in the financial system despite claims of recovery. No senior executive of a major bank has been indicted, let alone tried or imprisoned for fraud—or even subjected to an official investigation. The conviction of Ponzi schemer Bernie Madoff was a joke. The \$50 million⁴⁶ he defrauded nice little retired ladies out of was chump change next to the losses that accrued from the largest systemic control fraud in history.

Not only has nothing been rectified, it has actually been made worse. The Dodd-Frank Act of 2010 was written by a cabal of Wall Street lawyers working for the banking industry. It actually codified the “*too big too fail*” status of major financial institutions into law, ensuring that the existing financial power centers will continue to consolidate. The “liquidity injections” of fraudulently “created” money through “quantitative easing” is now a doctrinal part of US financial policy, all to the benefit of the Federal Reserve Bank and its shareholders.

The revolving door of employment between the Securities Exchange Committee (SEC) senior enforcement positions, and jobs as Wall Street executive positions, or in law firms that service those banks, is blatant and well-known. Wall Street executives like Robert Rubin and Henry Paulson, or more recently Timothy Geithner and Mary Schapiro rotate in and out of various government appointments at the Federal Reserve and Treasury, and assorted transnational banking corporations and hedge funds. Bank lobbyists from K Street are in *de facto* charge of writing banking regulations like the Dodd-Frank Act. It's not a secret, and no one even bothers to hide it.

Referrals for prosecution by the SEC to the Department of Justice were practically non-existent during both the George W. Bush and Barack Obama administrations. In fact, after 2001 the SEC adopted a policy known as “*deferred prosecution agreements*.” Fundamentally, this allows banks that are accused or suspected of misconduct, to police themselves, permitting the banks' own attorneys to investigate the allegations. Even in the most egregious, obvious examples of wrongdoing, the SEC regularly allows banks to get away with it, as long as they “promise” not to misbehave in the same manner, again.

Financial collapse though, occurs when faith in the financial system is lost by the average person. For most Americans, what happens on Wall Street, and the losses—no matter how severe—seem pretty remote to the middle-class family. Unfortunately, despite the claims of recovery, and the statistics thrown out to support those claims, for most Americans today, the negative impacts of the financial fraud have started becoming abundantly obvious, as it has impacted their own lives.

While the stock market and corporate profits have largely surpassed their pre-recession levels, those don't do shit to remedy the plight of the vast majority of American families. The fact is, less than half the households in the United States own any stock at all, even indirectly in the form of retirement accounts that happen to be invested in the stock market. Of the minority that do own corporate stock in

⁴⁶ According to the Wall Street Journal, “*that figure includes the alleged false profits that Mr. Madoff's firm reported to its customers for decades. It is unclear exactly how much investors actually deposited into the firm.*”

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one form or another, less than one-third own a stock portfolio worth more than \$10,000⁴⁷. More importantly to the vast majority of us, the indicators that actually matter, in relation to our standard of living and financial outlooks for the future, jobs and wages have not seen commensurate recovery with the stock market and corporate profits.

Between 2007 and the end of 2015, there have been an aggregate of just over eight million new jobs created. Unfortunately, that required the actual creation of over 20,000,000 jobs, because over 12 million jobs disappeared in that same time frame. In 2013, well into the claimed recovery, six of the months posted showed negative job creation numbers, ranging from 91,000 jobs lost in July of that year, to 1,055,000 jobs disappearing in October of that year. Total aggregate numbers for the year resulted in a cumulative negative growth in job numbers to the tune of -514,000 jobs. That means, over the entire year, the monthly AVERAGE job creation growth was actually -42,000 jobs. When looked at month-by-month, taking advantage of the short attention span of Americans today, the 270,000 jobs created in June of 2013, or the 658,000 created in November of that year look really awesome. Unfortunately, when you compare the actual averages, across the year, 2013 trended negative, as we see.

2014 was somewhat better. There were only three months—April, August, and December—that posted negative jobs growth. Of course, while the end result of the year was 1,059,000 jobs created, the single highest change in a month was the loss of 811,000 jobs in April. The monthly average jobs creation growth for 2014 was 65,000 jobs per month.

2015, also posted an overall positive growth trend, with a total of 1,691,000 jobs created, and a much heralded 466,000 jobs created in December alone. Of course, there's two issues with this. Number one is that the monthly average growth rate was only 140,000. Number two is that, at the beginning of January, 2016, the stock market slammed downward, and the numbers that result from that will not be available to study before this book goes to print. It may—probably will, in fact, even according to mainstream sources like the Wall Street Journal—end up having a very deleterious effect on those numbers.

In order to replace all of the jobs lost because of the recession that was solely the result of greed, avarice, and Wall Street fraud—with the blessing and connivance of the US Federal Reserve Bank and the Treasury Department—when we account for population growth, jobs growth numbers, and a host of other factors, the “jobs gap”—the number of jobs needed to return the US economy to pre-2008 levels is around 8 million jobs, total, as of 2013. If the economy averaged 200,000 jobs per month on average, that level would not be reached until 2020. As it is, seven years into the “recovery,” we're not seeing anything like those numbers. In fact, in the 24-month span of 2014 and 2015, only ten months witnessed jobs creation that exceeded 200,000, and the average over that span was only half that, at 103,000 jobs per month. The fact is, for the average working family there has been no recovery of the economy, and that is leading to an increasing lack of confidence in “*business as usual*.” While the pundits, stock brokers, and Wall Street tycoons sit in conference with their buddies in the Treasury Department and Congress, crowing about the wonderful work they've done pulling America up by the boot straps out of the this despair, the average American family is looking at them like they have dicks growing out of their heads.

47 Mishel, Lawrence; **Unions, Inequality, and Faltering Middle Class Wages**; 2012, The Economic Policy Institute.

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The net household wealth of the United States plummeted from \$65.8 trillion in 2007, to a bottom of \$49.4 trillion in 2012. While that would not be a big deal, since 70% of the US economy is actually driven by consumer spending, one of the Truths of finance and economics is that there really is something called *“the wealth effect.”* The more wealth we think we have, the more likely we are to go out and spend some of it. Unfortunately, the antithesis of that is equally true. Some \$7 trillion dollars or more, that Americans thought they had in real estate property, vanished in a flash, in the 2007-2008 crash. The problem is that 80% of that wealth is in the hands of 10% of American households. For “most” Americans, the recovery of the net household wealth means jack shit. People are scared—rightfully--that their jobs, homes, and what investments they have, if any, are at risk. They know they can't trust that we're not sitting on the brink of one more crash. The Financial Collapse, as *“faith in 'business as usual' is lost. The future is no longer assumed to resemble the past in any way that allows the risk to be assessed and financial assets to be guaranteed. Financial institutions become insolvent: savings are wiped out and access to capital is lost”* is well underway, and almost a decade along its path.

A Gallup poll in early February of 2016 placed the US Economic Confidence Index at -13.⁴⁸ The Economic Confidence Index is predicated on the combined numerical responses to two questions. The first asks respondents to rate current economic conditions in the country. The second asks whether they think economic conditions are getting better or getting worse. A negative rating at all—let alone in double digits—can be argued to support the argument that American consumer confidence in *“business as usual”* is failing, and the financial system has lost legitimacy in the eyes of many in our society.

The US became the financial powerhouse and the economic motor of the developed world over the past century not because of our fabulous mineral wealth, or even our massively developed industrial base. The US became what it became because the rule-of-law was understood to have been well-established as the bedrock of our financial and legal systems. People knew where they stood. Property law and contract law in US jurisprudence spelled out exactly what obligations everyone had. Those laws and obligations were enforced with a degree of impartiality that, while far from perfect, were far greater than what was to be found in most of the rest of the world. This in turn enabled businesses to do things the right way, and generally fairly. The confidence that people around the globe had for the rule-of-law in American financial matters was expressed in their respect for our money and the money-like instruments our businesses issued, such as stocks and bonds. That, as much as the military strength of our empire, was the impetus for adoption of the US dollar as the world's reserve currency. You knew what a dollar was worth, and you knew—even after we removed the gold standard—that such value was backed up by the “full faith and credit of the United States of America.”

Is it really any wonder that today, in the wake of the shenanigans of the connivance between the financial industry and the imperial government, that faith in the financial system is lost? Really?

Commercial Collapse

Orlov describes Commercial Collapse as *“Faith that 'the market shall provide' is lost. Money is devalued and/or becomes scarce, commodities are hoarded, import and retail chains break down and widespread shortages of survival necessities become the norm.”*

For most people in the world, including most of the population of the United States, the chicanery of

48 <http://www.gallup.com/poll/125735/economic-confidence-index.aspx>

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the financial markets seems irrelevant to their daily life. *“I don't own stocks, and I don't have any interest in owning stocks. I just want to go to work, get a paycheck and buy beer and cigarettes and groceries to feed my kids.”* That's not even a bad outlook to have. Unfortunately, as we saw above, the result of stock market foul play is lost income from lost jobs, which makes buying beer and cigarettes and groceries difficult.

A lot of preppers and survivalists immediately turn to the barter option as a default. On a limited scale, that's not a bad option either. The problem is, in the advanced world today, to procure food, clothing, housing, or medical care—or just about everything else—barter is just not an option. We appear to be forced to deal, not directly with the farmers, tailors, cobblers, builders, and doctors, but with middlemen who produce nothing and only add expense. This system of commerce developed because it's extraordinarily convenient. If I want oranges, I can't walk down the street to my neighbor and barter for them. Oranges don't grow where I live. If I want gasoline to fuel my truck, I can't walk down the street and barter for it. First, there are no refineries that close by, and second, the quantity of fuel that I use is small enough that even with fifteen of my friends going in on a “bulk” purchase with me, it would still not be economical for the refinery management to engage in barter with us. They'd end up having to own twice the property and warehouse facilities just to stockpile all the shit people bartered for fuel.

This convenience however, is largely the result of an artificially induced demand for goods that we can, comfortably, live without. I don't *need* oranges. Sure, I *like* oranges. They taste good, and they are a pleasant source of Vitamin C. The reality though, is that rose hips—which are plentiful in my natural environment—make great tasting tea and are a far more concentrated source of Vitamin C. If the commerce system didn't import oranges to where I live, I might have never developed a taste for Navel oranges and wouldn't even know what I was missing. If the petroleum industry hadn't commercialized the automobile industry, I could do what many of the pioneers of the industry did and run my vehicles off locally-produced ethanol. Guess what? Moonshiners did use the barter system, at a local level.

Commerce is the activity of buying and selling material goods and/or services, most particularly on large scales. Exchange of goods between individuals in the form of barter, is commerce, but in the context of the discussion here, it is specifically used to refer to large-scale, industrialized exchange. It includes legal, economic, social, cultural, and technological systems that support that exchange.

On the smaller scale then, commerce is as old as interpersonal communication, going back even before the appearance of Cro-Magnon Man. Historian Peter Watson argues that larger-scale intertribal commerce, also in the form of barter, took place at least 150,000 years ago⁴⁹. Commerce as we know it today, is largely a derivative of the Capitalist theory of economics. By this, we mean it is a system in which companies try to maximize their profits by offering products and services to the market, at the lowest production cost, while gaining as much profit as practicably possible.

Capitalism of course, is a theory of economics based on the private ownership of the means of production and the creation of goods and services for profit. There is nothing wrong with this in theory. In reality even, capitalism has been—inarguably—the most successful economic system in modern economic theory. It has, in a material sense, done more good, for more people, than any of the other proffered systems. The problem is that, like so many other concepts, capitalism has been distorted

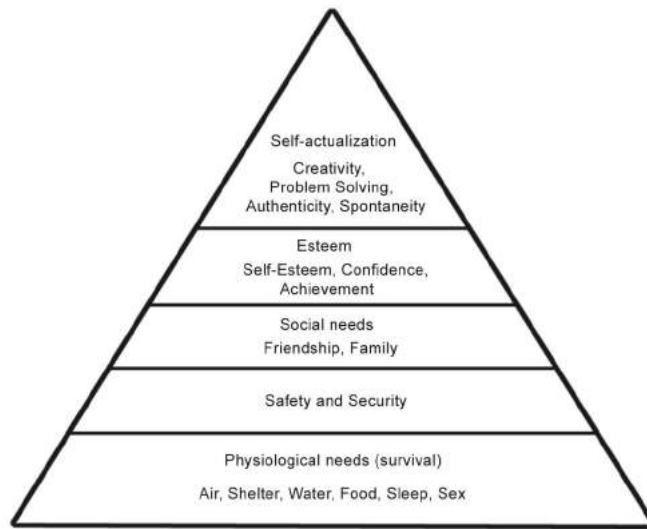
49 Watson, Peter; **Ideas: A History of Thought and Invention from Fire to Freud**; HarperCollins, 2005

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through the leverage of wealth, and the corruption of egalitarian rule-of-law, to the benefit of the few, at the expense of the many. When we look at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, we can—if we look at things objectively—begin to see the corruption of both our own cultural values and of the capitalist system⁵⁰.

It can be successfully argued that the fulfillment of our physiological needs has been made more affordable due to the rise of commerce and the competition of the capitalist market, and the economies-of-scale that result. We have easier access to better shelter, due to the market. We have access to larger quantities of a wider variety of foods, due to the market. We have access to more comfortable sleep, on more comfortable mattresses, under warmer blankets, due to the market⁵¹.



All of the other needs on Maslow's Hierarchy however, when seen in relation to the marketing of commerce, are easily recognized as artificially-fabricated benefits of commerce. While people, as both individuals and groups should be free to define their social and cultural values for themselves, the argument can be made with relative ease, that if you need to own XYZ products for your friends to value your company, then you probably need to reevaluate the worth of those relationships. If you feel obligated to purchase product ABC for your family, in order for your spouse and children to love you, I would argue that a) your spouse is a piece-of-shit, and b) you both did a shitty job of raising your kids. This doesn't mean we shouldn't buy our wives and children nice things. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't buy ourselves nice things.

The issue is that, in today's society, we have seen every level of Maslow's Hierarchy manipulated by

50 While I'm sure that triggered discomfort in a lot of readers who assume I'm going to jump on the Communism bandwagon, don't jump ship yet. I'll get to the relationship between capitalism and communism shortly.

51 While these arguments do have merit, the case can be made that the negative impacts of capitalism—without government regulations regarding pollution and product purity—have been as detrimental as the above have been beneficial. Besides, I sleep better on the floor or outside on the ground, wrapped in a poncho liner, than on any bed.

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marketing, so that we have the idea that we *need* ABC and XYZ, in order to be worthy. “*Well, if you're not wearing this brand of jeans, and that brand of sneakers, people are going to pity you, because you're not able to keep up with the Jones.*” That is probably true. If you're wearing a clothing line that was fashionable three years ago, people are going to look askance at you. The problem is that this mindset is entirely a product of merchandising and marketing.

I'm not saying this is inherently a bad thing. If that is how you choose to determine your individual value and worth—by how much you have spent on any given product, and how the rest of the world perceives you as a result of that—that's entirely your choice. I wholeheartedly believe in freedom of conscience when it comes to determining values, on both an individual and community scale. I just suggest that it would be more valuable to look elsewhere for your values metrics.

Even at the peak of the pyramid, when we reach the more arcane spiritual needs of human beings, we see the commercial market telling us that capitalism is the ultimate vessel for achieving the ability to develop things like self-actualization, authenticity, and creativity; values that the pursuit of was once considered a religious issue. By not having to expend all of our energy procuring food via hunting, gathering, and farming; by allowing someone else to design and build our homes for us, rather than doing so ourselves; by working for someone else for a known quantity of money as compensation for a known quantity of work each week, we are led to believe that we have more time available for things like “self-actualization,” “authenticity,” and “creativity” in our lives.

Bullshit.

Spending the largest portion of our lives in pursuit of the dollar, in order to fulfill the material social expectations of others, is not self-actualization. Dressing in an uncomfortable costume, and telling ourselves it is comfortable, because it makes us “feel good” to be recognized as “successful” or “attractive” to people outside of our own social circle, is not “authentic.” Doing the same job, day after day, living in the same house that everyone else on our block of the subdivision does, because that was what the architects and builders decided would fit the needs of the largest majority, while still minimizing production costs, is not “creativity.” Pinning a poster of a corporate-controlled musical group on the living room wall does not make you “creative” or expressive.

Capitalism can be summarized as production for exchange, driven by the desire for personal accumulation of material receipts in such exchanges. True *laissez-faire* capitalism leaves all controls over the markets to the markets. The markets themselves are, according to the theory, driven by the needs and wants of consumers and those of society as a whole. Unfortunately, like communism, capitalism has been corrupted into a protectionist game, as we saw with the “*too big to fail*” mantra of the 2008 financial crisis, wherein the needs of the wealthy minority, who have managed to concentrate the vast majority of capital in their own control, are protected, while the majority of producers are left to hang, “*at the mercy of the market.*”

Ultimately, capitalism tells us the ultimate goal of a business is to make money. The reason for the existence of businesses is to turn a profit. Theoretically then, in the capitalist system if there is no profit in making a product, resources will not be wasted on producing it.

In the real-world, this not only doesn't work, it has backfired by teaching us that the ultimate goal of mankind is the pursuit of capital. This focus on greed has led to the current lack of confidence in

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business as usual, and the fault can be laid at the feet of commerce.

In the process of constructing this immense, global commercial economy, we have lost sight of what trade really provides us, at the individual level. It is to offer services or material goods of value in exchange for other services or material goods of value. This definition excludes those who create a profit for themselves simply by moving money from pocket to pocket. Today, we have a global economy that is intrinsically unsustainable, created by commercial middle-men who do no real work, and provide no real end-value from their services. From bankers who create elaborate schemes to move money around, creating the illusion of wealth out of nothing, to marketing moguls who create the image of need where none has ever before existed in the entire history of the human experience, to politicians that provide protections for their financial backers that obliterate the very bedrock principles of capitalism, we have a system of commerce that is falling apart.

There are some serious issues at play though, beyond some sort of New Age, Aquarian dislike for capitalist mercantilism and materialism. The GDP of the United States, as I write this, is \$16.77 trillion. The federal debt, on the other hand, has—at the moment I am typing this—surpassed \$19 trillion, moments ago. The federal debt—the money that we as a nation, owe to *somebody*—is two trillion dollars greater than the total value we produce in a year. That is the equivalent of a guy who makes \$16,700 per year having \$19,000 in debt via student loans, car loan, and credit card debt. Except...the United States government is still buying shit on its credit cards!

According to the US Treasury, the largest holder of US Treasury debt is the United States Federal Reserve Bank, a privately-owned corporation consisting of twelve banks across the United States⁵². The largest *foreign* holder of US Treasury securities however, is the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC). The largest foreign organization to which we are indebted is a country who has openly declared their military and political hatred for us.

The Federal Reserve Bank holds some 13% of the US National Debt. That is upwards of \$2.5 trillion dollars. The PRC holds \$1.265⁵³ trillion. That does not include non-Treasury investments the PRC has made in this country, ranging from businesses to real estate. It also doesn't account for investments that individual Chinese nationals have made, all of which are subject to confiscation by the totalitarian, communist government of the PRC, by fiat.

The problem is not the national debt. If that young man making \$16,700 a year, and \$19,000 in debt, moved back in with his parents, or enlisted in the military, and avoided spending his paycheck on alcohol, video games, and strippers, he could easily pay off that entire debt in just a couple of years.

He won't do that though. He'd do exactly what the US government does. He'd blow off any proposed austerity program, and he'd go out and buy a sports car with 300,000 miles on the odometer, for a price 25% higher than Blue Book value, to impress his friends and the girls at the bars. He'd sign a note to pay 30% interest on top of that⁵⁴. That is the problem...Our government has the fiscal responsibility of a

52 "It's slightly misleading to say that the Fed is a private corporation. It is, but only because all federally chartered and insured banks are required to be in effect, share holders." --Jim Chappelow, "The Barbarian Economist, in private correspondence.

53 Source: United States Treasury Department

54 Don't laugh. That shit happens every day, with young, dumb, enlisted guys who have never been taught to handle money. The specific example of an overpriced sports car, with a criminally high interest rate, is one I personally witnessed.

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horny, eighteen year old adolescent male on his first weekend pass after Basic Training.

The problem is not the national debt. The problem is the national deficit. The deficit is the difference between what we owe annually, and what we have available to pay that with. Currently, the federal government's projected deficit for 2016 stands at \$544 billion⁵⁵. That's half of a trillion dollars...that we do not have.

Capitalism!? You can't handle capitalism!

Capitalism as an economic system and mode of production can be said to be summarized by the following:

1. **Capital accumulation**: Production of goods or services only takes place if it serves the implicit purpose of driving profits upward. While capitalists may engage in philanthropy through donations to charities or the needy, in a pure capitalism, this would be detrimental to the integrity of the system, because it robs the recipients of their motivation to work for gain. Accumulation of capital in the hands of producers is seen as a necessary benefit, because it facilitates the creation of more production. This was one part at least, of the theory of “*trickle-down*” economics theorized during the Reagan administration, with its 2.5% GDP growth, versus the higher levels of production during both the Carter and Clinton administrations, and significantly lower production during the GHW Bush administration...
2. **Commodity production**: Commodity production is production for exchange on the market. It is intended to maximize exchange-value rather than use-value. An example of this can be seen in the production of commodities like produce with longer shelf-lives, even at the expense of nutritive quality. It possesses a higher commodity exchange-value, because it can be “sat on” longer, to facilitate shipping to places where the natural product will not grow, even if there is some sort of native, local produce that can offer greater health benefits to the local population. It is about maximizing the capital accumulation of the middle-man, rather than maximizing the use-value to the consumer.
3. **Private ownership of means of production**. While private property is an important value, and in fact is one of the values enshrined in both the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, private property also implies private accountability. Leveraging taxpayer-funded bailouts to save privately-owned corporations because they are “*too big to fail*,” is not capitalism. Providing government management to a private corporation, to prevent the failure of a manufacturing company—besides being a horribly shitty idea on its own merits—is not capitalism.
4. **Wage labor**. Rather than possessing a vested interest in the success of the company and its products because they expect to see a return on their efforts, capitalism creates an opportunity for the common worker to exchange a set amount of his time in exchange for a set amount of money—capital—from the employer. The goal of the employer is to maximize the profit potential of goods, by minimizing the cost of production—including the wages of his employees. The goal of the employee is to get as high a wage as possible, for as little amount of work as possible, while avoiding getting fired.

(Continued on the next page)

55 Source: United States Congressional Budget Office (CBO)

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(Continued from previous page)

It's an inherently adversarial relationship that results in employers looking for ways to cut positions, and replace them with automation that is a "buy once, cry once" cost, versus the cost of weekly payroll, which requires the addition of one more cost, in the form of accountants to manage the paperwork. For the employee, it results in a lack of motivation to perform as well as possible, maximizing the quality of product. Most readers will have witnessed this, if not experienced it themselves, from construction workers and factory line workers, to teenagers working in a fast-food line.

"Take your time, I get paid by the hour."

"Oh, this measurement is off by a half-inch." "That's alright, we ain't building cabinets!"

"Hey, no one will notice if I take an extra minute or two on my fifteen minute smoke break!"

5. Investment for Profit. The investment of money to make a profit. Yes, Virginia, it really does "take money to make money." For the ground-floor individual, getting in on the capitalist system requires money. How do you get money? You get a job, and earn a paycheck. Then, the theory goes, you save a portion of that paycheck to invest. Which is wonderful...in theory.

In reality, we are all subject, to one degree or another, to the marketing schemes of capitalism that demand we "*spend, spend, spend.*" Between the expenses of bills in modern living, for rent, utilities, car, insurance, and more, it's really not a wonder that net domestic savings have dropped so much since the 1950s. What's remarkable is that there is any saving at all left.

6. Price Mechanism. The use of the *price mechanism* to allocate resources between competing uses. In a nutshell, price mechanism is an economic term that refers to the manner in which the prices of commodities affect the demand and supply of goods. To illustrate how this is supposed to work: Company A needs 100 barrels of petroleum to keep their factory running to make widgets. Company B needs 100 barrels of petroleum to keep their factory running to make doodads. There are only 100 barrels of petroleum available on the market, and petroleum currently costs \$120 per barrel.

Widgets currently cost \$10 each. Doodads cost \$15 each. At \$120 per barrel, either company can afford to keep producing products at the current price. If they have to pay \$150 however, Company A will have to raise the price of widgets by \$10 each, to make their profit margins. People will refuse to buy widgets at the higher price. In order to pay \$120 per barrel, Company B will also have to raise the price of doodads by \$10 each, but doodads are believed to be absolutely essential, so people will *have* to buy them, even at the higher price. Guess who's getting the 100 barrels of petroleum? Unfortunately, that's not how it works out in the real world. For various political reasons, various industries—pretty much every industry—receives benefits in the form of tax exemptions, subsidies, and others, to keep them competitive. In its worst form, this protectionist, or "Crony" capitalism, resorts to spending taxpayer dollars to repay loans made to private corporations.

Worse yet, that doesn't even count the non-discretionary spending the government is obligated to pay out, in the form of entitlements such as Social Security, Medicare/Medicaid, and other social welfare programs that the progressives have built into the fabric of our government over the years. Our annual deficit is actually considerably greater than half of a trillion dollars. Total government spending for 2015 was over \$4 trillion⁵⁶. That's almost a fifth of our GDP, and is actually more than the government's income, which means it is adding to the national debt. That in turn will add to the national deficit for following years.

⁵⁶ Source: usgovernmentspending.com

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The total tax receipts—the total amount paid to the US government in taxes—is, at the moment I am writing this, \$3.317 trillion. Remember that young dude who was contemplating joining the Army to pay off his debts? He produces \$16,700 a year, but what he produces is for his employer. His actual income is \$3,300 per year...and he's spending \$4,000 a year.

This leads us to two very important questions that need to be answered:

1. Is it any wonder that our proverbial young man is so far in debt that he can't see out the top of the hole that he has dug?
2. What kind of dumbass lender would loan him more money?

The Progressive-Socialists of the world, including many in the Republican Party—communists to their souls—would simply say, “*Tax the rich! They don't pay their fair share!*” While I do, in part, “*blame the rich,*” I blame them for looking out for their bank accounts rather than the cultural values of our society, by creating the demand for unnecessary luxuries as some sort of *need*, in the interest of increasing their profit margins, rather than for not paying enough in taxes.

Of the annual tax receipts, 57% are from individual and corporate income taxes, 35% are from social security and payroll taxes, with the remaining coming from excise taxes, estate taxes, and sundry other government fees.

The average taxpayer, making less than \$200,000 annually only pays 15% in federal income tax⁵⁷. The so-called 1%? The average effective tax rate for individuals and corporations with incomes above \$200,000 is 30%. That is the effective tax rate. That's what they actually pay, after they take out all the deductions they can get away with. The nominal tax rate is higher.

There are people out there, on both Left and Right, who genuinely believe that it does not matter how much the government spends on their personal pet projects. After all, we're the most powerful nation in the world. Hell, in the history of the world! If we run out of money, that's okay. We can just print more. If some little tin-pot Third World dictator doesn't want to accept it, we'll just act like good imperialists and overthrow his government and install one that will!

Here's what we *know*...

A national default is inevitable if a country's sovereign debt is significantly higher than it's GDP and its economy is dwindling. While the US GDP has continued to grow, it has greatly reduced it's rate of growth over the last fifteen years. Twenty-five years ago, the US economy represented 22.28% of the GDP of the world. 10 years ago, the US GDP represented 19.94% of the world GDP. Five years ago? It was at 16.98%. Today, it is down to 16.14%.⁵⁸

Now, that may not seem like a bad thing. After all, it means the rest of the world is getting richer too, right? Not really. While China's GDP is growing—they are currently the largest share of the world GDP at 16.32%, up from 13.71% five years ago, and 4.07% twenty-five years ago, the rest of the West is losing control of the world GDP. Japan is 4.4% of world GDP, down from 5.79% ten years ago, and

⁵⁷ This does not include state income tax, social security, FICA, or any other taxes, of course.

⁵⁸ Figures are from the World Bank, via <http://knoema.com/nwnfkne/world-gdp-ranking-2015-data-and-charts>, and use PPP figures.

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8.79% twenty-five years ago. Germany represented 6.10% of world GDP a quarter century ago, and 4.2% ten years ago, down to 3.45% today.

Our economy is *not* doing well, and our debt and deficit are still growing. There are some who entertain the delusion that a national default would be a positive development: we could wipe out all of our bad debt, print new, sound money on a gold standard, and the economy would recover overnight! After all, Russia, Argentina, Iceland...all those countries defaulted, and it didn't spell Apocalyptic Doom, there or abroad.

National defaults have occurred in recent years and global finance recovered. The significance of a national default varies in its impact though, based on the relative impact of that nation's economy in relation to the global economy. Argentina's default was a non-event on the global scale. In 2001, the World Bank also listed Argentina as number seventeen in the world for GDP.

Iceland represents 0.01% of the world's GDP. So, yeah, it had fuck-all of an influence on the global economy. Right?

What about Russia? Russia defaulted on its sovereign debt in 1998, and almost destroyed the global economy in the process, when Long Term Capital Management failed as a result, and the—wait for it—United States Federal Reserve engineered a bailout. Russia only represents 3.3% of the world GDP, and the US sub-prime mortgage crisis and failure of Lehman Brothers in 2008 resulted in much bigger bailouts and brought the global financial world even closer to total meltdown.

The United States represents 16.14% of the world's GDP. The only other country that represents more than 5% of the world's economy⁵⁹ is the PRC, at 16.32%⁶⁰. A national default by the US or China would be absolutely apocalyptic for global finance.

What's more, the process by which financial failures create instant breakdowns in commerce is well-established. In order for goods to move, they have to be shipped. All cargos, everywhere, are financed. If those loans cannot be obtained, cargo does not move. For those readers who lived through it, or who know a little bit about history, we can look at the OPEC embargo of the 1970s for an example of what happens, albeit on a lesser scale. Within days, missing shipments mean empty supermarket shelves. Production lines at factories go dormant for lack of essential components produced elsewhere. Construction stops, and hospitals run out of drugs and vaccines. Within a week, local fuel inventories are depleted and transportation is disrupted.

More than 50% of the manufactured goods purchased by American consumers are produced overseas. That percentage is growing greater every day. Anyone who possesses the physical courage—or desperation—to wade into the cesspool of human detritus that is Wal-Mart these days, is well aware that ol' "Mr. Sam" Walton's policy of "*MADE IN USA!*" is dead. It long ago went the way of the Dodo bird, in the interest of the globalist agenda, and the shareholders' profits. In a purely capitalist sense it is logical. They can purchase goods that were produced for pennies in other countries and sell them for cheaper here than something produced in the US.

This is not capitalism. It is socialism for the rich. It privatizes the profits of transnational corporations by off-shoring the production, and socializes the losses through state aid in the form of

⁵⁹ Japan is the third largest economy in the world, at 4.4% of world GDP.

⁶⁰ Yes, for the first time in modern economic history, the PRC has a larger GDP than the US...

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subsidies and taxpayer funding when corporations lose money.

As Italian author Piero San Giorgio points out in **SURVIVE: The Economic Collapse**,⁶¹ three words explain this: blindness, greed, and arrogance:

“...by exporting jobs through off-shoring and outsourcing, business leaders and politicians have implicitly betrayed the confidence of their employees and constituents and trampled upon the social contract that cements a nation. In order for our current economic system to function at its peak—and to maximize the present to the detriment of the future, and the profits of a tiny number of privileged persons to the detriment of the rest of humanity—all logistical, political, moral, and cultural barriers had to be blown up. It became a *fait accompli* with the end of the Soviet Union. This is when the Indian and Chinese way of thinking changed, opening a source of cheap labor to the West. A process was quickly established for transferring Western jobs and industries to emerging countries. This globalization accelerated the dismantling of the industrial infrastructure that had enabled Europe and the US to dominate the world.”

This aspect should be hugely important to all of us. Globalization on this scale allows a tiny oligarchy of the richest shareholders, who possess majority control, to absolutely destroy local mom-and-pop businesses and artisans in local communities, through the economic warfare tool of below-cost prices. This is made possible solely through the economy-of-scale possible by production in foreign countries where wages are fundamentally non-existent.

Why is this important? It sounds like I might be some sort of anti-capitalist communist! What kind of Leftist, collectivist crap am I spewing?

Communitarianism is not communism. In fact, it's the exact opposite. Communism is the international “brotherhood” of the Worker, under the thumb of the Central Communist Party, while communitarianism is the opposite. It is shopping at the mom-and-pop store owned by Mr. and Mrs. Baker, who donate to the local food bank, sponsor the baseball team, and buy Girl Scout cookies from your daughter, instead of buying at Wal-Mart, even though the Bakers have to charge a little more for the same product. Communitarianism is being more worried about your next door neighbor than it is about some asshole in another city a thousand miles away, who you've never even met. Communitarianism is local, local, local.

Small shops, like mom-and-pop stores, local artisans, local small-scale farmers, are the warp-and-weave of the social fabric of small towns and communities. Even in large urban areas, they are the fabric of the small neighborhood communities that our cities used to be built around. Taking pride in a product that your community produces is a tie that strengthens the bonds of community.

If more than 50% of manufactured consumer goods in the US are produced overseas, what happens when the US government defaults on our sovereign debt? It's going to happen. Everyone knows it. The only thing holding it all together is that the US dollar has been the world's reserve currency since the

⁶¹ Giorgio Piero; **SURVIVE: The Economic Collapse**; 2013

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end of the Second World War. It's the linchpin of the global economy. The US dollar has lost 90% of its value since the end of the First World War. Today, it is backed solely by "*the full faith and credit of the United States of America*." Because of its international acceptance—often in recent years, at the muzzle of a M4 carbine—people, corporations, and nations have simply been unable to consider refusing it in transactions. Today though, more and more people are losing their faith in that credit. Nobody in the global marketplace believes that the US is not going to default. It's simply a matter that people expect us to default last. We're not a good bet, we're just the last best bet.

The BRIC nations⁶² have already spent the last several years discussing the option of moving off the US dollar as their reserve currency. If that happens, all of the transnational corporations that do business in those countries will no longer be forced to use the US dollar for international trade, even though they will still have to accept the dollar in this country, at the consumer end. Prices will skyrocket for normal consumer goods.

The largest producer of cheap consumer electronics in this US—the PRC—is considering moving away from the US dollar as its international trading currency. You think paying \$600 for a “smart phone” is ridiculous? How about \$6000? It's not just smart phones though. Walk through your house and look for the labels on random things: toasters, kitchen appliances, light bulbs, picture frames, bookshelves....

The second-largest producer of American food is Mexico, and they are the largest producer of American-consumed fruits and vegetables.⁶³ Mexico has considered moving off the US dollar as its reserve currency, following the BRIC nations. Mexico isn't producing luxury foods like caviar and champagne. They're shipping vegetables. How many people are going to starve because the prices of vegetables—either as vegetables or as base ingredients in other foodstuffs—are no longer affordable?

People in America are waking up to this. As Orlov predicted, “*faith that 'the market shall provide' is lost*.” Some of this is a result of jobs and investments lost in the 2008 crisis. People no longer trust that their money will hold the same value tomorrow that it did yesterday. More of it is an apparently growing unease about the complexity of the systems around us. People seem to have woken up and realized the fragility of these incredibly complex supply chains that provide us everything we think we need to survive and thrive.

Some of it also appears to be a growing unease about the good intentions of transnational corporations and industries. The convenience culture of modern America has left many people feeling hopeless and helpless. Not simply in the face of Wall Street and the government and their connivance, but on a day-to-day commercial level as well. From the growing distrust of agribusiness giants like Monsanto, and the rising tide of public sentiment against genetically-modified organisms (GMO) in our foodstuffs both at home and abroad, to the burgeoning distrust of pharmaceuticals inherent in the growing stupidity of the anti-vaccination movement. It's not even the “usual suspects” that have become anti-globalist. Young urban elites are promoting small-scale production of goods made in the USA, even as the most vocal Republican patriots in middle America fork over their dollars to Wal-Mart to purchase low-cost junk manufactured overseas, in the quest to acquire more stuff.

62 Brazil, Russia, India, China

63 Canada is actually the largest foreign source of American foodstuffs. They don't produce a lot of fruits and veggies in Eskimo Land though.

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In his delightful literary traispe through a burgeoning cultural renaissance, **The United States of Americana: Backyard Chickens, Burlesque Beauties, and Handmade Bitters**,⁶⁴ author Kurt B. Reighley describes this re-awakening of a group that too many of my friends and acquaintances dismiss as “hipster.”

“In one of our many e-mail exchanges over the last year, Chris Bray of Billykirk⁶⁵ recounted a conversation he'd had with a gentleman at the 2009 Pop-Up Flea Market, concerning the amount of goods the United States imports from abroad, 'It seems not only did this kill off jobs and make upper management and CEOs rich but it has killed off the 'How To' in this country. It's no surprise that when one starts to make it financially they get other people to make and do things for them. Has our greed tied our hands behind our backs? Is it out of the realm of possibility that we will be so reliant on other countries to make and do things for us that we will be a nation of needers and not doers?'”

I would argue that, when even “hipster” twenty-somethings have lost faith in the commerce of America, there's little hope left, but it just makes sense from the perspective of a young person, trying to join the labor force of commerce. He faces a dysfunctional, decrepit, dying system of employment, in a world with little remaining promise except the empty boasts of his elders about some mythical Golden Age of the past. What allure is there in toiling at some specific, limited set of repetitive tasks within an undesirable job, when that job—even the entire career path that job represents as a starting point—is likely to disappear from under him at any given moment? Why should he bend to the will to create profit for self-interested strangers a continent or more away, who have little to offer that cannot be better—more easily and more enjoyably—attained by cooperating with his friends, family, and neighbors in his local community. Every need represented on Maslow's Hierarchy is readily available in his local environment, if he is willing to ignore—or actively disdain—the induced wants-as-needs of modern commercial advertising and marketing. The proof of this is evident in the existence of communities in those places long before the advent of modern commerce.

Political Collapse

Orlov points out, in the beginning of Chapter Three of his book that,

“Financial and commercial collapse are already potentially lethal. People lose their bearings and their sense of purpose, or decide to take advantage of those in distress, or fail simply through an inability to adapt to radically altered circumstances, and when that happens people get hurt. Financial and commercial collapses tend to be hard on those who failed to prepare...Both of these causes of potentially lethal circumstances can be avoided: first, by choosing the right kind of community; second, by laying in supplies or securing independent access to food, water and energy; and third, by generally finding a way to bide your time and ignore the world at large until

64 Seriously, read it. It's a delightfully entertaining piece of writing. Simply awesome.

65 Billykirk makes high-end, handmade leather goods in New Jersey, of all fucking places.... billykirk.com

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things get better...political collapse is a different animal altogether, because it makes the world at large difficult to ignore..."

It would be simple enough—and more than adequately accurate—to sum up the collapse of the political system of the United States by just looking at the state of affairs in the current Presidential primary races. The media's front runner in the Republican primary is an orange-skinned *Oompa Loompa* clown who is considered a business genius, because he's a celebrity billionaire—even though the man has lost more money in his career than he's made. Yes, it was a "*sound business decision*." Yes, "*it was business*," and "*used the law*" to his advantage...He "*used the law*" to avoid business failures... That sounds suspiciously opposed to *laissez-faire* capitalism to me. It is certainly a symptom of the financial and commercial collapse of legitimacy when people take a crooked businessman serious as a potential Presidential candidate.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, you have an openly Socialist career politician; a white dude in his seventies, claiming to be a "non-establishment" candidate—who's been in federal office for over two decades—and is supported by the Communist Party of the United States. For any readers who are not aware, up until at least the 1990s, membership in the CPUSA was a bar for enlistment in the United States military. Now, people are actively seeking to make the man Commander-in-Chief? Across the Democrat aisle from him, you have a former Secretary of State who is under current federal investigation for mishandling classified documents because she assumed the rules didn't apply to her. Apparently, she was correct.

Simply pointing out the travesty of the circus side show of modern American electoral politics is not adequate however. Lots of people are still lining up to donate money to these clowns, and campaigning to get their chosen asshole elected. My goal is not simply to illustrate that the entire system is broken, but that people have lost faith in the system and its willingness to protect them.

Outside of the natural human instinct described by Glubb as one of the harbingers of social decay in empires, to look to celebrities as role models for social leadership, there is a more immediate explanation for the stupidity of the current state-of-affairs in American politics, and it is not as simple as the *Communist v. Capitalist* dialectic that our "betters" feed us on the nightly news, with our suppers. It is not as simple as a "*free shit army*" realizing they can vote themselves into possession of the wealth of their "betters."

Many of us like to joke about the ineptitude of the federal government and its bureaucracy, and it is only partially in jest. If however, you believe—even for a moment—that the patrician class within our own society does not recognize what is occurring around them, you are more than mildly delusional.

With quiet forbearance, the American people have carried the burden of the abuses of the federal executive branch, carrying water for the mandarin bosses of their commercial masters. The American people have ignored the connivance of the executive branch and its unelected bureaucracy, with the oligarchs of commerce and finance who have bypassed the checks-and-balances of the republican form of government represented by the Constitution, in the pursuit of profit and gain at the expense of the rest of us. Whether it's Progressive-Socialists in power, like the Clintons and President Obama, or Neo-Conservative capitalists like the Bushes, both sides follow the dictates of their bosses to infringe on the "natural" human rights of the citizenry.

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Meanwhile, we suffer ignominiously under the “representation” of a legislative branch that is content to sell their constitutional duty to create laws that represent the interests of their constituents, for the largess of corporate sponsorship, so they have a nice consulting job with a six-figure income and book deals, when they leave office. They conveniently delegate their constitutional legislative duty and authority to the unelected bureaucracy of the executive branch, which creates “laws” under the guise of “regulations,” in order sell out the American Dream to the highest bidder.

These types of unconstitutional abuses by the imperial regime have led to a growing disgust and a sense of disenfranchisement with the government and politics, as people have begun to distrust its interest in protecting the lives, liberty, and pursuit of happiness of individual Americans. Things are ugly, and they are going to continue getting uglier. Millions of people are awakening to the fact that most of what they've been taught about “*Truth, Justice, and the American Way*,” throughout their lives, was utter bullshit. They're demonstrating their distrust and their loss of faith in the legitimacy of the system through abstention. In 2004, 60.45% of eligible voters participated in the national elections. In 2008, that number rose to 62.3%, before plummeting in 2012 to 54.2%⁶⁶.

It has long been a mantra of American civic responsibility that, “*If you don't vote, you can't bitch.*” In the declining American Empire, the loss of legitimacy of the political system has led to the realization that the reciprocal is actually true: “*If you vote, you are expressing belief in the legitimacy of the outcome. If you vote, you can't bitch just because your side loses.*” People have long complained about having to choose between “*the lesser of two evils.*” In increasing numbers however, they are recognizing that choosing the lesser of two evils is still choosing evil, and they are removing their consent from the process.

The modern nation-state as a political entity, is a relatively modern invention. Formally codified in the Westphalian Treaty of 1648, Westphalian Sovereignty did not reach fruition until the late 19th Century, and it did not become the dominant system internationally until the 20th Century. The inevitability of the State's survival is a modern historical conceit with no demonstrable validity. Already, the concept of the sovereignty of the State has been eroded into a farce. From invasions and installment of puppet regimes by imperial powers ranging from Great Britain and Tsarist Russia, to the more modern examples of our own imperialism and that of the defunct Soviet Union, many nations have seen their vaunted sovereignty destroyed for the whims of commerce. Some have become weak states while others are either already, or well on their way to becoming defunct states.

Like those countries, the United States is now gasping for air and fighting for its life as a political hegemony. Unfortunately, that is not likely to be a simple, peaceful transition. The current political system, anachronism that it is, is unlikely to “*go gently into that dark night.*” The potential for chaos is there, but more likely is organized action of a very damaging sort, because the ruling class of politicians and their corporate sponsors, and the Praetorian Guards that service them, in the professional career military and federal law enforcement, as well as the bureaucracy of career civil servants, possess a vested interest in maintaining the myth of the inevitability and necessity of the State. They cannot allow local autonomy without a fight. They are obligated by the very self-interest that capitalism upholds as highest virtue, to “*rage, rage, against the dying of the light*” of state-sanctioned civilization.

66 Source: The American Presidency Project, University of California, Santa Barbara

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There is, in my belief—and in a burgeoning belief among many Americans—a reason for the increasing encroachments against the individual liberties of Americans, and the insistence by the imperial regime that normal, working-class Americans with traditional, self-reliant values, are “*potential domestic terrorists*.” In order to maintain the illusion of state sovereignty over its citizens, these officials must introduce increasingly draconian regulations and “crime-fighting” measures. They can only allow those curtailed activities that benefit them, while mercilessly crushing any sign of insubordination or rebellion.

We can see this in the recent responses to different brands of civil disobedience and organized protest in this country. In August of 2014, riots broke out in the predominantly black neighborhood of Ferguson, Missouri, over the shooting death of a young, black career criminal named Michael Brown, by a white local police officer, Darren Wilson. To many outside of the community, and in the law enforcement community, the response of federal political figures seemed to be specifically intended to support and encourage the rioters. Across the country, “conservative” pundits lined up in support of law enforcement and calls for efforts to crush the riots. The federal government did nothing, except declare via a Department of Justice investigation, that the “*institutional racism*” of the local police department “*caused*” the riots by leading to the shooting of Brown.

The Ferguson riots were accompanied by riots protesting racism and police brutality in other large urban areas across the country, in solidarity with the Ferguson efforts. Most on the “conservative” Right pointed the finger at President Obama and accused him of “*race-baiting*.” While they were right to point the finger at the federal imperial government, it had nothing to do—or little to do, at any rate—with the President being mulatto⁶⁷, and self-identifying as black. Nationwide, across the spectrum of the “Right,” cries arose for increased law enforcement funding, training, and support against the supposed “*war on cops*.”⁶⁸

An article on **The Blaze** from 27 OCT 2015 reads, “*FBI Director James Comey says the recent spike in violent crime in a number of cities is a result of the “Ferguson Effect”—or officers showing more restraint in the wake of backlash against law enforcement.*”

Conservative talk show host and “Constitutional Scholar,” Mark Levin, on his radio show, opted to side with law enforcement in the wake of the Black Lives Matter riots as well. “*What we are witnessing now is the left's war on the civil society. It's time to speak out in defense of law enforcement and others trying to protect the community and rule-of-law.*”

World Net Daily “exclusive columnist” and “civil rights leader,”⁶⁹ Jesse Lee Peterson is quoted in a WND article, claiming, “*If the citizens can force the politicians to back the police and enforce the rule-of-law, then there's a chance to restore peace.*”

I don't know anyone who supported the riots in Ferguson, Baltimore, and other places. No one I know supported the looting and burning of small businesses. Fast forward however, to January of 2016 though. In the desert of eastern Oregon sits a small community that most people had never heard of.

67 I was informed recently that “mulatto” is a racially offensive term. It may actually be more offensive than “nigger,” apparently. The fact that someone would get offended by a historical term for mixed-race parentage that has no common lexical cachet as an epithet is absurd to me. Fuck it.

68 Which, according to the numbers of LEO feloniously assaulted and murdered, was a fabrication.

69 Both titles were cited on WND.

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Named for the famed Scottish poet Robert Burns, the county seat of Harney County boasts a population of less than 3,000 people—and still represents over 60% of the population of Harney County.

Just to the south of Burns, Oregon sits a family ranch owned by the Hammonds. Two of the Hammonds, father Dwight, age 73, and his 46-year old son, Stephen, were convicted⁷⁰ of arson on public land, in 2012, for a back-fire they started in 2001. The government insisted they started the back-fire to cover up evidence of a large-scale poaching operation. The Hammonds insisted they started the back-fire to stop an out-of-control grass fire on publicly-owned, Bureau of Land Management controlled land adjacent to the family's ranch. The original judge in the case decided that a three month prison sentence for Dwight, and a one-year sentence for son Stephen, were adequately punitive.

The US attorney's office disagreed, and using the **Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996**⁷¹, appealed for the minimum mandatory sentence of five years. Under the **Sentencing Reform Act**, which was part of the **Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984**, when a guideline sentencing range is less than the statutory mandatory minimum sentence, the latter prevails. It also did away with parole eligibility for almost all federal crimes. Mandatory minimum sentencing laws have long been heralded by conservatives as a key anti-crime measure. The Hammonds, as a result, were sentenced to return to federal prison, for the duration of a five year sentence.⁷²

During a conservative “patriot” rally in support of the Hammonds in Burns, a group of people, from outside the state of Oregon—who had apparently previously planned to do so—moved south of Burns, and occupied a portion of the Malheur Bird Sanctuary Wildlife Refuge. This was done—according to their own statements—not to support the Hammonds, who had already decided to turn themselves in and face the prison sentence that will likely outlast Dwight Hammond, but to “*draw attention*” to the federal misuse of public lands in the western United States. In a nutshell, they wanted to see federal land in the West returned to local and state control, so that ranchers could have easier⁷³ access to the grazing.

During the course of a month-long occupation, the occupiers repeatedly stated that they had only peaceful intentions, but were armed for self-defense. One of the most public faces of the occupying group, identified as LaVoy Finicum, repeatedly made statements on national news media and via social media, that he would not be arrested, because he was not going to spend the rest of his life in a “*concrete box*.” Over the course of the “occupation,” the leaders, including Finicum, repeatedly left the Refuge, traveling around the western US to speak at public gatherings. On 26 January 2016, several of the leaders of the “occupation,” including Ammon and Ryan Bundy, Ryan Payne, and Finicum, decided to travel to nearby John Day.

They were pulled over by Oregon State Police (OSP). Ryan Payne left the vehicle and was arrested. After a four-to-five minute delay, Finicum—who was driving—accelerated away from the vehicle.

70 It doesn't matter what story line you believe about the events, they convicted.

71 Key points for readers: 1) The bill was introduced by conservative Republican sweetheart, Bob Dole. 2) It passed with broad bipartisan support—including Republicans. The Senate vote was 91-8. The House vote was 293-133. Remember that, when people only point out that it was signed under Bill Clinton's presidency.

72 I will gleefully wager \$100 that the Hammonds were avid supporters of “conservative” political candidates that supported “minimum mandatory sentencing” for crimes that they believed were “wrong.” Unfortunately for them, they discovered, “*what's good for the goose is good for the gander*,” and “*reaped what they sowed*.”

73 Read “free.”

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Approximately one mile up the road, OSP and agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had established a roadblock. Finicum accelerated towards the roadblock, driving off the road in an apparent attempt to drive around it, when the pick-up truck became stuck in the snow. Finicum exited the vehicle, with his hands in the air, and moved away from the truck, before advancing—slowly and awkwardly, because of the deep snow—towards the OSP officers, with his hands in the air.

On the overhead camera footage, released by the FBI only days later, Finicum can be seen pulling the hem of his denim jacket back with his left arm, and reaching towards his left side with his right hand⁷⁴. He was shot, multiple times, by the officer in front of him, and another apparently, who was behind him in the tree line.

Conservatives and “patriots” almost instantly went on the offensive via social media, calling it “murder,” an “ambush,” and claiming it was all a set-up. Almost as quickly, there were claims of an “eyewitness” statement from Ammon Bundy, of having seen it. These claims were allegedly made by Bundy, via a cellphone call to his wife—while handcuffed in the backseat of a cruiser—under federal felony arrest—while still at the scene of an officer-involved shooting...that resulted in the death of one of his associates...⁷⁵

By the next day, the source of the “eyewitness” account changed to a young female accompanying the occupiers, named “Victoria Sharp.” Miss “Sharp’s” account included the allegation that OSP and the FBI shot “*at least 150 rounds!*”⁷⁶ into the vehicle. Over the course of several days, both Miss “Sharp,” and another participant who was allegedly in the vehicles when this occurred made contradictory, conflicting reports of exactly what happened—all conveniently exonerating Mr. Finicum, of course—and castigating the FBI and OSP. The police, that conservatives had previously said politicians needed to “back” and “support,” were immediately labeled “murderers,” and “ambushers.” The “Pacific Patriots’ Network” immediately called for a “peaceful” gathering in Burns to protest the “murder” and issued a “Call-To-Action” for people from around the country to join them. They “demanded” that the FBI “leave Oregon,” and that the officer who shot Finicum be imprisoned⁷⁷.

The problem? The ONLY people involved in this entire, stupid fucking mess started by a bunch of morons claiming to want to “*uphold the Constitution,*” that actually adhered to the US Constitution and the intent of the Founders? The Federal Fucking Bureau of Investigation!

You had an organized group of armed citizens—self-described as “*part of the militia*”—from other states, who invaded the state of Oregon, and occupied a facility in the sovereign state of Oregon. They were not sent by the governor of their state(s). They were not called to active service by their governor

74 Anyone who has ever carried a gun in a cross-draw holster or shoulder holster, concealed, recognized it for a draw attempt, immediately.

75 Here’s a hint...and something I pointed out, within minutes, to several commentators.... “*Not just no, but no fucking way, did that alleged phone call occur.*”

76 If you are somehow dumb enough to still believe this account, I suggest going to your local salvage yard, purchasing a dilapidated old wreck of a pick-up, and towing it to the range. Place a couple of targets inside the truck. Then, fire ONE magazine—a mere thirty rounds—through the body of the truck, at the targets. Then, go look at the conditions of the targets....then, extrapolate the damage that would have occurred to the occupants if they had actually fired 5 times that many rounds into the truck...

77 Presumably, they were willing to settle for him first being tried and convicted, but I’m not entirely sure they were willing to wait that long...

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or the President of the United States—the two constitutional authorities over the militia. They decided—on their own—to invade a sovereign state, to protest federal policies.

The governor of Oregon—whom, I hasten to add, I despise—called on the federal government to help defend her state against an invasion by a hostile band of “foreigners” from another state. That is—in case you're curious—one of the few legitimate federal functions specifically spelled out in the Constitution.

The crux of the story however, is not whether Finicum should have been shot⁷⁸. It doesn't matter whether the occupiers had a legitimate grievance against the federal government⁷⁹. What matters, in this context is two-fold: first of all, the political class—the politicians, media, and the political commentators on both Left and Right—that tell you what to think, convinced conservatives that they should support law enforcement, against the “*raging, looting, rioting darkies!*” They didn't point out that those same law enforcement agents would be turned against rural, white, elderly ranchers who got out of line just as quickly. Second, the political class—and their Praetorian Guard—does not care about your petty complaints and concerns. They do not care about your interpretations of the Constitution. They care about maintaining their place of prestige in the current system, as well as whatever is currently trying to replace the current system. The political class intends to hold on, despite the fact that most of the American public understands all too well, that the government has long since lost its legitimacy in regard to protecting the “*life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness*” of the American people.

If a bunch of welfare-living inner-city residents riot and burn their neighborhoods, it's actually not a big deal to the patrician class. After all, where are those people going to turn when they realize they need a place to live? Right back to the loving arms of Big Daddy Government. The patricians will simply skim their take off whatever government expenses are used to rebuild.

If a bunch of reasonably prosperous taxpayers start revolting however, it is a direct threat to the bank accounts of the patricians and the Praetorians. That cannot be accepted. It doesn't matter if you like it. It doesn't matter if you think it's unconstitutional. It doesn't matter if you think it's right. All that matters is that it is.

Many of us stand opposed to the idea that the political system cannot be saved. We are patriots, and by definition, we love our country. We want to believe in the righteousness of our system. Some of us even swore oaths to protect and defend that political system, as enshrined in the Constitution. Even those who never served, spent their adolescence being indoctrinated by the education system, in the sanctity and divinity of the democratic⁸⁰, republican system and its symbols.

Orlov describes this well,

“The effectiveness of these symbols rests on a certain human vulnerability; there is a particular developmental stage at which young people instinctively seek a tribal identity, which is normally constructed by going through initiation rituals and rites of passage, and it is at this stage that they

⁷⁸ Probably not, but the dumbass brought it on himself, so...

⁷⁹ They did...and do.

⁸⁰ I get it, “*we're not a democracy. We're a republic!*” Well, dumb ass, we are, actually, a representative democratic republic. That means, we may not be a mob democracy, but the mob still gets a vote.

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most easily imprint on a fake—an arbitrary set of hollow symbols—deftly substituted by public schools and other state-controlled institutions. The United States Pledge of Allegiance, which schoolchildren are made to recite with their hands on their hearts...is not just a formality—it is a transformative act that creates a group of young people willing to follow a leader waving a certain flag just as surely as a group of ducklings followed Konrad Lorenz's rubber boots, having imprinted on the boots as their mother.”

More and more however, people are not buying into the rhetoric. Blacks no longer—if they ever did—believe that either the federal, state, or their local governments care about them and their needs. Increasingly, middle-class white Americans, after watching the weak-kneed responses to the Black Lives Matter riots, and the swiftness with which the governments responded to the Malheur occupation, are beginning to understand that the governments don't really care about them either. The government—the elected leaders, the unelected bureaucrats, and the enforcers—care about maintaining the image of an invulnerable, strong, America. The political system has increasingly lost its legitimacy in the eyes of the people.

Paul Harvey's Input

In the words of the famous radio commentator, now comes, “*the rest of the story.*” After discussing the signs and symptoms of the collapse of political legitimacy, Orlov goes on to describe social and cultural collapse. Those however, as he points out, can be averted, if people take local autonomous action, despite the efforts of the political collapse, to hold the image of the system together as healthy and vibrant. That is the goal of building a resilient community for surviving the decline of the American Empire. It's not to “*save America!*” It's not even to “*Restore the Constitution!*”

The point is not America. America is done. When we look dispassionately at the historical facts and precedents, and superimpose them over events in contemporary America, that becomes abundantly obvious. You can argue, debate, scream, and beat the floor with your fists, but history doesn't care. Parts of the US are already Third World. From infrastructure failures and loss of government services in places like Detroit; from the corruption of the relationship between local government representatives and the citizens, to neighborhoods and communities that belong—for all practical purposes—to the control criminal organizations that provide all the government services that the civil government cannot in that area, it's already fallen, and significant portions of the rest are following quickly.

The point is not even the Constitution. It's a piece of parchment with some words written on it. Those words can be—and have been—bent and twisted to mean whatever someone wants them to mean. All they have to do is convince the guys with guns and the will to use those guns, that their interpretation is the correct one.

What is important is the cultural values enshrined in the Constitution. The ideas of representative governance, and limited impact of the government on individual and local liberties are what are important. You don't need to be part of “*The United States of America*” to believe in those ideas. You don't need to be part of “*The United States of America*” to uphold those ideas as valuable. You do need a couple of things however. You do need to believe in those ideas. You need other people in your local community who believe in those ideas.

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As the current system continues to collapse around us; as the increasingly large number of disenfranchised continue to cry out and act out in anger over the lies they have been fed, you can join them, and watch them and your own people trampled under the boots of those who desire—more than anything else—to maintain their positions of authority and power. You can beat your head against a metaphorical wall in anger and frustration when things don't go the way you think they should. Or, you can be like the barbarian chiefs on the outskirts of the Roman Empire, as it declined, and lead your local community to survival and success, by focusing on your own friends, family, and neighbors and their needs and desires.

The Future Is Past

One of the great misunderstandings of modern history is that the fall of the Roman Empire was the result of “*the sack of Rome*.” Unfortunately for those that hold this view, none of the “*Dark Ages*” incidents of Rome itself being invaded, were the cause, or even the catalyst for the fall of the Empire.

The first “Sack of Rome” occurred in 390 BCE, before the Republic had even established itself as an imperial power. As such, it is closer in context to the burning of Washington, DC during the War of 1812 than it is to anything we face today.

The second, third, and fourth invasions of the city are what people are generally speaking of when they discuss the “Sack of Rome.” The first of these, and arguably the most well-known, occurred on 24 August 410 CE, when warriors of the Visigoth tribe led by Alaric took the city. The empire had been rocked by civil war and internal dissent since the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 CE. In 284, Emperor Diocletian had seized power in a coup and ordered the Empire to be split into two halves, Eastern and Western. By the time Alaric's Visigoths invaded and sacked the Eternal City, it was no longer the capital of even the Western Roman Empire, having been replaced in that role by Ravenna eight years earlier. The reason—the sole reason really—that popular imagination portrays this as a critical political event is two-fold.

1. It was the first time in almost eight centuries that the Eternal City had fallen to a foreign enemy⁸¹. While not the political capital, the city was still the moral and spiritual heart of the Empire. The successful sack of the city by the “barbarians” was a major blow to the morale of the Empire's population and leadership.
2. The fact that a bunch of “backwards, uncivilized barbarians” could take the urban heart of the civilized world was a general shock to both friends and foes of the Empire. In many ways, it served to prove what was already becoming understood—the Empire was finished as a world power.

What many people today do not understand when considering this is that the Germanic tribes of Europe had been in contact, for trade and conflict, with the Roman Empire for four centuries. The impact of this contact with the Empire, was four centuries of increase in population numbers, economic growth, and political sense, stretching back at least as far as the uprising under Arminius in 9 CE, that resulted in the loss of more than three legions at the Battle of the Teutoburg Forest in what is now northern Germany. The barbarians had developed their tribal system to the point that they could

81 The first time, previous to this, was the invasion by the Gallic Senones in 390 BCE, mentioned above.

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successfully face and defeat Rome on the battlefield.

Far from being the catalyst for the fall of the Roman Empire, the sack was actually the culmination of a convergence of catastrophic problems that faced the Empire. The aforementioned domestic rebellions and civil wars, stretching back over a century previous, had weakened the internal unity of the Empire, making a concerted defense against external invasion all but impossible. Since the time of the Marian Reforms that allowed non-citizens to gain citizenship through service in the legions, the composition of both the general Roman population and the army, had grown increasingly multicultural, and many in the legions felt they owed far more allegiance to their own tribe than they did to Rome itself.

The third sack of Rome occurred less than half a century later in 455 CE, when the Vandals, invaded. The Vandal king Genseric had previously been in an alliance with Emperor Valentinian III. Genseric's son Huneric was betrothed to Valentinian's young daughter Eudocia. In 455, Valentinian was killed and Petronius Maximus took the throne of the Western Empire as well as Valentinian's widow, Licinia Eudoxia. He then married his son Palladius to Eudocia. Genseric, who saw his own family's hopes of being tied to the imperial line shattered, used the broken betrothal of Huneric and Eudocia as a pretext to attack Rome.

The fourth and final—so far—sack of Rome occurred in 546 CE, but it is important to note that the last emperor of the Western Roman Empire, Romulus Augustulus, had been removed from the throne in 476, by the Germanic Odovacer, who declared himself to be King of Italy. By 546, Rome was just a city that happened to be the home of the Catholic Church. It was the soul of Christianity.

What we see in these lessons, when we look past the bowdlerized versions of the tales, is that the fall of Rome had nothing to do with who held the throne of the Empire, or even who was doing what to the capital city. The reality is that the overextended Empire, fraught with the collapse of legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens and enemies, showed signs of weakness much like those the American Empire shows the world today. The barbarian tribes nibbled away at the edges of the empire's corpse, looting, pillaging, and plundering the failing civilization for anything they thought would be useful or appealing to their people.

This should be the lesson we learn, as we watch others shatter their heads on the brick walls of the failing empire of the United States. We may hope for some divine intervention that will lead to a postponement of the inevitable. We may even be naive enough to hope that somehow, that divine intervention could change the patterns of history for our benefit. It is difficult to face. It's hard to look squarely into the face of destruction, and know—inarguably—that the nation you grew up in, and were conditioned to love the very thought of, is in the violence of its death throes. The individual who genuinely loves his family, and places his loyalty to his children above any indoctrinated loyalty to the State however, cannot afford to remain bound by this programmed, blindly obedient, unquestioning childishness. We cannot afford to ignore the realities of the world around us and awake fairy tale solutions.

The American Empire is dying. It probably won't end tomorrow or even the next day. The political class will not give up their hold on the trappings of power without a concerted, violent effort to maintain their position of status and power. They will bend and twist the intent of the cherished Constitution, using the words therein to do so, to maintain that hold.

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You can complain about the infringements on the Constitution all you want. You can pin the blame on Progressive-Socialists, Marxists, the Freemasons, a secret cabal of Jews, or even the fucking alien lizard men who secretly rule over us in disguise⁸². That's a rather stupid waste of time and both intellectual and moral energy though. If you invested all of your time, energy, and resources—even if you willingly sacrificed your life itself—to try and change the nature of man, as evidenced by the patterns of history, you would still not have any reasonable hope of achieving that.

You can argue about the sanctity of “*natural, God-given rights*,” as enshrined in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. You are wasting your breath, and your brainpower, and your energy. The idea of “*natural, God-given rights*” is philosophical masturbation. The “*natural, God-given rights*” enumerated in the Constitution and the Bill of Rights were written down for two very specific reasons:

1. The founding generation of the new republic had just fought a fucking eight year war, specifically to secure those rights from the British Crown. The only thing that granted those rights to the people of the new republic was the blood of those who died, and the iron in the weapons and backbones of those who survived.
2. The founding fathers knew—they stated as much repeatedly, in the arguments for the inclusion of the Bill of Rights—that if they were not specifically enumerated, they would be lost to the government in less than a generation.

The fact is, you're not going to vote your way out of it, and if you try to throw an armed revolution, you'll be on your own. You can hypothesize and proselytize all that you want about an “*uprising*.” You can toss labels like “*three percent*,” and “*patriot*” around all that you want. It's the political equivalent of a Poodle yipping and yapping at my kids' Gladiator Mastiff dog.⁸³ The big bastard is going to politely ignore it, until the Poodle gets the nerve to actually nip at his leg. Then, he's going to turn around and crush the little fucker's head, with one quick clamp of the jaws.

When you start discussing armed insurrection against the military and police; when you start talking about “target folders” with elected officials names in them, normal people righteously start looking at you like you've got a dick growing out of your head. It doesn't matter if they agree with you that the imperial government is out of control. It doesn't matter if they are waving a Gadsden flag in their yard. They're going to look at you and they're going to see a “whacky survivalist,” or a “crazy fucking militia dude.” The idea that a bunch of fat, middle-aged dudes, who are borderline unintelligible in spoken English, are going to “vote from the rooftops,” is ridiculous, and it will continue to be ridiculed.

Armed insurrection is not the answer to increased liberty, prosperity, and a return of classical American values. The poor in this country—of all colors and creeds—have grown comfortably accustomed to receiving handouts from their political liege-lords. You can't outvote them, and—outside of minority religious demographics like Catholics, Mormons, and the Amish—you're not going to outbreed them. The other side simply has more bodies to throw at the problem.

Autarky is a term derived from the Greek αὐτάρκεια, which means “*self-sufficiency*.” It is derived

82 If you sincerely believe that the world is ruled by alien lizard men in disguises, do me, yourself, and the rest of the world a huge favor, and go eat the barrel of a Glock; preferably before you breed that stupidity into the gene pool.

83 130 pounds of muscle and sinew...at a year old.

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from αὐτο-, meaning “*self*,” and ἀρκέω, meaning “*to suffice*.” Generally, the term is applied to political states and their economic systems. Autarky can be said to exist whenever a political unit has the ability to survive, and continue its activities without external assistance⁸⁴. Autarky is not, however, solely an economic phenomenon. An entity can said possess autarky in any discipline or field in which it is self-sufficient.

For the most part, sensible, mature, thinking adults in the preparedness and survivalist communities are under no delusions that they can be self-sufficient at the individual or nuclear family level. As John Donne famously wrote in 1624 CE, “*no man is an island*.” However, a tight-knit community, with shared values, traditions, and customs, has ample historical example to follow to achieve exactly that level of autarky required to survive the decline of empire. After all, it was well-led small tribes working in concert with their neighbors, who managed to leverage the converging catastrophes that destroyed the Roman Empire, to survive and found what became the Renaissance that led to modern Europe and what we today recognize as “classical western values.”

84 If a self-sufficient economy refuses ALL trade with the outside world, it is referred to as a “closed economy.” That is not —at all—what we are suggesting in this work, as we will see in later chapters.

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Three
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“The mythology of a people is far more than a collection of pretty or terrifying fables to be retold in carefully bowdlerized form to our schoolchildren. It is the comment of the men of one particular age or civilization on the mysteries of human existence and the human mind, their model for social behavior, and their attempt to define, in stories of gods and demons, their perception of inner realities.”

*--H.R. Ellis-Davidson; **Gods and Myths of Northern Europe***

One of the side effects of the decadence of the Age of Affluence discussed by Glubb in **The Fate of Empires** was the impact of the rise of intellectualism in a society. He pointed to the parallels between the Caliphate and our contemporary situation quite poignantly, as well as to evidence in the Biblical book **Acts of the Apostles**, of the same issues in Hellenic culture, “...all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing by talking about and listening to the latest ideas.”

In Athens, this led to interminable debate, discussion, and constant argument back-and-forth, among factions with different views of the goals of Athenian democracy. In our own time we see this mirrored in the unending debates of physically and mentally soft blowhards in the elected legislatures of the western world, the media, and in our own local communities. We see issues debated in the partisan press; incessant talking and bickering, with no one—even among the most fervent on either side of a debate—willing to place his own future political career on the line by standing up and saying, “*alright, we’ve talked this shit to death. Now, we’re going to do it my way, because you bastards can’t come to a conclusion. Shut the hell up and get out of my way.*” When someone does—ever so rarely—decide to sacrifice himself on the altar of action, the other side quickly bemoans the “*lack of bipartisanship*,” and “*democratic values*,” even if the precipitous action worked and solved the problem. If the actor was on the Right, he’s quickly mocked as a fascist or Nazi⁸⁵. If on the Left, he’s derided as a communist. In either case, he’ll be labeled a tyrant. No one is apparently man enough to accept being called names, even though our forebears had were willing to challenge each other to duels on the floor of Congress!

Regardless, the spirit of Athenian debate seems to be, like elsewhere, the destruction of the spirit of action that was necessary to the founding of empire. The rise of each empire’s Age of Intellect seems to be a good thing at first glance. Surprising advances are made in the sciences and in the understanding

⁸⁵ In most cases, almost instantly illustrating the accuser’s complete ignorance of the actual meanings of either of these two words.

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of the physical world. In the ninth-century, when the Christian world of Europe would require another seven centuries to grasp that the world was not flat, and that personal hygiene prevented disease, Mohammedan Arab scientists in the commission of Caliph al-Ma'mun had—with remarkable accuracy—determined the circumference of the globe to be 40,246km⁸⁶, and bathing was a religious precept.

The cultivation of the human intellect seems to be—and I would argue is—a magnificent ideal, and Christian, evolutionary, and Marxist philosophers alike all tend towards the adulation of the goal of an ever-increasing improvement in mankind, driven by the expansion of intellectual understanding, as the epitome of human achievement in each generation. This is only true though, history shows us, if the pursuit of intellect does not rob a culture of its willingness to pursue—even its longing for the pursuit of—action for the furtherance of its ideals and the protection of its values.

The most damnable result of the rise of intellectualism though, is the growth within the collective psyche of a people, of the idea that the human brain can overcome nature, and solve all of the perceived problems of the world. It is the same belief that “*imperialism is bad*” that drives the belief that “*imperialism is good*” as subjects of political philosophical debate. The reality of the human experience rather clearly illustrates that in order for any human cultural activity to succeed, some form of community must be engaged in the collective effort towards the achievement of the goal. In order for that to take place, the members of the community must be willing to sacrifice self to some degree and act in a spirit of service to the community. The idealistic naivete of “*reason always prevails*,” or that mental cleverness alone can resolve the world's problems, without physical effort or community participation falls flat as soon as a foe is met who is willing to stop talking, and starts chopping the heads of the intellectuals.

We see this in our contemporary world, as the intellectuals of the West constantly debate the merits of different methods of dealing with the influx of jihadist emigrants into the West. The Left looks for ways to appease the warriors⁸⁷ of the resurgent Caliphate, even as those invaders kill, behead, and rape. Rather than respond instantly with overwhelmingly violent action against the perpetrators among the invaders, the intellectuals of the Right sits by and fume, trying to use argument to convince the governments of the West to do “*something*” about the situation. They argue back-and-forth about the “*moral high ground*,” without being able to accept that it was not a moral high ground that led to the ascendance of western culture in the world. It was not a moral high ground—that any of us would recognize as such—that allowed the Romans to conquer, or the Macedonians, or the Assyrians, or the Mongols. It was the willingness to raze cities, and put heads on spikes that allowed those imperial cultures to overtake their worlds. Even the Christian empires of the more modern world were willing to use overwhelming force and violence to achieve their aims. We have descended into an Age of Intellect that gives every indication that the New Caliphate will win the current struggle.

86 Modern geodesic measurements place the circumference at 40,068km. I don't recall what the measurement of distance used at the time actually was within the Caliphate, but I am aware that it was not kilometers. They measured it accurately enough though, using their equivalent distances—a metric that presumably most of us would find even more unfamiliar than kilometers.

87 While the use of the word will offend some who have injected the word with an intellectual morality it does not have, make no mistake that the terrorists and refugees are the actual pioneering warriors of the Mohammedan world, spreading into the decadent older civilization of the West with dreams of conquest.

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Intellectualism is Bad, but Intelligence is Still a Virtue

Before we can begin to recognize the impact of intellectualism and the reactionary anti-intellectualism, within the context of surviving the decline of empire, we must concede that having the intelligence to understand the meanings of words, and to apply those words accurately, is critical. Words have meanings and we need to understand the actual meanings of those words, rather than simply accepting the “*general understanding*” of what the establishment wants those words to mean, within The Narrative.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, which is—or at least should be—the final arbiter of the meaning of words within the modern English language, intellectualism is defined as “*the exercise of the intellect at the expense of the emotions.*” In turn, intellect is defined as “*the faculty of reasoning or understanding, objectively, especially with regard to abstract or academic matters.*”

At first glance, neither of these seems particularly nefarious. This is fortunate, since the intellect has a definite, positive role to play in life and survival. It is not until we begin to consider the realities of human nature though, and the resulting expression of intellectualism in our current social and political discourse, that we begin to see the deleterious effects of this on life and cultural survival.

Noam Chomsky, himself a prattling social activist intellectual of the worst sort, pointed out in a rare moment of honesty, “*...the intellectuals are specialists in defamation, they are basically political commissars, they are the ideological administrators, the most threatened by dissidence...*” Philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980 CE), a leading voice of Marxist collectivism in the 20th Century, called intellectuals the “*moral conscience of their age,*” claiming that their moral and ethical responsibilities are to observe the social and political movement and to freely speak in their society, in accordance with their consciences.

In Marxist philosophy, the social class function of the intellectual, referred to by Marx and Engel as the “*intelligentsia,*” is to be the source of progressive ideals for the transformation of society, and to interpret the country's politics for the proletariat, as well as to provide guidance and advice to the political leadership of the Party. In the Platonic **Republic**, this intelligentsia forms the nucleus of the leadership caste of the ideal society. This has become our common understanding of the role of the intellectual, and this has shaped our collective distrust of—and disgust with—intellectualism⁸⁸.

Unfortunately, this has led to a backlash of spiritual primitivism in the form of anti-intellectualism, albeit not entirely without just cause. Anti-intellectualism is recognized as a hostility towards, and a distrust of the intellect and intellectuals, expressed in the derision of education, philosophy, literature, and the sciences, as being impractical in the real world, and thus contemptible. Well-respected conservative political philosopher, Dr. Thomas Sowell—who is, by any objective metric the definition of an intellectual—makes the case in **Intellectuals and Society**, for a justifiable level of anti-intellectualism in the modern world, due to malfeasance in the educational system:

“By encouraging, or even requiring, students to take stands where they have neither the knowledge

88 Ironically, we can see—in Soviet Russia, Communist China, and under the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, among others—the actual role of the intelligentsia in Marxist societies. That role is to be a voice of persuasion to gain the support of the common man, after which the intellectuals are slaughtered, lest they continue voicing conscientious objections against the new rulers.

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nor the intellectual training to seriously examine complex issues, teachers promote the expression of unsubstantiated opinions, the venting of uninformed emotions, and the habit of acting on those opinions and emotions, while ignoring or dismissing opposing views, without having either the intellectual equipment or the personal equipment to weigh one view against another in any serious way.”⁸⁹

It is important to note that Dr. Sowell is critical of the misplaced emphasis on unreasoned thought, not on the use of the intellect itself. In fact, it is a call for a more disciplined intellectual rigor, requiring both the intellectual tools of critical thinking, and the empiricism of life experience, for decision-making about where an individual stands in regard to complex issues. This is critical, because it distinguishes intelligence from intellectualism, at a practical and practicable level.

Anti-intellectualism has a deservedly bad reputation due to its overwhelming reputation as a common face of totalitarianism. Action is critical, but that action must be tempered and guided by thought and reason to be beneficial. In a philosophical community that is as self-proclaimed “liberty-minded” as the preparedness and survival cultures claim, the prominence of rabid anti-intellectualism is more than mildly disturbing. The fact is, intellectualism as “*the exercise of the intellect at the expense of the emotions*,” has a very important place in the world. The expansion of the human intellect, and the advances that result from scientific inquiry, are useful tools for right-thinking people. As Saint Thomas of Aquinas (1225-1274 CE) famously proposed, Truth exists wherever it is found.

While intellectualism is not—nor should it ever be considered—the final arbiter of Truth, as it relates to human nature, there is a great deal of Truth to be found in the scientific method and the pursuit of intellectual rigor represented therein. As Thucydides (460-395 BCE) so poignantly reminds us in ***History of the Peloponnesian Wars***, “*the society that separates its scholars from its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards, and its fighting by fools*.” According to the patterns of human experience, both of these are recipes for disaster in the form of cultural suicide.

In order for there to be a serious study of anything in the human experience, there has to be a balance between the intellectual and experiential learning models. The academic who has never tasted the copper-mouthed sensation of life-or-death fear, as he watches muzzle flashes downrange, or has never watched the blood pouring out of someone that he knows and loves, lacks the requisite real-life experience to genuinely understand, at a human, visceral level, the warrior past of our collective heritage.

On the opposite side of the coin however, the warrior—no matter how well-blooded in battle—without an intellectual understanding of the human past, can never really understand the strategic and social implications of the combat in which he took part. He is forced to accept the explanations of his leaders, never completely certain if he is being fed a ration of bullshit. The balance must be sought between intellect and instinct.

Myth is History, Told Better

The folklore and legends of the preliterate past; those epic oral traditions that form the beginning of the foundations of the study of history, are—first and foremost—bellicose. In fact, until the rise of

⁸⁹ Sowell, Thomas; ***Intellectuals and Society***; 2009

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Marxist intellectualism in the 20th Century, historiography was largely little more than the study of conflict and war, and the social and political catalysts for both.

History of course, as we've established, is the study only of the written accounts of the past, and writing is a social communications device limited to—by definition—civilized societies. For this reason, the historiography of the world has been limited by the prejudices and cultural cognitive biases of civilized historians. While particularly prevalent in the Marxist-dominated intelligentsia of the 20th Century, even previously this has led to a discrediting of the value of myths and legends in the telling of the story of the human experience.

Publius Cornelius Tacitus (56-117 CE⁹⁰) is one of the most important historians of ancient times, and an example of the influence of intellectualism among historians. Educated as a lawyer and orator, Tacitus spent his entire life—absent the years he spent writing—in public service in administrative positions. While he did serve the Empire in the frontier provinces for a few years (89-93 CE), whether he spent that time in the command of a legion or in a civil post is a point of contention among historians, with little—I'm actually aware of none—evidence that he filled a military post.

Later historians, dependent on their membership in the leisure class of upper-crust society, have had varying levels of military service, but as a general rule can be seen to have been academic theorists with little if any, real world experience regarding the subjects they wrote about. This has—understandably—led to some condemnation on the over-reliance on written opinions and second- or third-hand observations in historical writings—including Tacitus'—when attempting to draw an accurate picture of the human past.

Further, recognizing the existence of the cultural biases of historians in their treatment of preliterate societies, we are forced to acknowledge the absence of—within historiography—valid, unbiased observations of a majority of the general human experience of the past. This leaves us with a limited number of options for studying much of the past, and how humans survived outside of the civilized nation-state construct.

In the first place, we can turn to the relatively modern ethnographic study of anthropology. This allows us to look at what are often preliterate societies as they exist alongside civilization, in the modern context. While some philosophical purists will argue that their access to modern technology and cultural values through even limited contacts like trade, and the presence of outside, civilized anthropologists in their midst, creates an artificiality to this study, this argument overlooks the fact that even our preliterate, barbarian ancestors had contact and trade with their civilized neighbors and rivals, or we'd know absolutely nothing about them. Anthropology has limitations for our purposes—mostly in the same educated biases of the civilized anthropologists, as we'll see—but it does offer one valuable option for comparison.

In the second place, we have the option of relying on a study of the myths and legends of the past, handed down through the biased lenses of historians. When coupled with the study of the archaeological evidence available, and intellectual rigor in the form of solid, objective critical thinking skills, we can begin to gain at least some value. The foremost drawback to this route however, is that internalizing the understanding of the myths and legends handed down to us from the preliterate past

90 The dates of Tacitus' birth and death are—quite ironically—approximate guesses by historians. We don't have any concrete historical evidence of the actual dates.

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requires overcoming the influence of the biases and belief systems of the civilized scribes—generally non-believers in those myths—that first put them down in ink, as well as our own biases. Ultimately, the only way for this method to really have value is if the interpreter of the available data has a legitimate, experiential frame-of-reference in the subject matter of the myth or legend. An academic who has never even been punched in the mouth, and returned the favor threefold, has no legitimate frame-of-reference for interpreting the history behind the myth of a legendary warrior's actions, when considered objectively. A Manhattan penthouse-dweller, whose only experience with nature is the occasional picnic in Central Park does not have a legitimate frame-of-reference for interpreting the practical meaning behind myths regarding the planting and harvesting cycles of prehistoric agriculture or hunting.

The final approach, and the one I have chosen within my own praxis—and within this work—is a combination of all of the above. By utilizing the conclusions drawn from the interpretation of mythic history and archaeology, and comparing those conclusions with the available data from both written historiography and anthropology regarding historical and contemporary preliterate societies, it is my belief that we can draw the most useful picture of the subject matter at hand: tribal strategies for surviving the decline of empire, as emigres from the decadence of a culture in mortal decline. This allows us—hopefully—to overcome the failures of intellectualism in studying the collective human experience, in the specific context of tribalism for survival preparedness during the decline of empire.

The Hegelian Dialectic of Anthropological Mythology

Anthropology, as a scientific discipline, has an interesting if contentious history. Like historiography, much of anthropology has been focused on the study of conflict. In many ways in fact, much of what we recognize as historiography could be considered the antecedent of anthropology⁹¹. A relatively young formal discipline however, anthropology has been heavily influenced in the modern era by the impact of Marxism on 20th Century academia, as well as two long-standing, but conflicting myths about preliterate, uncivilized societies. These myths, when approached with a combination of the actual, objective anthropological evidence available, as well as the archaeological and historical records, and tempered with real-life experience in places outside of the civilized world, can be approached through the intellectual tool of the Hegelian Dialectic, to find something approaching a truth.

A dialectic is a discourse between two or more points of view about a subject, with the hope of establishing the truth through a reasoned argument. The term was popularized by Plato's Socratic Dialogues, but the concept has been centrally critical to western philosophy since the beginning of time. The Hegelian Dialectic⁹² consists of three stages of development. The first is the statement of a

91 Tacitus' **Germania**, for example, is nothing but an anthropological ethnography of the Germanic tribes on the Roman frontiers.

92 Although named for Georg W.F Hegel (1770-1831 CE), Hegel himself never used the specific formulation of thesis/antithesis/synthesis that has been popularized under his name. Additionally, while the Hegelian Dialectic is often criticized as a tool of Marxism, Marx and Engel were actually critical of Hegel for making dialectics too abstractly ideal: "The mystification which dialectic suffers in Hegel's hands, by no means prevents him from being the first to present its general form of working in a comprehensive and conscious manner. With him it is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again, if you would discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell..." --Marx, Karl; **Capital**; 1873 (Second German Edition)

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thesis or argument, which gives rise to a response that contradicts or negates the thesis, called the antithesis. Finally, the discord between these two positions is resolved by the means of a synthesis that should be—if not the Truth—closer to the Truth than either of the preceding two positions.

The two myths that permeate the entire history of anthropology are perfect vessels for illustration of the Hegelian Dialectic as a tool for finding an answer closer to the truth.

The myth of the *Progress of Civilization*, is ancient in its origins, but finds its modern genesis through the writings of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679 CE). In the Hobbesian view of the natural state of man, he is an ignorant, miserable, brutal, and violent savage. This is the view of the human experience that is strongly influenced by the cultural cognitive biases of imperial civilization as the final arbiter of all that is good in life.

According to Hobbes, any artificial complexities introduced by mankind have served only to benefit the world, bringing about the bliss and comfort of peace. In the state of nature—absence the beneficence of the calming influence of civilized government—this theory argues that every person in primitive society was forced to preserve his liberty by actively trying to subdue those around him, lest they subjugate him first. Hobbes described this as the “*war of every man against every other man*,” and argued that men lived in “*continual fear and danger of violent death*.” Their lives were, to quote Hobbes' most remembered line, “*solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short*,” as a result of a lack of civilized society and governance.

In the myth of Progress, it is only by agreeing to the covenants of civilization and thereby surrendering some of his natural rights to a sovereign in return for security, that man can find justice and happiness. Of course, a covenant is only as valid as the ability to ensure that it will be adhered to. In Hobbes' view then, “*covenants, without the sword, are but words*.” In order to ensure that all men adhered to the covenants of civilization then, the King—the state—must enjoy a monopoly on the use of force, in order to punish the lawbreaker, and to defend civilization against internal and external threats. Since Hobbes lived and wrote in an era when people believed, to their marrow, in the *divine right of kings*, presumably he felt—as modern Statists likewise seem to believe—that the king was somehow immune to the temptations of illicit behavior, despite the wisdom of another Englishman who lived shortly after Hobbes, in recognizing that, “*power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely*.”⁹³

Ultimately, in the myth of progress, it is only through the state's authority to control man with force, mediating their selfish desires in return for the sacrifice of some of their natural liberties, that the comfort of security can be gained. Man's journey of existence then—the entirety of the human experience—according to this myth, has been an ever-climbing struggle to move closer to the pinnacle of social perfection through the increasing influence and power of the state.

There is of course, something to be said for the partial accuracy of the Hobbesian perspective. There is certainly less overt physical conflict within the borders of the empire, so long as the sovereign has that monopoly on the use of force that the myth demands. We can look at historiography ranging as far back as Tacitus' tales of his father-in-law Agricola's conquest of Britain, and his reports on the state of affairs within the preliterate tribes of Germania, as well as the archaeological evidence and the

93 Lord John Dalberg-Acton, First Lord Acton (1834-1902)

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anthropology of modern preliterate societies, and see that—at least at first glance—there is a far greater proclivity for violence, with a far greater loss of life—as a percentage of the human population of tribal societies⁹⁴—than even the slaughterhouse horror of modern industrialized conflict. From that perspective, looking at Hobbes' theories provides us with an important touchstone in seeking perspective in the human experience. Fortunately, it's not the whole truth, because there are some significant problems with the actuality of this myth.

For the past two centuries, the single most influential critic of the Hobbesian view of primitive society and the nature of man has been Jean-Jacques Rosseau (1712-1778 CE). Rosseau disdained the logical rigor of the philosophy of the time, and the empiricism of the historian and scientist, as well as the imaginative inventions of the romanticists. Although sometimes considered the leading anti-intellectual philosopher of his day, he combined elements of all three of the above disciplines with a rather aggressive narrative style, to become the leading sensation of intellectualism of the era, and—to a degree—ever since.

Like Hobbes, Rosseau constructed his own origin myth to explain the human condition, but took the antithetical view to Hobbes' and proclaimed the natural divinity of the primitive. Rosseau, as did Hobbes, asserted the natural egalitarianism of mankind, but contrary to Hobbes, he portrayed humans in the natural state as being satisfied, without the “unnatural” institutions of monogamy and private property. Any tendency towards violence in the primitive world, Rosseau argued, would have been suppressed by man's “innate” pity and compassion. This natural compassion, according to Rosseau, was only overwhelmed by the jealousy originating in the creation of marriage, property, and the resulting social inequities of civilized society. His claim—ultimately—was that, except when hungry, the savage was the friend of all creation and the enemy of none.

War—and violence in general—only became common and terrible when people organized into separate societies and surrendered to artificial, rather than natural, laws. When artificial, impersonal, passionless states fight, they commit more murders and “horrible disorders” in a single engagement than were ever perpetuated in all the ages of man that had come before civilization—or so goes the Rosseauan *Myth of the Golden Age*.

The Truth Shall Set You Free

In the early part of the 20th Century, as anthropology began to gain ground as an actual scientific discipline, the overwhelming mass of haphazard, obviously biased observations and hypotheses regarding preliterate societies that had accumulated during the European colonial expansionist period began to give way to the new, systematic data collection and analysis of ethnographic studies. This was combined with an idealistic attempt by scholars to introduce objectivity into the study of foreign cultures.

All the collected and collated data, old and new, led to the indication that neither the Myth of Progress nor the Myth of the Golden Age was entirely accurate. More accurately, as is generally the case when extremist theories are put forth, was the synthesis that the truth of the collective human experience seems to have existed somewhere in the middle ground. With exceedingly rare exceptions, inter-tribal relationships were not particularly peaceful, despite the hyperbole of the Myth of the Golden Age. An objective, mostly unbiased view of the available data and evidence, outside of cultural

94 Keeley, Lawrence, PhD; **War Before Civilization**; 1996

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cognitive biases, proved that the claim of eminent turn-of-the-century sociologist William Sumner (1840-1910 CE) that primitive man “might be described as a peaceful animal,” who “dreads war,” was inaccurate at best—and to put it more precisely, was utter bullshit. In 1941, still-legendary ethnographer Branislav Malinowski (1884-1942 CE) was able to accurately argue that, “anthropology has done more harm than good in confusing the issue...depicting human ancestry as living in the golden age of perpetual peace.”

At the same time however, unfortunately for the Hobbesian apologist for statism, it was equally evident, as people seriously studied intra-tribal relationships, that—contrary to Hobbes' prattling bullshit—life in preliterate, uncivilized society was anything but “*solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.*” Anthropologists who actually lived among preliterate peoples around the world discovered, as the archaeological record increasingly continues to illustrate, and the historiography more than hinted at—when it doesn't make explicit—preliterate societies were perfectly valid and satisfying ways of experiencing life, thanks to tribal structures, traditions, and values. In fact, with the reliance on community, and neighborly, familial cooperation, they actually possess features that are preferable to the comparable aspects of impersonal, commercialized, modern western civilization.

One of the principal excuses used for military adventurism, over the last several centuries, has been the need for the pacification of the primitive in the Hobbesian tradition. Only through conquest, missionary conversion, and the enforced administration of western, Christian values could the “*little brown guys*” begin to learn to enjoy the benefits of modern consumer culture and the comforts of Christianity. Their very salvation required that they be slaughtered into pacification and control by the technological superiority of civilization. Much of this can be—and has been—attributed to the need to explain to the average mother and father why the politicians and clergy “*needed*” to send their sons and daughters to fight and die in some backwards foreign land, without having to admit that the oligarchs desired to further enrich themselves with the natural resource wealth of those undeveloped regions.

The application of the Hegelian Dialectic to the contrary myths of anthropology illustrates the drawback on both sides of the false dialectic of modern politics, between Left and Right. It also helps—to some degree—to explain the backlash of anti-intellectualism. The emphasis on the intellectual theory, without the application of critical thinking skills, and absent any consideration of actual experiential instinct and human feeling and emotion, is reprehensible to many people—most people—at a very visceral level, because it is so unnaturally inhuman. The unfortunate result however tends to be a decline in the interest of even bothering to understand those valid intellectual tools that make critical thinking possible. When combined with emotion and natural instinct however, those critical thinking skills are useful to determining actual workable solutions to the human condition.

There must be a balance between pure intellect and reason, and the more gut-level intuition that can only be developed through the experience of living life. In the western tradition, we have numerous examples illustrating a perfectly valid alternative to the Hobbesian statism of the imperial legacy, all of which demonstrate many of the cultural values—far better than the imperial model does in fact—that we most admire in our own historical legacy. They are the mythic histories so beloved of all people, except the intellectual elitists who possess a vested interest in maintaining the Hobbesian *Myth of Progress*.

In the Hellenic traditions of the Mediterranean, we have the great Homeric epics, including the Illiad

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and the Odyssey. We have the teachings of Socrates, first expressed in writing by Xenophon, Aristophanes, and most famously, Plato and Aristotle. None of these stories—what strict intellectuals would insist can only be referred to as “*legends*,” since they lack any physical evidence except second-hand stories—can be considered strictly historical. There is no hard archaeological evidence that the characters in Homer's epics⁹⁵, or even Socrates, actually existed as historical persons, beyond the stories. Rather, these are the mythic histories of the classical Hellenes. They portray the preliterate ancestry of classical-era Greece, in the way the people of classical Greece needed to believe that their ancestors existed.

To the North we have—at a much later date—the same types of mythic histories, in the form of the Norse and Icelandic sagas, epic poems like the Nibelunglied in the German tradition, and Beowulf, as well as the Arthurian Cycle and the St. George stories, in the English tradition. These too are the mythic histories of the respective cultures, forming a portrayal of their preliterate ancestors as either the Christian-era scribes that put ink to parchment, or the individuals who passed those tales to the scribes, wanted them to have been. We see much the same in the tales that survive of the Founding Fathers and other ancestral figures in American history.

It is a popular meme among the intellectual elitists of academia, to discredit the accuracy of the Scandinavian sagas and the epic poems—as it is the myths of our own Founding Fathers—precisely because they may have been written down long after they are credited with having occurred, or because someone has argued that “*it couldn't have happened that way!*” Some of the legends inherent to the mythic histories of course, are beyond belief and rational, critical thinking—to our minds. Is it creditable that Achilles was really impervious to all wounds except the back of his ankle? Is it believable that Ragnar Lothbrok accomplished all the things he is credited with in the Heimskringla, in one lifetime? Is it creditable that Siegfried—or Beowulf—actually slew a dragon? Perhaps not, from a rational, scientific point-of-view.

The most common course of action for scholars then, whether historian, archaeologist, philologist, or anthropologist, is to attempt to explain these myths away in more scientific terms, plausible to their own belief systems. Achilles was not really “*blessed of the gods*.” He was just preternaturally physically gifted—or inordinately lucky—or he was an early pioneer of social engineering, and managed to induce a mass hypnosis among all who confronted him, so that none actually ever tried to kill him, because of the legends he spread about his birth. Ragnar Lothbrok was really a composite of a number of minor warlords blended together in legend, to create a fictional character worthy of the origin myth of a strong, proud, national and cultural identity. The dragons faced by Sigurd, Beowulf, and St. George were metaphors, just like the “*snakes*” that Saint Padraig drove from Ireland during the Christian conversion⁹⁶, or they were just made up whole-cloth by the original poets, long before they were ever written down.

While this tendency makes sense from an academic standpoint, where everything must have a rational, plausible explanation, it does a great disservice not only to the men who possessed the original foresight to record the legends for posterity, but to the rest of mankind as well. The fact is, culturally,

95 Despite the archaeological discovery in the 1860s of what is believed to be the physical location of the city-state of Troy by Calvert and Schliemann.

96 For any readers unfamiliar with the history behind myth, the “*snakes*” that Saint Patrick is famed for driving from Ireland were a metaphor for the believers in the indigenous pagan religions of his homeland.

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mythic history is at least as important—more important, it can be convincingly argued—as actual history, to the cultural identity and history of a people. We “*know*” for example, despite the cultural cognitive biases of the Chinese, that the Middle Kingdom has seldom been a single, homogeneous cultural and political entity. Instead, while certain dynasties have held the imperial throne, the vast majority of China, even as late as the early 20th Century, was actually a broken, scattered composite of minor fiefdoms, ruled by fiercely independent local warlords who may—or may not—have voiced fealty to the empire, while practicably retaining their autonomy. Despite this, the mythic history of the Middle Kingdom remains critical to the ethnic and cultural identity of many people of Chinese descent, around the world.

The same is true of the value of the Homeric epics, the teachings credited to Socrates, and the epics and sagas of the North, for western culture. Our own national founders, raised with classical educations, knew the mythic histories of North and South, and accepted them—if not as actual historical fact—as an important cultural myth, forming a significant portion of the better foundations of their own—and our—culture. Myth really is history, told better, and the mythic history is as important to the identity of a culture—tribal or imperial—as actual history. When the intellectualism leads to the discrediting of that mythic history, that culture is setting itself on the path to destruction. It is part of our duty to reclaim our mythic history.

Harden The Fuck Up

Since the first Cro-Magnon man crawled, simpering with terror out of the darkness of his cavernous childhood abode, into the sunlight of day, we have had to defy our fear of the unknown in order to accomplish anything of note. Cro-Magnon had to face the primordial fear of the unknown, the unseen, and the unexplained. Even as his cousins huddled fearfully in the dark, someone had to be the pioneer that went first, and stepped boldly forward, stone-tipped spear and ax clenched in his fists. That man was a hero, and he followed the *Way of the Hero*.

Today, if we hope to salvage what is good about our cultural way of life from the ruins of a decadent, dying empire, we need people who will exercise the same intrepidity as that long-forgotten ancestor, and who are willing to step forward to face the unknown, the unseen, and the unexplained, by stepping out of the darkness of the decadent, dying cultural cave, and into the blinding light of an alternative cultural solution. To give in to the mewling pleas of cowardice, succumbing to the numbing comforts of the familiarity of solving problems by trying to return to the same materialistic political solutions we've “*always known*” is to spit in the face of the legacy our ancestors have passed on to us.

There Is An Alternative

Glubb's study of the parallel trajectories of empires is ultimately still representative of a cultural bias. Sir John was born and raised a son of the Britannic Empire—he was a Knight of the Empire, after all—and watched the climax of the American empire at close hand. Like many modern Americans, he viewed history through the subjectivity of that lens. Civilized empires are not however, the total sum of human social structures. They are not even—within the totality of the human experience—the most common social structure.

The solution to the decline of empire is not a futile struggle to hold on to that empire. That solution, were it even possible—and history pretty clearly illustrates that it is not—only benefits the oligarchs of

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the patrician class. The solution to the decline of empire is not hastening to resurrect that empire in some sort of “*new and improved*” form. The solution for surviving the decline of empire is the embrace of the other side of the social coin. The solution to surviving the decline of empire is the embrace of our barbarian, tribal heritage.

The civilization of the imperial legacy gives the “*barbarian*” a bad name. It has to, because the freedom of the family and tribe-centric barbarian is the antithesis of the imperial state. Whether Scandinavian *vikingr* terrorizing the civilized remnants of the Roman imperial legacy in from 793-1066 CE, the Celto-Germanic ancestors of the *vikingr* that resisted—with differing degrees of success—the enforced assimilation by Imperial Rome, the indigenous Indian tribes of North America that resisted the Manifest Destiny of the early American Empire, or even the Pashtun mountain tribesmen of the Af-Pak border region today, barbarians have always been portrayed to history by civilized men.

The barbarian knows his own culture, and accepts its worth as self-evident. Even as he learns the skills of literacy from the outsider, he doesn't concern himself with the opinions of these outsiders, so he doesn't feel the need to quantify the value of his own culture with literature. As my buddy, author Jack Donovan has so succinctly phrased it, the barbarian's attitude about the opinions of outsiders is, “*Not my people, not my problem.*” To the literate, civilized outsider, content in the mewling image of safety provided by the protection of the state, the self-reliant barbarian is evocative of the *primordial fear*. He appears wild, bloodthirsty, and immune to the calming influence of political processes that would rob him of his essential character, though these processes are deemed essential to the security of a peaceful, unified world by men who would be masters.

The very humanity of the barbarian is little recognizable at first glance, to the humanity of the post-modern, pseudo-liberal, democratic ideal that tears families apart in favor of the mercantile indoctrination of the state that blathers on about the “*supremacy of the individual.*” To a people indoctrinated alongside the commercially-produced baby formula that—expensively—replaced their mother's milk, to accept the virtues of patriotic loyalty to the state, humility towards your social betters, and the ideals of pacifism, the barbarian seems little more than a violent, vicious, brutal animal. To the civilized man, the only righteous violence must be the violence of the state, enforcing the edicts of the patrician class, as expressed by the paid-for mouthpieces of the mewling mobs. Anyone who would resist this must be seen as something to be feared and loathed.

This indoctrination makes the barbarian an uncomfortable alien to the civilized man despite his own legacy of cultural ancestry in barbarianism. The barbarian does not owe his allegiance to the state, but to his tribe, and to his tribe alone. He does not recognize the virtue of humility. He is confident and proud—even to the point of boastfulness—about his abilities, and the greatness of his deeds. Not for the sake of his own ego, but because he recognizes that it is for the honor and glory of his tribe, and because he recognizes the truth that, in the natural state, honor and glory represent the strength that ensure the security of his tribe's survival.

The barbarian recognizes the philosophy of pacifism as the crutch of cowardly fear, leveraged as a tool of the state, because of the craven willingness of the weak to surrender their honor to Orwell's “*rough men*” who will protect them for pay. The barbarian refuses to surrender his honor to the state or its agents, because he recognizes by doing so, he surrenders his tribe to the state as well. He recognizes that honor is crucial to the survival of his tribe. He accepts the responsibility for—at the very least—the

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promise of violence on the behalf of his tribe.

That humanity, unrecognizable as it is to the civilized man, is the definition of humanity by any objective metric. The anthropological, archaeological, historical, biological, and mythological evidence all indicate that the natural state of mankind, in every part of the world, is the tribe. It was here before the first empire, it has existed alongside and even within the empires, and it will continue to exist after the fall of the last empire. Although a fiction writer, the creator of Conan the Cimmerian, Robert E. Howard, got it right when he wrote, “*Barbarianism is the natural state of mankind. Civilization is unnatural. It is the whim of circumstance. And barbarianism must ultimately triumph.*”

The original, anatomically-modern human, Cro-Magnon man, did not exist in a single, homogeneous social construct. He had no empires. He did even possess a single homogeneous culture. From the very beginning of the definably human experience, we have existed in a completely different, more natural, and arguably superior, social construct. That construct was the tribe.

Even after the ascent of civilized societies, and the rise of the concept of the nation-state sovereignty and patriotism, following the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the vast majority of the human social experience has been represented by tribal societies. Across the globe, before, alongside, in the midst of, and following the decline of empires, tribal societies have existed as the single most common shared social structure in the human experience. This is simply because, when all else fails, the tribe survives.

The Way of the Hero

This is a book of philosophy and ideas. The Oxford English Dictionary defines philosophy as “the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence...” This book is about the study—and understanding—of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, at the decline of an empire. More importantly, it is about the praxis of that philosophy. This book is about recognizing the existence of your tribes as a social construct that will allow your cultural values, customs, and traditions to survive the decline of the American Empire. It is about building those tribes, one person, one family, and one community at a time, by following what I have chosen to term “The Way of the Hero.”

This is not a philosophy of being a ruthless, violent tyrant that people turn to in fear. It is about dispelling fear through leadership. It is about being the person that people turn to out of respect. It is about being the person that others look to in their time of need, when they are hungry, scared, and desperate. It is about turning yourself into the person that is worthy of the respect that people naturally offer to strong leaders of character, wisdom, honor, and strength. This is a philosophy of being a person that people know can—and most importantly, will—stand strong in the face of danger and adversity. It's about being the person that puts the tribe before himself, by putting himself before the tribe. This is a philosophy of natural aristocracy; of leadership through nobility and self-sacrifice.

The Way of the Hero is self-sacrifice. It is not about courage in a moment. Too often, that is nothing more than sheer animal instinct for survival. That is no different than a house cat caught in a corner. The Way of the Hero is about being so capable that courage of such a base nature need never even enter the tale. The hero you see, is not born. He earns his title of acclaim not through birthright—no divine right of kings lends him authority—but through the steadfast courage required of the daily sacrifice of leadership. The hero is not born. Like his spear or ax, he is crafted, forged in the heat and pressure of the self-sacrifice of daily training and effort of preparation required by his duty to his people.

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Having been so forged, he is able, when the dragon that is the primordial fear is at the gate, to step calmly forward, and put himself before his people, to slay the dragon; not with courage, but with confidence.

The hero accepts the inheritance of the mythic history of his people. He eschews the mewling, weak comfort of the mediocrity of egalitarianism, choosing instead to don the arms and armor of responsibility once borne by Arminius, Arthur, Beowulf, Sigurd, St. George, and even Moses. He knows that only the coward—who knows he lacks merit—fears the meritocracy of struggle that leadership requires. The hero is a king to his people—in the original sense of the word. He is *cynning*, “*best of his kin*,” and his motto is that of his ancestors: “*Who does more is worth more*.”

This is a book about philosophy and ideas, but it is a book about putting those ideas to work in a practical, functional way that will save not the civilization of imperial America, or even the nation-state of The United States of America; but rather, to salvage the best of the cultural values that are worth salvaging. When Rome fell, it was not the Senate that ensured the survival of the worthiest ideals of Rome. It was individuals who recognized the importance of the shared cultural values of Rome that looked around, took stock of what was available, and lived on. It was those individuals who were intelligent enough to recognize that Rome was dead, and were smart enough—and strong enough—to gather around them a tribe of people who could be resilient and strong, to survive in the new order, to ensure the survival of the values they most cherished.

The Preparedness/Liberty/Survivalist/”Patriot” crowd speaks of Revolution, in their fantasies of Red Dawn scenarios, as if in their adolescent longing for the accolades of modern social adoration as heroes, they will be fighting off some communist or Mohammedan invasion to restore the culture they claim is corrupt.

Fuck them.

We don't need a Revolution. We need revolution. We need to stop playing the game by the rules set by the opposition. If you will stop allowing your self-proclaimed enemies—people who gladly admit that they despise you for your beliefs and traditions—to dictate the terms of your struggle, then you can stop worrying about what your betters tell you to do. If you will focus your energies, talents, and efforts on your own tribe of kith and kin, you can ensure the safety of your tribe, building the foundations of your society that can save the values you cherish. You can recreate, within your own refuge from the decline of empire, your very own, very real, Camelot.⁹⁷

Forge yourself into a hero—a leader that people want to look to. Lead your people to the strength needed for survival in chaos by being a leader they will follow by choice. People who should know better continue to allow themselves to be dragged into the programmed responses that are written specifically to destroy them. This tendency is a vestige of the primordial fear. It is the fear that if you

⁹⁷ Contemporary historians and mythologists tend to agree that the legends of the Arthurian Cycle are based on the exploits of a Breton chieftain/warlord, after the withdrawal of the Roman legions. This leader—who was almost certainly not named “Arthur”—built a coalition of tribal warlords, a “round table” around the council fires, that resisted the invasion of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, in an attempt to salvage what they considered the best cultural values of their indigenous culture, coupled with the best of the Roman culture they had adopted and inherited. While obviously unsuccessful, ultimately, in resisting the incursions, the success of their efforts can be seen in the survival of those legends to the present day, even in their bastardized medieval retellings.

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were to actually develop self-reliance, instead of simply talking about it and spending money to support the wealth of the oligarchs, you might actually become self-reliant. That would mean placing yourself outside the protection of the anonymity of the masses.

Some of the fearless, independent resilience of your barbarian ancestors remains inside you though. It remains in you to refuse to succumb to the primordial fear. You must become willing to stand tall and step forward with spear and ax in hand, in defiance of imperial edicts, and face the unknown, the unseen, and the unexplained. You must be courageous enough to emigrate to the “frontiers” of our collapsing, dissolute empire, and rebuild from the inside, an alternative, more resilient, more natural—better—culture.

That is the future of the survival of our culture. Western culture has never been about egalitarianism. Egalitarianism is a crutch of the weak and cowardly, to gain leverage over the rest of society. It is a tool to keep the worthy from being recognized as leaders. Only the man who knows he lacks merit abhors the meritocracy of true aristocracy. Western culture is about family, community, and self-reliance. Liberty is self-reliance, and self-reliance is scary. We've forgotten what our ancestors knew: Those things that go “bump” in the night? They're dangerous. They have fangs and claws. They're bigger and stronger than one man, and they enjoy the taste of human flesh.

That is the primordial fear. Our barbarian ancestors understood that. They knew it took more than an individual, no matter how brave, to survive. It takes a community—a tribe.

Accept that the path is scary. Accept that facing that fear makes you a better human being. Step forward, willingly, and place yourself before the tribe, to face the unknown, the unseen, and the unexplained. Forge yourself. Forge the hero the future generations of your people will tell stories of.

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Four
Defining Tribes

“Ethnicity and tribe began, by definition, where sovereignty and taxes ended. The ethnic zone was feared and stigmatized by state rhetoric precisely because it was beyond its grasp and therefore an example of defiance and an ever-present temptation to those who might wish to evade the state.”

--James C. Scott; *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*

A spiritual and physical extension of the basic biological family unit, tribes are the oldest and—since they are still extant today, despite the efforts of the modern nation-state at eradication—longest-surviving of complex social networks. Whether the basic kin-group network of biological relatives and close, trusted friends and neighbors, or an intentionally-formed and organized *sodality*⁹⁸, the tribe is an extension of the basic family unit, and often sees itself as a large extended family.

My dictionary defines a tribe in several ways that are exceedingly relevant to the context of this book:

“1. A social group comprising a series of families, clans, or generations, together with slaves, adopted strangers, etc....3. More loosely, any aggregation of people, esp. in a primitive or nomadic state, believed to be of a common stock and acting under a central authority, as of a chief. 4. A group of persons having a common character or occupation;...”

It has become fashionable to point out that a tribe is a very discriminatory organization, and the identity of a tribe is predicated on a very specific delineation of “Us,” as opposed to the outsiders of “Them.” This is entirely accurate. For a sodality, the delineation is membership in the organization, and a professed loyalty to the organization, above all other loyalties. This may be reinforced by specific uniforms, grooming practices, or even simple gestures, such as the proverbial “*secret handshake*.” The rules and by-laws of the sodality will specify who may or may not be initiated into the group, thus even more clearly defining “Us.”

98 My 1936 edition of Webster's defines sodality as “[L. *sodalitas*, from *sodalis*, a comrade] 1. Fellowship. 2. A fraternity;brotherhood...” Anthropologists use the term to refer to any closely-knit, intentionally, or artificially-formed social network that uses tribal-type structures. These may include fraternities, guilds, and other organizations of the type.

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For the kin-group tribe, in many European languages and national cultures, the population of the tribe may be referred to by the Germanic language derived term “*folk*.” Derived from the Anglo-Saxon/Old English “*folc*,” the term is defined as “*a group of kindred people, forming a tribe or nation. 2. In a people bound together by ties of race, language, religion, etc, that great proportion of its number which determines the group character and tends to preserve its civilization, customs, etc, unchanged...4. Plural colloquialism. The persons of one's own family, relations.*”⁹⁹

Your folk, in a kin-group tribe, can be defined as your “*kith and kin*.” As anyone raised in the rural South of the United States can probably still tell you, “kin” simply defines your family. It is “*one's relatives, collectively*.” They are those people related to you specifically by blood.

“Kith¹⁰⁰” on the other hand, has different contemporary colloquial definitions, when it is known at all, because of the twisting of definitions by certain groups and individuals with specific political agendas, who choose to abuse the meaning of the word. Derived from the OE word “*cyththe*,” or “*cyth*,” meaning “native land,” from the word “*cuth*,” which simply means “known,” the modern word is defined as “*familiar friends, neighbors, or relatives, collectively*.” Thus, your “kith and kin” as the specific definition of your kin-group tribe, refers to your blood relatives, and familiar friends and neighbors. It is only through the most obtuse rationalization—and a complete lack of understanding of ancestral tribal values—that the terms can be used to refer to national heritage or race, as defined by skin pigmentation and modern national origin. This makes defining the “Us” that marks the borders of your kin-group tribe particularly easy. It is comprised solely of those friends and family with whom you share close cultural and social ties.

Tribalism, whether kin-group or sodality, implies the possession of this type of primary cultural identity, outside of any loyalty to the state or other group identity. We can look at a member of a modern Amerindian tribe, such as my neighbors of the Osage tribe; they are proud Americans, but they do not self-identify as Americans first. They self-identify as members of the Osage tribe. Their identity as Americans is a secondary—and really, more often tertiary—one. While modern social norms are specifically intended to weaken tribal structures and ties in the imperial and colonial cultures by exaggerating social distinctions between members of the tribes, the evolutionary urge to tribal social structures is not easily destroyed. We find people increasingly seeking tribal identity outside of their natural kin-groups, when those kin-groups are unavailable or unsuitable, in the form of gangs, fraternities, and other examples of organizations with strong social identities that profess to offer the social “protection” of belonging.

Anthropologically, the term tribe is used to refer to a variety of social and political organizations. Tribes are formal or informal collections of sodalities or kin-groups tied together via some form of pan-tribal associative link, that unite together for common purposes, such as warfare or social necessities such as courting/breeding and commerce. The smaller, mostly autonomous or semi-autonomous social

⁹⁹ I am of northern European descent. As a result, I have chosen to use northern European terminology. Do not read too much into this. While I am appreciative of the evolutionary biological and cultural advantages my ancestors have bequeathed to me, I do not believe I am some sort of special little snowflake simply because of where my ancestors came from, nor do I believe my ancestors would have any patience with such ignorance. I simply chose what I am familiar with. If you happen to be of African, Asian, or Amerindian descent, these principles still apply, although your ancestral cultures probably utilized different terminology for the same fundamental, universally human principles.

¹⁰⁰ Pronounced “*keeth*.”

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groups that make up the individual elements of a tribe may range in size from a small band of two or three extended family groups—generally only in the case of nomadic hunter-gatherer societies—to villages of 150-200 or more people in the case of pre-industrial agricultural economies.

Bands

Bands are the smallest and most primitive social structures. They are small, politically autonomous groups of twenty to fifty people, generally with an informal chief or recognized leader. They consist of a few generally related, extended families who reside together or travel together as nomads. Several such bands may congregate together for a few weeks each year, or several times a year, into a macro-band at tribal gatherings of several hundred people for the purposes of religious and social ceremonies and festivals such as courtship or marriage arrangements, and commerce, or to build a coalition of adequate size to defend themselves from external threat—or to become an external threat to others. Such tribes generally speak a dialect unique to themselves, that may or may not be understood by neighboring groups.

Clans

Most tribes, especially among settled peoples, such as in agricultural societies, are kin-group tribes, based on kin-group associations. The word “clan” is a cognate of the Gaelic “*clann*,” meaning “offspring,” or “descendants.” A clan is defined as “*a social group comprising a number of households, the heads of which claim descent from a common ancestor, esp. in the Scottish Highlands. 2. A clique, a set. 3. Sociol. An exogamous division of a tribe, descended from a common ancestor...*” A related word from the Irish branch of Gaelic, is “*sept*,” which was an ancient Irish word for a clan, and is used anthropologically to mean, “*a social group in which all are believed to have descended from a common ancestor.*” A tribe may be composed of any number of smaller clans or septs.

Chiefdoms

Chiefdoms are the largest sub-tribal organizations. They are social organizations that unite thousands of people under the formal, full-time leadership of “The Chief,” and are generally what we recognize as feudal in nature. The populace of a chiefdom is typically divided into hereditary social classes, consisting of a small nobility and a larger body of commoners. Both the means of economic production and the control and distribution of any surplus are concentrated under the control of the Chief or his agents, who redistribute them. A central political structure serves to integrate many local communities within the chiefdom. While there may be a council of local chiefs, The Chief will control this hierarchy of lesser nobles.

Succession of leadership within a chiefdom is hereditary, permanent, and generally justified on religious or magical grounds. While this is remarkably similar to the feudal structure of kingship, the difference lies in the fact that a chief generally does not possess the military might to force the people of the chiefdom to obedience through force-of-arms. Instead, he must rely on magical/religious and/or economic power to enforce his dictates. The classic example of a chiefdom, familiar to most contemporary Americans, is the early medieval Scottish clan structure, although a remarkable number of African and Polynesian petty kingdoms follow a similar structural organization.

The term tribe is generally used generically to encompass bands, clan-based tribes, and weak chiefdoms. Stronger chiefdoms, with more consolidated control and power, as well as formal states, are

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specifically excluded. In the most generic sense, the term tribal has been inaccurately used to describe societies that are simpler in technology and some aspects of social organizations, while being smaller in size than civilized societies that have produced written historiography¹⁰¹.

Mutual Exclusivity and Boundaries

Tribes—whether kin-group or sodality—are defined by an inherent, explicit commonality that sets them apart from outsiders. It is this “*mutual exclusivity*” that defines the identity of the tribe, and thus establishes the border between “Us” and “Them.” This identity is its shared history, customs, traditions, and values, and a shared—real or mythic—ancestry. Without this mutual exclusivity, there can be no tribal identity, and we quickly find ourselves easily sucked back into the void of the modern, universalist identity of the decaying imperial culture.

Most readers of this work will share many common social traditions, customs, and values as a result of growing up within the broader American imperial culture. Whether your intent is to create an intentional tribe in the form of a sodality, or to begin developing a stronger tribal identity in your own kin-group, you will recognize shared values and traditions with the people that you select. They are what we typically recognize as “*traditional American values*.” They are, in actual fact, original tribal values.

As Americans, we believe that we value individual liberty and the Rights of Man outlined in the Bill of Rights. We have a shared tradition of standing up for what we believe is right, and of valor in the face of threats to our people. We believe in standing up for the weak and less fortunate, even as we value self-reliance. We have a shared national history of these values.

How you exercise those values though, depends on your community and family traditions. Our traditions and customs—from celebrating certain holidays in a given manner, to the foods we choose to eat, or not eat, are generally the same tribal traditions and customs that our grandparents possessed. Modified over time by technology, environmental circumstance, and the input of useful additions from outside cultures, they are the same traditions and customs that our grandparents' grandparents possessed. They are the reason that tribalism offers a viable solution to surviving the decline of empire, because they are values, customs, and traditions that are worth saving.

We have a common tradition of shared history. It is the history of American excellence. Not the watered-down, feel-good, socialist dogma, revisionist history taught today. It's real history. It's a history of strength and courage and the loyalty of applying those to the protection of our families and our communities first. Folks, that is tribalism.

Tribes can be defined by the shared values, traditions, and customs that create mutual exclusivity, but there are some other specific traits that tribes must display, in order to survive, within the borders of empire, and especially in the environment of a decaying imperial environment. Failure to possess these traits invariably results in the tribe being conquered and killed or absorbed into the conquering society, and the resulting loss of the tribal identity as well as its values and traditions.

The tribe needs a strong specific identity. The tribe needs a level of trust with, and loyalty to, that

¹⁰¹Within the context of this book, I will use the terms tribe, clan, band, and sept interchangeably. When any term is used in a specific, non-interchangeable manner—when I am using them in the anthropological context—either that fact will be self-evident, or I will specify the intended meaning.

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identity that is uncommon in today's culture, outside of misplaced identification with the state itself. The tribe needs leadership and guidance too though, to set it on the path not just to survival, but also to success as a thriving social organization, even as the larger society around it disintegrates.

We're not discussing identity in the sense of "*we need a cool name for our club!*" While a guild might have a name, such as the Fraternal Order of Free Masons¹⁰², tribes generally don't have names for themselves. In fact, giving your tribe its name should be viewed as a sign of failure. It is far better, even for an intentional sodality, to just use the label "Us," and allow outsiders to determine what they want to call you. It reduces the inherent play-acting tendencies, if nothing else. The tribe isn't a club or a gang; it's a family. Within the context of the failing empire, it also offers the benefit of reducing your signature on the empire's radar. A group of people in your community suddenly donning matching jackets or patches might announce your existence to other tribes in the area, sure. It's also going to announce your existence to the one tribe most likely to destroy you as well though: government law enforcement.

Social Structure and Hierarchy Within Tribes

The identity of a tribe is determined in large part, by the inherent social structure of the tribe. That in turn, results from the customs and traditions that the tribe uses to exercise their cultural values. Loosely speaking, if we follow the pre-Christianization, pre-feudal tribal structures of European antiquity, tribes can be said to be made of up three general classes: free men, the nobility, and slaves. In pre-feudal tribal societies, it was entirely possible that an individual could change station within these classes based solely on his personal behavior and achievements, balanced by the needs of the tribe.

The general body of the tribe—the free men—possessed all of the rights we generally recognize as "*natural human rights*," expressed in the Bill of Rights, because the possession of those rights are absolutely essential to the survival of a tribe. While we have been culturally conditioned to see tribes as small little tyrannies, knuckling under the will of a powerful chief, that is simply not the case indicated by the available historiography or archaeology. They were free men, very much of the mold idealized in our own national mythology. They were farmers, artisans, craftsmen, and every other trade, but they were warriors all, ready to fight to defend their culturally recognized rights, and their culture.

The nobility is generally recognized—as a result of our cultural inheritance of Britannic imperial values—as "*2. Collectively: Usually with the, those who are noble; the body of titled persons in a state; in Great Britain, the peerage.*" While the nobility is certainly comprised of "*those who are noble*," the second and third clauses of that specific definition are inventions of the medieval feudal system of hereditary governance. In tribal cultures, "*those who are noble*," are defined as those members of the tribe who possess the "*1. Quality or state of being noble in character, ability, rank, etc.*" In many tribal societies—and specifically in ancestral European tribal societies, according to the available evidence—the nobility were raised out of the mass of the free men of the tribe, by virtue of specific ability, achievement, or other merits, predicated on the immediate needs of the tribe.

The "*divine right of kings*" was a feudal-era development, built on a foundation of medieval Christian belief that the aristocratic families were aristocrats because of God's favor alone, rather than

¹⁰²Apparently there are a lot of people in this world that don't know that the Freemasons began, not as some sort of secret conspiratorial cabal, but as the professional guild of stone masons. It was intended to protect the personal and business interests of the guild's membership.

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explicit ability. In fact however, the word “king” is cognate of the OE word “*cyng*, from “*cyning*,” which specifically meant “*best of the kin*.” It refers back to the practice of selecting the most capable to rule over the people, and to represent them to the outside world.

Tribal societies, like any other, are inherently hierarchical. Unlike the false artificial hierarchy of state society's though, in tribe's this tends to be a natural ordering, in accordance with who best exemplifies the values of the tribe. The people of the tribe will order themselves in degrees of influence and power within the community, on the basis of merit. Naturally superior leaders rise to the top, based on their ability and achievement—or, in a worst case scenario, their ability to convince others of their ability and achievement. If a man wanted to improve his station in tribal society, he would have to prove his worth in a manner that elevated him above his peers in a way that would make people want to listen to his opinion on things.

Position in tribal society could be won or lost, and was achieved solely through merit in the opinions of the tribe. The only equality in tribal societies was in the protection under the laws of the tribe. All free men within a tribe were allowed the same rights and privileges that every other free man possessed. The only way to gain greater position, and the requisite benefits that might provide, was to offer greater benefit for the tribe. This might come in the form of handing out wealth as a way to win favor and increasing the economic status of others within the tribe¹⁰³, or the benefit to the tribe might come on the battlefield, either by defeating a particularly fearsome foe, or by winning a battle that resulted in a great deal of loot being gathered by the warriors of the tribe. Alternatively, the benefit to the tribe might come as a result of wise counsel in the tribal council or assemblies to avoid a fight, or by discovering a way to increase crop yields. Where service matters most, and what service is most valuable for the tribe is predicated on the needs and values of the tribe, in relation to the environment of the tribe at the moment. It might change from one day or week to the next, depending on circumstances. It is determined by the people of the tribe.

Being a tribesman ultimately means belonging to the tribe, in an almost religious sense. Not in the sense of being the property of the tribe, but in the sense that you serve the tribe, because the tribe serves you. Those who provide the greatest benefit for the good fortune of the tribe will be perceived to be the more valuable. They will be looked to for leadership and guidance, naturally.

The importance of this natural hierarchy can be recognized when we understand the role that the leader plays in the social structure of a tribe. He is responsible for the luck and fortune—good or bad—of the tribe. He embodies the tribe and its fortune—literally—through the wisdom of his counsel and leadership, and through his role as an intermediary between the tribe and the world. Warlord, Hero, King, or President; the leader is the ultimate representation of the belief that the tribesman is the tribe, and the tribe is the tribesman.

In their book **Medieval Kingship**,¹⁰⁴ historians Henry Myers and Herwig Wolfram explain this concept of “sacral¹⁰⁵” leadership, in the Germanic tradition:

¹⁰³Yes, this is exactly what we would consider a bribe. But, look at it from a different perspective. If this guy is smart enough to be richer than the rest of us, maybe he's smarter than the rest of us, and will provide wise leadership and guidance.

¹⁰⁴Myers, Henry A, and Wolfram, Herwig; **Medieval Kingship: The Origins and Development of Western Monarchy in All Stages from the Fall of Rome to the Fifteenth Century**; 1982

¹⁰⁵“[*L. sacer, neut, sacrum, sacred*] 1. *Of or for religious rites.*” The term refers to the religious meaning inherent in the

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“The early Germanic thuidan personified the tribe in a very real way. His tribe saw him as the best man to please the gods of war and nature because of his Heil, that certain something about him that the ancient deities liked. His tribe entrusted him with their very identity; the divine liking for him meant a greater probability of victory or survival in the face of calamity than the tribesman could hope for on his own merits.”

The leader—and the entirety of the tribal nobility—may not be formally recognized as such by title, although he may be. What is important is that people look to the leadership because they see the leaders as the personification of the shared values of the tribe. That is why he must be the type of person that people look up to when they are scared, hungry, and desperate. Whether they consciously recognize it or not, people look for leadership to those they perceive as possessing—and demonstrating—the values they hold dear, even in the face of the primordial fear.¹⁰⁶ The sacral leader has taken ownership of the shared history, identity, customs, traditions, and values of the tribe, to such an extent that he is the tribe, in a very real way. He is the tribe personified, in a way that no other member of the clan seems to have achieved, in the minds of the tribesman.

The nobility of the tribe then, are those free men—normal citizens of the tribe—who have been exalted for their contributions to the tribe. It's not something they do. It's not an act or an action. It's what they are. It's life. It's the series of acts and actions that define a life of character in observance of the values of the tribe. You can't make a specific bullet-pointed list of the traits and virtues inherent in the sacral leader, because none can exist without the others. The tribe's values are the leader's values, and the leader's values are the tribe's values. While one value may seem more important today—the value of strength and courage on the battlefield—tomorrow the most important value might be the generosity of dealing kindly with a defeated foe, to prevent future strife.

Because of the economic and social history of slavery in our own cultural experience, and our inheritance from the Britannic Empire, we have a rather skewed view of the origins of slavery, as part of traditional tribal societies. Slavery as we know it, was a horrific economic practice that was utilized and leveraged to expand the wealth, privilege, and status of a relatively small minority of wealthy families, at the expense of the dignity, freedom, and humanity of its victims.

Slaves, in more traditional societies though, were generally not forced to spend their entire lives in servitude. In European tribal societies, slaves were generally one of two types of people. In the first, they were outsiders, either from rival tribes that were captured during conflict, or for outsiders from

role of leadership in traditional societies, with the leader being the physical manifestation of the spirit of the tribe, collectively.

¹⁰⁶It has long been my personal belief that ultimately, the issue Americans had with President Clinton during the Lewinsky affair, was not that he fucked around on his wife. It was that he didn't give a damn that people cared. While many Americans—and many American presidents—have committed adultery, they were discrete about it. Most Americans do not see themselves as adulterers. By not being discrete, and then not taking responsibility for his behavior, Clinton made it appear that the representative of the American people, on the world stage, was an adulterer. By extension, as the representative of the American people, the implication was that all Americans are adulterers, or that adultery is a shared cultural value.

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further afield, they were purchased in commercial exchanges from nearby allied tribes. In the second, a free man of the tribe, falling on hard times economically, might indenture himself to another, more successful member of the tribe, in return for protection, or for economic reasons, such as paying off a debt.

In a naturally hierarchical society, in both cases, the misfortune of becoming enslaved was seen as a natural result of a lack of inherent value. Poor fortune or skill-at-arms could result in an outsider being captured. Poor judgment and bad decision-making might cause a free man of the tribe to fall on hard times and need the protection of his kinsman.

In both cases though, achievements that indicated abilities that would be beneficial to the tribe could raise the slave out of servitude and into the ranks of the free men of the tribe. For the natural-born tribesman, a return of kinship within the tribe might not even be noteworthy. It just “was.” It happened with enough frequency to be unworthy of note in many cases. For the outsider, adoption into the tribe would generally require some sort of initiatory process and formalized adoption ritual, but once that was achieved, he was an equal member of the tribe, and recognized as a descendant of the tribal ancestors, just as if he had been born into the tribe.

While our modern cultural prejudices are specifically calculated to make tribalism seem unfair and undesirable, in many ways, the natural hierarchy of a tribal society is the most egalitarian—under the law—form of social organization, because all advancement is predicated solely on achievement and collective recognition of merit.

The Ties That Bind: Trust and Loyalty

Loyalty is the state of being loyal. Loyal is defined as being “...true to any person to whom one owes fidelity; constant.” Trust meanwhile, is cognate of the Old Norse (ON) word “*traust*,” meaning “confidence” or “security.” It is defined as “*assured reliance on another's integrity, veracity, justice, etc; confidence...*” As a verb, trust is defined as “*1. to place confidence in; to rely on...3. To allow one to go, act, etc, without fear or misgiving...*”

The mutual exclusivity of a tribal identity only merits value, in any context, but most especially in the context of surviving the decline of imperial culture, if it provides benefit for belonging. If there are no easily-perceived benefits to belonging to the tribe, one is better off adhering to a primary loyalty to the state, or becoming some sort of insular “*rugged individualist*.” The benefits provided in this context are predicated on the trust and loyalty that each member of the tribe possesses in the tribe collectively, and the other members of the tribe individually. In OE, this trust was referred to as *frið*, or “frith.”

Frið is generically defined today, as “peace,” but had far deeper meaning in tribal society. It is cognate to the ON *friðr*, Old High German (OHG) *fridu*, and the Iceland (IS) *friður*, all of which generally do mean “peace,” but all of which also relate to the root-cognate of “friend.” In tribal society, it has a great deal to do not only with the state of peace, but with the very nature of social relationships that create and contribute to the state of internal domestic peace within the tribal culture. It is inherent to the aforementioned relationship between a leader and the people of the tribe. While *frið* is contextually inherently related to kinship, which is the strongest indicator of the state in traditional and tribal societies, it goes much further than simple blood-ties and refers to all of the inherent cultural values, traditions, beliefs, and duties that kinship entails within a culture.

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In a tribal context then, frið refers to the “*freedom from molestation, protection; safety, security,*” that is provided by the protection of the loyalty to, and within, the tribe. In the absence of an external police force, ancient tribes were the only source of security, with kinsmen obligated by the honor inherent in frið, to protect and avenge one another. Acceptance of this obligation, and the knowledge that your kinsmen accepted this obligation, was the source of frið.

Frið is the source of the tribal focus on mutual exclusivity and identity. The family, the clan or sept, and the tribe, are the primary focus of loyalty, trust, and concern. Anyone else in the world—everyone else in the world—is at best, a distant secondary consideration, well behind the welfare and benefit of the tribe. We can see this in a non-European example, with almost every Amerindian tribal name translating as “*The People,*” or something similar, while almost invariably, their names for competing tribes were some derivation of “*Them*” or “*The Savages.*” Tribal societies anywhere, at any time, can be said to focus on the following, in order of precedence: the immediate, nuclear and extended family, followed by the band, clan, or sept. In Germanic terms, this relatively small, intimate circle of kith and kin are referred to as the *innangarð*, meaning roughly, “inner yard,” or “inner circle.” The rest of the larger tribe, is the larger social circle that may not be part of your *innangarð*, but may include people who are within the inner circle of trust of someone in your inner circle of trust. This implies a lesser, but still extant, level of trust and loyalty, predicated on the shared trust and loyalty with the intermediary. It's a larger, less cultivated *innangarð*. In a metaphorical sense, the larger *innangarð* could be seen as the fenced pastures that surround the inner circle of the village or fenced farm yard.

Beyond these inner circles of implicit trust lies the rest of the world, referred to as *utangarð*. In a metaphorical sense, the geographical and psychological states of *innangarð* and *utangarð* are the same. The *innangarð* represented not only the inner circle of trust, but also the very reasons for that trust. It was the representation of the farmyard. Everything was orderly and civilized, and followed the understood rules of society. This inner circle of friends and family—the clan or the village—is trusted not just because of blood relationships, but because of the very nature of the loyalty inherent in frið. The people of the tribe can be trusted specifically because of the common understanding of shared values, traditions, and customs.

The outside world however, populated by people who may not—probably do not, at least to some degree—share those same tribal values that define the tribe's specific mutual exclusivity, can be seen, in this light, as chaotic, wild, and without readily understood rules and roles. Without the shared cultural references and understanding, the outside world simply does not make sense.

The Rule of Law

The rule of law within the tribe, serves the same purpose. While we culturally recognize the codified, statutory rules of behavior we are expected to follow, or face punishment, as “*the law,*” sociologically, it is far more all-encompassing. In ON, the term “*vár lög,*” meaning “our law,” referred not to written, codified rules, nor even the “common law” of established precedent, but the “laws” of behavior, represented by the customs, traditions, and values of the culture. The OE cognate of “*vár lög*” is “*ørlog,*” which has the same meaning. Ørlog provides the framework of shared cultural understanding within the tribe, that makes being part of the tribe psychologically valuable, because it represents order, civilization, and the rules, as they are defined by the culture of the tribe. This is why the most heinous crimes and wrongdoings that violate the ørlog of the tribe's culture result in

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“outlawry.”

Outlawry is not as simple as our modern understanding of the word, meaning “*someone who breaks the law*.” Outlawry, etymologically and historically is far more terrifying. It is being removed from the inner circle of trust of the innangarð. It is being thrust outside of the bounds of frið, losing the protections inherent to membership in the tribe. The outlaw has lost the protection of the law. He no longer possesses any civil rights under the law of the tribe, and could in fact, be killed by anyone on sight, with no legal repercussions. It is the more severe ancestor of the modern act of a family “disowning” a troublemaker, or a church “disfellowshipping” or “shunning” a member of the church. In a very real psychological sense, the individual no longer exists, to those who remain innangarð to the group.

Ørlog in Action

A great example of orlog in action, versus the codified law of the state, can be seen in my family's exercise of the commonly accepted cultural value, “no matter what, you don't hit a girl.”

While that traditional value is under regular attack in today's society; and while there is no codified statutory law anywhere regarding that specific rule, in my family and the extended family of my clan, it is well understood, and continues to be taught that, “no matter what, you don't hit a girl...” The unspoken conclusion of that law is also well-understood by the men of the clan, “...or every male in this family will take turns kicking the dog-fuck out of you.”

While there is no “law” on the books, it is part of the ørlog--“our law”—of my clan's rule-of-law.

Defining Our Mutual Exclusivity

Ørlog, as the definition of the tribe's “our law,” is determined by the shared history of the tribe. It is the shared history of the tribe, defined by the development of shared customs. Shared customs must be—can only be—defined by a shared history of practicing those customs together. That is something that can only occur over time, through the daily, living interactions of the members of the tribe, as they face the daily struggles of existence. It is developed not by getting together for weekend barbecues, or even occasional religious celebrations, although both of these are expressions of ørlog. It is about sharing holiday traditions, births and baptism, and all the rest of life's milestones, together. It is about sharing life's ups and downs, and witnessing and experiencing the shared effort of every member of the tribe working for the betterment of the tribe, collectively.

This doesn't preclude self-advancement, even within the tribe. What it requires however, is that every deed, even if it ultimately benefits the self, must also, somehow be for the benefit of the tribe. Children and spouse come first, clan and tribe comes second, self comes third. The rest of the world can go piss up a rope.

Custom and the Law

This shared history—*ørlog*—provides the framework of the culture of the tribe. It is predicated on the law of shared virtues and values, expressed through the orthopraxy of shared customs and traditions¹⁰⁷. These values and virtues are a shared, common trust that the tribe must hold in common

¹⁰⁷My dictionary does not include an entry for orthopraxy. A look for definitions online includes the contextually appropriate, “the belief that right action is as important as religious faith.” The word is derived from the Greek “ortho-”

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belief. These are the various rules and laws that we—as humans—find ourselves subject to, and they enjoy different levels of importance.

Natural law—what Christians refer to as “God's Law”—include those virtues and values that almost all human cultures hold to be true. These can range from what we recognize as science—such as Newton's Laws of Physics, for example—to what are largely universal moral precepts. The problem that arises with Natural Law is the inability of people to understand—because of their own cognitive biases as a result of ethno- and cultural-centrism—the impact that culture and language has on the interpretation of those natural laws, particularly in the case of morality.

It's a relatively universal value that, “*Thou shalt not murder.*” The definition of murder as we tend to understand it though, is colored by the inherent socialism of modern universalist culture. It is important to understand that, when constructed, the Ten Commandments—and all the law books of the Torah¹⁰⁸—were written as guidelines for one tribe of people: the Hebrews. It is inherently tribal in nature, and the customs and laws referred to in it should be viewed in that context. In light of the wholesale slaughter of entire cities recorded in the Old Testament tribal history of the Hebrews, this actually makes much more sense.

“*Thou shalt not murder...*” makes much more sense, in the context of Hebrew history, when we add the culturally implicit “...*a member of the tribes if Judea,*” because doing so weakens the tribe materially, and spiritually—by sowing discord and anger within the tribe. This is why we see story after story of the Hebrews putting entire cities to the torch, killing Gentiles, and stealing their wives and children, while still finding favor with their god¹⁰⁹. While Natural Law, including the value “*Thou shalt not murder,*” does play a role in the development of shared values within a tribe, it is important to understand that a particular tribe's *ørlog* will determine precisely how they define the specific meaning of that Natural Law, in regards to moral customs.

The more commonly recognized aspect of *ørlog* as the law of the tribe is the custom—the common law—of the tribe. This is the establishment of law built on precedent, or “*what we've done before.*”¹¹⁰ It refers specifically to the judgments that the tribe has passed down previously. Once these judgments become customary in regard to a specific set of related circumstances, they become law, in the sense of “common law.” They may not be written down as codified rules, but they are still law. It is a “law” that we eat ham at Yule or Christmas, and turkey at Thanksgiving. It's not *the* law in the sense of codified statute. It's just “*what we do,*” because it's “*what we've always done.*”

meaning “*correct, right,*” and “-praxis” meaning “*practice, as distinguished from theory.*”

108The Hebrew legal canon of the Old Testament.

109This also illustrates, inherently, one of my greatest beefs with anti-Semitism. I'm not Jewish. I only know a half-dozen or so Jews, and none of them are in my “inner circle” of trust (although I do like all of them). People who use the “evil, conniving Jew” stereotype miss the fact that Judaism is a tribal religion and ethnicity. A Jewish person, putting the interests and needs of other Jews before those of Gentiles is doing nothing wrong. It's simply human nature, and part of being a tribesman. It only becomes immoral if you believe the universalist tripe that “all men are brothers.” Anti-Semites only hate Jews because the Jews have been better at protecting their own people and tribal identity.

110Technically, many—myself included—would argue that this is actually the very definition of *ørlog*. I'm using it in a broader sense here, for simplicity and ease of understanding.

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Custom as Common Law in History

An example of the role of custom in defining the law can be seen in the “common law” marriage. In medieval England, not every village had an ordained priest. In fact, a village might go a year or longer without being visited by their parish priest or any other member of the clergy. Rather than waiting for some indeterminate time in the future when a priest might be available, betrothed couples would simply begin living together. As soon as the relationship was consummated they were considered wed under civil law. When a priest did finally show up, the couple might have the union formally blessed by the Church, so that any children would be eligible for baptism.

Today when we talk about common law marriage though, the conversation tends to revolve around the legal definitions; what states do or do not recognize the relationships, and what specific actions are required for a state government to recognize the union as statutorily legal. Once these definitions are codified though, then by definition, it is no longer a “common law” marriage. Within the cultural traditions and customs from which it sprang, all that is required for a common law marriage is the declaration of frið between man and wife, represented by cohabitation and consummation of the relationship.

Finally, we have codified, written law. These are the legalistic, recorded rules of the society. The word “legal” is cognate to the older, proto-Germanic word **lagan*, meaning “to put,” or “to lay,” as in “to lay down the law” or “to lay down in writing.” Historically—and obviously, prehistorically—codified law was seldom a requirement within a tribal society¹¹¹. Ancient tribal laws worked on the common law concept of precedence, and since the people—or at least the elders—knew their tribal history, they knew what the precedent was for a given issue, given the totality of circumstances.

Codified Law in Sodalities

While some tribal nations did develop codified law in the medieval Christianization period, the most common example of codified “tribal” laws and rules occurs in sodality forms of intentional tribes such as guilds and fraternities, in the form of by-laws.

For groups that find themselves forced by environmental circumstance—or preference—to develop intentional tribes to face the decay of the empire successfully, the construction of a codified set of by-laws may be necessary to help form a context for the development of common law *ørlog* within the tribal society.

From groups with shared religions, to political fraternities, the importance of a common, shared set of rules for identifying orthopraxy is incalculable. By-laws can determine how collective decisions are made, such as methods for identifying and selecting leaders, as well as spelling out the specific obligations of membership, and methods for determining who can be recognized as *innangarð*.

By-laws can also specify what events will be recognized, and how those events will be celebrated, forming the beginning of a basis of custom and tradition. Even in a shared religious community, the specific details of the practice of that faith may be significantly different enough to cause dissension, unless a standardized form of observation is agreed on.

The process of developing by-laws, among a core group of founders may be a bonding opportunity, or it may be catastrophic enough to allow early recognition of the incompatibility of the group's particular values. I would much rather discover incompatibilities while sitting in someone's living room, trying to come up with a set of rules for orthopraxy than in the middle of a dangerous situation.

¹¹¹The first recorded law codes in European tribes occurred during the Christianization period, when the Church was used as a tool to establish the enduring permanent legitimacy of the aristocracy's rule.

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Generally speaking, codified law is only required when there is a large-scale influx of immigration to the society, who cannot be expected to possess the cultural understanding of the society's *ørloq*.

The disadvantage of codified law can be seen today in America. That is the tendency of politicians and judges to bypass the common sense of customary, common law precedent that most Americans understand implicitly, in favor of interpretations of codified law that ignores the cultural values of society. When done in pursuit of a favored agenda, this tends to be antithetical to the spirit of the common law. Common law is—and codified law should be—grounded in the customs and traditions of common sense.

Traditions

Traditions are developed as a result of the shared history and experiences of the tribe. These can range from holiday celebrations, both religious and cultural, and passage-of-life events such as birth rites and ceremonies, marriage rites, death rites, and initiations, to political processes within the tribe such as choosing leaders, and the customs used to select them.

Most kin-group based tribes will already have well-established traditions in these regards, passed down through generations, and shared within their local communities, especially in regard to religious and passage-of-life processes. Even more political processes like identifying leadership, may be a *fait accompli* in tightly-knit families, where everyone already knows who the sensible uncle is that everyone looks to for advice on business, or where everyone runs ideas by grandma for her judgment on them, before executing a new venture.

Forging The Tribe

In order to be functioning social structures that offer value, tribes have to be recognizable to the citizens of that tribe by their mutual exclusivity. It is far more than simply throwing on a certain patch or uniform and using the label. Recognizing—or creating—identifying shared cultural values is not about passively accepting them, or superficially memorizing them so that they can be spouted off verbatim to impress others. They are the rules and guideposts of life, that define the boundaries of *frið*, and determine one's rightful place within the *innangarð*.

Tribes have to be comprised of people who recognize and adhere to shared cultural values and customs. They cannot be some haphazard grouping of people with no shared identity or *frið*. While simple shared political or survival interests in common may prove adequate in an immediate, short-term struggle, when the time comes that requires people to work together, putting their egos, their fortunes, and even their lives on the line, day-after-day-after-day, or to trust someone else to reciprocate, unless you share the same values, traditions, and customs—including the trust and loyalty of genuine *frið*, then individual self-interest and greed will invariably win the day, and cause fatal dissension.

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Five
Forging Identity

“We find here a community based upon general unity, mutual self-sacrifice and self-denial, and the social spirit. A society, in which every individual, from birth to death, was bound by consideration for his neighbor.”
--Vilhelm Gronbech; **Culture of the Teutons**

From a modern universal cultural perspective, values and morality are most often perceived as religious concepts, and are perceived as universal, world-encompassing, and permanent. They tend to be understood as a gift—to those who benefit from them—and as a directive—from those who feel restrained by them—from the divine, and thus omnipresent. Morality is universally applicable, and those who do not adhere to one's universally applied morality are believed to be either evil incarnate, and thus worthy of destruction, or woefully ignorant, and in dire need of education. Teaching and guiding them so they might “*see the light*” of wisdom and righteousness, and crawl gladly back into the warm, comfortable embrace of the universal, imperial culture, is seen as the epitome of righteousness.

This is an intellectual conceit of empire, and it is a conceit that the American Empire shares with those that have gone before. Clinging desperately to this conceit, in the vain hope that a loving deity will aid you in purging the Earth of all those who think, believe, and behave differently, is a path to ruin, as part of the festering corpse of a dying empire. The tribal cultural perspective, throughout most of the human experience, has never expected—or in fact, desired—that the entire world would subscribe to the tribe's morals, values, and customs.

Of those in contemporary American culture who recognize the word *innangarð* at all, many see it in one form or another, as a universal vision. Some view it as “*the world of men*.” In this definition, it applies to all of humanity, standing in opposition to the rest of the universe, which is demonstrably not the original intent of the term, or the concept that it describes. Others, looking to gain political capital from dividing people not by the traditional *kith-and-kin* description of a tribe, instead label *innangarð* as a pan-European conceptual region, applying only to “white” people of some arbitrarily chosen percentage of European descent. Both of these are ridiculous notions, predicated on the political gain that can be leveraged through the use of a specific linguistic construction of a largely universal human concept.

The pre-Christian European tribal use of the concept of *innangarð* did not refer—except possibly in the most broad sense—to all of Europe, or even all of Germania, let alone all of humanity. More accurately, the *garðr*—borders—were that area that surrounded the cultivated, well-ordered safety of

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the village or farm, and separated it from the dark, wild, scary, world beyond. The concept of innangarð and utangarð refer as much to the psychological/spiritual borders of that community as they do to the physical. These two distinct spaces can be best understood as being that which lies within the controlled, understood space of the shared customs and traditions of close-knit social relations, and all the rest of the world, which is foreign and outside of that space.

Utangarð is not just a name for the rest of the world, outside of our tight-knit, well-known, and understood social circles however. Utangarð instead describes all that is not in compliance with the values and customs—the morality, or *ørlog*—of the tribe. A wide range of beings both real and metaphorical, can be said to inhabit the utangarð: from the fearsome wolves and bears of the natural world and “foreign” people of other villages and communities, with their own innangarð and utangarð; to spirits, giants, and trolls, utangarð is both physical and spiritual/psychological. The foreign, “outside” nature of the utangarð can be seen illustrated in the Icelandic sagas. These mythic histories of the Icelanders are replete with tales of heroes who are outlawed, where that term entailed literally going outside of the protection of the confines of the lawful society. The term used in Icelandic was *skoggangr*, meaning “forest-going.” *Skoggarmenn*—“forest men”—were those who were sent to live outside the protection of society, because they had broken the rule-of-law of the community. They had declared themselves to be utangarð from the rest of the community's laws and morality. They had broken the orthopraxy of custom and tradition.

The presence of other people, who were utangarð, within the borders of their communities, illustrates the critical importance of understanding what defines our own innangarð. It doesn't matter what *their* morality is. It doesn't matter what they do, unless they—who are utangarð—try to impose on our inner circle. Within the innangarð of a community—whether that community is physical or psychological—lay its laws, social mores, and customary, traditional behavior that marks the expression of its implicit and explicit morality. These concepts are intimately interwoven, and often cannot be easily or readily distinguished from one another. The law of the community's values exists within the community's traditions and customs. These customs provide the community its identity, sanctified by its morality, and affirmed by its laws and rules of behavior.

The geographical and political landscape, and the location of a community specifically shapes its traditions, customs, and even its morals, and provides the foundation that they are developed from. We can see this in my native Southern Highlands, in the migration of the Scots-Irish, and modifications of both their ancestral Scottish culture, the intermediate Irish influences, and the contemporary changes that have occurred between migration to the Southern Highlands of Appalachia and today.

The innangarð of a tribe or community is strictly a metric of that tribe's *ørlog*. It is their morality—their values—expressed by their social mores and customs and traditions. Those that are innangarð are those people who are recognized as adhering to the orthopraxy of the customs and traditions that define the *ørlog* of the tribe. Trying to define another tribe's values as “right” or “wrong,” misses the point. It doesn't matter if the other tribe's values are “right” or “wrong.” They're not “our people.” What matters is that the other tribe's values are the other tribe's. It is not a matter of judgment of the gods—or outside society—for abiding by universally ordained, codified law. “Right” or “wrong,” for any tribe is defined by the relative value—or harm—that will or might come to the tribe, as defined by the tribe. What is “proper” behavior, or “improper” behavior is entailed through the establishment of customs that express the values of the tribe. By preserving these customs, the community preserves and strengthens

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its identity and their social order. When these customs are forgotten, or are allowed to lay dormant, that community ceases to exist. Its identity has been lost in favor of the identity provided by whatever customs and traditions replaced the old.

When Xenophobia Is A Virtue

This is the sociological beginning of the evolutionary survival instinct for xenophobia. “I don't trust them, because I don't understand them,” when viewed from the perspective that identifies “trust” as a synonym for frið. It's not a matter of fear, or being afraid. It's simply a matter of “if I don't understand their behavior and customs, I can't trust that we see things and define things in the same manner. That can lead to violence.

Today, even as the imperial culture decays and declines around us, we have an obligation to our communities and to ancestors and our descendants, to identify and establish appropriate boundaries to define innangarð and utangarð for our tribes. This is achieved by identifying those who belong in our close-knit communities of kith and kin—our families, friends, and neighbors—and those who are not a part of that inner circle of trust. We must determine the ethics of our communities, and our cultural definitions of “right” and “wrong,” as they relate not to some outside declaration of their definitions, but by how they relate to a person's behavior harming or benefiting the innangarð of the community.

While we may find it necessary to balance the internal values and cultural morality of our tribe with the existing, codified laws of local, state, and federal jurisdictions, this is necessary only as it pertains to potential harm or benefit of the tribe. At a collective level, the “Heinlein Rule” applies: *“I am free, no matter what rules surround me. If I find them tolerable, I tolerate them; if I find them too obnoxious, I break them. I am free because I know that I alone am morally responsible for everything I do.”*¹¹²

At the same time, this understanding of the concept of innangarð necessitates the internalization of the understanding that neither the morality, values, customs, or behavior of anyone who is utangarð, has any bearing on the morality of the tribe, unless those actions threaten the peace and security—the frið—of the tribe's innangarð. It doesn't matter if they celebrate a different religion, or even the same religion differently. It doesn't matter if their activities get them in trouble with the imperial authorities. It doesn't matter if they are starving because they failed to prepare for the financial or commercial collapse. It doesn't even matter if they decide to attack another neighboring tribe, who is also utangarð, with violence. As Jack Donovan has so eloquently phrases it, *“Not my people, not my problem.”* Or, as my grandmother phrased it, in an entirely different way, *“If you keep your nose out of other people's business, it's less liable to get broke.”*

Frið

Frið is the trust and loyalty inherent to the culture of a tribe. It is the recognition of the security provided by identification of being inside the boundaries of what defines the innangarð of the tribe. More than that, it is the loyalty to that “inner circle” that drives us to always put the needs of the inner circle foremost in our concerns, and the trust that the rest of the inner circle is striving to accomplish the same.

Loyalty to kith-and-kin is based on one of two fundamental bonds. Although our modern materialist,

¹¹²Heinlein, Robert A; **The Moon is a Harsh Mistress**; 1966

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consumer culture of the empire strives to trivialize it, even resorting to leveraging the Christian Bible to do so—“*If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple*”¹¹³—families are still bound together by blood and DNA, and the evolutionary biological obligations of loyalty for the sake of survival, that implies. The loyalty to kith on the other hand, is more often a “blood oath,” either implicit or explicit, and can actually be stronger than the bond of blood.¹¹⁴

Whether by DNA or by oath, the loyalty of *fríð* is far deeper than what many people hold as loyalty today. It has absolutely nothing to do with convenience. In many ways, it can be seen to be extraordinarily inconvenient, at least by modern cultural social norms. It is not a matter of, “*Gee, dude, I'd love to come over and help you with that, but well...American Idol is on right now!*” It's not even a matter of greater concerns, “*Damn, dude, I'd come help you hide that burglar's body, but what if we get caught? Who is going to take care of my kids?*”

The loyalty of *fríð* goes deeper than that. It is a matter of what I like to only half-jokingly refer to as “*shovel-and-lime*” loyalty. That is the loyalty to friend or family, required so that when you call them at 0230 and say, “*Hey, I need you at my house in 20 minutes. Bring a shovel and a bag of lime!*” you have no doubt or worry that in 19 minutes, that person will be pulling up to your garage—no questions asked—with a shovel, and a fifty-pound bag of lime in the trunk. *Fríð* can be defined as “*if my clansman needs me, I'm there.*” It does not matter if it is inconvenient. It does not matter if it is dangerous. It only matters that it is. At the same time though, *fríð* is knowing better than to call your clansman, at 0230, and telling him to show up with a shovel and a fifty-pound bag of lime, unless it is a genuine emergency.

In his 1909 treatise, ***The Culture of the Teutons***¹¹⁵, Danish cultural historian, Vilhelm Gronbech (1873-1948 CE), a professor of the history of religion at the University of Copenhagen, described *fríð* as the defining trait of pre-Christian, barbarian tribal culture in northern Europe.

“The Hellene exists as an individual, a separate person within a community. The Germanic individual exists only as the representative, nay, as the personification of the whole. One might imagine that a supreme convulsion of the soul must tear the individual out from that whole, and let him feel him-self, speak as for himself. But actually, it is the opposite that takes place; the more the soul is moved, the more the individual personality is lost in the kin. At the very moment when man most passionately and unreservedly gives way to his own feelings, the clan takes possession of the individual fully and completely...what is the hidden force that makes kinsmen inseparable? First we learn that they call each other 'friend' (*frændi* in Icelandic¹¹⁶, *freond* in Anglo-Saxon), and

¹¹³Luke 14:26, KJV

¹¹⁴While the timeline of the origin of the proverb is in dispute among philologists, I tend towards the school that believes the origin of “*blood is thicker than water*” is the older proverb, “*the blood of the oath is thicker than the water of the womb.*” This implies that the loyalty of a sworn oath should be stronger than the bond of biological kinship.

¹¹⁵Originally published in German as ***Vor Folkeætt i Oldtiden***. Volume One was published in 1909. The final three volumes were published in 1912. My copy includes only Vol. 1-2. I don't know that I've ever even seen a copy—in English or German—of the remaining two volumes.

¹¹⁶I'm not certain how correct Professor Gronbech was in attributing this spelling of the word to Icelandic, rather than Old

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a linguistic analysis of this word will teach us, that it means those who love (each other); but this brings us no farther, for etymology tells us nothing of what it is to love. We can perhaps get a little nearer by noting the etymological connection between the word “friend” and two others that play a great part in the social life of those days: “free” and “frith.” In “frith,” peace, we have the old kinsmen's own definition of the fundamental idea in their inter-relationship. By frith they mean something in themselves, a power that makes them “friends” one towards another, and “free men” towards the rest of the world...if we look closely at the older significance of the word, we shall find something sterner; a firmness that has now given place to weakness. The frith of earlier days was less passive than now, with less of submissiveness and more of will. It held also an element of passion which has now been submerged in quietism.”

Frið is the state of being that exists between members of the tribe, and defines the boundary, safety, and protection of innangarð. It means, above all other meanings, the state of “*reciprocal inviolability*”¹¹⁷.” Regardless of clashes of will, or even anger, within the tribe every member of the tribe recognizes implicitly and explicitly, the existence of the garðr that mark the boundaries between the inner circle, and all else in the world. It is seen in the modern sense of the half-humorous, “*he might be a shithead, but he's our shithead. Ain't nobody beating his ass, 'cept us.*”

We also see in this reciprocal inviolability, the origin of the concept of “Thou Shalt Not Murder.” Gronbech wrote, “*We need have no doubt but that good kinsmen could disagree with fervour, but however the matter might stand, there could—should, must inevitably—be but one ending to it all; a settlement peaceable and making for peace—frith.*” We can recognize this in tribal societies, ranging from the pre-Christian European examples we are relying on, to the Hebrew law. It is a subject that men have considered since the earliest times; the horrific idea that a man might slay a member of his own tribe, even accidentally. Doing so is automatically a cause for being declared *utangarð*. Even in the Hebrew record, Cain's murder of Abel was not the gravest of sins simply because he took a life. All of the heroes of the Old Testament took the lives of men; some even took the lives of thousands of men, women, and children. The severity of Cain's sin was that he killed his brother—his kinsman. He violated frið, placing himself as *utangarð* by violating the most inviolate of universal human morals.

Frið is not—cannot be—a conscious choice. It is the collective conscience of the tribe. Written, codified law may provide guidance on behavior in adherence to the customs of the tribe, but frið is unwritten, because it is an obligation that lies deeper than any other inclination we have. It is not a matter of will, in the sense that those who are in frið intentionally set their kinship before all other feelings. Instead, it is the will. It is identical with the actual feeling of kinship, not something derived from kinship.

Frið is a biological imperative. The Red Queen Theory of evolutionary biology describes evolution as a genetic arms race. Everything we do in life including the act of procreation, is driven by our very genetic code to ensure the survival—the continuance of the line—of that genetic material. In many

Norse. The two languages are remarkably similar though, so it may be accurate.

¹¹⁷The phrase is Gronbech.

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ways, it is what drives the entire culture of survivalism. We want to survive. It is in our very DNA to want to survive. The irony of course, is that the one fact we can all be absolutely certain of is, we're not going to survive. I will die. You will die. My children will die. My grandchildren will die. Why would I, given such a depressing, fatalistic understanding of reality, care about survival?

Simply put, because it is a biological imperative. Yes my children and grandchildren will die, but my grandchildren will have children, who will have children, and so forth, down through the pages of as-yet unwritten history. My genetic material will survive through them. At a conscious level, I want them—even those descendants who I will never meet in this life—to enjoy the cultural values, and the quality of life that results from cherishing those values, that I do. How does frið factor into this?

At any given time, over the course of the decline of the empire, something may occur that requires me to sacrifice myself for the survival of my children. If I go willing “*to the sound of the guns*,” I face the very real possibility of dying as a result. Who then will protect my children? Who then will provide for my wife? By protecting my children in one instance, I have robbed them of my protection in any future instances that may require even greater protection. How do we overcome this?

“*No man is an island.*” By building a level of shared social trust and loyalty—frið—with my kith-and-kin, I know that they will provide for and protect my wife and children, if I fall in the defense of the innangarð. I trust this, because I know that they know the same is true in reverse. That is the ultimate definition of frið. It is the peace and security, and the protection, of knowing, understanding, and living the customs and values of the tribe.

Frið is more than the willingness to look out for one another. It is more than the loyalty required simply to not harm another within the tribe. Frið is the understanding that we are the clan, and the clan is us. We stand for one another's causes. One of the older guild statutes explained this well, as well as illustrating the importance of innangarð:

“Should it so happen that any brother kills any man who is not a brother of the Guild of St. Canute (i.e. not of our guild) then the brethren shall help him in his peril of life as best they can. If he be by water, they shall help him with a boat, oars, dipper, tinder box and axe...should he need a horse, they are to provide him with a horse...any brother able to help, and not helping...he shall go out of this guild as a nidling¹¹⁸...every brother shall help his brother in all lawsuits¹¹⁹.”¹²⁰

Relationships with those outside of the tribe are not forbidden by the spirit of frið. Even business alliances with those outside of the tribe that result in a profit being made from members of the tribe are not forbidden by the spirit of frið. There is nothing in tribal cultural matters that forbids a person from improving his station in life materially, even in matters directly concerning kith-and-kin. Frið is not communism; it's not anti-capitalism. It exists outside that false dialectic. What frið does demand however, is the recognition that the requirements of frið may rise up, inflexibly, to interfere with these, and when it does, frið takes precedence.

¹¹⁸Roughly, “nothing.” It is a term describing someone of zero worth; non-existent as a person; utangarð.

¹¹⁹While it does not say it in the excerpt available, the implication is clear, contextually, that this last phrase includes “*Your ass will lie under oath, if necessary, to protect your guild-brother.*”

¹²⁰This excerpt is taken from a quote in **The Culture of the Teutons**.

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This may be as simple as giving something to a clansman that you had intended to sell for a profit, because you recognize that the clansman needs it and cannot afford to pay for it. It may be as complicated as severing business or social relations with an outsider, because he suddenly finds himself in conflict with a clansman¹²¹. The simplest way to understand frið is, again, “*He might be a shithead, but he's our shithead. Ain't nobody beatin' his ass, 'cept us.*”

Gronbech goes on to explain that the idea of disowning a kinsman's position on something, even as mildly as trying to take an impersonal, neutral standpoint, is inconceivable in the tribal culture.

“A man is brought home, lifeless. The question of what he has done, of his antecedents generally, fades away into the dimmest background. There is the fact: he is our kinsman. The investigation has for its object: slain by the hand of man, or not? Wounds? And of what sort? Who was the slayer? And thereupon the kinsmen choose their leader, or gather around the born avenger and promise him all assistance in prosecuting the case, whether by force-of-arms or at law. The kinsmen of the slayer, on their part, are well aware of what is not to be done; they know that vengeance is on their heels. So simple and straightforward is the idea of frith. It reckons with facts alone, taking no count of personal considerations and causes which led to this violent conclusion.”

The argument is often made to me, when I discuss the concept of frið in class lectures, that “*Well, sure, but there were no police and courts in those days! We're not a bunch of barbarians, living in a village in the forest. We've got to let the law take its course!*” My response to that is multifaceted. On the one hand, we're acknowledging that the political system has lost legitimacy, and is losing control of things. In pursuit of that line of thought, perhaps we should ask the business owners who found their livelihoods lost to the Black Lives Matter looters, how well the law protected them?

Perhaps we can ask the family of the late Mr. Ricky Ballin, of DeKalb County, Georgia. Mr. Ballin was found dead at his home in 2009. His wife, Pamela Ballin, was convicted of three counts of murdering him—malice murder, felony murder, and aggravated assault—in 2014. After the jury rendered their verdict, DeKalb County Judge Mark Anthony Scott extended her bond for at least a month, scheduling a hearing “*to address the pending directed verdict.*” I'm sure Mr. Ballin's family retains their complete faith in the justice system¹²².

Or, perhaps we can ask one of the victims of the 97% of rapists who go unpunished for their crimes?¹²³ Maybe we should ask Mr. Ryan Ferguson, of Columbia, Missouri. In 2001, Ferguson, then 17, was convicted of the murder of Kent Heitholt. His “friend” Charles Erickson, confessed to police that he and Ferguson had killed Heitholt for beer money. Ferguson's conviction was overturned 9 years and 8 months later, when it was discovered that the prosecution withheld exculpatory evidence, and that the witnesses who testified against him had recanted their testimony.¹²⁴

121I've actually witnessed this occur within my social circle. Several friends of mine were friends with another, although not all were. That individual ended up sleeping with a woman that one of the friends, who was in frið with the others, however implicit. The individual found himself instantly outcast—utangarð—by all of the social network.

122<http://www.cbs46.com/story/25825541/dekalb-county-judge-lets-convicted-killer-walk>

123<https://rainn.org/news-room/97-of-every-100-rapists-receive-no-punishment>

124<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/ryan-ferguson-update-for-8-years-48-hours-has-reported-on-the-problem-surrounding->

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We could turn to the numerous victims of the “Knockout Game” that the justice system insists is an imaginary phenomenon, despite the innumerable videos available on social media websites that record the exploits of the criminal thugs that participate in it.

The fact is, as a result of the loss of legitimacy of the political system, Americans are losing their faith in the “justice” system as well. A 2011 Gallup poll indicated that less than a quarter of Americans—23%—have confidence in the justice system¹²⁵. That's less than the 28% who have faith in the banking system—how dumb do *those* people have to be?

Sure, we could count on the justice system to get the justice we demand. It would require quite a suspension-of-disbelief though, to have faith that it would work. The idea that the state—and the state alone—is the legitimate source of justice, is an intellectual conceit designed solely to enforce the power of the state. As the decline continues, we will witness the increasing inequality of the application of the rule-of-law. Too often in recent years, we've seen instances where a family member has called the police, seeking assistance in some matter that is rightfully a family matter, only for it to end in bloodshed and catastrophe for the family.

Duty is a Harsh Mistress

Frið demands much of us, including the willingness to take an active part in our clansman's trouble. It requires the innangarð to deal with matters within the inner circle, rather than relying on the introduction of the utangarð into the circle—along with *their* laws and rules that may not make within the morality of the clan. Justice in the tribe is enforcement of the customs and values of the tribe's ørløg. While justice in dealings with those who are utangarð may require taking matters to the state's courts, matters within the innangarð should never involve the introduction of the utangarð foreign, legalistic morality into the matter.

Even if a matter does involve someone who is utangarð—individual or institution—if the decision of the state's “justice” does not uphold the ørløg of the tribe; if the punishment of the outsider is not adequately severe, or the punishment of the insider is too severe, then frið demands that extrajudicial action be taken.

An example of this might be, if the child of a clansman were molested by someone from outside of the clan, and the case were allowed to go to court for prosecution, but the molester was not adequately punished, the frið that the tribe shares with the victim—the reciprocal trust and loyalty—demands that the tribe extract legitimate justice, regardless of what the utangarð world thinks or believes.

Similarly, if a member of the clan were falsely accused of a crime—or even rightly accused, if the crime is not a crime in the morality of the tribe's ørløg—by a witness who was utangarð, the tribe may not be able, despite their best efforts, to stop the clansman from receiving the state's punishment. Frið demands that the tribe extract extrajudicial justice, regardless of what the utangarð world thinks or believes.

Who are you willing to go to these lengths for? Who is willing to go to these lengths for you? Those people are your tribe. Think carefully. This is not about macho posturing.

Frið takes precedence over all personal considerations; business, social, personal pride and ego, all

fergusons-now-vacated-conviction/
125<http://www.gallup.com/poll/1597/confidence-institutions.aspx>

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yield to the demands of frið. The frið of the guild statute cited earlier, is not an exaggeration. Frið demands taking up the kinsman's cause, considering only the kinship and not the matter itself. Society at any level, is a social construct predicated on shared trust. Frið is the understanding that everyone who is innangarð—part of the tribe—exists in the observance of the ørlög—the customs and values—of the tribe. What is difficult—perhaps impossible—for most modern Americans to understand about frið—especially those who were not raised in a society of kinship and clannishness like that still prevalent in large swathes of the Southern Highlands—is the unconscious spontaneity of the concept. The decision to place the interests of the tribe before the interests and concerns of all outsiders—even above the “rule-of-law” of the imperial society—is not a conscious decision. It just *is*. It is an unreflecting, unconscious, “*I cannot do otherwise.*”

At this level of unconscious loyalty, the clan is self and the self is clan. There is no difference between you and I, if we are kinsmen. Frið can be viewed as the collective unconscious, the collective conscience, the collective soul, of the tribe. As such, if a member of the tribe is injured—physically or metaphorically—it is not felt as “*oh man, that dude attacked my cousin!*” Instead, “*hurting one of mine is hurting me.*” Frið—even self-interest—demands instant, uncompromising retaliation for the injury.

Frið is not a shield for shitty judgment and poor behavior however. If the clan is self and the self is clan, then every action that the individual takes is a reflection on the character of the tribe. This provides a sort of moral compass if you will, for behavior. If one is truly in frið with the tribe, he cannot act outside the ørlög—the values and customs of the innangarð. None within the tribe need fear he will embarrass or unnecessarily endanger the welfare of the tribe through precipitous, rash actions or behavior.

Frið then, can be seen to be nothing more than the duty and obligation required by the feeling of kinship. It is given at birth, or—in the case of adoption or in the case of intentional tribes—at adoption into the tribe. It is simply “love.” This is not some soft, feel-good, New Age nonsense, full of emotion and flights of fancy.

Compared to the modern conception of love, this old-time type of family feeling has almost a sobering steadfastness of character. Love is the emotion that drives us away from the meanness of our nature, driving us towards higher, loftier goals. Love of the kindred is what moves us to do the ugly, scary, necessary tasks that we may not feel comfortable doing. It is what leads us to undergo the suffering of discipline, to be the people we need to be for a better future for our tribe. This love—frið—even if we don't know the term or recognize the emotion, is what leads us away from the egoism of modern, consumer, pop culture, and drives us to perform the important things, even to the point of self-sacrifice, for the survival of the tribe.

In the love inherent to frið, there is no need for the high-pressure, consuming ardor that modern culture tells us is necessary for their to be “love.” Rather, frið is the balance and sobriety of loyalty and trust that allows people to grow strong and healthy in the security of their relationships, whether kith or kin¹²⁶. Trivializing frið by simply expressing it as “peace” does a great disservice to the concept, by

126As an example of this, I have a friend –and I use that in the oldest, deepest sense of the word, reserved for oath-sworn kin--whom I have known longer than any other human being, outside of my biological family. We have been close friends for well over thirty years. We have, at times, several years without seeing one another, as I spent my career in the

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failing to fully express the substance of this concept that really is the soul of the tribe. The energy of the vital force inherent in the word is simply lost.

Frið is “peace” because it is the peace-of-mind that arises from the security of existing in a social construct with the unanimity, mutual will, gentleness, loyalty, and understanding that all you understand to be valuable, and all that you hold precious, is held in the same regard and valued to the same degree, by those around you. Beyond “peace” and “love;” beyond “trust” and loyalty,” frið is happiness. It is the happiness and delight of recognizing that one is “home,” surrounded by one's family and faithful friends; that one need not be concerned about appearances or subterfuges, because of the trust and loyalty that results from all living their lives within the same *ørlog*. We cannot find this same degree of happiness or contentment alone.

Kinship—society—is an innate, indispensable factor of being human. We are social animals, and even the most independent, psychologically self-reliant of us needs the community of *frið* to feel complete. This is why the modern state fights so hard to create artificial tribes, such as sports team fans, and national identities. Only by creating superficial, artificial states of frið can they weaken the natural human tendency to tribe that robs the state of its artificially imposed legitimacy. As the state loses its legitimacy in the minds and hearts of more and more people, they find themselves seeking this missing element that they no longer even recognize the name of.

In order to develop tribes however, we have to rediscover, and find a natural, unconscious level of frið, even though we start the process consciously.

Honor

Frið and honor are the combined soul of the tribe, because honor is a significant, inseparable part of frið. Honor is the social concept that provides the security of the tribe both externally and internally. Honor of course, is a concept that is paid a great deal of lip service in modern pop culture. All too often however, it is derided as an obsolete relic of a by-gone, immoral, patriarchal society, or it is applied inaccurately to things of no real consequence.

Modern society, and those constrained by its universal values, look at contemporary tribal societies—from the Pashtuns of the Af-Pak border regions, to the outlaw gangs inside of our own society—with their emphasis on honor, as nothing but “*ignorant, savage barbarians*.” Technically of course, the “barbarian” label is correct, because they exist separate from the civilization that is judging them. In a society that has surrendered its honor to the protection of Orwell's “rough men,” most people cannot begin to fathom the critical importance of honor to the tribe, so they rely on the xenophobia they claim to despise, and view anything they don't understand as “ignorant” and “savage,” rather than simply different.

The truth of frið however, is that in a tribal society, where—by definition—there can be no recognition of the authority of some “outside,” impartial governing authority to act as a central, mediating authority for conflict resolution with those who are *utangarð*, providing at least the appearance of legitimate equality under the law, honor is—literally—survival.

military, and then living in the West. Before my wife and I returned to my ancestral home in the Southern Highlands, when I would come back to visit, my friend and I would visit, and it were as if there had never been any separation. There have been times when one or the other, despite being hundreds, or even thousands, of miles apart, needed help, and the other was ready to drop all outside concerns to go help. That is frið.

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The failure of the tribe—or even any individual within the tribe—to respond to any injury or insult, real or imagined, no matter how slight; a failure to defend against the invasion of the *innangarð* by the wildness of the foreign values of *utangarð*, is a matter of dishonor. Failing to respond is perceived as not being able to respond. That inability implies weakness. That weakness means you are susceptible to further assault. Why shouldn't my clan come and kill you, rape your women and take them as chattel, and steal all of your belongings, if doing so improves the chances of our success and survival in the long-term? The modern Christian ideal of “turn the other cheek,” may be noble and self-effacing, but I hasten to point out that you only have two cheeks before you run out of the ability to turn, and careful reading will indicate it was actually intended as a response to those with whom you are in a state of *frið* within the community of the Church, anyway. Such vacating of honor in an environment lacking external protection from the state, is certain ticket to destruction.

Honor and *frið* are closely intertwined, and cannot be separated. If your clansman insults or injures someone from another tribe, you can expect that tribe to come hunting vengeance, just like you would go hunting if the roles were reserved. It doesn't matter that you suspect your clansman is a raging asshole who probably started the confrontation in the first place. The other tribe is not going to care and recognizing, even unconsciously, the nature of *frið*, will not be particular about what member of your tribe they extract the blood-price from. You're tied to him by loyalty, so if your clansman is an asshole, you'd better be ready to answer for his sins. If his asshole nature is in violation of your *ørlog*, then you have two issues to deal with: first is determining why he feels it is okay to be such an asshole, despite your belief that it is not within your values and customs, and second is either outlawing him—and expressing that status to the offended tribe, and making adequate reparations—or going to war with the offended tribe anyway¹²⁷.

At the same time, if your clansman is killed for being an asshole, it doesn't matter that you knew he was an asshole and feel he had it coming. You should have corrected his behavior previously, or outlawed him before he went full retard. The survival of your family and your tribe depends on your willingness and ability to extract vengeance. If you do the “good, Christian” thing, and “turn the other cheek,” then the murdering tribe—and every other tribe that hears about it—is going to perceive that as an inability to respond, and they will fuck your shit up. Tribalism is not necessarily pretty or sweet, by modern culture's definitions. It's not just about living in some pastoral, pacifist commune in the mountains.

Gronbech comments on the relationship between honor and vengeance, “*Honor at once brings up the thought of vengeance. It must be so; he who thinks of honor must say vengeance, not only because the two are always found together in the stories, but more because it is only through vengeance that we can see the depth and breadth of honor.*”

It is often brought to mention that revenge won't undo the wrong that has been done. This belabors an obvious point. Honor is vengeance, and vengeance is honor, but neither is about justice in the modern, egalitarian sense of the word. Killing a murderer or rapist doesn't bring back the dead; it won't undo the rape. It can however—contrary to the blathering of modern liberals—restore the sense of security of the raped. It restores the security of the tribe, by restoring the *frið* of the sense of things

¹²⁷Which, honestly, if the notice of his outlawry is not approached correctly, will probably happen anyway, if they perceive it to be done out of fear of reprisal. “*Oh, they outlawed him, after he did this, huh? Must be scared of getting in a fight. They're weak!*”

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being right within the protection of the *ørlog* of the *innangarð*. Vengeance, in this sense, is not a hot-blooded passion of anger. It is cold-blooded righteousness.

“The avenger plants his axe in the opponent's head, wipes off the blood in the grass, covers the body according to custom, and rides on his way. He has no lust for further dealings with the man; mutilation of the dead is...a thing so unique as to mark the doer of such a deed as an exception, that is to say, an inferior man...”

This level of cold-blooded, violent retribution is completely foreign to most modern Americans, outside of criminal gangs, some veterans who have witnessed it in regions they've been deployed to, and the Dungeons-and-Dragons induced fantasies of fat men, drinking beer and knocking holes in the walls of their low-rent apartments with cheap, Chinese made “battle axes,” in a pathetic game of playing the “barbarian.” Too often, even those who claim their own “*uncivilized barbarity*” however, rely on the more modern, progressive forgiveness of “*turning the other cheek*,” because “*he'll get what's coming to him*.”

To the tribe that exists in *frið* however, and recognizes that honor is survival, it is necessary for the offender to be punished at the hands of the offended. If the offended should somehow die—say from natural causes, or accidental death—that is not sufficient. The insult is still unanswered. Vengeance as a factor of honor simply consists of taking something from the offending party, of equal or greater value that what was lost in the precipitation of the offense. Whether it is something as severe as a murder or a rape, or as minor as a stolen chicken—or something more relevant to our modern life for that matter—one's honor has been taken. The honor of the *innangarð*—the values of the tribe's *ørlog*—have been offended. To remedy this; to restore the *frið* of the clan, one must have his honor back.

Blood does not need to be shed for an insult to endanger life by implying weakness. Honor can be lost as fatally by the blow of a harsh word, as by the edge of an ax. “*Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me*” is a fine song to teach schoolchildren that you want to force to live in harmony with strangers. It has no room in reality, when dealing with insults from those who are *utangarð*. Apology for an insult is great if it is sincere; when it is offered out of recognition that failure to apologize will result in a terrible swift vengeance, and when it is offered with adequate compensation for the wrong committed. When the offender continues to talk shit however, or continues to act offensively, then the apology was insincere, and honor remains offended until made right through action.

If a man is called a coward—and feels he is not—failure to respond effectively to disprove the lie, instead proves the truth of the assertion, in the eyes of all who witness the claim or hear of it. Failure to respond implies that the charge is true, and mere denial does nothing to disprove it unfortunately. If you allow someone to take something from you—even if it's just your public reputation—you might as well let them have your virgin daughter as well. You've already told them you're not going to resist.

Honor does not merely allow men to take vengeance. *It requires it*. An individual who breaks *frið* by attacking or wronging his clansman, in accordance with the values of the tribe, is cast out into the *utangarð*, as an outlaw—a *skaggormann*; he is outside the protection of the tribe. He incurs the same sentence if he fails to take up the cause of his brethren, when he is in need of assistance in dealings

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with those who are utangarð. In both cases, he has harmed his clansman, and violated frið. Likewise, if a man is dishonored, and does not move to avenge the wrong, if he suffers without calling for the assistance of the clan, he is just as guilty of a wrong. In all cases, he is weakening the security of the tribe by allowing the tribe to be perceived as weak and susceptible, in the view of those who are outside of the tribe. For the innangarð, vengeance is a duty. Frið *demand*s it.

This duty was understood throughout tribal societies, notably in Europe, until the rise of the feudal system and the imposition of universal cultural values and codified law. The first laws which mandated capital punishment for murder robbed the tribes of their honor, by taking away their right to avenge their clansman. It required the tribes under the authority of a king from outside of their own tribe, to submit their authority for internal affairs—their execution of their ørlög—to the state. Even then though, it was recognized by the law-writers and legislators that revenge was a necessity. These reformers had to provide a suitable substitute for vengeance. Restrictions could be made solely on the condition that “restitution” could be secured in some other way. Capital punishment in jurisprudence is an extreme example of this. It is vengeance in the interest of restoring frið, but it is for the restoration of the security of the state's society, not the mental and spiritual well-being of the family of the slain.

Today, as we witness the decline of legitimacy of the state; as we come to the understanding that the rule-of-law is not as equitable and egalitarian as we were conditioned by the state's institutions to view it, we return to the natural human understanding that the protection of our tribes—whether kith-and-kin or intentional tribe—is in our own hands. That realization leads us quickly to understanding the truth of a line from Ernst Junger (1895-1998 CE),

“long periods of peace and quiet favor certain optical illusions. Among them is the assumption that the invulnerability of the home is founded upon the constitution and safeguarded by it. In reality, it rests on the father of the family who, accompanied by his sons, appears with the ax on the threshold of his dwelling.”

You will necessarily rediscover the critical nature of honor—and the vengeance that it requires—to the security of our posterity, regardless of culturally-conditioned biases that find the concept abhorrent now.

Honor today is often viewed as an internal sense of righteousness, and is defined as adherence to one's personal code of conduct. This internalization of honor though, is a selfish deformation of what can rightfully only be understood as an external metric. Even the dictionary definition of honor indicates it is an external metric: “1. *Esteem due or paid to worth; manifestation of respect; hence, fame; credit; good name.* 2. *That to which esteem is paid...*”

Individual honor is a factor of loyalty to the innangarð. Honor is frið. Honor is inherently external, because frið demands that it be so. It is your reputation within the clan, because your honor defines the honor of the clan. The honor of the clan is built on the honor of the clansmen. A clan that does not seek restitution for wrongs—vengeance—is shamed. A man who fails to avenge an insult is a nidling—an outlaw. He is outside of frið because he has violated the security of the innangarð, by allowing an incursion of the utangarð to penetrate the bounds of the tribe's values.

Whether injury or “mere” insult, we have an obligation to those we love—for their protection—to

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seek remittance. If our clansman refuses to look for redress, we are forced by the *frið* we feel for the rest of the tribe to seek it for him, lest the tribe be perceived as weak by association with the coward.

This demand for remittance however, must be viewed through a cultural lens. While it may at one time, have automatically required a blood atonement no matter the insult—and while it almost undoubtedly will soon return to that—matters cannot be so drastic today. Seeking blood atonement for the theft of something today is a pretty certain way to end up imprisoned by the state. Even in the face of the declining power and legitimacy of the state, this actually weakens your tribe, by removing a member of the tribe from its presence.

This requires one of two alternatives—in the first place, we can continue to utilize the state's justice system as long as it stands, and as long as we feel adequate vengeance is received. In the second, we can still acquire vengeance on our own, but doing so demands a more circumspect approach. While it is imperative that the recipients of the vengeance—and everyone else—knows that we are responsible for the vengeance, it becomes equally important that the organs of the state's justice system are unable to actually place the responsibility for the act on the members of the tribe.

Even in the old days, it was understood that sometimes, seeking a life for a life in restitution for a killing, was not in the best interest of the tribe. In these cases, by common agreement with other tribes, or other clans within the same tribe, *frið* could be regained and restored through the payment of *wergild*¹²⁸, or the “man-price.” The price demanded for any individual life was actually codified in ancient laws, predicated on the position of the victim within—and value to—the tribe.

Maintaining the security of the tribe requires honor, and honor implies—requires—vengeance, but it also requires good judgment and a host of other character traits. Honor is about more than just vengeance. It is about avoiding shame in the eyes of the tribe. It is about the tribe, collectively, avoiding the violation of their own *ørlog*.

Defining the shame of dishonor—individually or collectively—requires an understanding of the tribe's specific cultural values, as well as the role of the natural hierarchy of tribal leadership and nobility. Hierarchy in this case is not some artificially created scale of worth, predicated on seniority or other superficial metrics. Hierarchy is a matter of perceived value to the tribe, within the conscience of the tribe. At the top, we have the naturally elected leadership of the clan—those individuals that the people of the clan naturally look to for leadership, by virtue of their perceived value to the tribe. They form an elite because of the perception that they best personify the values—the *ørlog*—of the tribe, as defined by their orthopraxy of the customs and traditions—and thus provide the greatest benefit to the tribe, in the minds of the tribe.

On the other hand, we have the greater quantity of those who hold loyalty to the tribe, and still adhere to the customs and values of the tribe, although they do not necessarily serve as a superb example of those values, as such. Men—and women—standing in leadership roles can be expected to have a better understanding of what is fitting—what behavior and actions form the *ørlog* of the tribe—because they are seen as the personification of those values, due to their adherence to those behaviors. The greater mass of the tribe's population, those who live within the customs and values of the tribe, but not so perfectly as to be said to personify those values, may be able to get through their life with

¹²⁸From the Anglo-Saxon/Old English “*were-*” or “man,” and “*-geld*,” or “money,” in this case referring to “debt” or “payment/price.”

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little lapses of the ørløg that are not so grievous as to warrant outlawry.

A leader of the clan serves as a moral exemplar of the values of the tribe in how he manages his relationships, both innangarð and utangarð, as well as how he deals with insult and injury. The more successful he is in this role, the greater his value to the tribe, and the more he contributes to the strength of the clan's frið. Even the clansman who does not aspire to a position of leadership, but wants the best for all of his people, must strive at all times to live as an embodiment of the values of his people.

A man of honor is dishonored if he fails to apply all of his energy to the implicit and explicit obligations of his position in the minds of his folk. It is not simply a matter of “filling” an official position, or of “playing a role.” The embodiment of the universal tribal value of frið demands instead that he live the values of the tribe as his very identity as an individual. It is not a role or a position; it is simply life.

Some neo-tribalist writers, like Jack Donovan, have attempted to identify the “virtues” of manhood, and this is a worthwhile effort. Jack's four “Tactical Virtues” of strength, courage, mastery, and honor, offer a valuable frame-of-reference for beginning to understand the role of honor in a tribal mind. They are unquestionably important virtues, but such definition also does a disservice to the ørløg of a tribe. As Gronbech pointed out, *“the barbarians know no virtues, because they have no minimum of morality. However high a man may rise above the common level, he never gets beyond his duty; for his duty grows with him.”* While the Tactical Virtues *are* important, they are no more or less important than the culture-specific virtues that form the foundation of the ørløg of the tribe.

Honor within the innangarð simply means living your life in a manner, not as you see fit individually, but in a way that provides the greatest value you are capable of providing to the tribe, collectively and individually, from the greatest to the meanest. There can be no hierarchy of values or virtues. There is no way, universally and absolutely, to label one virtue as greater than the others. The greatest honor—the “best” good for the tribe—is due to the person who provides the most benefit to the clan. The opposite then—the “worst” evil—is the niding who is without any honor at all in the eyes of the tribe. That individual though—he who is outside of frið with the tribe, by virtue of not adhering to and upholding the ørløg of the innangarð—is by definition utangarð, so in a very real sense, he does not even exist to the tribe, as a person. He is of no consequence. He is nothing.

In order to achieve honor, one must live his life in a way that embodies the spirit of the tribe. He must uphold the honor of the tribe in order to merit honor from the tribe. Focusing solely on strength and slaughter, violence and vengeance however, places too much of a restriction on the view of an authentic tribal life. It makes the clan appear to be some sort of “LARPish,” cartoon-like child's play of prepubescence. More is demanded for the honor of the clansman than simple skill-at-arms and a well-honed ax close to hand. The clansman's honor is upheld within the tribe not just by his willingness to face the foe, but also by his generosity, hospitality, helpfulness, wisdom, and by his nobility of manner and glad willingness to uphold the ethical standards of the clan.

The traditions, values, and customs of the tribe—the tribe's ørløg—form the entire ethical standard of behavior within the tribe. It does not matter what outsiders perceive to be “good” or “evil.” Certainly, any tribe is bound by their humanity to recognize some acts as immoral, and bringing dishonor on the perpetrator, whomever he might be; but the definition of how and why those acts are defined as immoral is entirely subjective to the tribe's particular values and the circumstances of environment.

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Murder is bad. Yet, if I murder someone outside of the innangarð, as we have seen, the tribe may not even recognize that individual as a human being, because they are utangarð, and since they do not recognize what the tribe defines as “human values.” We can see a shallow example of this in the modern Christian, Western view that jihadi terrorists are inhuman in their treatment of their captives, when they behead them, or burn or drown them. We do not see them as “human,” because they act in a way we define as “inhumane.” We seem to overlook the inherent irony that the very fact they can bring themselves to act in such an “inhumane” manner is because they do not perceive those they slaughter as “human.”

Even if my tribe's values view all people who are biologically human—*Homo sapiens*—to be “people,” and thus view the non-retributory, premeditated killing of any human as “murder,”¹²⁹ it may not mean that every act of premeditated killing is immoral. If I murder someone in vengeance, as we have seen I am doing it to protect the security of my tribe. An outsider may view it as immoral, but within the tribe—those protected by the act—it is the definition of honorable and virtuous.

Theft is bad? What if I am stealing goods from an enemy that directly impact his ability to project harm on my own people? What if I am stealing food from someone who has ample abundance and is keeping it out of greed, in order to feed my starving children? In that case, does not the morality of my obligation to provide for my children not trump the immorality of the theft?

The “Universal” Sin

Rape is bad. I cannot overcome my own cultural biases—my tribe's orlög—to condone rape, ever, under any circumstances. Period. Full-stop, end-of-story.

However...

I can set aside my biases—my understanding of “right” and “wrong”—long enough to look at historical examples with impartial objectivity, and see why other cultures were able to condone, or even encourage the rape of the women of defeated enemies.

On the one hand, bringing an unwilling captive into your tribe, and “marrying” her by fucking her, is within our cultural definition of rape. To that tribe though, it was—legitimately—not rape. It was done to strengthen the tribe, bringing in new bloodlines, and—through the web of relationships between mother and child, and child and mother—could result in the development of frið.

On the second side of the equation, dishonoring an enemy is just as effective as killing him, if it results in other tribes witnessing his weakness, and taking advantage of it. It still results in dead foes; it just achieves it without risking as many of your own clansmen. Raping his women is the ultimate dishonor. After all, if he can't even protect his women, what can he protect? Rape then, was a psychological weapon.

That having been said, rape is still evil, and I will gladly contribute to the effort to castrate and then disembowel any convicted rapist.

While there are undoubtedly some universal moral precepts that define part of the boundary between honor and dishonor, across the garðr that separates different tribes and cultures, it is important that we understand that honor is defined by the tribe, for the tribe and for each member of the tribe. Only the perception of those within our tribe—those with whom we share frið—should define how we view our

¹²⁹“the offense of unlawfully killing a human being with malice aforethought, express or implied.”

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own honor and ethics, but the perception of those with whom we share frið must define how we view our own honor and ethics. Each circle has its own honor. Honor is the innangarð of the clan. It is a spiritual representation of the value we bring the tribe. Honor is the patch of land on which I and mine reside, which we own, and on which we depend. Whether it is broad and blessed with rich soil, well-stocked with cattle and crops to feed the clan, or poor, stony, and barely adequate to support my own wife and children. We keep our honor—like our land—by force-of-arms, but also by wise providence, and care of all the chores and duties that require us to keep that honor, and that land, in good condition, to be of service to the clan.

We Write Our Own Codes

The subjectivity of a tribe's morality, to their own cultural understanding of the world provides the ultimate definition of “liberty.” It is a freedom of conscience, limited only by the parameters of shared belief. That does not mean though, that other tribes are obligated to “respect” that morality.

That is the essence of the division between innangarð and utangarð. This is not multiculturalism 101. If a neighboring tribe has an orlog that holds what my tribe views as evil, as sacred, there is not universal moral precept that says I have to “respect” those differences.

The clan across the mountain believes that slinging meth and pimping out little girls is completely okay. They don't have any moral reservations about these activities. I can respect the right of different cultures to have different beliefs, but I do not have to subvert my own morals to protect someone that is the definition of evil, according to my morals. Whether my tribe hikes over the mountain to burn them out of the cesspits, or we utilize an alliance with another clan—like local law enforcement—to burn them out of their holes, there is nothing wrong with destroying what you perceive as evil.

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Six
Forging the Pillars of Frið

“...a young prince must be prudent like that, giving freely while his father lives so that afterwards in age when fighting starts steadfast companions will stand by him and hold the line. Behavior that's admired is the path to power among people everywhere.”
--Beowulf, 20-25

A tribe is identified by its innangarð. The innangarð consists of those who exist inside the boundaries of the tribe's customs and values. Those customs and values form the ørløg of the tribe. By definition, every tribe will have it's own ørløg, and those customs and values will be derived from the shared experiences of the people of the clan. Since customs and values are inherently influenced by a number of environmental factors, including the past experiences of the individual members of the clan, the customs and values of the surrounding communities, and even the external, utangarð codified law of the state, there can be no way to describe exactly what customs and values define any given tribe. On the other hand, we do have the opportunity to look at the historical, anthropological, and archaeological records, and recognize commonalities that exist in the values of successful tribal societies across the human existence.

It is a cultural conceit of civilization to believe that the fact a given tribe no longer exists means it was unsuccessful. In fact, in many cases, the most successful tribes no longer exist, not because they were unsuccessful, but because they were too successful. The Celto-Germanic peoples of northern Europe, for example, are no longer extant as tribes. Instead, their tribes were so successful that they took over the trappings and valuable contributions of the defunct Roman imperial culture to achieve even greater success. Those tribal values led to the Renaissance and modern western culture as the dominant world culture for nearly a millennium. It is in fact, their success that leaves us where we are today. Rome too, was built on the foundation of the tribal societies that started the growth to empire. The Caliphate was built on the successes of the Arab desert tribes, sweeping out of the sandy vastness of the Arabian peninsula.

The successes of the Celto-Germanic tribes at the decline of the Roman Empire, rest on certain common cultural values and customs that offer the pillars upon which a return to the tribal social model for surviving the current decline of the American Empire can be built. By adapting these common values and customs to the environmental specifics of our own time, we may find ourselves in possession of the necessary tools to forge our tribes, one person, and one family, at a time.

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Self-Sacrifice

Our contemporary cultural mythology is built on a theme of self-sacrifice for the good of the tribe. For Christians, Christ sacrificed himself on the cross at Golgotha to make restitution for mankind's original sin. He underwent suffering, that those who believe in his message would be saved the pain of eternal damnation. That message of self-sacrifice, for the good of our people is one we must understand and emulate, if we are to build a successful tribe.

In pre-Christian northern mythology, we have the story of the god Tiw¹³⁰, who sacrificed his hand to the giant wolf Fenrir, for the sake of his tribe. According to the Icelandic myths, at some point in the mythological past, the gods decided to shackle Fenrir, but the wolf kept breaking the chains they placed on him. Eventually, one of them had the brilliant idea to have the dwarves forge a magic ribbon that looked like a simple silk ribbon¹³¹. Fenrir decided the gods were trying to trick him. He refused to be bound with the ribbon, unless one of them put their hand in the wolf's mouth, so, if it was a trick, Fenrir could take his hand in restitution. Vengeance is honor.

Knowing that it really was a trick, of course the gods refused. Finally, known for his courage, Tiw agreed. He stuck his hand in the wolf's mouth while the other gods bound the beast. When Fenrir struggled, but could not break loose, the gods refused to untie him. He devoured Tiw's hand. Again, we have a mythic exemplar of the characteristic of self-sacrifice for the benefit of the tribe.

Ancient religious myths aside, we also have a more recent historical example of the culture of self-sacrifice for the good of the tribe. Of the 56 signatories to the Declaration of the Independence, nine died during the course of the war they instigated. They did not live to see the nation they conceived. Seventeen others—1/3 of the total signatories—lost every penny they had. They really did pledge their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, for their cause, and many of them sacrificed them for the good of the people of their communities and their posterity.

- Phillip Livingston of New York, was one of the wealthiest men in America in 1776. His family was driven from their house by the Crown, and his estate was plundered. Livingston lost every shilling he had, and died in poverty two years later.
- John Hart, a delegate from New Jersey, lost his family—literally. His wife was on her sick bed at the signing of the Declaration. After signing, Hart rushed home, only to be forced to flee the British Army. He died in 1779, never having seen any of his 13 children since the day he fled.
- Perhaps one of my favorite tales of self-sacrifice of the Founders, is that of Thomas Nelson of Virginia. A resident of Yorktown, at the battle for that city, which ended the war, Nelson watched the artillery bombardment of the British-occupied city. According to the legend, when he noticed that the artillery were sparing his own home, which was serving as the headquarters of British commander General Cornwallis, he personally turned one of the guns on his own home and fired it, destroying his own home in the service of the Cause, and illustrating that he

¹³⁰Tiw is OE. Tyr in Scandinavia and Iceland is the same deity.

¹³¹The ribbon, called Gleipnir, was actually forged from six components: the sound of a cat's footfall, the beard of a woman, the roots of a mountain, the intellect of a bear, the breath of a fish, and the spittle of a bird. It is said that they dwarves used so much of these, in forging Gleipnir, that this is the reason none of them exist anymore.

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was willing as anyone to sacrifice self-interest for the Cause of his people. In addition to blowing his own home up, Nelson loaned the Continental Congress well over two million dollars, not a dollar of which was ever repaid.

- Three of the four delegates from South Carolina—Edward Rutledge, Arthur Middleton, and Thomas Heyward, Jr, were all imprisoned by the British when Charleston was captured in 1780. Beaten and tortured while imprisoned for a year, when they were released, they found their homes burned, and their plantations plundered and destroyed. The fourth delegate, Thomas Lynch, disappeared at sea, along with his wife, while sailing to the Indies in 1779, in search of medical care¹³².

The centrality of the value of self-sacrifice in western culture can be seen in our myths, our fables, and our history. For the tribe, the sacrifice of self—in all aspects—is one that must be stressed. This is the well-spring of frið, honor, and security. While self-sacrifice seems counterintuitive to the concept of survival, if we look at it in the broader scope of “*I’m going to die, but I want the values of my society to survive, so my posterity can enjoy them,*” then the importance of self-sacrifice becomes clear. Your tribe’s frið has to be strong enough that you can trust the rest of the tribe with the fate of your family, and *vice versa*. In order to protect the tribe, we have to be willing to put our lives on the line. We have to be willing to face danger; to run to the sound of the guns. If I don’t trust, that if I die, my family will be taken care of, am I going to be willing to put myself at risk?

We have to establish this value within our clans, whether kin-group or *sodality*. We have to establish a culture of self-sacrifice. Telling tales and myths that express it as a virtue are good, but ultimately, unless we live the virtue, it becomes apparent to everyone, including yourself, that it’s not actually a value.

There are any number of ways we can practice self-sacrifice for our tribe, demonstrating our internalization of the value, and providing the example for others in the clan to follow. In order to establish these methods though, we have to recognize sacrifice for what it is, and then internalize the intent within our actions.

Sacrifice is from Old French, where it was in turn, derived from the Latin *sacrificium*. *Sacrificium* is constructed from *sacer*, meaning “holy,” and “*ficar*,” meaning “to make.” Thus, it literally means, “*to make holy, or sacred.*” The dictionary definition however, offers a more specific application of the term: “1. *an offering to a deity of animal or vegetable life or of food, drink, incense, or the like;* 2. *Anything consecrated and offered to God or to a divinity.* 3. *Destruction or surrender of some desirable thing in behalf of a higher object, or devotion of it to a claim deemed more pressing; also, the thing so devoted or given up...*”

Sacred, likewise, is defined as “1. *dedicated; set apart in honor of, or as dear to, one as a god hence, devoted exclusively to a certain person or end...*” What we have in sacrifice, is the act of setting something that we value apart; giving it up, in honor of something we are devoted to. Self-sacrifice, is giving one’s self up, or a part of one’s self, in honor of something we are devoted to. In this case, the

132 The story of the South Carolina delegation is important in my clan. Family lore has it that we are somehow related to Lynch on one side. I actually have no idea what the relationship might be. It is certain however, that we are not descended from him, since he and his wife were childless.

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tribe and the family. It is an exchange with whatever divinity we believe in. We are offering something we value, in the hope that in return, we will gain some future benefit.

The most obvious self-sacrifice is our life, as in the example of Christ at Golgotha, and of the Founding Fathers. We have less extreme examples however, in both the Tiw/Fenrir myth, and the example of those of the Founding Fathers that lost their fortunes, but not their lives. There are self-sacrifices we can make, in our daily life, that create a culture of self-sacrifice, by forming a tradition of self-sacrifice within our ørlög.

Practicing Self-Sacrifice

We can experience self-sacrifice when we do effective physical conditioning training. We are offering a part of ourselves—our sweat, labor, and time; our pain and effort—in the hope that, when we need it later, we will have the strength, stamina, and skill to protect and provide for our families and friends. We are building future good fortune by exercising good judgment today, and preparing for future uncertainty despite the immediate costs. We are offering a gift to something we value—our people.

We can experience the same self-sacrifice, hosting a holiday party, rather than going on a vacation for the holidays. Perhaps, rather than going on a cruise, we should spend that money on hosting a party as an opportunity to build frið within the clan. Your wife will certainly be sacrificing the opportunity for relaxing on the cruise ship, being waited on hand-and-foot. She will be exchanging that for the chore of waiting on the guests instead. You may be sacrificing the peace of a happy, relaxed and contented wife, in exchange for the wisdom of creating an opportunity to get to know members of the clan better.

My wife and I hosted a holiday party last winter. I told my wife, “*Hey, we should host a New Year's Eve party. It will be a good opportunity to build frið with friends and family.*”

Then I made the necessary phone calls to invite three dozen people, with the instructions, “*You're welcome to bring something if you would like, but don't feel obligated. This is not a potluck. We're hosting it, and we're supplying food and beverage.*”

Our guests included a range of people from a newborn only a few weeks old, to at least one sixty-something grandfather. My wife spent two weeks preparing enough food to feed three dozen people. The morning of the party, I put meat in the smoker, and produced 30 pounds of smoked pork. We spent well over \$500 on the feast preparations, and my wife worked her ass off for two weeks. She is still delighted with the results. We became closer friends with the guests and forged closer relationships with family as well.

Gift-giving, as we will establish below, is a form of self-sacrifice for improving the frið of the tribe that is as ancient as tribes, and that we still recognize in our contemporary society. Hosting a feast or party is a form of gift-giving that was expected of leaders and the wealthy in tribal societies. In the Pacific Northwest, the indigenous Amerindian chiefs were expected to throw feasts that impoverished them. By recovering economically from the poverty, they demonstrated the traits that made them worthy chiefs.¹³³

Self-sacrifice is something we have to develop as a cultural value of our tribes, in order to strengthen frið, but self-sacrifice should also be viewed as a form of gift-giving to the tribe, because it strengthens the bonds of frið. As such, it follows certain rules that preclude the sacrifice from being taken advantage of, if we genuinely have frið with those we believe are within our innangarð. We are giving some part of ourselves—even if it is the material product of our labor—to the tribe. In that way,

¹³³It's actually where we get the word “potluck,” although the meaning has changed significantly.

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we are setting the example for the others to follow, reciprocating the gifts with their own gifts of self-sacrifice, even if theirs is not the same form as ours.

The Foundation of Fortune's Favor

In The Culture of the Teutons, Gronbech tells us,

“...besides honor, man needs something which in the ancient languages is called luck; our translation, however, which draws the sense of chance into the foreground, fails altogether to indicate the true force of the word. The associations of the modern term, stressing the sense of chance or fortune, all run counter to the spirit of ancient culture...”

Luck and fortune, in the context used here, are more correctly understood by the use of the ON word for them, “*hamingja*.”¹³⁴ The term represents the manifestation of the good fortune of an individual or a clan, and was understood to be less a result of chance than the result of the good judgment—the wisdom—of the individual or the clan's leadership. If we accept this definition of *hamingja*, then Gronbech's description of it as next to honor in importance makes complete sense. The results of good judgment—*hamingja* or good fortune—is a critical component of the honor of the tribe.

Wisdom—the practical application of knowledge through the good judgment of critical-thinking skills—is the virtue that underlies good *hamingja* for the clan in all things. In a fight, strength and valor are useless, if they are not applied appropriately, with the good judgment of tactical and strategic acumen. *Hamingja* as a result of wisdom is about far more than just politics and conflict in the honor of the clan though. Wherever we look in our lives and our history, we see the impact of *hamingja*, and the obvious impact that wisdom and good judgment have on the outcome of this fortune. It determines progress and advancement. Where *hamingja* fails due to poor judgment, good fortune is lost.

If a man's fields yield a rich harvest, and his cattle fatten on pasture and deliver healthy calves, he can be said to have good fortune. Whether this was because he was smart enough to offer appealing sacrifices and prayers to his gods, or because he was a skilled farmer, wise enough to study the sciences of agriculture and animal husbandry, is irrelevant. His good fortune, in either case, was a result of good judgment and wisdom.

The ancient Norseman, living on a rocky, barren strip of infertile coastline along a fjord, had little use for the *hamingja* of the fields, but his judgment in selecting a fishing spot would determine his fortune in the harvest nevertheless. An intelligent fisherman, wise enough to understand the needs and habits of the fish—or to offer good sacrifices to the gods—would gather a rich harvest to enrich his clan. A poor fisherman, who just sailed out into the fjord and dropped his nets wherever he happened to stop moving, would most probably remain a poor fisherman, because he lacked *hamingja*. He lacked good fortune, not because he chanced to be unlucky, but because he lacked the intelligence and foresight to study his occupation in order to learn to be effective.

In a modern context, the individual who advances and grows wealthy in his profession, increasing his profits—without violating his ethics to do so—can be said to enjoy good *hamingja*. He has good luck in his business dealings, because he exercises wisdom and good judgment in his affairs.

¹³⁴“huh-MING-yuh”

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As much as intellect though, hamingja depends on the wisdom of the frið of clansmen. When the people unite in an undertaking, the result depends on their ability to maintain a good working relationship. They need to exercise the good judgment to put personality conflicts and perceived unfairness aside; they need to be willing to sacrifice pride and ego for the common good of the hamingja of the clan.

The Need for Rede

The hamingja of the clan collectively, as a manifestation of the hamingja of the chieftain, does not rely solely on the intellect of that individual. The Middle English (ME) word *rede*, derived from the OE “*rǣd*,” means “to offer counsel.” It implies good counsel of course; a wise plan, and from an ethical standpoint, just and honest advice, in accordance with the values of the clan.

According to Gronbech, “*a redeless man is weakened by lack of will, lack of power, and lack of self-assertion.*” The chieftain relied not only on his own native intellect, but also on the rede offered by trusted advisers, whose wisdom and intelligence he respected. Failure to heed the counsel of other wise men of the clan, when such a failure resulted in bad hamingja for the clan, is a sure recipe for a fall from honor for the leader. He has put his own ego and pride above the good hamingja of the clan, and provided less value than his position demanded from the tribe. He has violated the trust of frið, and so violated the ørløg of the tribe, which demands a leader place the interests of the clan above his own ego.

Many preppers and survivalists today seem convinced that the only important role in a resilient community is to be pipe-hitting, bad ass gunslinger. This is unfortunate because, while everyone should possess the ability to defend themselves and their tribe, a monkey can be taught to shoot a gun, and to perform choreographed movements. There is a far greater need for wise counsel for the leaders of the community—and for leaders to recognize the value of such counsel—than there is for one more gunfighter. The person who steps into the leadership role of chief's counselor is fulfilling an important heroic role for his tribe.

The state of an individual's honor determines the hamingja of the individual and his family within the natural hierarchy of the clan as well. The same good judgment and luck that increases his material wealth, leads to respect and esteem from his clansmen, when he offers good rede to the rest of the tribe. His counsel is sought by others within the tribe, increasing his value in their eyes, because he offers greater value to the tribe. Hamingja is dependent on frið and honor, but the converse is equally true: good fortune determines frið and honor.

Hamingja is an expression of wisdom and intellect, but only when applied through the filter of *frið* and honor. Frið—the loyalty and trust of kinship that provides us an identity in the world—is an outcome of hamingja. It is a result of wisdom and good judgment in selecting our friendships and loyalties, and in determining how we should act towards our kith-and-kin, in accordance with our cultural ørløg.

Hamingja is the essence that inspires us and emanates from our person, forging our words and our deeds. It comprises all the requirements of family and clan. It is the manifestation of the existence of the clan: its power and potential, its achievements and aims. It is the character of the clan.

Hamingja is everything that defines our humanity. It is the entire homogeneous constitution of our self-identity, and it is both internal and external. Inward, as we've seen, it is good judgment and wisdom, in both our own choices and decisions, and in the rede we offer to our kinsmen, individually and collectively. Externally, that wisdom and judgment manifests as many of the virtues that strengthen

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the frið, honor, and security of our innangarð.

Hamingja is demonstrated externally through our wealth, as a result of good judgment and business acumen, but it also manifests in Donovan's Tactical Virtue of “courage.” Not in the common colloquial abuse of the term, as some sort of fearlessness that refuses to recognize danger for what it is, but rather by allowing us to understand the value that self-sacrifice offers our own self-interest within the tribe, by helping to ensure the honor and security of the tribe.

Hamingja determines our strength and our fitness, not only in our ability to fight in the defense of the tribe, but also in our ability to provide wealth and sustenance for the clan. Hamingja determines our strength and fitness not only through the wisdom and good judgment to eat healthy foods and to train for fitness, but also because the individual who possesses good health owes at least some of that to the good fortune of having ancestors who themselves exercised good judgment in their choice of breeding partners, in order to pass on desirable genetic traits.

Luck and Leadership

Gronbech explains, “The luck of the chieftain was of a far different volume from that of the peasant.” This greater volume and quality of good fortune provides the source of the natural hierarchy of the clan's society. The tribal leader has no formal power. He cannot fall back on any “divine right of kings” to maintain his position. The clan will only follow his guidance for as long as they feel it is of greater value than that of anyone else.

The clan's leader—whether called a chieftain, some other title, or no title at all—reigns at the sufferance of the tribe. In a natural hierarchy of merit, the chieftain must have authority to command, but he possesses nothing but his force of personality to support that authority. There is nothing to hold his position if he shows himself to be redeless. All of his power—and any privilege that results from that power—exists as a result of the perception of his superior hamingja. He has the leisure—and the need no less—to think greater thoughts, about greater things, in a broader context, than the peasant who needed only to focus on the immediate requirements of survival. The peasant who could find or create the space in his thoughts to think greater thoughts and educate himself, was bound for the nobility.

This provides a natural checks-and-balances between the power of the chieftain and the will of the clan. All of his authority rests on the clan's perception of the benefit that his good fortune—resulting from good judgment—spreads to the clan. If that fails for even a moment, he loses the legitimacy of his authority. The people will ignore his commands in favor of a new someone who offers greater fortune to the tribe.

This may seem to be a rather shallow authority to rest the future of the clan on, but in reality it is an institutional paradigm that no revolution or momentary fad can alter. In order to reach that level of exaltation within a tribe to be recognized as a chief or leader—for people to actively seek out one's rede—indicate the possession of wisdom, judgment, and concern for frið that is not shaken by mere whim. It requires a perception of a good fortune not only stronger and more lasting, but essentially different than that possessed by others.

With only a minimal effort, we can see this pattern in the natural aristocracy inherently advocated by the constitutional republican system. The educated voter will support the election of the best political candidate—the one who presents the best apparent hamingja. It is only through the destruction of an educated electorate, through the programming of the imperial culture's educational system, that this natural aristocratic tendency within the system falls apart.

Hamingja is only valid in its relation to the individual's frið with the rest of his innangarð. Hamingja

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is more than just critical-thinking skills. Good judgment is the foundation of hamingja only in its manifestation as the honor of the clan, because the honor of the clan constitutes the image of the world of the clan. Without that honor, there is no hamingja, because it is a relic of the culture of the tribe.

We have said that frið is identical to the definition of humanity. This is a literal truth that our culture tries too hard to destroy. All that defines us as human bears the mark of kith-and-kin. A person has no place in the world except as a member of his innangarð. Even at his most innermost and individual level of identity—his conscience and moral judgment—he bears the stamp of friends and family. In the supposed security of modern culture, we can move away from friends and family. We can create a whole new image of ourselves, but the morals and ethics we display in this pretend characterization are still relics of our previous experiences.

We Are Who We Come From

This is something that took me a long time to recognize in myself. After twenty-plus years living away from my kith-and-kin, I could no more erase the stamp of my childhood friends and family than I can erase the stamp of the military on my personality. My judgment, my intellect, my morality, my ethics, and even my health and fitness are all direct results of the influences of my past.

Whatever good fortune—hamingja—we possess is not ours through any effort of our own, but exist as gifts from those who have created us. The work ethic that so many claim as an individual trait is, in fact a gift of the influences of our youth. Whether our parents were hard workers who impressed that ethic onto us, or they were lazy, shiftless, no-good pieces of shit, and we learned our work ethic from seeing their failures, we owe them a debt of gratitude for the lessons we learned.

The intelligence we utilize to make our fortunes in the world is also a gift. It is a gift of the formal and informal education we received from our mentors in our youth. It is also a gift of the genetic material passed down to us from our ancestors, through the wisdom of the choices they made in whom they married and/or bred with.

It has become increasingly popular among preppers and survivalists to demean their own families—parents, siblings, and cousins—for their lack of wisdom to have the foresight to prepare for tribulations. This is ignorant. Any foresight you have is a result of the education you received from your experiences with them, even if indirectly. The first place you should be looking for your tribe, is to the people around you already.

In order to find your place within your tribe, you have to first be willing to sacrifice your ego to the frið of the clan. Contrary to the desperate pleadings of the greed-stricken rugged individualists, there is nothing “un-American” about this. It is a cultural value that is one of the defining traits of “*traditional American values*.” It is only the modern materialist culture that robs us of our understanding of this, by pushing us to identify our own greedy interests as the paramount virtue of individualism.

When we marry and raise children, the family is an expression of this clan loyalty and frið. The morality, the sense of righteousness, and the understanding of our cultural values that defines our place in our society and community, is dependent on the feelings of neighborliness and fraternity expressed by the kinship of frið. This feeling of loyalty to kith-and-kin is the basis of all spiritual life, regardless of religion. It is the sole means of finding a connection to the larger world. It is only through our love of our kinsmen—and the discipline of suffering in self-sacrifice that expresses that love—that we can find the source of our good fortune. The hamingja of the individual can only be found within the ørlög of the clan, because the ørlög of the clan is the soul of the individual identity.

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Within the above definitions of hamingja, there are several important qualifiers to achieving good fortune through wisdom and judgment. First is the requirement to know and understand the *ørlog* of our innangarð. In a kin-group clan, that understanding comes as a result of being raised within the culture of the family and friends we are surrounded by. Learning from the examples of those around us is unavoidable, and that is a critical aspect of building a culture of wisdom and good judgment; setting the example for those around us, by exercising critical-thinking skills, rather than relying on emotion in our decision-making is essential to establishing that culture within our *ørlog*.

Building a sodality of good, loyal folk who personify the shared *ørlog* of the founders' intent, as expressed by the by-laws and established custom of practice within the tribe, is a product of good hamingja. It is an expression of the good judgment required to select appropriate candidates that will contribute to the good hamingja of the clan, and the wisdom needed to develop a valid selection and initiation process to bring new members into the innangarð while weeding out less desirable candidates.

These qualifiers may include the religious beliefs and practices of your clan's culture. Pure logic and reason may—almost certainly will in fact—require overlooking or ignoring some aspects of religious faith. Doing so could be a violation of the values of your community culture though. Practicing flawless logic would not be a reflection of the customs and values of your tribe in that case. Ignoring this transgression might seem to benefit the tribe in the short-term, but in the long-term it will damage the *fríð* of the tribe, resulting in poor hamingja for the tribe.

Orthopraxy of morality is important. It is the expression of the values of the tribe through the established customs and traditions of the tribe. This means that, regardless of the origin of their belief, everyone in a tribe has to live in accordance with the same *ørlog*. These shared customs and values are what define the boundaries of the innangarð. Anyone not adhering to that orthopraxy is *utangarð* by definition. They are living outside of the laws of the tribe. They are *skoggarmann*. This necessity to remain within the orthopraxy of the tribal *ørlog* is a crucial consideration when we begin discussing the role of logic and reason in establishing a culture of wisdom within our tribes.

An example of this might be someone who belongs to a Christian sect—or even just a family—that believes in the strictest observance of the Sabbath. They complete all of their Sunday chores before dusk on Saturday,¹³⁵ including fixing all the meals for the following day, and do nothing except worship until Sunday at dusk. A particularly good opportunity may arise—picking up a trailer load of free building materials, just as they've decided to build a new barn—but only if they take advantage of it right now, even though it is Sunday afternoon. To many of us, the answer is obvious—go get the fucking building materials. God will understand, because He wants us to succeed. For someone from a family with such a strong belief in the sanctity of the Sabbath though, the benefit of going and getting the materials is outweighed by the damage of violating the orthopraxy of the *ørlog* of their cultural faith.

For this reason, while it is not necessarily true that members of a tribe must share the same religion, it may be important, depending on the depth of observance of the customs and traditions of the religion,

¹³⁵I recognize that a more appropriate example would be the observance of the Sabbath on Saturday, but the fact is that most Christians today observe it on Sunday, if they observe it at all. Sunday is the more culturally relevant example. If you observe the Sabbath on Saturday, more power to you, not my belief system anyway. The example is still valid.

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versus the ørlög of the innangarð. In the early days of Christianity's spread into northern Europe, there were villages and families that had both converts to Christianity and those who continued to follow their ancestral faith. The frið of their cultural ørlög allowed the converts to recognize their loyalty to kith-and-kin as more important than strict orthopraxy of the new faith, for at least the first couple of generations.

If your beliefs are such that you cannot abide anyone not sharing those beliefs, then it is absolutely critical that everyone in your tribe be of the same faith. You define your innangarð by the orthodoxy of shared belief. By definition, you cannot be in frið with someone who does not share your beliefs, regardless of their orthopraxy. For a Christian who believes that it is a core requirement to proselytize and bring others to Grace, it will be impossible to develop legitimate frið with a devout atheist or agnostic who is annoyed—or even offended—by “Bible Thumpers,” regardless of other shared customs and values or kinship. The same would apply to pretty much any non-Mohammedan in an Islamist tribe. “Convert or die, or subject yourself to dhimmitude” is a conversation that is hardly conducive to building frið.

Self-Sacrifice for Hamingja

I have a number of very dear friends who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints—Mormons. One of the tenets of the Church's orthopraxy is the importance of tithing 10% of your gross income. This is a Biblical tenet that supposedly exists across Christendom of course, but the Mormons are the only sect that I'm aware of where members sit down annually, with their bishop, and review their yearly finances to ensure that they haven't somehow fallen short in their duty to God and Church.

The first Mormon girl I ever date was—if you will excuse the pun—poor as a church mouse. When she explained to me that she had to cancel a date to go meet with her bishop for this reason, I—as an outsider—was appalled. This was a girl who made just over minimum wage. She had trouble balancing things to cover her rent, car payment, and groceries some months, and she was handing over one-tenth of what she made to the Church!

Her explanation of course, was a reflection of her core beliefs—her ørlög. “By giving God back his share of what he has given me, he returns that to me in greater abundance, when I need it, in whatever form I need it.” From a perspective of pure logic, that's crazier than a shit-house rat, of course. When we consider it from the perspective of the ørlög of the culture of her faith though, it makes perfect sense. If we look at it through the filter of the cultural value of the Church doctrine, it's sound example of self-sacrifice, in accordance with cultural social mores. It is a sacrifice of giving up some money, in exchange with God for something more important to them, in the form of His blessings.

To someone utangarð to the Church community, it's still bat-shit crazy, but we don't matter. It is far better that she maintain frið with the culture of her community of kith-and-kin than with some dude she dated for six months, almost two decades ago. By maintaining frið, she's probably found a husband who shared her cultural values, by this time. She's probably living a full and rewarding life, within the community of her Church and kith-and-kin. That is *not* bat-shit crazy.

At the same time however, I count among my closest kith-and-kin, very devout Christians who recognize the biblical concept of “free agency.” While they will gladly share their testimony with me, they do not feel it incumbent upon themselves to convert me. While they willingly admit they would prefer to see me “saved,” they believe in the Truth of their faith, and believe that if their god wills me to accept salvation, he will guide me there. They pray for my salvation, and tell me so, without actively

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trying to force my conversion. They simply love their lives in a manner that reflects their beliefs.

While it must be filtered through our clan's cultural *ørlog*, which may alter the form of logic and reason in ways that an outsider would not recognize as “pure,” they fundamental skills of critical thinking are still the pillars upon which we build a culture of good judgment and the resulting *hamingja*. There are estimated to be over eight million species of animal life on Earth today.¹³⁶ Of all those millions of species, humanity appears to be the only one that bears the capacity for complex, abstract reasoning. It is what makes us human, and every human—absent some limiting brain injury or defect—is capable of it.

The problem is that, while we are all capable of reason, most do not practice it. Even in “advanced” Western industrial society, few people actually think clearly, using the established forms of logic and reason. Of those who do manage to do so occasionally, we still fall back into the trap of thinking poorly most of the time. We base our responses to situations and our decisions on emotion and superstition, rather than on verifiable facts and the reasoning of logic.

Critical Thinking for Good Fortune in Tribe Building

Perhaps you've decided that circumstances require you to develop an intentional tribe. You've sat down with a few close, trusted confidantes, and begun writing a set of guild by-laws. You've been hanging out with some of the local prepper/survivalist groups, and the local chapter of Oathkeepers, trolling for potential recruits for your merry band.

One evening, a dude rolls up, expressing an interest in joining your burgeoning little tribe. You don't know him, and you don't know anything about him, but he's dropped some hints, over the course of several conversations, that seem to indicate a background as some sort of bad ass special operations, door-kicking pipe-hitter. He's big, and apparently fit; dude looks like he eats Olympic barbells and shits kettlebells. He's pimping a Multicam soft-shell park resplendent with Gadsden Flag and Pork-Eatin' Crusader morale patches. You could think, *“Aw, hell yeah! There's strength in numbers, and this dude is obviously one bad motherfucker! We'll make him our training dude. He's obviously some sort of operator, so he knows what he's doing!”*

He fits your cultural image of what a bad ass special operations, door-kicking pipe-hitter looks like. He's dropped some terminology that you recognize, since you've read the Ranger Handbook, and he's got the same Multicam soft-shell that you own. He's hanging out at the prepper meeting, and he's an Oathkeeper. He's got the same morale patches that you do; you obviously have shared values, right? You could hand him a copy of the group's charter and by-laws to sign, teach him the secret handshake, and congratulate him on his new promotion to “Training Guy.”

Or, you could practice some fucking critical-thinking skills! You could just accept him, based on appearances that are comfortably favorable, based on your cognitive biases and ambitions, or you could improve the chances for a favorable outcome for your little tribe, and practice some logical reasoning to determine if he's actually a good prospect. You could use your critical-thinking skills to recognize that the only way to build *frið* with someone is to spend time with the, observing them observe the customs and traditions of your *ørlog*. You could use good judgment to recognize that you need to establish an initiatory process for your guild, in order to not just teach the customs and traditions, but to test candidates for their internalized understanding of the *ørlog*.

¹³⁶<http://unep.org/newscentre/default.aspx?DocumentID=2649&ArticleID=8838>

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Good decision-making is critical to developing good hamingja, both individually and tribally. While it must be accomplished within the constraints of the *ørlog* of your clan, this can be achieved while consciously acknowledging when those customs and values impose on pure logical reasoning. Good decision-making is simply the art and science of accurate analysis of available information, to determine an appropriate course-of-action. Recognition of the impact of your own cognitive biases, as a result of the *ørlog* of your tribe is simply part of that accurate analysis.

Within our tribes, it is critical that we develop a culture that values critical-thinking, logic, and reason, within the constraints of our customs and values. This is expressed in the medieval educational process of the *Trivium*. The trivium is an ancient, systematic method of teaching critical-thinking used to derive correct answers from available data. Incorporating it into your tribal orthopraxy is a crucial part of developing your culture of good judgment.

Merlin's Magic

Most Americans, regardless of their religious, ethnic, or geographic background, possess at least a passing familiarity with the Celtic mythic hero Merlin, the wise, magical mentor and adviser to King Arthur. Whether that familiarity is through the culturally esoteric study of Geoffrey of Monmouth's **History of the Kings of Britian**, and the fanciful recreations of older myths by Malory and Tennyson, or through the ironic exploitation of the Arthurian Cycle in modern popular cinema, if there is an American over the age of twelve who's not familiar enough with Merlin to have a mental image of him in their imagination, I would be greatly surprised. What is startling to many though—whose entire imaginative¹³⁷ understanding of Merlin has been formed from cinema—is that whether Merlin was a historic person, or is entirely the creation of legend,¹³⁸ the role of the wizard in history was not only real, but influential to a degree that they still impact us today.

From the practical applied knowledge of astronomy, botany, and thinking skills of the Paleolithic and Neolithic hunter-gatherer bands, to the same broad range of skills in the pagan priesthoods of early pre-industrial agricultural societies, there has always been a very real, very practical role for the professional wizard. This doesn't refer to the garden variety fraud represented by the modern fortune-teller and palm readers that we see at the county fair, wearing ridiculous costumes that are the illegitimate offspring of some jackass's imagination of Caliphate-era Arab garb, crossed with the same idiotic imaginary reconstruction of a medieval gypsy's costume, while muttering over a “crystal” ball made of glass, blown in some Chinese slave-labor factory south of Beijing. Nor does the term refer in this case, to the modern neo-paga, running “sky-clad”¹³⁹ through the woods, performing some ritual concocted by Gerald Gardner, less than a century ago, in his attempt to seduce younger women to get naked in public.¹⁴⁰

Instead, the Stone Age shaman, pagan priest, or Carolingian Court counselor all fulfilled the critical

137I use the term not in the contemporary sense of something “*made up*,” but rather in the classical definition. The word “imagination” is Old French (OF) meaning, “*the faculty of the mind to form and manipulate images*.” I am referring to the picture in the mind—influenced by all of our previous experiences and education—of a subject.

138A very compelling case for the historicity of Merlin was made by the grandnephew of Leo Tolstói, Nikolai, in his 1985 survey, **The Quest for Merlin**. Mr. Tolstói holds a MA in Modern History, and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, and an Honorary Associate Member of St. Antony's College, at Oxford University.

139“Sky-clad”=“naked.” You're “clad” by the sky.

140Gardner (1884-1964 CE) is often credited as the “Father of Wicca.” Regardless of your personal thoughts on the religion, most of the Wiccans I've met gleefully admit that Gardner was mostly just an old pervert.

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social and political role of providing good rede to their societies' leaders. While it was undoubtedly well-marketed through incantation and prophetic lingo, the reality of the profession seem to have been that the successful wizard owed his professional achievements less to “magic” than to good, old-fashioned critical-thinking through logic and reason. The “magic” angle, whether attributed to the gods or to ritual and grimoire, served as a sort of professional self-defense mechanism.

In his **Daily Life in the World of Charlemagne**,¹⁴¹ French Historian Pierre Riche explored the development of the profession as a result of the decline of the Roman Empire. Riche describes the rise of the monastic education in decline-era Europe, where the education of young clerical aspirants focused almost solely on scriptural and theological issues in the early part of the period. At the same time, the education of young aristocrats not destined for the service of the Church focused even more tightly on the sciences of war and government.

The Wizard's Grimoire

The traditional professional reference work of medieval wizardry is commonly known as the **Picatrix**. Despite being a historic European name for the work, it is likely a misnomer. The 400+ page tome was originally written in the late Caliphate-era in Arabic, with the title **Ghayat al-Hakim**, or “The Aim of the Sage.” A text covering astrology and magic that scholars may have been translated into Latin as early as the first half of the 10th century, it also explicitly describes the importance of the wizard developing a well-rounded education in a broad variety of subjects that he might be called on to provide guidance about for his sponsor. This ranged from the grammar, logic, and rhetoric of the Trivium, to those elements that formed the more advanced Quadrivium—arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy—as well as more specific branches of knowledge, including agriculture, navigation, medicine, and the natural sciences, as they were understood at the time. The message of the **Picatrix** is that the wizard needed to understand as much of the totality of scientific learning that had survived the fall of the classical world.

Combined with the later efforts of the Church to recover and salvage much of the written knowledge that was still salvageable, we can see that this written exhortation to learn all that could be learned was one of the pillars that served as the foundation of the rebirth of classical knowledge and philosophy that was the Renaissance. While short-sighted neo-tribalists tend to focus on the cool-guy aspects of recreating the warrior traditions of our barbarian ancestry; while most “Three Percenters,” survivalists, and preppers are focused on acquiring the latest Multicam nylon, and three dozen rifles per person, those are not the things that ensure the long-term survival of your cultural values. The simply provide the brawn for the execution of tasks determined by the wizard's brain.

Not everyone is a warrior. While even the druids like Merlin were undoubtedly expected to know how to defend themselves and their people, including the hearth-and-home of the village, that was not their primary contribution to society. Wizards brought good hamingja to themselves and their tribes, not through strength and force-of-arms, but through critical-thinking skills and education. It is just as important within our modern tribes, that we create and encourage a culture of reason, logic, and education, as it is that we create cultures of strength, valor, and self-sacrifice.

Outside of these, education of the period was largely of the hands-on, apprenticeship model. It was only in those few families where there was an active attempt to hold on to the better of the classical values of imperial cultural contributions, that the older curriculum of a well-rounded model of education and knowledge-seeking retained a hold on the imagination. Riche points out that as these

141Riche, Pierre; **Daily Life in the World of Charlemagne**; 1988

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models continued, those who learned the inquisitiveness inherent to classical philosophical methods, including the mental and academic rigor of logic and clear thinking, often found themselves in a dangerous social position as the Church gained more power. The common suspicion of the medieval period, among many within the clergy and aristocracy, that questioning the truth of Church canon, was a result of dabbling in Satanic magic, may have been strictly political gamesmanship, but it makes it abundantly obvious how a small subculture of intellectuals, armed with a unique brand of unusual knowledge and critical-thinking skills, could have emerged as a professional class that leveraged their abilities to increase their personal and professional good fortune.

Generosity and Hospitality

One of the nearly universal tribal values that defines frið across cultures, is generosity. This may range from the ancient European tribal custom of a chieftain maintaining an open table for travelers and for clansmen in need, to the concepts represented in the Pashtun code of *Pashtunwali* as *melmastia* and *nanwatai*.¹⁴²

Melmastia requires showing hospitality and respect to all visitors, regardless of race, religion, or other status, without hope of remuneration or favor. Nanawatai is derived from a Pashto verb meaning “to go in,” and refers to the protection offered a visitor against enemies. Visitors who claim asylum, even unwittingly, are protected against all costs, including the loss of life of members of the clan, because of the cultural requirement of hospitality inherent in the Pashtunwali. Honor requires it.

Although it initially seems contradictory to the concept of the survival welfare of the tribe to give food away to strangers, or to fight and die for someone not of your own innangarð, when we recognize the importance of hamingja to success, generosity and hospitality become increasingly critical aspects of the ørløg of the successful tribe.

Hamingja, as we have seen, is the good fortune that occurs as a result of the application of the wisdom of critical-thinking skills, filtered through the lens of the frið of kinship that results from adhering to the values and customs of the ørløg of your innangarð. Hamingja can be seen as the seat of identity within the clan. It is a metric of value within the perception of the clan, but it is not simply a tool for advancing within the tribe socially. It is also a tool for advancing the tribe socially within the world. The hamingja of the individual reflects the honor of the tribe, because it reflects the respect that the tribe offers him, providing his identity in the tribe. It is his worth to the tribe. Good hamingja improves and strengthens the frið of the clan, because it helps increase the survivability of the clan.

Generosity within the tribe, to those with whom you share frið, but who may—whether through poor judgment or lack of opportunity—not provide the same level of wealth and providence for the tribe as you do, is an expression of hamingja as good judgment and wisdom. It increases the strength of the tribe, both materially—by ensuring that members off the clan don't grow ill and weak from exposure, malnutrition, or other want, and spiritually, by increasing the bonds and obligations of loyalty between those within the innangarð. The wisdom in this can be seen by contrast with the expressed intent of so many in the preparedness and survival community, of “*I'm preparing for my family. If you ain't smart*

¹⁴²*Melmastia*=“hospitality.” *Nanawatai*=“asylum.” Although these concepts are often inaccurately described as “Pashtunwali,” in reality, these are simply two parts of the overall “Way of the Pashtuns.” Pashtunwali is more accurately identified as the ørløg of the Pashtuns. It is the entire unwritten—but intrinsically understood—ethical code and traditional lifestyle that the Pashtuns have observed since prehistoric times.

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enough to prepare, I'm not going to support you!"

It is only through forging a tight-knit community with shared values and customs that the dangers of the declining empire can be overcome. Unfortunately, even as they recognize that “*shit just ain't right*” in the midst of the ongoing financial and commercial collapses, and the increasing lack of legitimacy of the state, too few people have the will to exercise their foresight by prudent preparation. They lack *hamingja*, because they lack good judgment. If we are in *frið* with them though, their negative *hamingja* will come back to bite us on the ass if we choose to violate that *frið* by outlawing them solely for a lack of prudence. Honor demands otherwise.

On the contrary, the person of honor will ensure that he is stockpiling and preparing, not only for himself and his immediate family, but for as many of his kith-and-kin as he is capable of providing for. This is one reason why the wisdom of good judgment tells us that simply stocking up on canned goods, freeze-dried foods, and a case of MRE for six months is inadequate. On the contrary, by preparing for a longer duration situation, from providing for the ability to raise gardens and livestock, to the ability to fabricate expedient housing for those of your clan forced by circumstance to abandon their homes, is the type of generosity required by the honor of *frið*. The more people of our kith-and-kin that we can provide for, even on short rations for a time, the greater our honor within the clan—and for the clan—because we are increasing the good fortune of *hamingja* for the clan by increasing its strength physically and numerically.

At the same time, hospitality to strangers first appears to be contrary to the very concept of *innangarð* and *utangarð*. If they are strangers, then by definition they cannot be *innangarð*, so why waste our resources on *utangarð*?

There are actually two parallel mythic teachings that express the wisdom of hospitality. In the Christian tradition, we have the parable of the good Samaritan coming to the aid of a stranger along the road, left beaten, stripped of his clothes, and half-dead. Whether we view this like Saint Augustine did, as an allegory for Christ as the Samaritan, offering hospitality by saving the *utangarð* souls of non-Hebrew Gentiles, or simply as a moral exemplar for all of the teachings of the Gospels, is irrelevant. It is a teaching that guides believers to provide aid and sustenance for strangers in need, no different than the Pashtunwali concept of hospitality embodied in the principle of *melmastia*.

To the North, in the Icelandic skaldic poem **Havamal**, which is attributed within myth to be teachings of Odhinn, we see repeated exhortations for hospitality to strangers and guests:

“Fire is required by one who's entered

and is chilled to the knee;

food and clothes are required to anyone

who's journeyed over the fells.”

“Water is required by one come to dine;

a towel and friendly welcome;

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a kind disposition, if it's to be had,

speech and silence in return.”¹⁴³

In both mythic examples, the case is made that generosity is important. Most often, we see this importance explained because the guest may be the particular deity come in the flesh, to test our character according to our orthopraxy of *ørlog*.

At a more pragmatic level however, there may be a far more worldly explanation for why hospitality is a critical aspect of all tribal *ørlog*, for any stranger that offers no indication of ill will. That reason is prudence. The stranger may be a member of a strong tribe. Rude behavior and ill manners may offer an insult that his tribe feels honor-bound to remedy, leading to a fight that your tribe—no matter how strong—cannot afford. That is a detriment to the good fortune of your tribe, brought about because you failed to exercise the good judgment to not be an asshole.

At the same time, albeit on the opposite side of the coin, the stranger may be a member of a tribe that—while not strong enough to offer any real threat to your own—offers great benefit to your own, if peaceful ties can be forged with them, whether for trade and commerce, political or military alliance, or even social interaction, possibly leading to future ties of *innangarð*, as young people of the two clans come together in marriage. In either case, the honor and security of your tribe is strengthened, not by being an aggressive bad ass, but through the generosity of hospitality. Good judgment offers good *hamingja*.

The Ring-Giver

Whether the Pashtun concept of generosity reflected in *melmastia*, the hospitality to a stranger exemplified in the Christian hero of the good Samaritan, or the exhortations of Odhinn within the ***Havamal***, adherence to the ancient universal human value of generosity expressed through the custom and tradition of gift-giving is not only one of the fundamental foundations of human commerce, it is among the most important forms of self-sacrifice available to us for strengthening the bonds of *frið* with friends and family. Gift-giving allows us a powerful tool for building a culture of generosity and good *hamingja* within our tribes.

Gift-giving can be viewed as a transference of the good fortune of *hamingja* from one clansman to another, in a material form. When an article of value is passed hand-to-hand, a fusion of *hamingja* takes place; metaphorically speaking, the two fortunes are bound together. Exchange of gifts has long been recognized as the ideal method of sealing a friendship and alliance. Social status and value is predicated—at least in part—by one's usefulness to those with whom he exchanges gifts, because those gifts represent the gift of some of one's honor within the clan and within the wider world, to the recipient.

143Verses three and four. From the Orchards translation, Penguin Classics, 2011.

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Gettin' Taken for a Ride

Although modern commerce castigates barter as an inconvenient and less evolved primitive precursor to modern commercial trading, in reality it should properly be seen as an entirely different type of exchange. This is the problem that arises with most of the currently espoused barter schemes and plans among preppers and survivalists.

People are too invested in the declared value of the US dollar, as determined by the wizards of Wall Street—people who are utangarð for most of us—and in not “getting taken” by the people they define as their own innangarð. When you have to be concerned about “gettin' took” by family and friends, either you need to reconsider how you define your innangarð, or you need to take a serious, introspective look at your own values.

Gift exchange, as a form of barter, ignores the market price of goods—their value as expressed in dollars—as anything but a remote, ancillary consideration, if at all. Instead it takes into consideration the other party's known or suspected needs. While barter is generally expected to involve at least some friendly confrontation and haggling—or if the theories of many survivalists writers are to be believed, a great deal of adversarial confrontation and haggling—and an explicit *quid pro quo* is sought, even among close and trusted friends, there should be no such frið-destroying confrontations in gift-exchange.

There is a reason that even the mention of an expectation of *quid pro quo*¹⁴⁴ is culturally taboo in the exchange of gifts, even in modern consumer culture. An exchange is certainly expected implicitly, but even a child learns early that “*the joy is in the giving.*” To openly express that expectation can be the gravest of insults, and for good reason.

Gift-exchange requires that one never express any expectation of a gift in return, because it is a transfer of some of the hamingja—the honorable effects of good fortune—from the giver to the recipient. If frið exists between the two; if they share the same cultural values, the implicit expectation that there will be an exchange is given. To imply that the recipient does not implicitly understand this would be an insult to his honor. It implies that the recipient lacks an understanding of the ørlög of the innangarð. Either he is actually utangarð, or he is so low on the hierarchy of the tribe's recognition that it is assumed he doesn't even know what the customs and traditions are.

The giving of a gift certainly presupposes a debt of gratitude that can only be discharged through the reciprocal giving of a gift, but explicit expression of such expectation destroys the honor of the transfer of hamingja and the attendant honor of both parties is besmirched, damaging the trust of frið that exists within the community of innangarð. It changes the character of gift-giving from self-sacrifice to mere commerce. The importance of this in tribal societies can be seen in the Celto-Germanic cultures of ancient Europe, by the reference to a chieftain or warlord—the man recognized to possess the greatest hamingja in the clan—with the kenning “*beaggifa*” meaning “gold giver” or “ring giver.” While modern cultural prejudices view this as the chief “buying” his position through the bribery of the warriors of the tribe, that is all too shallow a view of the importance of the exchange.

The gift of gold—or weapons and armor, or women, or food and drink, or whatever other gift of value that the chieftain offered—implied the expectation of a gift in return, but the gift that was expected was two-fold: first, the honor of having his greater hamingja recognized, which included not

¹⁴⁴Latin. Literally, “this for that.” It implies an exchange of explicitly equal value.

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just his material fortune, but also his wisdom and battlefield valor that was required to earn that fortune, and second, as a result of that honor, the tribesmen were expected to demonstrate their continued loyalty and trust by continuing to look to him for leadership; they were expected to remain in frið with their chieftain and the clan.

Gratitude is a highly-developed, universal in human cultural understanding. The gratitude implicit in gift-giving is gratitude for the self-sacrifice represented by the gift. It can only be meaningful if it represents the transfer of a portion of the giver's hamingja and honor to the recipient. This is achieved by understanding the recipient's needs, relative to your own. Think of the young child who is castigated for picking out a Tonka truck as a birthday gift for his mother, when Daddy take him gift-shopping for her birthday: *"We're buying a gift for your mother, not for you. You would like a Tonka truck, but what do you think your mother would like?"*

The self-sacrifice of gift-giving requires honesty, compassion, and fairness—the feelings of frið. It requires being honest with yourself about what your kinsman needs and wants. It requires the compassion of generosity, but it also requires fairness, and the compassion of understanding your clansman's limits as well. Being overly generous when giving the gift, or not generous enough when reciprocating the gift, beings the entire exchange into infamy.

The giver who offers a gift of such value to the recipient that both parties know there is no way the recipient can ever balance the equation, insults the honor of the recipient. That is not a gift; it is charity. Such largess is a gift that can never be reciprocated, so it's not really a gift at all; it's a hand-out to make the giver feel good about himself. Rather than improving the frið of the clan, it engenders resentment and envy—or dependency, in which case it may even lead to the unjustified sense of entitlement we see in welfare dependency today. In return however, the recipient who chooses not to reciprocate, or does not reciprocate by offering his clansman a gift that similarly fulfills some actual need of his clansman, violates the implicit debt of gratitude. This ignores the virtue of reciprocal self-sacrifice, and damages the frið they presumably share. Actions like this, from either side, indicate a lack of shared ørlög—one party or the other is not living the same orthopraxy of values as the other—and is an indication that whatever frið was believed to be present may have been false.

We can perceive that gift-giving is a transfer of the hamingja and honor of one of the clan to another. This strengthens the frið of the clan by increasing the hamingja—good fortune and wealth—of the recipient, and the honor—and thus also the hamingja—of the giver, by demonstrating his already superior good fortune, evidenced by his ability to afford to give some of it away. This can only be true though, if the delicate balance of reciprocity is observed. This is only possible if there is already a degree of frið between giver and recipient, allowing each to recognize the needs of the other.

There are some very practical benefits to gift-exchange as a form of commerce in surviving hard times, when the promises with which people have bound themselves in a market economy are suddenly invalidated, such as during the financial and commercial collapse we are living through. Since gift-giving is explicitly voluntary, there is no possibility of breach-of-contract, so there is nothing to litigate. The gift-exchange is self-regulated by the ørlög of the clan, so it requires no regulatory regime, outside the natural feelings of frið engendered by being in a state of innangarð with someone who holds the same customs and values that we do. This offers great value to the clan's economy and growth of wealth in an environment when the state's government is corrupt, predatory, or defunct.

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It's Not About Money

Besides the taboo against the explicit mention of an expectation of reciprocity, the second most-important rule of gift-exchange is that money makes a poor, thoughtless gift, except in certain, very limited contexts. Typically, even today when a friend or family member gives you money as a gift—whether cash, check, or gift card—the underlying message is understood as, *“I'm too busy to be bothered to think about your actual needs or desires, so you just figure it out yourself.”* The gift of money is a bribe to overlook the obligation of a gift. A gift of cash as reciprocation for a valuable gift is certainly verboten, right? How tasteless is that? It would be an explicit statement of the expectation that a gift requires a reciprocation, and that the person giving the cash found the original gift so worthless than he couldn't be bothered to think about what his clansman might need.

On the other hand, it is possible that money may—occasionally and rarely—be the only appropriate gift. If a member of the tribe is in financial need, a friend or family member who can afford to simply hand them the needed money may do more to maintain the honor, hamingja, and frið of the clan than anything else. Giving someone a gift that they have to sell of pawn, in order to raise the funds to pay his rent is certainly not doing anyone any favors, right?

Examples of this might be when a close friend or family member is about to be evicted for not having his rent, or there is a sudden, unforeseeable medical emergency. In such cases though, there is a necessary formality that must be observed to avoid damaging frið by impugning the recipient's honor. The gift must be conveyed as a gift, with the explicit, verbal expression that neither repayment nor reciprocation is expected or acceptable. This does not—of course—dispel the debt of gratitude, nor the expectation of reciprocation, but the use of money to repay the gift should be out of the question.

The fact is however, outside of very limited, special cases, money as a gift violates the innangarð of the tribe. Use of money concentrates the trust—and determination of value—in the authority of the central bank, which is utangarð from the tribe. It places something that can only be determined through the unconscious frið of the tribe's orlög—the value of the giver's honor and hamingja—outside the bounds of innangarð.

Because gifts and gratitude are cultural universals, most people already know and understand the rules that must be followed when giving or receiving them. When you offer a gift to a clansman, you already possess some understanding of what the recipient may be able to reciprocate with, and you naturally modify the quantity, nature, or intrinsic value of the gift, based on the recipient's needs, balanced with what you expect the recipient to be able to reciprocate with. In return, the recipient will possess some understanding of what the giver needs, so he will know what he can offer in return that will fulfill the implicit reciprocation demanded by gratitude. Failure to reciprocate adequately—or at all—is indicative that the recipient of the gift is not actually part of the innangarð. They lack the shared cultural value of gratitude, and did not recognize the custom and tradition of reciprocation as part of the tribal orlög.

Money, as we've discussed, is the definition of a thoughtless gift, most of the time. A well-to-do clansman, showing up at a friend's house and dropping off an “extra” quarter of a hog though, because, “I just don't have room in the freezer for it, and I don't want it to go to waste,” when he knows his friend is short on grocery money for the month, is offering a gift that fulfills a legitimate need of his kinsman. Everyone involved knows it is a gift, of course. They even know that it is a gift that was selected because of a known need; but the nature of it being a gift with the unspoken expectation of an exchange down the road, keeps it from being the insult of mere charity.

The recipient may not have an immediate gift to reciprocate with, but immediate reciprocation

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would invalidate the premise of it being a gift anyway. Even any explicit mention of that expectation, or of the need that it fulfilled, is strictly taboo because it degrades the honor in the gift. “*Oh, thanks, man! This will really help. I know how expensive this must have been. We'll make it up to you!*” cannot be spoken. It dishonors the giver. The only appropriate response is, “*Hey, thanks, brother! Yeah, we'll take that off your hands!*”¹⁴⁵

Nevertheless, both parties know that at some point in the future, the recipient will return the favor with a gift of his own that fulfills a need of the original giver. This may range from something as simple as clearing some brush on the other's property, or feeding his animals while the family is on vacation, to something like offering a voice in support of a suggestion that the clansman offers before the clan. It may not even be reciprocated by a single gift, but by multiple smaller gifts of this nature, over a period of time. Loyalty is built on gift-exchange, because the value of both sides of the exchange are not determined by market value—which is increasingly irrelevant anyway—but by the intrinsic value of the need being fulfilled at the time the gift is offered or returned.

In addition to strengthening the bonds of frið and loyalty within the boundaries of the clan of kith-and-kin, gift-exchange is also a tool for expanding the tribe, by offering a path into frið to someone who is not yet part of the innangarð. This may be simple generous hospitality to a stranger, as we touched on previously, or it may be seen in the most obvious cultural universal, relevant to both traditional societies and the contemporary consumer society, in the bonding of two families through marriage. Although dowry and bride-price have been long bastardized into a sad replica of the original purpose, we still witness the outward trappings of the exchange of gifts—the giving of gifts to the newlywed couple—as the transfer of some of the material demonstration of the hamingja of friends and family on both sides of the wedding aisle, to the new couple, as representatives of both sides of the aisle. The couple becomes a bridge of frið between the two clans, expanding the innangarð of the tribes, by bringing their own families into the clan of their spouse, and *vice versa*.

The Ties That Bind

The survival value of the binding of clans through marriage, for the construction of resilient communities of frið, can be seen in the explicit and implicit attempts by modern consumer society to trivialize it. From the idea of wedding registries, that allow guests to forego putting any effort into the selection of their gifts for the newlyweds—building frið with the young couple by spending time with them and learning their goals and desires—to the belittlement and mockery of the in-laws we see encouraged by the entertainment industry and media; to the encouragement of the young couple to escape the ties of kith-and-kin through professional development and advancement that sends them chasing the corporate dream in regions far from the safety, security, and familiarity of both families, we can witness the effort made by contemporary imperial society to belittle the bonding together of the hamingja of two clans, through the metaphorical gift of bride-and-groom from one clan to the other.

¹⁴⁵It is important to note that this is entirely distinct from an actual loan of money or material to a clansman. It is a business transaction, rather than gift-giving. Both the monetary payment of the debt, including any agreed interest as profit, is not only explicitly explained and expected, but failure to do so, for whatever reasons—most especially by trying to shirk the responsibility through appeals to frið—is damaging to the innangarð, because it violates the ørlög of the clan to break the contract with a kinsman.

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Laying the Footings

In order to develop a stronger degree of frið in our tribes; to forge resilient communities in the midst of a decaying materialist, consumer society that elevates the artificial ideal of individualism as the pinnacle of human social development, we need to establish cultures that replace the artificial ideal with the natural human virtues that form the foundations of the longest lasting form of successful society. It is inadequate to declare, “*this is my tribe!*”

We have to identify our innangarð by understanding the values that define our shared community, and the common customs and traditions that we use to express those values. We need to strengthen this orlog and increase the hamingja of our communities, by establishing cultures of self-sacrifice, generosity, hospitality, and wisdom.

As a result of our own national mythology of the story of the Revolutionary generation throwing off the yoke of servitude to King and aristocracy, Americans often possess a pronounced aversion to not only titles, but the mere concept of natural hierarchy and aristocracy. As we watch the empire decay around us, we must set aside these artificially encouraged biases, and recognize the existence of a philosophy of natural aristocracy even in the founding culture of our nation. It was not hierarchy that was expelled with the British Army. It was the false hierarchy of inherited title and position, without any effort on the part of the inheritors. We must strive—regardless of the role we find ourselves in within our innangarð—to become “cyning,” or “*the best of our kin.*”

The surest way to succeed at building a culture of resilience in our communities is by leveraging the natural, universal cultural tendency towards gratitude for gifts. We must set the example for those around us in our communities—our kith-and-kin—and rebuild the foundations of our tribes one person, and one family at a time. We must become the hero. Not in the modern, vainglorious sense of some pampered, overpaid adolescent sports star or celebrity, but in the classical mold. We must become the person that people look to, when the dragon of primordial fear is at the city's gates, because they know we are prepared to fight dragons; they know we long to slaughter dragons.

We must accept the inheritance of the mythic history of our people. We must eschew the weak comfort of the mediocrity of egalitarianism, and strive to be worthy of donning the arms and armor of responsibility once borne by Arminius and Arthur. We must pick up the shield and spear of Beowulf and Sigurd.

We must set the example for others to follow, by becoming living moral exemplars of the customs and values of our identified innangarð. Some—perhaps most—of those we identify with as our kith-and-kin may not yet recognize the currency of the decline of the American Empire. Some will be blind to the decay around them; others will be in denial of it. Some may recognize it, and even admit it, but refuse to acknowledge their ability to affect it, even within their immediate reach. That doesn't matter.

Arminius spent two years, walking the length and breadth of Germania, to bring the tribes together for the fight at Teutoburg. He argued, debated, and pleaded for people to open their eyes. For two years, he did not accept the complacency of his people; he set the example for them, by living the Way of the Hero.

Too often, we see survivalists and preppers who castigate even their closest family members for not being “on-board,” and stocking away supplies. This is absurd. Not everyone within your tribe has the

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same level of hamingja, expressed as the ability to “*see the future*,” by applying critical-thinking skills and pattern analysis to an understanding of current events, overlaid with a knowledge of the history of the human experience. This does not absolve us of our obligation to the frið of our innangarð, to help them survive, in order to carry on the survival of our cultural ørlög.

We have an obligation, to our children, grandchildren, and other descendants, as well as to our ancestors, real and mythic, to ensure that our culture and values carry on and survive. We can only do that by creating a culture, within our communities, that is resilient enough to survive the decay of the empire.

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Seven
Upholding The Legacy

"In Sri Lanka, when two strangers meet, they ask a series of questions that reveal family, ancestral village, and blood ties until they arrive at a common friend or relative. Then they say, "Those are our people, so you are our people." It's a small place. Everyone knows everyone.

"But in America, there are no such namings; it is possible to slip and slide here. It is possible to get lost in the nameless multitudes. There are no ropes binding one, holding one to the earth. Unbound by place or name, one is aware that it is possible to drift out into the atmosphere and beyond that, into the solitary darkness where there is no oxygen."

—Nayomi Munaweera, **What Lies Between Us**

The family is the foundation of all societies. Without parents producing children, there can be no continuation of a society or its culture. In cultures as disparate as Taoist China, Amerindian tribal societies, and barbarian Europe, the definition of the boundaries of the family has been largely the same for most of the last 200,000 years. Family has never been simply Mommy, Daddy, and 2.5 kids named "Junior." Even the more contemporary cultural norm of the extended family including grandparents, aunts and uncles, and first cousins, is overly simplistic in the long view. Instead, traditional human cultures have viewed the family—and the extension of the biological family represented by clan and tribe—as the unified collective of all descendants, living and dead, of a common, venerated¹⁴⁶ ancestor.

This ancestor veneration is one of the nearly universal cultural norms. Ancestor veneration is generally based on the belief in the continued existence of the deceased family members in some form of afterlife. Whether implicit or explicit, it involves the belief that not only do our family members continue to have an existence—somewhere—but also that, from the afterlife, they have the ability to influence the fortunes of their living descendants, as well as an interest in doing so. The unity of the living tribe—the *frið*—is reinforced and strengthened by the shared belief in the ancestors' influence on the collective fortunes of the clan, and by the orthopraxy of the practices involved in gaining the beneficence of the departed.

It is important to understand however, especially for Christian readers concerned about idolatry, that this is not a form of idolatry. Ancestor veneration is not asking for favors; rather, it is a philosophical and metaphorical—although in some cultural contexts, a very literal—extension of the previously-

¹⁴⁶Venerate: from the Latin. *"To regard with reverential respect, or with admiration and deference; to revere."*

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discussed principle of gift exchange. By observing our filial obligations of respect for our ancestors, we are implicitly reciprocating for the gifts we have received from them. Further, by continuing to practice loyalty to our venerated deceased, we implicitly expect¹⁴⁷ that they will “*return the favor*” by acting as a positive influence on our fortunes. It doesn't matter if your particular religious beliefs about the afterlife involve the Christian heaven, the Germanic pagan family burial mound, or some form of neo-Pagan, Wiccan ideas about the “spirit” being “*absorbed into the collective conscience*.”

When someone goes to the grave of their grandfather¹⁴⁸, and leaves a gift of flowers in remembrance, they are exercising their filial duty to memorialize the deceased. If you believe that the dead are dead, and have no existence after life, beyond ending up as worm shit, then there is no reason to place a head stone, or to keep returning to lay flowers on the grave.

There is certainly reason for the common practice of such visits including a conversation between the visitor and the deceased though. The visitor may or may not explicitly expect a literal response from the deceased, but they do expect to receive some benefit from the conversation. It may be as simple as a young wife asking their dearly departed grandmother for relationship advice. The petitioner doesn't actually expect her grandmother to stand up out of the grave, and offer a monologue on how to be a dutiful bride¹⁴⁹. The actual response from Granny might be as simple as the petitioner kindling some form of subconscious memory of something her grandmother told her as a child. It is a self-induced—some would label it imaginary, or even hallucinatory—conversation, but it is still, within the human psyche, an example of the tangible benefits to be accrued from ancestor veneration.

The petitioner believed that—somewhere—Granny was still around to hear her petition, and still cared enough to offer a response. By honoring her grandmother's memory in this manner—by recognizing that Granny was wise, and asking her for guidance—she got her reciprocated gift in the form of the answer she was seeking, even if the epiphany doesn't occur for weeks or months. It doesn't matter if the young wife believes that Granny is in Heaven with Jesus and the angels, or has taken up residence in the oak tree she was planted beneath. What is relevant is the belief that, by honoring the filial duty to the ancestor, the petitioner gained a benefit.

The common refrain, of course, is that “*that is ridiculous! We don't do those things for the dead, we do them for the living!*” B-I-N-G-O! By fulfilling our perceived duty according to the customs of our cultural *ørlog*—providing a memorial stone, leaving flowers, visiting, etc—if nothing else whatsoever results, we receive the benefits of feeling good about ourselves, and we refresh the good memories we have of our experiences with that individual. We've strengthened the *frið* of our *innangarð* by observing the value of honoring the past, and we've expressed it through the orthopraxy of our customary traditions.

Psycho-religious elements aside, there is an important sociological benefit to understanding and practicing the cultural importance of ancestor veneration within the *ørlog* of the tribe, for developing a sense of *innangarð* and strengthening the *frið* of the people.

147Implicit in a modern cultural context. While we would expect ridicule for admitting that we expected our dead grandmother to “give” us anything, ancestrally, this expectation was not only accepted, it was taken for granted.

148It could be any relative. I used grandfather because that was the most recent death in my family.

149Although, considering the current popularity of Zombie cinema, this expectation would not be entirely surprising...

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The Cultural Contributions of Real and Mythic Ancestry

The premise that the clan and the tribe are extensions of the biological family is well-understood. There is evidence however, that even in the most strictly defined kin-group tribes, the relationship to key ancestral figures is as often mythical as literally genetic. This evidence occurs in both the anthropological and the archaeological evidence.

Our clan or tribe is composed of our folk—our kith-and-kin. If we include “*closely known friends and neighbors*” in our definition of *kith*, then we can begin to recognize that, outside of some closed and semi-closed societies, where intermarriage between second- and third-cousins is still common practice, any shared genetic relationship is likely far enough in the dim recesses of the past as to be largely irrelevant at the tribal level. This was well illustrated by a study published in the **American Journal of Human Genetics** in 2004, titled **The Genetic or Mythical Ancestry of Descent Groups: Lessons from the Y Chromosome**¹⁵⁰. The study utilized DNA samples from five different descent groups of semi-nomadic tribes in Uzbekistan:

“We compared ethnological (descent-group affiliations) and Y-chromosome data from 247 men of five different patrilineal populations from the Karakalpakia region of Uzbekistan: Kazaks... Turkmen... Uzbeks... Karakalpaks Qongirat, and Karakalpaks On Tört Uruw...Each sample was composed of unrelated healthy donors from whom appropriate informed consent was obtained. These five populations consist of former pastoral nomads who have recently adopted a seminomadic way of life, balancing between agriculture and pastoralism. The rigor with which these Central Asian peoples have maintained their patrilineal social organization has few parallels worldwide. Some of their oral-tradition genealogies comprise up to 60 generations...”

The results from the study's genetic analysis offers an important lesson for our purposes, especially within the context of those who find themselves forced to create intentional tribes in the form of *sodalities* like guilds or war bands:

“Their genetic kinship is not significantly higher than the mean kinship of the whole population, and, in two populations, it is even significantly lower. Thus, our results show that a tribe does not correspond to a real genetic entity, and its claimed common ancestry is likely to be socially constructed.”

Let me repeat that, because it is simply that important:

“Their genetic kinship is not significantly higher than the mean kinship of the whole population, and, in two populations, it is even significantly lower. Thus, our results show that a tribe does not

¹⁵⁰The abstract of this study, from which my quotes were excerpted, can be found on the Internet at: <http://ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1182146/#>. It is an interesting read, if this aspect of tribal identity holds any interest to you.

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correspond to a real genetic entity, and its claimed common ancestry is likely to be socially constructed."

There are two basic processes that can result in the creation of a "descent group," or kin-group tribe. Both are critically relevant to our contextual understanding of tribalism in the midst of the declining imperial culture. In the first, a small sub-group within the larger culture, increases in size and/or autonomy, becoming independent from the original group. The opposite development of this "fission event" is the "fusion event," when an original kin-group assimilates other groups, creating a larger political entity. After such events, it is common that the genealogy of the tribe is amended to create the affiliation of both descent groups through the creation of a fictitious common ancestor, to enhance the *frið* of the group. The oral traditions in the Central Asian populations described above support the first scenario.

In the context of American cultural history, we can actually see both events occurring in the formation of a distinct American cultural identity. First, we have the "fission event" of the break from England, with the Revolution. This breaking away from the ancestral culture of Anglo-Saxon England required the creation of a new, alternative cultural identity, including the identification of mythic ancestral figures for the culture to identify with. In our case, it was the Founding Fathers. The second scenario, the "fusion event," is equally identifiable however. The relatively small core of largely Anglo-Saxon founders absorbed other immigrants and elements of their cultural values in the "melting pot," forming the cultural identity of the American "tribe."

This can occur because of the subconscious recognition that specific ancestors are venerated, since they serve as moral exemplars of the cultural values of the tribe. It doesn't make much sense to hang out at the grave of your retarded uncle, asking for guidance, does it? By venerating those ancestors—real or mythic—whom we believe best represent the cultural values of our innangarð, we provide a moral template for the living descendants of the tribe.

We can see this occur in the formation of European national identities, in the written genealogical histories of two distinct but related groups. In the more prominent example, written by the early 13th century Icelandic polymath Snorri Sturlusson (1179-1241 CE), we have the **Heimskringla**, or **Chronicle of the Kings of Norway**, including the **Saga of the Ynglinga**, which recounts the accepted lineage of the early kings of Scandinavia, going all the way back to Odhinn. Whether you believe that Odhinn is an actual deity, with the powers described in the myths, or you prefer to believe Snorri's euhemerist¹⁵¹ explanation, the establishment of a line of descent from Odhinn to the kings of Norway—certainly when we recognize the common belief of the time that the king was "cyning," or "*best of the kin*," and repository of the collective hamingja of the nation—offers not only a common patrilineal line of shared descent for the Scandinavian royalty, but also reflects positively on the collective hamingja of the people.

¹⁵¹Euhemeris, named for the Greek philosopher Euhemerus, who used it to explain the Greek gods and goddesses, is a method of explaining the origins of myths. It presumes that the mythological accounts originated from real historical events and persons, which became fables as they were exaggerated in the retelling, gaining alterations and elaborations based on current cultural mores.

I happen to believe that the euhemerist explanation of the Odhinn stories offered by Snorri had far more to do with Christian theological influence on society at the time, and Snorri's desire to not piss off his bosses in the Church, than with the actual beliefs of the people who originally recorded the Ynglinga Saga in an oral tradition.

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In the same vein, albeit some five centuries earlier, we have the less well-known *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, or **History of the English Church and Nation**, written by Saint Bede in the early 8th century. This includes the genealogies of the royal families of Anglo-Saxon Britain at the time, and ties all of the royal lineages¹⁵² of the era back to the gods. Like the much later efforts of Snorri for their cousins across the North Sea, Saint Bede tied the royal lineages back to the gods *Woden* and *Seaxnet*¹⁵³, explaining the inclusions of these pagan gods by offering euhemeristic tales of the human exploits of Woden and Seaxnet.

This earlier literary example has provided a fundamental portion of the foundation of an English national identity. The sociological value to the tribe, of a common ancestral figure can be witnessed in the tradition of ancestor veneration, outside of any religious connotations. The commonly shared ancestor(s) venerated as the “founder(s)” of the tribe, represent the personification of the customs and values of the tribe. They serve as an identifiable repository for the good *hamingja* of the tribe, and serve as a moral exemplar for good behavior, in accordance with the collective customs and values—the *ørlog*—of the tribe's specific moral culture.

This symbolic representation serves as a guiding light for the members of the tribe to identify what behavior will keep them within the *innangarð* of their society. This becomes especially critical in the case of the *sodality* models of the intentional tribe. Rather than relying on the codification of law within the by-laws of the organization, the moral exemplar of the mythic ancestor recounted in the written and oral histories of the tribe, offers a more understandable guide to what defines acceptable behavior.

Repaying Our Debts

In some ways then, it can be said that the gift exchange with our ancestors, real and mythic, is already extant. Whether we are discussing our literal ancestors or the mythic ancestors we look to culturally, we already owe them debts, if we subscribe to the nearly universal human cultural norm of gratitude.

It can be said—and traditional societies do say—that everything we are and have is a gift from our ancestors. From the evolutionary competitiveness we accrue from our DNA, such as good health, physical attractiveness, and high intelligence, to the cultural values that they passed on to us, we've all received a great deal of benefit from the gifts of our ancestors¹⁵⁴. From our mythic, cultural ancestors, we have the culture of respect for individual liberties that they enshrined in the Magna Carta, the Declaration of Independence, and the United State Constitution to be grateful for. While neither of these representations of ancestors will ever explicitly ask for anything in return, it can be said that, if

¹⁵²Anglo-Saxon England at the time was divided in numerous smaller kingdoms, including Northumbria, Mercia, East Anglia, Kent, Essex, Wessex, and Sussex. These disparate realms would not begin coalescing into a single English nation until the unifying efforts of Alfred the Great. True unification would not be finalized until after the Invasion of 1066, and the reign of William the Bastard. There would be no recognition of “England,” until Alfred's attempts at unification.

¹⁵³Woden is generally accepted as an older, continental identity for Odhinn, and the names are often used interchangeably, although some dispute this. Seaxnet, from which the name Saxon may have derived, was the “senior” god of at least some Saxon tribes. He may be an alternative identity of Odhinn, or an older identity for Tiw/Tyr. He may also be a separate god.

¹⁵⁴Of course, if you look like you fell out of the ugly tree, hitting every branch on the way down, before landing on the ugly rock, or you have the IQ of a box of crushed granite, you may not feel much gratitude.

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you believe they still exist—somewhere—that they implicitly expect a return on the investment of their efforts.

That debt is repaid by our efforts to ensure the survival of their gifts. Whether genetic or cultural, the debt we owe our forebears is the continuation of the social culture and values they have passed on to us. The family, as we said in *The universal truth of survivalism and preparedness* is that, at the individual level, it's a pointless endeavor. We will all die. Our children will die. Our grandchildren will die. What we can achieve however, is the effort to ensure that our cultural values are passed on from us to our children and grandchildren, and from them, to their children and grandchildren. If we are successful in this, then survivalism and preparing for the decline of the imperial culture is worthwhile, and repays the debt incurred in our gift-exchange with our ancestors.

Finding Frige¹⁵⁵

Customs surrounding marriage, family life, and raising children are specific tribal customs, reflecting an important aspect of the borders of the *innangarð*. What is appropriate within one family's interpretation of religious and social mores may be completely irrelevant to a neighboring tribe's customs and values. There are however, some general conceptual issues that seem to be reflected in a number of varied cultures and societies, so they may offer some guidance in the understanding of the roles required for families, in the tribal social construct¹⁵⁶.

Since the beginning of time—in every culture—the sexes have had specific roles. These roles are a set of societal norms dictating what behaviors are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, and desirable for members of their culture, predicated on their sex. Some of these expectations have varied substantially among different cultures, but others are common throughout a range of cultures. Often, if we look back far enough, to tribal societies, these roles are far more egalitarian than what we generally perceive to be “traditional” sex roles, and even in contemporary “traditional” societies, the specific obligations of the sexes are not fixed, but are regularly negotiated between individuals. American sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) observed this in the 1950s, among American families in agriculture, and many of us who have been exposed to farming and ranching families today, at a close distance, see this in those families, even when the public image is presented as a more traditional division of labor.

In tribal societies, anthropologists and archaeologists tell us that societies have traditionally been relatively egalitarian, based on need. In many of the different bands of the Apache tribe of Amerindians, which were at least semi-nomadic, while there was a recognition of distinct separate roles for the sexes, the skills of both, ranging from cooking and sewing and housework, to hunting, tracking, trapping, and the use of weapons, were taught to all children, up until early adolescence.

In the more agrarian societies of the eastern woodlands tribes however, with some exceptions, men

155The wife of Odhinn, Frige (OE)/Frigg(ON)/Frije(OHG) is often portrayed as the pan-Germanic goddess of the home, marriage, and childbearing.

156Specifically, these values reflect the culture of my own tribal *ørlog*. Since this book is a reflection of my philosophical approach to the concept of developing tribal cultures for surviving the decline of the imperial culture, I get to share them. You can a) agree that they seem worthwhile, because they are shared with your own values, b) agree that they are worthwhile, and attempt to integrate them into your culture, c) agree that they may be worthwhile, but are irrelevant to your cultural needs, or d) ignore them as irrelevant and useless, in which case, you are quite welcome to fuck off.

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and women were assigned very specific roles, which they were taught from a very early age. The division of labor between the men, who spent the winter and spring hunting, and the women, who spent the summer farming, while the men were off raiding, was equitable, if specific, and actually resulted in an outcome that we seldom expect in modern, industrialized cultures.

Because the women spent more time at home, they became the masters of the house, determining how things functioned in this private sphere, and having a profound influence on how their spouse presented the image of the family to the public of the tribe¹⁵⁷. Thus, the role of the woman, while “barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen,” was hardly one of a domestic slave, subject to the violent whim of her husband.

While we are often led to believe that the Christian belief is that women should be subservient to men, the Biblical record is hardly on the side of that, despite some apparent scriptural biases. In Genesis, we see that “*And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him.*”¹⁵⁸ While this could be seen as servitude, it is important to remember that the King James' Version of the Bible is a late translation, and used words in their current contextual definition. A help meet, or help *mate*, is simply someone who helps, or assists us. It implies a partnership.

While the Mosaic laws of the tribes of Israel indicate that a woman should be subservient to their husbands, this is not an uncommon cultural value in tribal societies, with the man viewed as the repository of the household's communal fortunes. It does not *ipso facto* imply that women should be “barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen” with their mouths shut, nor that women had no social function within the tribes, except as cooks and breeding vessels. Rather, in the Old Testament tribal chronicle, we see women like Deborah, Esther, Hannah, Miriam, Ruth, and Sarah, regardless of marital status, fulfilling important social roles as prophetesses and leaders in the Hebrew culture.

When we leap forward into the New Testament, we see the sex roles apparently even more specifically described. We have the example of Paul's Epistle to the Colossians, “*Wives submit yourselves unto your husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*” Or the Epistle to the Ephesians,

“for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.”¹⁵⁹

While—feminist pseudo-Christian apologists aside—this seems to be pretty clear guidance on the behavior of women, in Christian cultures, it's really not. We see, throughout the ministry of Christ, despite the legal and cultural climate of the time, him allow women into his confidence. In the **Gospel According to Luke**, it was not just the twelve disciples who traveled along. We see instead that,

“...He went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the

157Axtell, James; **The Indian Peoples of Eastern America: A Documentary History of the Sexes**; Oxford University Press; 1981

158Genesis 2:18 KJV

159Ephesians 5:23-25 KJV

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kingdom of God, and the twelve were with him. And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and many others...¹⁶⁰”

So, there may be, even in a Christian tribe, more of a role for women than the typically voiced role of housekeeper and baby-factory.

Selling Out to The Man?

From an historical perspective, the argument can be effectively made that the guidance Paul offered in his epistles to different congregations of the new faith regarding public behavior, had more to do with the representation of the faith in the public view, according to Roman law, than it did with what he believed Christ wanted of his followers. The Roman law *Patria Potestas* was the law that recognized the oldest living male in the household as the legal and moral head of the household. It vested all household authority in the *paterfamilias*, over his wife, children, and more remote descendants in the male line, regardless of age. This law vested in the head of the house alone, not only control over his wife and children—including the right to sell his children into slavery—but all the legal rights of the family.

Thus we can see from this angle, the advice of Peter to, “*submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme: Or unto governors, as unto them that one sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do evil. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.*” (1 Peter 2:13-15 KJV)

This can be interpreted that, while women are not mere chattel, if the law of the land recognizes them as such, which the *Patria Potestas* certainly did, it was important to respect the law, just as you respected the king, because failure to do so would result in criminal punishment, including probable execution.

The fact is, the evidence seems to indicate that the early, pre-Nicean Council church venerated women, just as the ancestral Hebrew faith did. It was not until much later that the emphasis on the role of women—personified in Eve—in the fall of man from Grace, would become emphasized. It has been argued that this later development within the church had more to do with the politics of the economy in the late medieval period than with any inherent prejudices against women inherent within the scripture of Christian theology.

The role of women in any culture must primarily involve motherhood. Every human culture has understood that, without women willing to give birth to children, the culture will die. It is natural human instinct; a biological imperative. A significant portion of human motherhood biologically requires the role of child-rearing. From the beginning of humanity's existence, until very recently, every culture has understood that men need to go out and do man things, bringing home the meat and protecting the village from external threats, while the women—with limited exceptions that proved the rule—stayed home, took care of the early education of the children, and kept the home fires burning.

We cannot ensure the survival of our tribal cultural values if we don't have families and raise our children immersed in our cultural values. Without children, our cultural values and customs—our collective *ørlog*—dies with us. The role of the woman in a tribal society then, is to be a mother. This does not however, automatically result in the popular image of the quiet, obedient housewife, content to spend her existence squirting out a baby every year, while quietly keeping her peace in the home, subject to her husband's every whim.

¹⁶⁰Luke 8:1-3 KJV

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As the guarantor of the cultural legacy of the tribe, through her influence in the raising of the children, women have as much of a vested interest in the hamingja of family and tribe as their men do. The belief that women should be mothers, and take the role of motherhood seriously, does not equate to a lack of input in the family's—or the tribe's—collective voice. Women have long been seen as “frið-makers” within a tribe. While this is often viewed in simplistic terms, as the role of “peacemaker” through their status as brides in marriages to bind warring tribes together, this is not entirely accurate. In the Anglo-Saxon poem **Beowulf**, we see the actual cultural understanding that this seldom works well expressed by Beowulf. King Hrothgar's daughter, Fræwaru, has been betrothed to Ingeld, a prince of the hostile Heathobard tribe, in the hope of ending the enmity between his tribe and Hrothgar's Danes. This common strategy is belittled by Beowulf though, who recognizes that the union will probably only revive the old angers and passions of the rival tribes:

“...generally the spear
is prompt to retaliate when a prince is killed,
no matter how admirable the bride may be.
Think how the Heathobards will be bound to feel,
their lord, Ingeld, and his loyal thanes,
when he walks in with that woman to the feast.
Danes are at the table, being entertained,
honoured guests in glittering regalia,
burnished ring-mail that was their hosts' birthright,
looted when the Heathobards could no longer wield
their weapons in the shield-clash, when they went down
with their beloved comrades and forfeited their lives.
Then an old spearman will speak while they are drinking,
having glimpsed some heirloom that brings alive
memories of the massacre; his mood will darken
and heart-stricken, in the stress of his emotion,
he will begin to test a young man's temper

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and stir up trouble..."¹⁶¹

The role of the women of a tribe as frið-makers is more complex and altogether more simple at the same time. First of course, we have the role of the woman as a mother, rearing her children, teaching them the customs and values of the tribal culture. The children's understanding and internalization of these values allows them to grow into adults who will live within the cultural innangarð of their tribe, by embodying the values of the tribe's orlög. This strengthens the frið of the tribe into the next generation. Mothers are frið-makers.

On a second, equally important plane, women are the voices of conscience within the tribe. There have been countless sociological and anthropological studies pertaining to sex roles in religious culture. They have widely agreed that females are more likely to be religiously observant than men. Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi (1943--) and Michael Argyle (1925-2002 CE) observed, in their 1997 paper, **The Psychology of Religious Behavior, Belief, and Experience**, that this phenomenon occurs because of three primary causes:

- 1.) women seem to feel emotions at greater heights than men do.
- 2.) Feminine sex roles are more likely to align with religious values like conflict mediation, tenderness, and humility, and
- 3.) the natural result of sex roles with women as the caretakers of the home.

Within the psycho-religious constraints of tribal innangarð, women increase the good hamingja of the tribe, increasing frið by reminding us to set our egos aside when dealing with members of the clan. They remind us to think of the collective good of the clan, rather than taking advantage of a kinsman in a business or social setting. They remind us of the importance of being willing to apologize to a kinsman, for any injury or insult, no matter how slight. In this role, as the voice of the conscience of orlög, we see a role for women in the tribe that precludes the modern image of the subdued "*little woman*" at the house, biding her silence.

At the same time, the role of frið-maker has another, far less docile, far less pacifist expression. Women are the voice of conscience, not just in dealings within the innangarð, but without as well. While traditional societies have generally expected the men of the tribe to do the fighting, protecting the tribe from external threats, and upholding the honor of the tribe, we know from various sources in the historiography, that women played an important role here, following their men to the battlefield, and exhorting them to fight well. Men perceived to be cowards might face being ignored by other men with equanimity, but the shaming of being mocked by mothers, sisters, and other women was too much.

While contemporary consumer culture, in the quest to validate the behavior of every individual who adheres to its mantra of "spend, spend, spend," castigates "shaming" as a brutal relic of the barbaric past, that is because it fucking works. Even in the progressive-venerated teachings of the East, shaming was recognized as a more effective tool of controlling behavior, and keeping people within the bounds

¹⁶¹Seamus Heaney translation, lines 2029-2046

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of orthopraxy regarding cultural orlog:

“Lead the people with administrative injunctions and put them in their place with penal law, and they will avoid punishments, but will be without a sense of shame. Lead them with excellence and put them in their place through roles and ritual practices, and in addition to developing a sense of shame, they will order themselves harmoniously.”¹⁶²

Queen of the Iceni

Boudicea may well be the ideal role model for the post-modern barbarian woman. A first-century queen of the Breton Iceni tribe, Boudicea was the wife of an Iceni chieftain named Prasutagus. Faced with the overwhelming military might of the invasion of the Roman legions, Prasutagus made alliance with the Imperial envoys against some of the neighboring tribes. While this could not have sat well with any of the tribe, it was not until Prasutagus composed a will that promised his inheritance would be split between his daughters and the emperor, that his wife took public umbrage with this decision as a violation of the customs of the Iceni, including very public disagreements with her husband in the tribal council. Even then however, when dealing with the Romans she voiced support and admiration for her husband's decisions. Upon his death, she upheld the execution of his will until the empire ignored the will, claiming all of the Iceni lands and wealth as tribute to the emperor. Boudicea was flogged for speaking out against this publicly, and saw both of her daughters gang-raped as punishment.

In response to these insults to the honor of her family and the Iceni collectively, Boudicea gathered the warriors of the Iceni and some surrounding tribes and led them against the legions. In the process, some 70-80,000 Romans were slaughtered before the alliance was finally stopped by a sound defeat at the “Battle of Watling Street.” Boudicea killed herself to avoid capture, and Britain, the realm of the Bretons, would be ruled for the next three centuries by the Romans, only to see that foreign culture replaced by the Anglo-Saxon invasion during the Migration Era.

Boudicea filled the role of frið-maker even in her death though. In her insistence that the leaders of the tribe—including her husband—stand up to the insults of tribal customs and values by the Romans, she reminded them of their obligations to their innagarð. Boudicea's example illustrates the role of frið-maker, when women form the voice of the collective conscience of the tribe, reminding us that we have obligations to our kith-and-kin, to increase our collective hamingja. They remind us that we need to get off our asses, rather than sitting around with the buddies, drinking beer, and do something productive, for the betterment of the tribe.

On a more eternal plane, she still serves as frið-maker, serving as a crucial mythic ancestor for the English, helping forge their national identity even today, in her example of resisting foreign invasion, unto death.

In extremis, when the men of the tribe cannot—or will not—uphold the honor of the tribe on the battlefield, there are countless mythic examples, from every culture, of women picking up spear and shield—or cannon loader and swab in our own story of Molly Pitcher—and going forth to face the enemy. The role of men as protectors of the band should not be seen as an excuse or justification for women not being strong and knowing how to fight. If the men are away hunting or at war, the duty of protecting hearth, home, and honor falls on the woman's shoulders in the last resort, as we see in the legend of Boudicea.

It has been the corporate capitalist marketing of modern consumerist culture that has destroyed this

¹⁶²Confucius; **Analects**; Dawson trans. Oxford's World Classics edition; 2008

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very important role for women. Tribal customs and traditions encouraging women to motherhood strengthen the bonds of the tribal identity. As the frið-makers, women define the boundaries of innangarð, by determining the construct of ørlög. It is the mother, as the typically more devout of our parents, who teaches us what is right and what is wrong behavior within our cultural morality.

By encouraging women to not be mothers—in the moral sense of the word as much as the physical—corporate culture encourages us to leave the role of caretaker and mentor to our children to someone else. That someone else includes day-care workers and school teachers; that someone else is someone who is approved by the state's culture of blind obedience to the corporatized imperial culture. That someone else is not going to teach your children your cultural values, they're going to teach the imperial cultural values, strengthening the imperial identity that results in the loss of tribal identity. In order for our cultural values to survive however, we have to overcome this. We have to raise children that are indoctrinated with our cultural values and our tribal identities, rather than the corporate cultural values of the Empire, which are subject to change with the results of the latest consumer advertising.

Raising Feral Children

For most people, the mental image that arises with the term “feral children,” is the boomerang-chucking little mute kid in the **Mad Max: Road Warrior**. Sociologically though, the term “feral children” refers specifically to children who live isolated from human contact from a very young age. This leads to a lack of civilized behaviors and cultural understanding, including care and language. While historically, many feral children have been abandoned or confined by their parents as a rejection of intellectual or physical handicaps, there are cross-cultural mythological examples of feral children growing into successful adults. From the Roman foundation myth of Romulus and Remus, to the modern fiction examples of Kipling's Mowgli, and Burrough's Tarzan, we can reflect back to the earlier point that “*myth is history, told better.*”

In the mythological examples, we see children with relatively normal levels of human intelligence and physicality, growing into a superior being because of their enhanced development of physical attributes and survival instincts that have not been dulled by exposure to social behavioral norms. Of course, this concept is closely tied to the “noble savage,” or “Myth of the Golden Age,” but it also offers an extremely useful approach for developing cultural identity and raising children that will continue the survival of cultural values and tribal identity.

Feral is derived from the Latin “*ferus*” meaning “wild.” It is specifically defined as “*untamed; undomesticated; hence, wild; savage.*” A more contemporary edition of Webster's includes “*having escaped from domestication and become wild.*” The issue becomes, “*who is defining 'untamed,' 'undomesticated,' and 'wild?'*”

If we allow the imperial culture to define those terms for us, then most “traditional American values” are now the realm of “wild” and “savage” people, because they do not fit the cultural norms of the imperial culture. To the Roman imperial culture, the Celto-Germanic barbarians were—by definition—wild and savage and undomesticated, because they did not adhere to the customs and traditions of imperial culture. If you want your children to be docile slave-citizens of contemporary imperial civilization, I propose that you are in the wrong place, mentally and spiritually.

Even in the Roman example, we look at the foundation myth of Romulus and Remus and we can see

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a glimmer of memory of the barbarian, uncivilized foundations of Roman culture. We must strive for the same. We must strive to raise children who are not constrained by the morals and regulations of imperial culture, but instead, are constrained by the cultural values of our tribes' *ørloq* and so, live in *frið* with the rest of the tribe—whether kin-group or sodality—increasing the chances that those customs and traditions will survive the death throes of the declining empire.

There are three basic aspects in my understanding¹⁶³, to raising feral children. The first of these, as in all things, is leading by example. We cannot expect our children to internalize the cultural values we profess, if we do not provide the moral exemplar for them to follow. At best in such cases, we can only hope that by setting such a shitty example, our children are repulsed by it and strive to achieve a life opposite our own, thus actually succeeding at living the values we professed, but did not live.

Lead The Way!

If you profess to believe in critical-thinking and logical decision-making as cultural values, you don't get to get angry and scream at your child to, “*shut the fuck up and don't question your parents!*” when they question you. By questioning not only the reason for your decisions, but even the basis of your authority for making those decisions, the child is successfully learning to implement the critical-thinking that you profess a desire for them to learn. If your cultural values are that parents are the *ipso facto* the source of all right thinking in the family, in the tradition of the Patria Potestas, that's fine. You're a fucking idiot, but that's fine too. Not my people, not my problem. If you expect your child to learn critical-thinking skills though, you'd damned well better be able to explain to them that there is actually a legitimate philosophical basis for your parental authority, and what that basis is, exactly.

If you profess to believe in the virtue of health and fitness to the survival of your tribe, then your children probably better not see you spending every available moment of free time sitting in front of the television or computer screen, sipping on cheap beer and grubbing on cookies and ice cream. While some time with either tool—and either snack for that matter—is not even noteworthy, your children need to see you engaging in activities—and should be participating themselves from an early age—that validate your professed belief in health and fitness. Whether that is slinging heavy barbells and kettlebells around, or simply going for regular hikes in the woods, you have to provide an example for your children to look up to and mimic.

In my family, our gym is in the backyard. When I go out to do PT, the kids come with me. The baby sits in her stroller and cheers for Daddy, while the older does pretty much whatever she feels like, from running sprints with her dog, to slinging around her little five-pound dumbbells, or—when she's really feeling froggy—deadlifting the fifty-pound kettlebell, at a body weight of 65 pounds herself.

The second aspect is the indoctrination of critical-thinking skills. If we accept that wisdom and good judgment are the basis of good *hamingja* for both the individual and the clan, then it seems self-evident that teaching basic critical-thinking skills—logic—is a fundamental prerequisite of training our children to be leaders of their own generations within the tribe. If we teach our children legitimate logic and critical-thinking skills, they are less likely to find themselves coerced into actions inimical to their best interests and the best interests of the clan, through political and corporate marketing schemes that play on falsely created emotion. We must create a culture of wisdom and clear thinking.

The third aspect, directly related to the above, is the absolutely essential requirement of

¹⁶³*It is absolutely critical to understand that, to some degree, this section is largely hypothetical for me. While we do raise our children this way, our oldest is still primary-school aged. By the time she is a teenager, or young adult, we may have realized we were complete fucking retards on the subject, and ruined our child's life through shitty parenting.*

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homeschooling our children. While this is often attacked by many within the preparedness movement as “impractical” for “most” people, that—in itself—is a failure of critical thinking and judgment. The typical reason provided for declaring homeschooling to be “impractical” is the “need” for two incomes, and the resulting inability for one parent to stay home. That is completely a function of surrender to the marketing of imperial corporate cultural programming. If removing Mom from the workforce requires a downsize of housing or material lifestyle, what are you losing?

1. *“Oh, I don't want my children to feel deprived!”* This concern is an admission that you are allowing others to define the cultural values of your children. If your children are raised to value family connections and values over material wealth, how could they feel deprived by the opportunity to spend more time with their family? It is only when we see our children corrupted by the corporate advertising of the imperial culture—through public schooling, whether from teachers or their “peers,” or through television and other media marketing—that we see this raised as a concern.
2. *“Well, what would the neighbors think!?”* Who gives a shit? Unless those neighbors are part of your kith-and-kin, in which case, they should—by definition—share your cultural values and traditions, the opinions of your neighbors should be completely irrelevant to you. If they are of your tribe, and share your cultural *ørlog*, and they voice opposition to your homeschooling, I would offer that there are two issues potentially raising their head: a) they do not, in fact, share your cultural values, at least in this specific area, in which case, you should reconsider where you've placed the boundaries of your innangarð, and b) maybe they are not making a comment on your values, but on your ability to adequately teach those professed values. Perhaps, in the latter case, it is not the neighbors you are actually concerned about, but the unconscious understanding that you're a fucking retard, and have no business trying to educate your children, if you are truly concerned about the survival of the tribe, rather than your own ego.
3. *“There is no way my wife would go for that!”* Like both of the aforementioned “concerns,” this actually illustrates nothing more than a failure of basic critical-thinking skills and good judgment. In the first place, it is a failure of critical thinking on the part of your wife, relative to the goal of survival of the tribe—and thus, of her own children. If your wife recognizes her role as the cultural arbiter of morality—in her role as the keeper of the hearth—then there is really no sound basis for refusing the role of homeschooling teacher for your own children. Does she believe that her income, as a method of funding more purchases of material goods, to assuage her guilt for not being home to raise her children, is more important than being home to raise her children?

This of course, reflects back on the other side of the poor judgment involved. If you are a husband who is married to a woman that does not share your cultural values and customs, you demonstrated a remarkable lack of good judgment in marrying her in the first place, didn't you? The reciprocal is equally true of course. If you are a wife who is married to a husband who insists that you cannot afford to stay home and take care of the children because of financial considerations, and you believe that passing on the cultural values of your kith-and-kin is the

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most essential role you have in life, then you're a fucking idiot for marrying his ass in the first place.

The common retort to this that I often hear from critics is, “*Well, I don't believe in divorce! That's a cultural value.*” This is often offered as a defense for an unsuitable pairing that occurred because of youthful indiscretions and the lady of the house getting “knocked up.” I get it. Shotgun weddings are still a very real thing where I live. I'm not even referring to the morality or immorality of premarital sex¹⁶⁴. What we are referring to here is the “*Well, she got knocked up, so I did the right thing by her and the kid.*” Make no mistake, I agree this is the appropriate response. For better or for worse, you've passed on your ancestors' DNA, and have—in my personal belief—a moral obligation to ensure the best possible outcome for the child. However, none of this removes the guilt of piss-poor judgment from your moral load. Now, because you lacked the good judgment to use a better form of birth control, or to abstain from premarital sex, you find yourself saddled with a spouse who does not share your cultural values. Undoubtedly, this was a result of the programmed conditioning you received in your own life, leading you to fall for a pretty face or a hard body. In the heat of the moment, good judgment and critical-thinking skills often fall victim to “*damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!*” So, now you're stuck watching your children raised in the teaching of a culture completely foreign to your own values and traditions, with the forlorn hope that maybe—hopefully—you will be able to reverse that programming in the brief interludes you have with your children, at supper and on the weekends. Of course, at the same time you are struggling to achieve this, your efforts are being very effectively countered not only by the official programming of the public education system, but also of the unofficial programming of exposure to peer-group children with similarly contradictory values to your own tribal cultural values: bad hamingja. Bad luck is an outcome of poor decision-making.

Despite these refutations though, apparently there are instances where it is not practical or practicable for mother to stay home and teach¹⁶⁵. In such cases the tribal community approach to surviving the decline of empire offers a ready-made alternative in the example of the origin of public education in much of America, when a local community built their own school and hired a teacher to come teach their children. In such cases, we have the opportunity to select a teacher that teaches lessons that correspond to your tribal cultural values.

While the obvious example of this is private schools, whether secular or parochial, there is a less obvious example. That is—in cooperation and collaboration with others in your tribe—selecting a member of the tribe to act as the community schoolteacher, at least for the primary grades. It is in effect, a return to the one-room schoolhouse model of yore¹⁶⁶.

We see the effectiveness of this educational model described by French emigre Pierre Samuel

164For me to protest premarital sex as immoral would require a level of ironic hypocrisy that even I am fundamentally incapable of.

165I actually cannot imagine what the fuck they are, but people insist they exist, so...what-the-fuck-ever.

166Remember, that obsolete, archaic model of American education that preceded the compulsory, public education system. Back when literacy rates hovered steadily over 90% in most of America...

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duPont de Nemours (1739-1817 CE)¹⁶⁷, who penned an interesting little booklet on **National Education in the United States of America**¹⁶⁸, in 1812, wherein he pointed out,

“The United States are more advanced in their educational facilities than most countries...they have a large number of primary schools; and as their paternal affection protects children from working in the fields, it is possible to send them to the schoolmasters—a condition which does not prevail in Europe...most young Americans, therefore, can read, write, and cipher. Not more than four in a thousand are unable to write legibly—even neatly...the Bible is read; it is considered a duty to read it to children; and in that form of religion the sermons and liturgy in the language of the people tend to increase and formulate ideas of responsibility. Controversy, also, has developed argumentation and has thus give room for the exercise of logic¹⁶⁹...In America, a great number of people read the Bible, and all the people read a newspaper. The fathers read aloud to their children, while breakfast is being prepared—a task which occupies the mothers for three quarters of an hour every morning. And as the newspapers of the United States are filled with all sorts of narratives...they disseminate an enormous amount of information.”

What we see is a historical model of community- and family-based education predicated on the local community's shared values, that led to the growth of the most powerful culture in the human experience. Perhaps—just perhaps—it is time to return to that model, on the local, community and tribal level, to ensure the survival of our cultural values?

Ultimately, the goal of survival preparedness, if we use “*I want to survive!*” as our metric, is a dead end. You are not going to survive. Whether that is in the long-term or the short-term is largely predicated on your ability to develop the types of strong tribal ties—*frið*—that allowed your ancestors to survive the decline of previous empires. Simply building a gang of fellow preppers may be adequate to ensure survival in the short-term, at least until someone comes along who offers more benefit to your friends-of-convenience. In order to survive for the long-term, you need to develop that level of *frið* among your kith-and-kin—or within the intentional tribe of a sodality. Even then however, you can only survive to the end of your natural lifespan. The continuation of your cultural values requires passing on those values to the next generations. That requires strong families, with children who are indoctrinated in the values of the clan's *ørlog*.

By providing the example to your children, of how to live in accordance with those values, and by educating them with the skills and lessons of those values, you provide the greatest opportunity for not

167Pierre Samuel was the father of Éleuthère Irénée du Pont, founder of the DuPont company.

168Available in digital format, courtesy of the University of Michigan, at: <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015030974144;view=1up;seq=7>

169We see here, an example of Glubb's cycle of empires, wherein, a young, aggressive national culture values a specific custom—near universal literacy—that the decadent, older empires, well into their waning years, do not feel necessary. On a personal note, I find it interesting that de Nemours points out that controversy and debate on matters were commonplace, rather than the commonly held belief, in some circles, that, even at the founding of the Republic, everyone shared the same beliefs and views on politics and religion.

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only their—and your—short-term survival, but also for the long-term survival of your culture. That requires, as in all other aspects of life, emigrating “outside” of the metaphorical borders of the decadent, dying imperial culture's definition of “modern family values.” You've begun establishing the orlog of your tribe, by ensuring that your children are being raised in a culture that expresses your values through familiar customs and traditions. You are forging the heroes of the next generation of your tribe.

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Eight
Forging the Heart

“We few, we happy few, we band of brothers, for he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother; be he ne’er so vile, this day shall gentle his condition; and gentlemen in England now a-bed shall think themselves accursed they were not here, and hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks that fought with us upon Saint Crispin’s day.”
—William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Act IV, Scene III

The concept of belonging to a tight-knit tribe of kith-and-kin holds a great deal of appeal to people in the preparedness culture. Whether that is the biological imperative of the natural human social instinct, or because it conjures a feeling of traditional American community and neighborliness from their youth, or because it creates a mental image of some “band of brothers” military fraternal order, I don’t know, but it does appeal.

The problem that arises with the appeal however, lies in the execution. Because of the efforts of the corporate media, spewing messages of universal morality, and the fake tribal identity inherent to the nationalistic rhetoric spewed by both sides of the empire’s imaginary political dialectic, most people in American are no longer capable of recognizing their own natural, human instincts for tribal identity. They don’t know who to be loyal to, nor who owes them loyalty. The unnatural connection to strangers about whom we know nothing—and care less, if we’re honest with ourselves—have been artificially force-fed to us for so long, and in such volume, that people have allowed themselves to be blindly partitioned into false categories with programmed identities to define innangarð.

“Oh, that guy is wearing our team’s jersey! He’s a good dude. That lady over there is wearing the other team’s colors though! Fuck that bitch, let’s go fuck her shit up!”

There are a couple of psychological factors about human relationships, resulting from the biological evolutionary process, that are relevant to this, and to our contextual approach to surviving the decline of empire. The first of these is the obvious: even the most anti-social introverts want to belong to a group. It’s human nature. We’re eager for tribal connections of reciprocal loyalty, protection, and aid. It’s a result of our intuitive understanding about the primordial fear: those things that go bump in the night? They are bigger than us and stronger than us; they have claws and fangs and they like the taste of human flesh. We know we cannot defeat them alone, so we long to know that others are there to help us slay them.

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The second is that we need to be able to easily identify those who are part of our tribe. When you're wandering through the paleolithic forest and see some other human beings approaching in the distance, the sooner you can identify them the better. If they are not your people, you have more time to determine whether you should fight them or run and hide. If they are your people, you have more time to make sure the fire is stoked and there is a mound of mastodon ribs on the grill to welcome them home with. Easily recognizable markers of *innangarð* simplify that matter significantly.

That ties directly into the problem of execution of the desire for a tribal identity, within the context of surviving the decline. We know we need a tribe, and we want it. Unfortunately, we also want an easy, simple method of identifying the tribe, and that's just not available, as far as most people can tell.

Sure, you can grab a bunch of people, randomly, from the local prepper or Oathkeepers group, but then, you have to be worried that they will fall apart at the first hint of trouble, or their wives will tell them that they're not allowed to go hang out at the club house. You can just decide that, when you need to go into action, you'll take whomever shows up, because they will share the value of action with you, but then you end up with a bunch of lunatics in Multicam, spouting stupid shit on social media, and everyone else laughing at you, as they send you fifty-five gallon drums of lubricant and boxes of sex toys.

We need a way to identify those who share our *ørlog*, so we can identify who comprises our *innangarð*. Unfortunately, unlike our ancestors, we cannot base that solely on shared dialect and language, or simply on how they dress, or what foods they like. We need a different method.

The Unconventional Warfare Model

In classical Unconventional Warfare (UW) theory, recruiting for an insurgency is a two-part effort. Initial efforts focus on developing a core cadre. This is composed of the “True Believers,” who would struggle for The Cause to their last breath, even if they were the sole believer. The core cadre provides the leadership of the insurgency: training, indoctrinating, and leading those people who make up the second phase of the recruiting process, the mass of supporters who join, not out of conviction for The Cause, but because, in their fear and frustration with “*what is*,” the insurgency seems to provide the only alternative “*what could be*.” In a world where most of our friends, family, and acquaintances still seem to have their heads in the sand regarding the importance of acknowledging recognition of the decayed status of the empire, this must become the model for *frið*-making as well.

As we saw in our early discussion of the natural hierarchy that rises in tribes, a small, elite minority within the tribe are naturally looked to as leaders, precisely because they are believed—based on their everyday actions—to best embody and personify the core values of the tribe. They are the True Believers of the tribal *ørlog*. The rest of the tribe shares the same values and customs, to varying degrees, but they are also there simply because they don't “belong” anywhere else. They adhere to the *ørlog* of the tribe, not necessarily out of blind conviction, but because, in their fear and frustration with “*what is*” the alternative—the chaos of *utangarð*—the tribe seems to provide the best available “*what could be*”—a known, familiar world that is *innangarð*.

We recognize, biologically and socially, that our biological family is our kin; even if they are not interested in preparedness, and they deny the reality we all face collectively, we're obligated to include them in our tribe, if only out of gratitude for the gifts our parents and grandparents provided us in

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raising us to adulthood, rather than leaving us on a church door step somewhere as newborns. What about our kith though? What about our friends and neighbors? Are we obligated to make a special effort to include and protect them?

I would answer yes, but then, I was raised with a cultural value of service to the community. You may answer no, depending on your cultural *ørlog*. However, I would respond by pointing out that your closest friends, especially those you've known a long time, in multiple contexts, are the people—outside of your biological family—most likely to share your customs and values. If you define “friend” as the dude you met at the bar, that you hang out with just to have someone to drink beer and play poker with, then that might not apply of course. If however—as I do—you define friend more precisely, this is valid.

Friend is defined as “1. *One attached to another by esteem, respect, and affection; an intimate.* 2. *One of the same nation, party, kin, etc...* 4. Scot. *A kinsman.*” It is derived from the OE word “*frēond*,” which in turn, is derived from an older Proto-Germanic word “**frijand-*” meaning “lover.” It is cognate with the ON “*frændi*.” As we can see then, etymologically, a friend means something much more than a buddy we hang out with for the sake of convenience and not being lonely. A friend is definitely part of our tribe.

In many ways, our friends are likely those we most readily turn to when we begin considering building our tribe for survival. After all, if our customs and values have led us to recognize the state of decadence, then it is likely that our closest friends—who presumably share our customs and values—have likely recognized the same things occurring.

The problem that occurs for most people who are concerned about not having the requisite friends and family to start forging a tribe, is the small number of people they know who are willing to voice concern about the state of decay. This is a false dialectic for several reasons though, and should be the least of your concerns.

One of the most commonly voiced concerns among preppers and survivalists is the fear of compromise of their “*OPSEC*.” They don't want people to know that they have guns and food storage and emergency preparations, because they don't want people to know where to go when things get medieval. They don't want the government to know that they are preppers, out of fear that they will be targeted by the government for retribution. This is a valid concern in the broad diversity of an imperial culture that lacks real cohesion. Trust is the lubricant that allows society to function, and there is no trust in a pseudo-community as diverse as the preparedness culture, where different members of the community possess different cultural values.

The remedy to this is two-fold. First is to focus on your individual family and friends. Second, is to ensure that you are living the values and customs you profess to hold. What I often hear from students and acquaintances, is that their family is useless, and they don't have any friends, because everyone is “asleep,” and won't listen to their plaintive, whining pleas to wake up. That is—at least in my experience—not the fault of the plaintiff's friends and family. What I see when I look at these people, is a lie. I suspect their friends and family see the same things.

If you are complaining about the demise of society, are your actions proving that you are dissatisfied? If you are complaining about something, but then you are acting out the same things,

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whether out of ignorance, frustration, or lack of real motivation, it makes your complaints a lie.

If you claim you value a culture of strength, but no one has ever seen you do anything more physically exerting than eating an entire baker's dozen of cream-filled, glazed donuts? Your conviction is a lie.

If you claim you value a culture of community, self-reliance and independence, but you can't go help a neighbor move his couch because your favorite television show is on? Your conviction is a lie.

If you claim you are a combat marksman, and believe in the responsibility and right to bear arms for personal, family, and community defense, but you don't carry your gun every single time you walk out of the house? Your conviction is a lie.

If your conviction is a lie, people are not going to pay attention to you. They're not going to look to you for leadership, because you don't embody the personification of your ørløg. You're a liar. You're a fake, a fraud; a pretender to the throne of the tribal chieftain. You're the Trickster. Fuck you.

The first step towards building a strong, resilient, surviving tribal identity is living the customs and values that you profess. I promise you, from the deepest depths of my experienced soul, if you begin living a life of leadership, by getting off your ass and living the values you lay claim to, people will begin paying attention to you. They will begin not only listening to what you say, but they will come to you, uninvited, and ask for guidance. It's part of the human nature, and the natural hierarchy. It's not a matter of the image; no one cares that you have eighteen sets of Crye Precision Multicam uniforms, and three complete sets of load-bearing equipment. If you're a lazy fuck, who won't get off the couch, you're a fraud.

No one cares that you are a NRA-certified CCW instructor, if you don't carry your gun, you're a fraud.

No one cares that you have two years worth of food storage, if the only meal they see you eat are McDonald's Extra Value Meals. You're a fraud.

If you tell your children and the youth of your clan, that they need to get outside, away from the television and video games, but you lock yourself in the house all day, because you're "old" and have "old injuries?" They're not going to believe you. You're a fraud.

That is the first step in building a tribe: forging the hero. It is becoming Beowulf. It is assuming the armor of Arminius. It is an initiatory process, a re-birth. It is the first step in forging the core cadre of your tribe. The core cadre, as we have seen, provides leadership, guidance, and training to the less committed mass of the tribal population. The rest of that core cadre is composed of those who share your obsession with living the values you profess. They form the warband: the nobility of your tribe. Like you, they are those who best personify the values and customs of your tribal culture, and like you, people will look to them for leadership and guidance, because they recognize that the warband embodies the customs and values that they too believe in. It's not about thinking and talking about preparedness; it's not about thinking and talking about a rebirth of "*traditional American values*." It's not about thinking and talking, it's about taking action. It's about living life. It's what you do that matters.

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The Warband

In **Germania**, Tacitus described the ancient, Germanic tribal warband as a *comitatus*¹⁷⁰—a social and political structure of agreement between the chieftain and his retainers. Tacitus described the level of loyalty, “...to survive the leader and retreat from the battlefield is a lifelong disgrace and infamy.” It is an Indo-European tribal structure that was seen from the Atlantic coast of Europe all the way to the Chinese frontier, and can be seen reflected in similar forms across the human experience in tribal societies. It is a reflection of the gift exchange, wherein the social inferior pledged military service and protection to the chieftain, in return for which he received land, compensation, and privileges.

The most familiar version of this to modern readers, will be the feudal system of early Christian Europe, and it reads poorly in the egalitarian cultural philosophy of post-modern America. That is unfortunate because, when we look at it in the context of the tribal society, it is an ideal that each of us should strive for.

The warband is the composite of the best individuals of the clan. They personify the customs and values of the clan, and exemplify the cultural value of self-sacrifice for the clan. If we see the chieftain defined as “best of the kin,” and as the individual who—in the eyes of the clan—best exemplifies the collective *ørlog* of the clan, then the warband who serves under him, serves the culture of the tribe.

In ON, the term for the warriors who served the chieftain—the nobility, because according to the tribal customs and values, they are the most noble within the tribe—was “*þegn*,” with the OE cognate as “*thegn*”¹⁷¹. The term literally means “one who serves.” They provide the core cadre of leadership within the tribe. Your warband is made up of the thegns—the most noble; those who serve the clan—of your tribe. That is the small nucleus that you should focus on developing. The rest of the tribe will be there when they need to be, because they will look to the thegns—who they have seen living the values and customs of the tribe every day—for leadership and guidance, in the desperation of their fear and frustration. People will look and know, “these people are ready to fight the dragons at the gate. They long to slaughter dragons.” They will know this, because they have witnessed you training to fight dragons.

LARP Much, Bro?

My wife pointed out to me once, as I was using archaic, ancestral terms to describe these concepts in a conversation with her, that it sounded a little like a Dungeons-and-Dragons fantasy, or “LARP”—Live-Action Role-Playing—to the outsider. She was correct.

Of you are an outsider, and use the terms, without living the values embodied in the terms? It's fucking retarded. Once you begin living the values behind those meanings though; once you begin Forging the Hero, you begin to realize that it is anything but fake. It is a matter of becoming what you imagine.

This is not a matter of identifying yourself as chieftain, and then choosing whom your retainers will be. That would make it a role-playing game. Rather, it is a matter of developing a small core group of like-minded friends and family—even if it is just two of you—who evidence their personification of the cultural values of your tribe by living those values every day. That core group, however small, that

¹⁷⁰The Anglo-Saxon/Old English term for the warband is “*dryht*.” While I will probably slip into using that term occasionally, for the most part, I will restrict my terminology to the modern English warband for this section.

¹⁷¹Pronounced, “*thane*.”

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personifies your cultural values and customs, forms the soul of the tribe, specifically because they represent the best moral exemplars of what defines the innangarð of the entire tribe.

Although we use the term warband, this is not simply about being warriors, and training to fight—although that should certainly be a part of it. Societies need more than warriors. Societies also need “*butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers*.” Even the Spartans, where every man was a warrior, needed someone to cook, clean, and manufacture items. They had slaves; we have the clan because we have a cultural value that views slavery as ignoble and evil. The warband serves as the soul of the tribe, not because they are willing to fight for it, but because they personify the ørlög of the tribe.

It is about forming a trained, cohesive group of people whom others in your tribe, when they look to them for leadership, will be able to deposit their trust in, because you are collectively, already trained and prepared to face the dragons of the primordial fear. How do you determine who belongs in the warband? How do you know you can trust that they actually do personify the customs and values of the clan, rather than simply wearing the trappings? Anyone with sufficient money, time, and Internet access can purchase all the Multicam, AR15s, and cool-guy “*barbarian, Viking warlord*” morale patches they want. How do you tell the difference?

Fortunately, we have a model offered by the collective human experience. It is a model that is common to all warrior cultures, implicitly or explicitly. That model is the initiatory process, and it has been common to all tribal societies, not only in their warbands, but as a process of entering adulthood within the culture of the tribe. It is not seen in the modern imperial culture however, because it is exclusive. The corporate, imperial culture cannot afford exclusivity, because exclusivity limits those who will spend money on material items. If only people who have been initiated as warriors buy warrior equipment, rather than wanna be poseurs buying it up, the corporations that manufacture those goods don't make as much profit.

Initiations, Selection, and Forging the Warband

An initiation is a rite-of-passage that marks the entrance into a group. It is a gate through which one must pass, to enter the innangarð of the group. The warband of the tribe forms a separate, inner innangarð, within the greater enclosure of the tribal innangarð, not just by design, but naturally. They are a separate innangarð within the larger community of frið because they have a stronger definition of the ørlög, because of their shared value of living the ørlög so precisely. The warband is the elite nobility of the tribe. Whether part of your kith-and-kin, or an outsider who seems to share the same customs and values, in order to enter that enclosure, they must come through the gate. After all, only people with bad intentions—whether to harm, steal, or simply to break the rules—crawl over the walls or fence rather than coming through the gate.

Modern Americans typically view initiations as short-duration events, that serve as ritual. Examples might range from college fraternity initiations to the *bar Mitzvah* welcoming a young Jewish male into manhood. In these two examples, the first is a joke, a sad, pathetic imitation of a very important, universal cultural tradition of great value. In the second, the *bar Mitzvah* is not the initiation, but rather, the ceremony that marks the terminus of the initiatory process.

Initiation into a closed society requires proof that the individual understands and shares the cultural values and traditions of the society. This is more than the ability to recite the law, it is the proven

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willingness to live the law. Unless the law—the *ørlog*; the customs and values—of your society is very, very minimal—and very, very simple—that takes considerably more than an hour, a day, or a week.

A tribal initiation ritual is a rite-of-passage, marking the entrance to adulthood. The initiatory process leading up to that ritual however, was a lifetime of growing up in the culture, learning the *ørlog* of the culture at the hearth and the communal council fire, witnessing the adults live those values, learning to live them. Within our context, the initiatory process becomes more like the initiatory processes used by the US military.

To the outsider, the initiation of a young paratrooper into the Airborne fraternity, appears to be the graduation exercise, with the soldiers marching by in pretty uniforms, and being awarded their silver wings. To the outsider, the initiation of a new Special Forces (SF) soldier appears to be the graduation ceremony when they are awarded their Green Beret. This is an uninformed view, created out of the ignorance of *utangarð*.

Prior to being awarded his or her airborne wings, the young paratrooper proved his/her ability to live the customs and values of service and courage. They attended Basic Combat Training (BCT), and met the standards that were required to graduate from that course. They attended their Advanced Individual Training (AIT)¹⁷², and met the standards that were required to graduate from that course. They attended the Basic Airborne Course (BAC), and met the standards that were required to graduate from the course. The final jump, and being awarded their wings, was not their initiation into the Airborne fraternity. That was the ritual that recognized their completion of the initiatory process represented by their previous training, over the preceding months.

For the young SF soldier, being awarded his Green Beret is not the initiation. Even the Robin Sage exercise is not the initiation. Robin Sage is the test that proves the initiation was passed. The Q-Course is only part of the initiation. Special Forces Assessment and Selection (SFAS) is only part of the initiation. The initiation was the years of living, day-in and day-out, the values and customs of service that were required to get to that point.

In the military special operations community, there is a proverb that “*Selection never ends.*” This exemplifies the spirit of the initiatory process. It is not about some brief period of surviving some minor hazing rituals. It is not about a psycho-religious ritual that symbolizes your admittance into the group. The initiatory process is the observation period, where you've been seen, by the members of the group—the cadre, if you will—to be not only able, but willing, to live the values and traditions of the group. That never ends. Violating the *ørlog* of the group, regardless of your position or rank within the group results in—and should result in—expulsion from the group, into the *utangarð*. You have demonstrated, by violating the customs and values of the clan, that you are not in *frið* with the group, so you are not within the confines of the *innangarð*. You are *skoggarmann*.

Initiations require time. It may be a month, or six months, or a year. I believe—at a minimum—the initiatory process should be at least one year. That provides the entire span of seasons to observe that someone is actually willing to live the customs and values that they profess, and to ensure that their observation of those rituals and behaviors that represent the *ørlog* are the same as the warband. It is easy to “fake it” at a holiday. It is easy to “fake it” for a workout at the gym, or a month of workouts at

¹⁷²In the case of infantrymen, in my day—and as far as I know, all combat arms soldiers, even today—BCT and AIT take place in the same place, as part of One-Station Unit Training (OSUT).

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the gym. It is easy to “fake it” at a three-day training event.

It is not so easy to “fake it” when you have to do so every single day, for months on end, regardless of the external stresses in the rest of your life. It is not so easy to “fake it” when your wife is bitching at you at home, because you're “*out playing with the guys*,” while she is stuck at home trying to take care of the kids.

The initiation process may be formal. “*Hey, we've established this group. Here's what we're going to do, to prove to each other, that we share these values. We're going to require each of us to do these, and we're going to require any outsiders who want to join us to do them as well.*” It may also be an informal thing—as long as it is explicitly recognized that you are doing it—of “*Hey, we're doing this, and we want you guys to know that we're doing it, so you know we're living what we preach.*”

In order to create an initiatory process however, you first have to identify what that initiatory process is going to focus on. What values and customs of your *ørlog* are most important, relative to the leadership function that the thegns of the warband provide?

Whatever your particular tribal *ørlog* is that defines the borders of your *innangarð*—wherever your warband is recruited from—there is the source of your initiatory process. If you identify your *innangarð* by religious affiliation, then witnessing the orthopraxy of your friends and family members—and them witnessing the orthopraxy of yours—will be a significant portion of the initiation into the warband. If you identify your *innangarð* by residence in a certain neighborhood or town, then living in the neighborhood is obviously a portion of the initiatory process. Adhering to the social norms—the orthopraxy—of the neighborhood is part of the initiatory process. Do they share your customs and traditions, or did they simply end up in the neighborhood because the shitty real estate market made your neighborhood affordable?

Regardless of your particular cultural values however, there are, as we have seen, some core values that seem to be common to all tribal societies—and indeed, to all resilient societies. Predicting your initiatory process on these—and any other fundamental metrics of *innangarð* that are important to you—can provide the outline and definition of your initiatory processes training and testing.

Really, the initiation into the warband of thegns—the nobility—is pretty simple. You are observing them in their daily lives, and seeing if they are living the values they profess to believe. At the same time, they are observing you. If you claim that you value health and fitness, so that you can protect the tribe, but they see you eating McDonald's and playing video games, rather than eating healthy foods at home, and doing physical training? They know you're a fraud.

If you claim that you believe in critical thinking and good judgment to build *hamingja*, but they see you borrowing money from people to pay your bills, month-in and month-out, and spending your paycheck on booze, lottery tickets, and partying? They know you're a fraud.

If you claim that you believe people should carry a gun to help protect the people of the clan and community, but on the few occasions they can drag you, kicking and screaming, to the range, you insist on wearing all of your load-bearing equipment, and running nothing but open-carry and rifle drills? They know you're a fraud.

You're not going to be recognized as a personification of the *ørlog* of your tribe, because you're not

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living those values. You're not a thegn. You're just like everyone else that says one thing, and then their daily activities prove that they are full of shit. You're not observing the customs and traditions of the ørlög that you profess is your values system. You're a fraud.

Initiation is not about a formal process. Even the metrics used to test—whether those are reciting sections of Holy Text, from memory, or being able to hit a mark with your longbow on the village green, or a physical test like running a free-for-all obstacle race through the woods while keeping a bird's egg intact in your mouth—are simply used to measure someone's ability to actually live the values of the tribe, in their daily life, when you have neither the time nor the inclination to invade their personal privacy every day, to ensure that they are doing what they say they are.

You can't recite thirty minutes of memorized scripture with only ten minutes of study. It takes weeks and months of repeated reading to memorize that.

You don't build the ability to draw and fire a one-hundred pound draw-weight longbow, and hit a man-sized mark at 200 paces, in a week. It takes years of training to build the ability to even pull the bow to full draw, let alone hit a target at any distance.¹⁷³

You don't build the physical capability to run, wrestle, punch, stumble, fall, roll, and jump obstacles, while staying calm enough to not break a fucking bird's egg in your mouth by just doing it one day. It takes training and conditioning over months and even years to achieve that level of conditioning, strength, and endurance.

Initiation is not an event, it is a process. It is a process of living, and it is a process of observing people living. It's not about the ritual at the end, it's about getting to that ritual. It's about orthopraxy. It's living the customs and traditions that express the values you claim you believe in.

Marks of Membership

In the preparedness and survivalist community, wearing certain symbols has come to represent a mark of membership. They are “*far recognition symbols*” for supposedly like-minded people. They are a culture-specific representation of uniforms, patches, and awards that mark one as a member of the group. For preppers and survivalists, those range from carrying around pocket-sized copies of the Constitution, to wearing Gadsden Flag and Three-Percent morale patches. These things—cultural appropriations of the military fraternity that they long to belong to—have become the team jerseys worn by sports fans, for the preparedness community.

Within tribal societies, the importance of wearing or carrying, a “*mark of membership*,” has varied. In some cultures, when they are large enough, it is very important; as it serves as an acknowledgment from the members of the group, that the individual has met the metrics for inclusion within the innangarð. This allows members of the group, who may not know each other personally, to understand, upon meeting the first time, that they share the same ørlög, creating automatic frið. They belong to the same fraternity. This can also serve as a way for others, not of the innangarð of the warband, but who

¹⁷³I discovered the truth of this myself this winter. I decided I wanted to take up traditional longbow archery as a pastime and a way to connect with my own cultural heritage. I'm a big, strong dude, who lifts really heavy weights regularly, so I figured I would start with a seventy-pound draw, and build to a hundred. Fortunately I found a mentor that knew more than me. When I pulled even a fifty-pound draw-weight bow to the ear, it was a bitch. I did it, and without difficulty, but holding it at full-draw for any length of time—let alone drawing and firing repeatedly—was a motherfucker.

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are part of the larger tribal innangarð, to recognize that the bearer of the mark is not just a fellow member of the larger community, but has been recognized by the thegns, who best exemplify the ørlog of the tribe, as a fellow moral exemplar.

Finally, if the mark of membership is significant, and the reputation of the clan and the warband are well-known outside of the innangarð, it serves as a protection, not just for the bearer, but for others of the clan. It becomes a symbol of, “*the protectors of my people are here.*” The implication of that, of course, is “*fuck with any of us, and we're here; we will chop your head off and put it on a pike for the world to see.*”

Marks of membership within the elite of the warband, that are ready reminders of this type, range from the Green Beret of the SF soldier and the silver wings of the Airborne soldier, to the kukri of the Nepalese Gurkhas, and the “*colors*” of an outlaw motorcycle club. When people see a brown-skinned little bundle of muscle and tendons wielding a kukri, they know they're fucked. When people see a dude wearing an Outlaws MC rocker—even if he looks like an accountant—they know fucking with him is a bad idea. He might not be too hard to kick the shit out of, but it's not him you need to worry about: it's the eighteen members of his club that are going to come hunt you down that you need to worry about.

The mark of membership protects not just the person wearing it, or even just the warband. It is representative of the honor of the protection of the entire tribe. It is a flag, symbolizing the honor of the entire tribe. It represents the recognition by the tribe, that the bearer lives the values of the tribe, and has “*done the work*” to help protect his tribe. It represents the recognition of the tribe that “*violence is honor, and honor is survival,*” thus representing their willingness to use violence to “*protect the customs, values, traditions, and the people of the tribe.*”

These marks of membership, within a warband, are very ancient. In his 2004 study of **Ancient Germanic Warriors: Warrior Styles from Trajan's Column to Icelandic Sagas**, professor Michael Speidel, a professor of Ancient History at the the University of Hawaii at Manoa, discusses the Indo-European origins of these marks of membership in warbands.

“Natalevka-style stone stellae from around 3000 BCE, found in the Ukraine, show a naked berserk warrior, as well as clubs, axes, spears, knives, bows, arrows, and horses, betraying a wealth of fighting techniques. By 1600 BCE, at the latest, when Aryans came to India, Indo-European warrior styles were in full swing. Around 1200 BCE, at the end of the Bronze Age in West Asia¹⁷⁴, berserkers decided battles and wolf-warriors ran with war chariots.

Warbands (“Mannerbunde”) with their own ways of bravery and ‘willfulness,’ underpinned these warrior styles. Sanskrit svandha¹⁷⁵ is kindred to Greek and English ethos¹⁷⁶ and to Latin sodales. Svandha comes close to our concept of warrior style, referring not only to ‘group’ and ‘behavior,’

¹⁷⁴Contrary to popular misunderstanding, the various “ages” of history did not all end at the same time, across the globe.

Even today, in the Technological Age, parts of the world are still Stone Age and Iron Age.

¹⁷⁵“inherent power,” “habitual state,” “custom”

¹⁷⁶“character,” “behavior”

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but also to weapons that went with these. The Rig Veda says of India's Marut warband, 'they glitter like lightning through the rain, with weapons befitting their svandha. To fight in such a style was a ritual; acting out a myth.

Groups of wolf-warriors and berserks had their own weapons, tactics, and war dances. Svandha heightened the group's spirit and made its grim ways less shocking to themselves and outsiders¹⁷⁷."

A buddy, a combat veteran of the 10th Mountain Division in Iraq, was asking me about the initiatory process within his own formative tribal attempts. He had a small group of five or six guys, who were getting together twice a month, and had been doing so for over half a year. He felt it was time to "*take it to the next level*," and to do so, they needed to "*really organize it and give it a name. Make it a tangible thing. We got solid guys, and we are starting to pick up what I call 'hang arounds.'*"

As I informed my buddy, "*coming up with a cool name is no different than the leader of three-man militia labeling himself a colonel.*" Names aren't for the warband. Names are for utangarð. Let the utangarð name you.¹⁷⁸ If you need a label, stick to "Us." Instead, as I told him, the historical model would be

"...quit worrying about labels. Decide what your standards [of performance] are. When all six of you can exceed those standards, sit down together and decide what your selection and initiatory requirements will be for new members coming in...if you want feel like you need some distinct way to mark the boundaries of innangarð, then come up with a physical mark of membership—please, for the love of all the gods, and my personal sanity, do not use a battle vest or some morale patch—as a mark of completing the initiatory process and entry into the group. I actually really like the idea of something along the Kukri tradition. Maybe an axe or a hammer or something? If you're all Christians, maybe a handmade, custom dagger with a cross shape? Establish the originals as the leadership cadre/elders of the warband. They make decisions, until new members have passed the initiatory process....If you need to make and record a few by-laws, establishing what customs and values are important, and how they will be observed, that's fine, but keep it simple: mission statement/philosophy, and statement of performance standards. Don't make it more than it is. It needs to be largely organic. You don't need a name to make it real and tangible. Make the initiatory process difficult and challenging; that will make it tangible. Give the guys a reason to be proud of being accepted."

¹⁷⁷*I suspect here, the professor is expressing an academic cognitive bias to the idea that warriors just might not be appalled by the violent nature of their profession, and thus, not appalled by the "grim" nature of the results of their methods.*

¹⁷⁸*Whatever name the utangarð saddles you with is what will stick anyway. Navajo means "savages." How many people know their own term "Dineh," which means "People?"*

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Marks of Membership in Practice?

There is undoubtedly, a distinct advantage, especially as the imperial situation degrades further, to marks of membership within a tribe and a warband. It may be worthwhile (*note that I said “may be worthwhile.” We are treading uncomfortably close to the LARP threshold my wife mentioned...*), as your innangarð of the warband expands, to consider, upon the completion of the initiatory process and acceptance into the identified circle, the gift of a specific weapon—even a totem, or ritual weapon, of limited modern value—as a bonding mechanism; a mark of membership. It should be something that outsiders will readily recognize as distinctive, even if they don't know what it represents. It may be largely symbolic, but I would argue that something at least potentially useful would be more gratifying, and instruction in its use—say of a particular type of knife—should be considered as part of the initiatory process. *“Hey, we're going to do some XXX training tonight. You might want to show up, so when you get yours, at the end of your initiatory process, you'll know how to use it.”*

Perhaps a specific type—maybe even with a special mark or design feature—of short sword, knife, or ax, or something similar. Initially, as I was contemplating this, I thought that something more modern and “practical” would be adequate, such as requiring everyone to own the same rifle, but I really don't believe that is adequately distinctive to serve as a symbol. The thegns of the warband provide more than a moral exemplar of the customs and values of the tribe. They also serve as tactical leaders, in situations where the greater mass of the tribe needs to train and perhaps fight, forming the fyrd of the clan. The distinctive nature of the mark of membership serves as a mark of prowess that sets the bearer apart and above, in that distinct situation. It's a reminder to the mass of the community that, *“this is a dude we should probably be listening to.”*

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Nine
Forging the Shield

“...the charge that I did not fight fair is true. I fought for success and not for display. There was no man in the Confederate army who had less the spirit of knight errantry in him, or who took a more practical view of war than I did.”
--John Singleton Mosby, COL, 43rd BN/ 1st Virginia Cavalry (1833-1916)

Among the common concerns that seems to drive people to the preparedness and survival culture is fear. That is, fear for the safety and security of their families and themselves, in an increasingly dangerous world. Like all of humanity, through the ages, when people discover that they are afraid, and it appears no one can or will help, their natural instinct seems to be to find a familiar heroic figure to emulate. Unfortunately, in our contemporary world, due to the influence of the corporate mass media into our every conscious thought, and the urge towards flag-waving, blind nationalistic patriotism, often, the only familiar heroic figures available for most people, are either law enforcement or the United States military.

Calling this unfortunate is not intended to belittle the honor or courage of the average police officer, performing an often thankless job, in the genuine hope of bettering his community. Nor is it intended to slight the military or veterans' community. I am a veteran and I am proud of the achievements I accomplished in uniform. No person who has sworn an oath to offer their life in the defense of their people—however their definition of that term may have changed in the ensuing time—and the values that they believe in, will ever be castigated for that choice by me.

It is intended to bring to mind the inappropriateness of either profession as a survival role model for developing security for the individual, family, or small community of neighbors and/or like-minded friends. While there are innumerable valuable lessons to be gained from various aspects of the military and law enforcement organizational, training, and technical models, blindly attempting to mimic any aspect of those models—without also being able to mimic the organizational, financial, and political assets of the Leviathan that supports them—is foolhardy at best.

Every profession, like every tribe, develops its own grammar—not just its own vocabulary, but a specific method of applying that vocabulary in common usage. In every profession, whether by institutional design or not, we find the ancient guild model recreated, of a relatively small core comprised of elite “Master” craftsmen—extremely talented, well-educated professionals—surrounded

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by a far greater quantity of less-skilled journeymen and apprentices. In these latter two groups, whether the populations are within those categories due to a lack of native talent or incompleteness of training and education, you will find—by definition—a lack of comprehensive understanding of the professional colloquial grammar.

This certainly applies within the profession-of-arms and aspiring leadership efforts within the preparedness/survival culture, where we witness people who lack either the academic or practical experiential credentials to lay claim to any title of skill beyond—perhaps in the best cases—journeyman, offering training and doctrinal suggestions to people which are far outside of their scope of expertise. Whether it is an aspiring “tactical trainer” who served a single enlistment as a junior enlisted man or officer, a non-combat arms veteran with wide reading interests pontificating on close-quarters combat from an academic angle, or—worst of all and equally common—people with absolutely no foundation of education or experience in interpersonal conflict, passing on regurgitated information they have no frame-of-reference for understanding, there are entirely too many who profess to teach skill-at-arms who lack any degree of the well-rounded blend of academic and experiential education to offer legitimate expert knowledge.

We see this occur within current trends in the academia of strategic thinking, and flowing down to what should be practical discussions of the subject, at the tactical level. We see a burgeoning interest—as a result of the ongoing conflict with militant Mohammedanism—on current trends in “unconventional,” or “guerrilla” warfare. Lacking an appropriately global view of conflict in the human experience, too many have succumbed to the inherent cognitive bias of the xenophobia of civilized military thinking.

The reality is, what we label as “unconventional,” “irregular,” or “guerrilla”—especially in the context of the “Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW)” model so beloved of would-be experts in the preparedness and survivalist communities—is far older than what the civilized world—including many of the loudest voices supporting 4GW theory—consider “conventional” warfare. While academic theorists point to conceptual differences between conventional military thought and 4GW, with even the meanest effort it becomes quickly apparent that there is nothing new or novel about these differences.

While modern 4GW forces, like ISIS/ISIL, attempt to undermine enemy strengths through the use of primitive tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP), and *ad hoc* improvisations to overcome the civilized nation-state military's technological superiority, there is nothing new or novel about this. The modern conceptual approach may focus on technological issues, such as reverting to human courier communications—rather than the use of radios, cell-phones, and the Internet—in an attempt to counter electronic eavesdropping from satellite-based signals intercept capabilities, but even at the dawn of civilization, we can see that improvisation has always been the tool of the less powerful antagonist in a conflict, in order to overcome his opponents' strengths.

Al Qaeda and ISIS/ISIL may resort to tactics like using IED to target risk-averse civilized military forces traveling in heavily-armored vehicles that limit their travel to roads, rather than engaging in the inherent risk of dismounted gunfights, but there is nothing new or novel about employing alternative TTP, via asymmetric operations, to exploit enemy weaknesses. In 9 CE a Germanic chieftain's son, Arminius of the Cherusci tribe, used a personal relationship with the Roman governor Publius

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Quintilius Varus, to lure the governor's forces into an ambush that resulted in over 20,000 Roman dead, in less than 48 hours¹⁷⁹. Despite his experience as a cavalry commander in the Roman army's auxiliaries, Arminius did not achieve this critical success¹⁸⁰ by lining his forces up in an open field and facing the legions in the Roman manner. He didn't try to turn the barbarian horde into legionnaires. Instead, he lured Varus' forces into the swampy forest, and executed his ambush in a position where they were unable to deploy the strength of their formations, and forced the fight to occur in small, disorganized clumps, suiting the barbarian way of war.

While 4GW theorizes that using terror as a psychological weapon, conducting rear-area operations that target the civil infrastructure of a civilized society, rather than engaging in a stand-up, “fair” fight with the nation-state military, is somehow new and novel, the fact is, 9/11 and the Madrid train station bombing on 11MAR04 are simply modern examples of a much older form of conflict. The idea that there is—or should be—some sort of civilized restraint in the conduct of conflict is a cultural conceit of decaying empires, and is without historical or archaeological relevance outside of that context. Dying in a stand-up, “fair” fight offers no benefit for the clan. The tribal warrior was—and should be—more inclined to raid in the deepest dark of night, sneaking into the enemy's hut, and burning it down round the decapitated, emasculated corpse of his enemy, and then quickly fleeing back into the dark forest, before the victim's kith-and-kin can detect the identity of the assassin, preventing retaliation.

Within our own national cultural heritage, we can see the transition from a culture willing to win at all costs, as long as it benefited our side. What started out as a society that was willing to eradicate entire cultures from the face of the Earth in order to build a society—on the backs of subjugated slaves no less—and to destroy entire metropolitan cities through fire-bombing and atomic weapons, we have decayed into a dying culture that attempts to have sit-down, diplomatic relations, in order to discuss the grievances our foes might have.

What we see in the rise of so-called 4GW forces like Al Qaeda and ISIS/ISIL, is not an aberration, or an accident of history. Instead, it is an exact replica of the historical cycle of empires described by Glubb. As the Anglo-American cultural hegemony, represented politically and militarily by the American Empire, declines in power and status like Rome during its decline, we are witnessing the rise of competing cultural powers striving to replace that empire in the developing power vacuum. The reality is that, while they are only partially correct, half-witted Neo-Conservative political commentators are correct when they attempt to score political points for the Republican Party side of the imperial *status quo*, by pointing out that Al Qaeda and ISIS/ISIL represent the exact same force as those Arabs who burst forth from the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th and 8th century, to conquer much of the known world.

¹⁷⁹While there are some good non-fiction treatments of the Battle of Teutoburg Forest, and Arminius, which approach the subject from a layman's point-of-view, such as Peter Well's 2004, **The Battle That Stopped Rome**, I believe the best treatment of the subject is actually Harry Turtledove's novelization of Arminius' life, and the battle, in **Give Me Back My Legions!** There is actually little evidence, outside of occasional Roman references to Arminius' betrayal, to the background leading up to the fight. Turtledove provides a believable human face—with human motivations—to the story that make it relevant to the casual reader.

¹⁸⁰By “critical,” I mean, this one battle is generally accepted to have played a pivotal role in the history of the entire world, including the development of Imperial Rome and western Europe. It is generally accepted as the reason that the Romans never successfully established any lasting settlements east of the Rhine, allowing the local barbarian culture to survive, largely intact.

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They are only half-correct though, because they seem to believe that the military might of western civilization can defeat them. It didn't defeat the Caliphate then, and it's not likely to defeat the resurgent Caliphate today. Certainly, we might destroy Al Qaeda, and we might destroy ISIS/ISIL, but the current decadent state of American imperialism makes it pretty apparent to the objective observer, that we're not going to defeat militant Islam. Islam provides the unity-of-purpose that military theory insists is critical to success. The western World however—including the United States—lacks the same unity-of-purpose. Even calls to “*kill 'em all*,” are ridiculous hyperbole. Killing all of the Mohammedans in the world would require the slaughter of a quarter of the world's population¹⁸¹. In a political environment that is willing to accommodate refugees who are coreligionists of the enemy, without an adequate vetting process to ensure their status, that level of unity-of-purpose does not exist.

While there are certainly lessons that can be profitably learned from the study of the post-modern, “4GW” application of the original model of conflict, for self-defense in the decline of empire, they are not the lessons that are generally being voiced by the “experts” within the prepper and survivalist communities. The lessons to be learned have nothing to do with running around in the woods, clad in Multicam pajamas¹⁸², while playing out **Red Dawn** fantasies. The current struggles in Europe are simply a repeat of the rise of the first Caliphate using the same tribal warfare methods, applied to the current operational environment.

Throughout the entirety of the collective human experience, most inter-group conflict has not been contested with Larteguy's display army of “...*lovely guns, tanks, little soldiers, staffs, distinguished and doddering Generals, and dear little regimental officers...*”¹⁸³ Rather, the resolution of the vast majority of inter-group conflict—even within the midst of the greatest imperial civilizations—has been achieved by small bands of poorly-armed, ill-disciplined, and poorly-trained—even untrained—clansmen, banding together to protect the ordered, understood society of their *innangarð* from the wild chaos of the *utangarð*. Most of the human experience of inter-group conflict has revolved around small groups of hard men, willing to do hard things, with no regard for the moral sensibilities of their enemies. That is the lesson that the prepper and survivalist culture needs to be taking from the study of “Fourth-Generation Warfare.” That lesson is, “*the only fair fight is the fight you win.*”

For the modern barbarian, emigrating outside the metaphorical boundaries of the decay of modern imperial culture, self-defense—warfare—must become what it was for our ancestors; not “*an extension of politics by other means*,”¹⁸⁴ but rather, a means of ensuring the survival of cultural values. In his 1996 study of the archaeological evidence surrounding inter-tribal warfare in prehistoric cultures, **War Before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage**, Dr. Lawrence Keeley pointed out that tribes engaged in endemic, inter-tribal conflict suffered an average loss of 0.5% of their population, annually. In a tribe of one hundred people, that's one person dying every two years, as a direct result of the conflict¹⁸⁵. One-half of one percent really doesn't seem like all that large a number. When we

181A Pew Research Center article, dated 7DEC15, estimates 23% of the world's population is Mohammedan, with a significantly larger growth rate than any other religion. By the end of the 21st century, it is estimated that Mohammedanism will replace Christianity as the world's largest religion.

182A tribute to my wife. Seeing a prepper at a shooting event once, clad from head-to-toe in Multicam—including boots and a face mask, she pointed out, “*That dude looks like he's wearing footie pajamas!*”

183Larteguy, Jean; ***The Centurions***; 1961

184von Clausewitz, Karl; ***On War***; 1832 (Mine is the 2003 Dover edition)

185In other words, directly from enemy action, rather than from an otherwise attributable cause, such as starvation or

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extrapolate that to the current population of the United States however, it equals roughly 1.5 million people, annually. That's more deaths—in one year—than the entire sum of all American combat deaths since 1775¹⁸⁶. When we consider that as a representation of the survival production capacity of a small tribe, this type of statistic makes it abundantly clear that we should harbor zero interest in fighting according to any sort of “fair play” considerations developed to enhance the prestige and lethality of civilized military forces.

While many in the preparedness and survivalist communities discuss the academic applications of 4GW theory, it is a common cognitive bias that they do so while framing the discussion in the grammar of civilization's maneuver warfare doctrine. They feel like they need to be able to fight in a civilized manner, using contemporary small-unit tactics. The cultural emphasis—based on the cultural conditioning of “fighting fair”—is on training to conduct conventional light-infantry patrolling operations in rural environments, utilizing conventional TTP that were designed with a doctrinal emphasis on the technological superiority of a supporting arms effort that is absent in the prepper/survivalist capability.

While there is definitively a place for the application of light-infantry tactical applications, it is limited. There are far more lethal threats that those genuinely interested in ensuring the survival of their cultural values should be concerned with. Those threats are not countered by running around in the woods or desert wearing Multicam, and brandishing military-type small arms. Don't worry about training to be a legionnaire to fight the legions.

The empire of Rome, as we have seen, did not collapse in a day. According to the historical perspective, neither will the American Empire. We need to be concerned with protecting our people, and their collective customs and values, from real threats, rather than the imaginary bogeyman of roving bands of organized, trained, cannibalistic looters. Even in the context of current social upheavals that do require the ability to fend off looters, such as the “*Black Lives Matter*” riots of recent years, overt paramilitary action of the variety espoused by so many of the self-identified experts in the preparedness and survivalist culture serves only to draw the attention of the state's “rough men,” resulting in a decidedly negative impact on the hamingja of those involved.

We have seen however, that the willingness and ability to resort to violence—or at the very least, the apparent willingness and ability to resort to violence—is a critical element in the tribal survival strategy in the decline of the empire. The decay of the American Empire into a post-imperial, third-world state of existence can already be seen. Significant portions of the country, both urban and rural, are already there. They may have the trappings of federal government protection and oversight, but at the immediate, local level, the federal government is already a failed-state in those places, and the local government is not any better. The third-world state environment may be reflected in the physical infrastructure of failing government services and burned out buildings not being removed or replaced, or it may be a reflection of the interactions between local citizens and the representatives of the local, state, or federal government, with corrupt law enforcement, or judges and politicians who see their jobs

illness, which, while it may have been indirectly caused by the conflict, could also be explained from a different, *unrelated cause*.

¹⁸⁶According to the Veteran's Administration, there have been 651,031 combat fatalities, and 308,800 in-theater, non-combat fatalities. These numbers include both Union and Confederate forces in the American Civil War.

Source: http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/fs_americas_wars.pdf

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and the local tax-base as their personal bailiwick from which to extract wealth and luxury off the backs of the peasantry. The failed-state may be reflected in who controls the local real estate, with government forces maintaining a shadow presence if any, while local criminal organizations actually wield the power and provide the services of a shadow government. In large portions of this country, the empire has already fallen, with the significant portions of the rest following those parts down the slide quickly. Do not do yourself or your clan the disfavor of pretending, because you still see the imperial flag flying over government-owned buildings and property, that this is not the case.

Whether from the imperial government itself, or from rival “tribes” competing for the same dwindling resources within the decaying infrastructure of the empire's civil society, the ability to respond to insult or injury is critical to the continued good hamingja and survival of the clan. In order to develop a “culture of appropriate violence,” and a “culture of strength,” we need to determine a doctrine for the use-of-force within our tribal ørløg.

While the terms “doctrine,” “tactics, techniques, and procedures,” and standard operating procedures,” have—incorrectly—become largely synonymous within preparedness and survivalist circles over the years, it is important to understand the correct definition of doctrine, because doctrine provides the means to define your TTP and SOP. Doctrine is defined as “...2. *That which is taught; a principle, a body of principles, in any branch of knowledge; tenet; principle of faith...*”

In the professional colloquial grammar of the military, doctrine is specifically defined as, “...*the fundamental principles by which units guide their actions in support of their mission(s).*” If we define the basic mission of the clan to be “*protect the values, customs, traditions, and lives of the people of the clan,*” then the doctrine we develop must focus on those principles that allow us to perform that mission successfully. There are several key fundamentals to “irregular” warfare that may apply to the self-defense doctrine of the tribe.

What is Good for the Clan is Good

While we often try to establish definitive definitions of good and evil based on cultural values, and apply them universally, this is a ridiculously flawed approach. While it is common to apply moral values to certain actions or acts, predicated on our cognitive biases, as soon as we broaden our perspective to the entirety of the collective human experience, the flaws in this approach become blindingly obvious. If we define the tribal mission as “*protect the values, customs, traditions, and lives of the people of the clan,*” then first of all, everything we do must uphold the customs and values that define the borders of our innangarð. As long as a behavior does not violate those borders, while also focusing on the survival of the people of the clan, it is—according to the moral of the tribe's culture—good. It doesn't matter what the Pope in Rome, or the government in Washington, DC, claim is good or evil. It doesn't even matter how the pastor from the church down the road defines good and evil—unless we attend his church, and thus presumably share his values.

If an action or activity, no matter how tactically or strategically perfect it may otherwise seem, violates either of these basic doctrinal goals, it is not good. This is important, and it is—sadly—one thing too many in the preparedness and survivalist cultures seem to blindly ignore. Your self-defense doctrine may uphold your cultural values of always fighting fair. It may uphold your cultural value of never striking first. It may uphold your cultural value of “*adhering to the Constitution.*” Those are all noble, but if it doesn't increase the chances of survival for your tribe, it is inherently bad doctrine.

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On the same hand however, your self-defense doctrine may ensure the survival of the people of your trusted inner circle of innangarð; you may have a doctrine of “*always shoot first*” and “*chop off the heads of the dead*,” but if your cultural ørlög mandates “*never take pre-emptive action*,” or “*never desecrate the dead*,” then it is inherently bad doctrine. The doctrinal principle of “*what is good for the clan is good*,” is not an excuse for a lack of morality in your actions. Doctrine that results in survival, at the cost of violating the cultural morality of your tribe can only result in dissolution of the tribal identity, because it is an obvious breach of the borders of innangarð.

What we see too often in the preparedness community, is an apparent desire to play the role of Don Quixote¹⁸⁷, running off to tilt at windmills, in a fanciful quest to achieve what an objective view of history tells us is simply unrealistic, by somehow convincing the 318 million people of the United States that “*we need to restore the Constitution*,” despite the fact that, even within the preparedness community—let alone in the entirety of that 318 million people—no one can agree exactly how to define various parts of the Constitution. While I agree that the values contained within the Constitution are good, I don't feel able, or obligated, to force others to agree with me. Facing the metaphorical dragons for other people serves no valid purpose for my own clan. That strategy then, of “*let's fight for people that are not part of my clan*,” ends up doctrinally unsound, when weighed against the doctrinal mission of “*protect the customs, values, traditions, and lives of the people of the clan*.”¹⁸⁸ If your cultural value places more importance on “*protecting those that cannot protect themselves*” than on the protection of your own innangarð, that's noble—sincerely—but it also means your tribe is fucked. While you're off playing Knights of the Round Table, Lancelot is going to sneak in the back door of the king's quarters and fuck Guinevere doggy-style on your bed. It may be part of your cultural values to “*always protect the weak*,” but if doing so is contrary to the survival interests of your own tribe, it's bad doctrine.

What is too often misunderstood, by people still blindly grasping for the security of the familiar, clamoring for the “rule-of-law” and a “*return to the Constitution*,” is that we human beings are inherently tribal. We cannot possibly share the exact values of someone in a different social and political ecosystem, regardless of whether we share the same general political or religious ethos. People develop their personal identity through association with whatever people they associate with. That is their tribe.

In the context of the decline of the American empire, it doesn't matter if you believe the greatest threat is from out-of-control federal law enforcement agents, your local sheriff's deputies, outlaw motorcycle gangs, militant Mohammedan extremists, or your friendly neighborhood drug gang. What all of those people share, through the nature of their world view, is that strength is honor and honor is survival. If you try and fight a battle on their terms—numbers or technology—they're going to win, because they're going to keep bringing the violence, in larger and stronger doses. You cannot win a

187de Cervantes, Miguel; **The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha**; 1615 (My copy is the 2003 Penguin Classics edition)

188Seriously, motherfuckers, think about it. Following the resolution of the JAN16 occupation of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge, in Harney County, Oregon, that resulted in the shooting death of LaVoy Finicum, the federal prosecutor issued 80+ federal felony warrants. What value is LaVoy Finicum to his kith-and-kin today, beyond—perhaps—an exemplar of moral behavior for their tribal cultural values? What value are any of the others who are now in the process of being arrested, for participation in that bungled debacle of shitty judgment, to their kith-and-kin? They're not going to offer much value from inside of a cage, are they? Their goals were laudable, but their strategic doctrine was shit.

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stand-up fight with the federal government or your local sheriff's department. You cannot win a stand-up fight with your local outlaw motorcycle club. In any of those cases, they're going to look at the situation, think about it for a moment, and then go get more of their friends. That's how tribes work—and their tribes are larger than yours. Instead of trying to fight in the civilized manner—even as you try and stand outside of the failing civilization—you must learn to fight like the barbarian you have been labeled.

The Dude That Throws the First Effective Punch Usually Wins the Fight

When the tribe is threatened—or members of the tribe are threatened—whether said threat is explicit or implicit, an “insult” has been committed, and the concept that “honor is survival,” demands remediation of the insult. Wherever that threat originates from, “*there is no possible victory in defense.*”¹⁸⁹ This is as true in a gunfight, or in a longer duration struggle between opposing factions, as it is against the grade-school bully. If we know a fight is imminent, if we seize the initiative and maintain it, we can keep the opposition—whomever it is—reacting to our actions rather than having the opportunity to impose their own will on events. This is not simply a matter of being willing to hit first. It is about recognizing the inevitability of the fight, before the first blow is delivered. It is about recognizing when you have gained the initiative, and being willing to maintain that initiative through continued, focused, targeted, aggression. It is about recognizing when you do not have the initiative, and having the intelligence and wisdom to avoid or escape the confrontation, in order to fight elsewhere at another time, when the conditions favor your effort.

The Box is a Cage

If you are the typical prepper/survivalist, a white, middle-class, suburbanite, or rural resident, this is probably going to require a significant mental shift in your thinking and decision-making processes. Not only are you going to have to change your methods of logic and reason, you're going to have to change your grammar. Perhaps the most efficient “first punch” will be sitting in the bushes next to the bad guy's driveway. When he pulls in from work, you empty a twelve-gauge into his ear, through the driver's side window of his truck. Perhaps the best “first punch” will be burning his house down, while he's inside, asleep in his bed.

It's not about “playing fair,” according to a set of civilized morals. Civilizations are not built on “fair play.” Civilizations are built on the burial grounds of the decapitated corpses of the enemy, and the burned foundations of their destroyed cities and villages. Fuck fair play.

If They're On Your Front Porch, It Is Too Late to Run Away

It is axiomatic in the doctrine of “irregular” small-unit warfare that “*stand-off favors the small unit.*” The application of weapons and tactics that allow the irregular force to choose the time and place of the fight is the best choice. The distance provided by “stand-off” provides the ability to leave the scene, surviving to fight another day, if the situation changes to favor the opposition.

Within the tribal context of course, if we define the mission as “*protect the customs, values,*

¹⁸⁹The entire, famous Steinbeck quote, “*This is the law. The purpose of fighting is to win. There is no possible victory in defense. The sword is more important than the shield, and skill is more important than either. The final weapon is the brain, and all else is supplemental,*” is from **The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights**. Steinbeck's collection is a modern adaptation of the Winchester Manuscript of Malory's **Le Morte d'Arthur**. I don't remember what the first translation of Malory I read was, but while this quote is wholly Steinbeck, it is apparently a far older sentiment...

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traditions, and lives of the people of the clan,” then waiting for the enemy to arrive “at the front porch,” is contradictory to the principle of “what is good for the clan is good.” The women, and the children, and the elders of the tribe are right behind the “front door,” leaving them vulnerable if the fight is lost. It places the survival of the tribe in jeopardy.

We see this in the preparedness context, in the expectation that the rule-of-law is going to affect the outcome of a situation. When your complaint is that “*the government no longer follows the Constitution*,” then staging a peaceful rally, in order to bring your attention to the government's courts, is staying on the front porch¹⁹⁰. If you feel that the government importing potentially hostile Mohammedan refugees into your community is an intentional action, to weaken the fiber of your community's morality, then complaining to the government about it rather than taking local action is certainly staying on the front porch.

You have to be willing—and able—to learn to be pro-active, being willing to “throw the first effective punch,” or the threats that endanger you, your family, and the extended family of your tribe, are going to catch you, with your fly open, pissing in the wife's roses from the front porch, with a half-can of Pabst Blue Ribbon in your gun hand. Rather than defining your morality by the notions of civilized behavior, put yourself mentally in the place you will be, when the empire fails in your community.

What will you be willing to do then? One of my favorite music groups, Canadian alt-country band, **Corb Lund**, has a great song that is really popular in my family¹⁹¹, called “*Gettin' Down on the Mountain*,” about social collapse. One of the lines in the song is, “...you ever seen a man whose kids ain't ate in seventeen days and countin'?” Exactly what would you be willing to do if your children hadn't had anything to eat, besides grass soup and chewing on boiled scraps of leather from your old work boots, for three weeks? That is the morality you need to be thinking about when trying to decide on what defines a legitimate “first punch.”

A Chihuahua Can Kick a Great Dane's Ass...If He Remembers That He Is A Chihuahua

Well-trained, well-disciplined groups of physically and morally courageous fighters have historically demonstrated the ability to defeat numerically and technologically superior foes—as long

¹⁹⁰Note, I am not implying that I feel the US government is in violation of the Constitution. On the contrary, I think they make a concerted effort to adhere to the word of the Constitution, while violating the spirit of its principles.

Again, we have a splendid example of this, in the terminal events of the occupation at the Malheur. First of all, we saw a semi-organized, armed band of self-proclaimed “constitutionalists” invading the State of Oregon, in protest of “unconstitutional” violations by the federal government. When the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was asked, by the governor of Oregon, to deal with this “armed invasion,” (which it was, regardless of any claims of a “peaceful protest.” You don't bring guns to a peaceful protest), they responded by removing a band of armed invaders—which is decidedly within the specific duties of the federal government, according to the United States Constitution.

When Finicum was shot—whether the first round struck him while in the truck, or after he had exited the truck—he was moving towards the Oregon State Police troopers and federal agents in a legally “aggressive” manner, and not responding to the constitutionally-legal commands of armed men. Whether it was moral or not is predicated entirely on your own cultural values, but it was damned sure legal.

¹⁹¹Seriously, it's one of my four-year old's favorites, and she gets super excited and sings along with it. We highly recommend their music. www.CorbLund.com

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as they adhere to a cogent doctrine, and don't get too big for their britches. *"It's not the size of the dog in the fight. It's the size of the fight in the dog,"* rings true because it is true.

Typically, within the context of surviving the declining empire, this is specifically going to refer to not trying to take on the empire's enforcement agencies, in any sort of toe-to-toe manner. It means—sadly for some—you don't get to play dress-up in Multicam, and strap on all the high-speed load-bearing equipment and body armor, and go pretend to be a soldier in your “militia.” Fortunately for the typical prepper/survivalist, that actually benefits them.

Acting Arminius

One of the common traits of declining empires, is an increasing amount of corruption within the legal and political infrastructure of the empire. Whether consciously or subconsciously, the people with power in the failing regime evidence a willingness—often even an eagerness—to bend and break the very laws that give them legitimacy, in order to grasp a larger portion of the rapidly diminishing resources of the empire. While it seems morally repugnant within the rule-of-law of the Constitutional republican system, this tendency actually provides a very effective force multiplier to the barbarian tribe existing inside the physical borders of the empire, while defining the imperial culture and political system as *utangarð*. When the tribe suffers the insult or injury of its *innangarð*, one of its most powerful weapons is the common public perception of corruption within the local government. Consider the example of a corrupt sheriff's department. Whether your clansman is facing arrest, or you have received an insult or injury from a rival “tribe” that your *ørlog* demands violent retribution for—a corrupt sheriff's department is an immense asset.

A whisper in the right ear, reminding the right individual that, *“Hey, dude...you know you're crooked. I know you're crooked. Everyone in the county knows you're crooked, and you know that everyone in the county knows you're crooked...”* may be an overt threat that, if they disappear, no one is going to spend much time or effort looking for them, since it will be assumed that either a) it was someone, among many potential suspects, who wanted “justice” for the corruption, or b) they ran off to escape impending punishment. There are also, of course, countless incidents of a corrupt official dying “accidentally,” under suspicious circumstances. While the death is almost immediately declared “accidental”—and in many cases, probably is—almost invariably, such corruption leads to speculation of foul play. Hell, even if you're completely innocent, and no evidence can be found to even implicate you, people are still going to wonder, and that keeps your tribe safe. This is how corrupt cops, outlaw motorcycle gangs, and even the Mafia, operates. That's why they like corrupt cops and outlaws. They all understand, and you need to begin understanding, *“violence is honor, and honor is survival.”*

The wise clan, concerned about the continued good hamingja of their *innangarð*, isn't going to try and pick fights that involve toe-to-toe slug fests with the local SWAT team. Whether they are fighting a threat from the empire's local representatives, or a rival “tribe” in the community, they are going to—figuratively or literally—remember they are a Chihuahua. They're going to *“raid in the deepest dark of night, sneaking into the enemy's hut, and burning it down round the decapitated, emasculated corpse of his enemy, before quickly fleeing back into the dark forest, before the victim's kith-and-kin can detect the identity of the assassin, preventing retaliation.”*

Don't Be Afraid of the Dark

While this may apply literally—most people are after all, even if just subconsciously, afraid of the dark—its more vital application is metaphorical. In the literal sense, people prefer to sleep at night, where they can hide from the primordial fear in the safety of their blankets. Without thorough, regular training, even in relatively well-lit urban areas most people do not perform well in the dark. Between

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fear of the dark, and the human body's natural circadian rhythms, it comes naturally to sleep at night. It's evolution and human nature. It has only been in the last hundred years that staying up much past sunset has become commonplace. From the combative viewpoint, this is a decided advantage to those willing to train and practice for functioning at night: it's much easier to gain the initiative when you start with the opponent asleep in bed.

At the more critical metaphorical level, this specifically refers to not being concerned about violating the cultural taboos of the utangarð, while also recognizing that the utangarð is not bound by your clan's ørlög. When you are trying to determine if a particular action is moral or immoral, and whether it is tactically sound in regard to the survivability of your tribe's people, it is important to apply logic, reason, and critical-thinking skills. You must determine if the morality is actually commensurate with your tribal ørlög—customs and values—or is an artificial construct, created by the external culture to restrict the challenge of empowered tribal minorities. Do not be afraid to do “dark deeds,” just because society may not approve of them. What society approves of, or disapproves of, should be of little relevance, unless their approval directly impacts your survival. What matters is, will it violate the clan's values? What matter is, what are you willing to do when your “*kids ain't ate in seventeen days and countin'?*”

Simultaneous to this, we have to consider that people who exist outside of our cultural borders—those who are not innangarð, because they do not hold the same values as us—are not going to be bound by the same morality as we are. Expecting them to act in a manner commensurate with our morality is naivete at best. Being upset with the opposition, because they are not “*playing fair*” according to your cultural mores is absurd as soon as you recognize the reality that they are not bound by your cultural mores. This is something we see a great deal of in prepper/survivalist circles. For whatever reason, they've been led to believe in the concept of “*truth, justice, and the sanctity of the fair fight.*”

When the conversation—real or virtual—turns to resisting incursions on their rights, they raise a cry of rage to discover that the other side—the imperial government—is willing to do whatever is necessary to try and maintain its grasp on control. Regardless of the morality of the protesters; regardless of the protesters conceptual approach to right, wrong, and the morality of rule-of-law, what matters in the morality of the state is “*maintaining the state.*”

Raising cries of protest over “*they shot an unarmed man,*” and “*it was murder,*” are patently absurd, and—perhaps more importantly—simply do not have any effect on the issue. The shooters are not bound by your morality, nor on the definitions of rule-of-law and justice that are obtained through your moral filter. They are bound by their own cultural moral filter. Philosophical and religious debates revolving around “universal morality” are simply mental masturbation, as long as those who possess the different morality do not share your philosophy and morality. Talking and debating is fine, until someone shows up who is willing to stop talking and start chopping off heads.

The answer then is not to expect those who are utangarð to share your morality, nor to engage the world according to their morality. The solution is to determine where the moral differences lie, and then—keeping considerations of your own morality at the forefront of your thinking and planning—determine how you can counter their “evil,” without becoming evil yourself; not in their definition of good vs. evil, but in your own. Do not be afraid of the dark.

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We see a lot of people in the preparedness and survivalist culture—especially among the “constitutional militia” types—frustrated over the armored vehicles, night-vision, and body-armor of the “militarization” of police. That's fucking retarded, and as soon as you look at it from the historical perspective, you begin to recognize how fucking retarded it is. They are not there to fight you in a fair fight, according to your morality, or the definitions of “constitutional law” that your morality has defined. They are there to protect their morality, and their laws, and their lives. They know “*the only fair fight is the fight you win.*” If you can't accept that? Well, fuck you for being a retard, and see you in the afterlife. The empire doesn't care about your morality. They're not afraid of the dark.

In a 25OCT2013 speech before the National Policy Institute in Washington, DC, the transcript of which was later published at Radix Journal as an article, Jack Donovan described the importance of understanding these differences in morality:

“If you were the rulers and toadies of a nation in decline, whose people were bound to lose wealth and status, and you wanted to protect your own interests and keep your heads, why would you not want to keep those people separate, emasculated, weak, dependent, faithless, fearful, and 'non-violent?’

Figureheads may come and go, but I see absolutely no reason why the message will change. Many of you see yourselves as civilized men. Sane men in an increasingly insane, vulgar, and barbaric world. But you're wrong! You are the new barbarians,

The official message will continue to be:

- If you believe that not all men are created equal...
- If you believe that free men should have access to firearms...
- If you believe the government cannot be trusted to regulate every aspect of your life...
- If you believe that race means blood and heritage—not just “skin color”...
- If you see that men and women are different and believe they should have different roles...
- If you believe that men should act like men...
- If you believe that gay pride parades and gay marriage are ridiculous...
- If you believe in some 'old time religion'...

If you believe any or all of these things, then, according to the State and corporations, the Academia and the media, you are a stupid, psycho, hillbilly, Neo-Nazi, woman-hating, wife-beating, homophobic throwback, reactionary Neanderthal. You know it. Dance to it. Make it a techno remix. Because make no mistake: you are dangerous, traitorous, and quite possibly

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seditionous.

It doesn't matter what you think you are. You are whatever they say you are. They control the message. No matter how reasonable you think your message is, the radio is not going to play your jam. No matter what you think you are, to them, you are the barbarians. So own it...be it. And, if you're going to be the barbarians, then start thinking like barbarians.”¹⁹²

When the society of the state has already decided that your morality does not equate with the approved morality of the imperial culture, then why are you bothering to appeal to the morality of the empire? They don't give a damn about your quaint, backwards, hillbilly morals. As Jack explains,

“what you need is to create a fundamental change in the way that men see themselves and their relationship with the State. Don't worry about changing the State. Change the men. Cut the cord. And let them be born to a state of mind beyond the State...Separate 'us' from 'them.'”

If you want to develop a legitimate doctrine of “*the fundamental principles by which [your tribe] guides [your] actions in support of [your] mission*” to “*protect the values, customs, traditions, and lives of the people of the clan,*” then you need to set aside the morals of civilized behavior that you've developed within the safe confines of the innangarð of imperial culture, where you've been protected by “*rough men, ready to do violence on [your] behalf,*” and start thinking about what your values, customs, and traditions are within the context of a third-world existence. That is when your values, customs, and traditions actually matter. What are you willing to do when your “*kids ain't ate in seventeen days and countin'?*”

Defense Doctrine Requires Definitions

In order to develop a doctrine of defense for your tribe, you have to begin by defining the borders of what is to be defended. Obviously, I as an outsider cannot define that for you, beyond specifying “shared values, customs, and traditions,” and “kith-and-kin.” Defining who meets those criteria is up to you. What I can tell you is, if you believe that “America,” or “the silent majority” of Americans, meets that criteria, you're bat-shit fucking crazy.

Americans see themselves in the light of the cultural icons of the defiant, rebellious Founding Fathers, but they're wrong to do so. It doesn't matter what you want. As my father told me when I was a kid, and as I tell my kids, “*want in one hand. Shit in the other. Let me know which one fills up quicker.*” America today is not about “*traditional Christian values.*” It's not about “*equality under the law.*” It's not even about “freedom!”

America today is about winning elections based on telling people what they want to hear. It's about popularity. When Glubb described the rise of frivolity in a society as a sign of decadence; when he explained that people looked to entertainers for leadership—America today was precisely what he was describing. America today is about Barack Obama winning a presidential election, not on the strength of the logic and reason of his debate answers, but on nebulous promises of “*Hope and Change!*” As I write these words, we see the Democratic Party split between the infantile promises of a septuagenarian

¹⁹²<http://www.radixjournal.com/journal/becoming-the-new-barbarians>

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socialist, swearing to fight the oligarchy he's been a part of for three decades, and a woman who is categorically known to be a liar, leveraging her sex for support, even as her husband has repeatedly avoided prosecution and even arrest for a life-long pattern of alleged molestation and rape of women.

On the “*other side*,” we see the Republican Party swooning over a “successful” business man, who “*started at the bottom*,” when his daddy offered him a “small” loan—of a million dollars! Despite having declared bankruptcy at least four times, Donald Trump is “*the best businessman out there*.” His supporters ignore the fact that, according to the criteria Trump used to declare bankruptcy in those different business schemes, he will be declaring bankruptcy for America the day after he is inaugurated. The only reason Trump is at the forefront of the Republican race is because the dude is entertaining. He says the stupid shit that stupid people want to hear, even when he knows it's bullshit, just like President Obama did to get elected. It's a culture of frivolity, and Donald Trump is well aware of how to leverage that to his benefit.

We see the rest of the candidates, even as they promise a “*return to the Constitution*,” demonstrate a remarkable lack of understanding of the republican system of the Constitution, in which the President is little more than a figurehead. The President—constitutionally—does not make laws. Congress makes laws. The President executes the laws that Congress makes. The only way the President gets to “change things” is by either a) convincing Congress to change things, or b) violating the spirit of the Constitution through the issuance of Executive Orders—the very thing they are complaining about Barack Obama doing.

Don't be afraid of the dark. Quit worrying about how the imperial culture views your internal, tribal culture's morality, and focus on your tribe's view of their own morality. I can promise you, outside of your tribe, no one—least of all the imperial government—gives two shits about what your little band of people think and believe.

Are you blindly patriotic, in the spirit of Admiral Decatur (1779-1820), “*My country, right or wrong!*” Or, more sensibly, will you be righteously patriotic, in the spirit of Chesterton, “*My country, right or wrong' is a thing that no patriot would think of saying, except in a desperate case. It like saying, 'My mother, drunk or sober.'*”¹⁹³ When the values of the national culture no longer reflect, in any sort of meaningful way, the culture of your kith-and-kin, it is no longer your country; any blind loyalty to the trappings of the country, in denial of your own moral values, is disingenuous at best, and a betrayal of the values you claim to profess. You cannot effectively hope to “*protect the customs, values, traditions, and lives of the people of the clan*,” if you limit yourself to functioning outside of the customs, values, and traditions of your clan, in order to do so.

Don't be afraid of the dark.

¹⁹³Chesterton, G.K; **The Defendant**; 1901. Specifically, the quote is from the essay **A Defense of Patriotism**. The entirety of **The Defendant** is available in digital format, from The Gutenberg Project, at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12245/12245-h/12245-h.htm>

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Ten
Forging the Spear

“He was big and strong and an excellent fighter...He could jump higher than his own height, in full fighting gear, and just as far backwards as forward. He swam like a seal, and there was no sport in which there was any point in competing with him...” --Njal's Saga¹⁹⁴

The classic image of the barbarian in the modern imagination, is that of Arnold Schwarzenegger as Robert E. Howard's literary giant, Conan of Cimmeria. Hugely muscled, and scantily-clad, wielding a huge broadsword against legions of evil-doers like a scythe through fall hay, and capable of fantastic feats of strength and vigor; Conan the Barbarian has defined the image of the barbarian for several decades.

Apparently, that's not an entirely inaccurate image. According to the historiographic and archaeological lore, that's a pretty fair sum of the physical description of ancient Celto-Germanic barbarians. From Tacitus and other Roman sources describing the northerners as standing inches over the Roman legionnaire, to the evidence of statuary and other art, like the decorations of Trajan's Column, the evidence seems to indicate that the Germans and Gauls of the ancient world were large, healthy and hale, compared to the average man of the civilized world.

Kirsten Wolf, a professor of Old Norse and Icelandic language and literature, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who holds the Torger Thompson Chair of Scandinavian Studies at the University, describes some of the physical culture of Viking Age barbarians of Scandinavia:

“Weapons training was a favorite sporting activity and probably essential for young men...stone throwing also formed part of the training of future warriors, and it is often mentioned as being used in battles...tests of physical strength included wrestling, fistfighting, and the lifting of heavy stones. Amongst activities that involve a high degree of agility and balance, the sources mention mountain climbing and the ability to step from oar to oar outside the railing of a ship while it was being rowed...Running and jumping were activities in which children also participated. Much the

¹⁹⁴This excerpt is describing Gunnar Hamundarsson. Excerpted from: Kellogg, Robert, et al; ed. **Sagas of the Icelanders**, 2001 (This is the Penguin Classics Deluxe Edition)

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same applied to swimming, which appears to have been practiced by women as well..."¹⁹⁵

Of course, in our own, modern imperial culture, we're past the phase of history that valued physical strength and vigor. We pay homage to the memory in our entertainment, but aside from that, the vast majority of people in America do not give a damn about physical fitness, aside from perhaps being able to lay claim to the social cachet of a membership to the local Planet Fitness¹⁹⁶-type "health club." As Jack Donovan wrote about recently, in an article on his blog, while the cultural elite of the urban chic crowd strive to propagate the belief that the waspish, teenage-girl, "skinny jeans"-wearing, scrawny body type is the "new normal" for American men, the real normal for all Americans actually seems to be the fat, dough-bodied slovenliness we see all around us.

It is the outcome described by Glubb. We have decayed, from a national culture of strength and vigor into one of apathy and physical torpor. In a society that defines comfort and wealth as greater virtues than physical ability and work effort, the stoic, joyful acceptance of pain and suffering that are required to achieve physical mastery of the self is not seen as a worthwhile quest. A 2009 study of aspiring military candidates found that over a quarter were disqualified because of obesity¹⁹⁷.

According to the National Institute of Health, in their National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey for 2009-2010, one in three adults are obese¹⁹⁸, while one in twenty are considered extremely obese. One in six children between the ages of six and nineteen are obese. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) supports those figures in their own later studies, placing the percentage of adults over twenty years of age who are obese at 35.1%¹⁹⁹, and the percentages for minors increasing as they age:

- Percentage of adolescents age 12-19 years who are obese: 20.5%
- Percentage of children 6-11 who are obese: 17.7%
- Percentage of children 2-5 who are obese: 8.4%²⁰⁰

From a tribal perspective, with the mission statement to "*protect the customs, values, traditions, and people of the clan*," this cannot be tolerated. Obesity kills. If you are obese, or your clansmen—and especially the youth of the clan—are obese, the tribe is not going to survive.

Obesity is the leading contributor to several major health concerns in modern American imperial culture, including the development of Type II diabetes, heart disease and high blood pressure, non-

¹⁹⁵Wolf, Kirsten; **Viking Age: Everyday Life in the Extraordinary Era of the Norsemen**; 2013

¹⁹⁶That is not a typo. If you belong to a Planet Fitness, fuck you for being a coward. I refuse to recognize the legitimacy of effort of anyone who works out in a place that claims to be interested in physical improvement of their clients, even as they actively discriminate against people that actually, you know, do hard physical shit, while offering pizza parties for members. Fuck them, and fuck you for giving them money to make you feel better about being a lazy piece of shit.

¹⁹⁷27% actually. Source: <http://www.military.com/daily-news/2014/05/13/military-forced-to-get-picky-in-recruiting.html>

¹⁹⁸According to the NIH site, "obesity refers to an excessive amount of fat," while "overweight refers to an excess amount of body weight that may come from muscle, bone, fat, and water." <http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/health-statistics/Pages/overweight-obesity-statistics.aspx>

¹⁹⁹<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/has/has14.pdf#059>

²⁰⁰http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/obesity_child_11_12/obesity_child_11_12.pdf

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alcoholic fatty liver disease, osteoarthritis, stroke, and some types of cancer²⁰¹. The irony of being a prepper/survivalist, and dying early because you are a fat fuck, should not be lost on anyone, yet, if we look around, even—perhaps especially—in the preparedness culture, what do you see? Obesity, fucking everywhere. The vast majority of prepper/survivalists have no concept that they have succumbed to the corporate imperial culture, even when they throw out excuses for not being physically fit.

Survival, outside the safety of civilization's boundaries, protected by Orwell's "*rough men*," places a noticeable premium of physical, athletic attributes. Whether you are in a knock-down, drag-out, throat-slitting, skull-crushing brawl against a Roman *contubernium*²⁰², in the Teutoburg Forest, defending your home from a crew of MS-13 *vatos*, or trying to fight your way out an illegal traffic control point (TCP) manned by corrupt sheriff's deputies extorting bribes, combat is one of the most physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually taxing endeavors in the span of human activity. For the barbarian tribesman, functioning in the post-imperial environment, survival is probably going to make physical demands that require an elite level of physical conditioning, more often than not.

In a culture of international air travel and 75MPH interstate highway speeds, where people earn their paycheck with no physical effort greater than walking from their parking spot to the shuttle stop in the parking lot, and then from the shuttle to the front door of the building; where we can order our groceries over the Internet, and have them delivered to our house, this may seem preposterous.

It's really not though. Whether you're walking to the neighboring town to trade bathtub gin for another sack of potatoes to keep up your black-market distillery, or you're sneaking into the police chief's backyard, to steal a couple cases of rifle ammunition that was confiscated from your cousin, or you're punching a carjacker in the dick; the stress—both physical and mental—of functioning for hours, days, and even weeks on end, with little or no sleep, and all-too-often inadequate food, will tax the physical and mental mettle of even the fittest athletes. Fat Joe, the weak, undisciplined slob who refuses to force himself to do hard, strenuous PT of any kind, let alone at an elite level, won't last the first few minutes of no-shit, this-is-a-for-real kill-or-get-killed encounter.

Too often, in the preparedness community, the three biggest counterarguments to the need for physical conditioning include the easily repudiated "*there will always be someone stronger*," so "*mental strength is more than physical strength*," and "*you'll be old some day, and then you'll understand, it all goes away anyhow*."

Generically speaking, it's true, "*there will always be someone stronger*." For Brian Shaw²⁰³ however, it's not true, at least not for three different years. In any given situation, it may not be true in that situation. You might be the strongest person there when something needs done that requires strength. Even if you fail to be the strongest person around, you've successfully increased the number of people in the world who you are stronger than. The stronger you are, the more likely that—in any given situation—there will in fact not be "*someone stronger*."

It is also generically true that "*mental strength is more important than physical strength*." However,

201Breast, colon, endometrial, and kidney, specifically.

202The smallest organized unit of the Roman Army, and the metaphorical and numerical equivalent of the US Army squad, it was composed of eight legionnaires, led by a *decurius*, roughly the equivalent of a Sergeant or Staff Sergeant.

203Brian was the 2011, 2013, and 2015 **World's Strongest Man** champion.

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when you need to kick open a door, to escape a burning building because the Fire Department is no longer responding to calls, or you need to push a truck out of the road to get out of town? When you need to carry your injured spouse or partner to safety, and you're just physically not strong enough to do it? Urban myths aside, mental strength is not going to change that fact in the moment. Of course, that false dialectic of mental vs. physical strength ignores the reality that, a) physical strength is a result of mental strength, and b) if you lack physical strength, it's because you lack the mental strength to pursue the value of physical strength. One of the greatest tools available to us to develop mental strength is successfully overcoming the drudgery and fear of facing the dragon of discomfort every day, just to do PT and build a culture of strength.

Ideally, yes, we will grow old, and we will probably not be as strong at eighty as we are at forty or twenty. Being strong enough to avoid being killed or injured though, is a pretty significant contributor to the cause of achieving old age. Being fit reduces the chances that we will die early, of disease as well.

I am—categorically—stronger at forty than I was as a young soldier at twenty. I have to work harder to stay strong. I can't rely on natural levels of muscle growth from the tail end of puberty, but it's true. I squat, deadlift, and clean far greater weights now, than I did at twenty. I also have better stamina. At eighty, chances are I'm not going to be as strong as I am now, but that doesn't mean I won't be stronger than other, younger people, who don't train as hard. I'll damned sure be stronger than the 20 year old who contrives excuses about why he can't be bothered to do PT. In the imperial culture today, that puts me easily into the 99th percentile, even at 80.

In order to be the thegns of our tribe—to provide the best moral exemplars of the cultural values needed for our tribes and communities to survive the decline of the empire—we have to establish a culture of strength that allows our people to defend the innangarð successfully. We can't do that by talking and debating, pontificating on the importance of fitness. We have to lead by example. We have to live the ørløg of our tribe.

Establishing a Culture of Strength

The value of self-sacrifice should be among the most paramount in the tribe's ørløg. We have seen that the identification of self as tribe and tribe as self, must be inherent within the tribal identity, because it is the surest way to ensure the survival not only of self and family, but also of the cultural values that define the ørløg. Determining and measuring one's willingness to sacrifice self for the community of the clan by committing ritual suicide though, is hardly realistic or effective. The simplest, most sincere way that I know of to demonstrate the value of self-sacrifice for the benefit of the protection of the tribe, is the dedicated performance of physical fitness training.

The idea of hard, physically strenuous PT is often unpopular in preparedness circles. People are still stuck in the cultural psychosis of the corporate civilization that they claim to loathe, and believe they can purchase technological exemptions to the need for strength, if they just purchase more *stuff*. Too often, we see people argue that they're too old or too crippled to bother with PT, but that's okay, because they've got lots of guns and ammunition and equipment, and they're ready to die on a hill for their beliefs. This is hyperbole; it's complete, unmitigated, utter bullshit.

The lack of willingness to do something for physical fitness—to improve your value to your tribe—

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is cowardice. It is a demonstration of the fear of discomfort, and if you think doing PT is uncomfortable you're damned sure not going to enjoy getting shot. One of my favorite one-liners, about life in general and PT specifically, is from Texas strength coach Mark Rippetoe, "*strong people are harder to kill, and more useful in general.*" He's absolutely right, and the statement illustrates the value of PT from a strictly defensive perspective. Dying on a hill doesn't do dick for your people. It's an insult to your ancestors. You're pissing away the gifts they have given you, because you were too lazy to prepare better.

Staying alive, because you were fit enough to win a fight? That's noble. Making it back to your village, to pass on the lessons learned to the next generation, that they might fight and win as well? That's noble. That helps the tribe. Those are the actions of the hero. Dying on a hill just tells people, a) you're a coward, and b) your tribe is weak. Being strong is more useful to your tribe.

Forging the hero is about being a leader. It's about being the person that people look to for leadership and guidance when they are scared and desperate, because "*shit just ain't right.*" You may not be *the* leader²⁰⁴, but you owe it to the people you love to be *a* leader. In order to achieve that, people need to see that you are. They need to see you living the customs and values of the culture that you lay claim to. It's been my experience that no one will ever take you seriously about the importance of strength and fitness if you are not obviously fit.

That doesn't mean you need to look as jacked as Arnold playing the Cimmerian. Nobody expects 23-inch biceps, and sub-five percent body fat levels are unsustainable for most people, regardless of their training discipline²⁰⁵. It does mean though, that being fit alone is not adequate. You need to look fit as well. It doesn't matter if you ran back-to-back marathons last weekend if you look like a Somali on a hunger strike. It doesn't matter if you can deadlift 600 pounds if you're walking around with Dunlap Disease,²⁰⁶ and people see you walking around, shoving your face full of Big Macs and Snickers bars, even as you preach the gospel of physical fitness, strength, and vigor. Don't expect them to take you serious. You're a fraud.

To establish a culture of strength, you have to be a leader by personifying the cultural value of strength. You need to live like you value strength, and you need to demonstrate that you value strength. You have to lead from the front, and you have to do it every day. Every. Single. Day.

Standing around in your best hero pose, wearing too-tight t-shirts and flexing your biceps, while everyone around you is engaged in demanding physical labor, because you're on a "rest day," is not setting an example; it is not demonstrating a spirit of frið with your innangarð. It might be helping your neighbor unload a trailer load of lumber for his shed-building project, or it might be getting a lid off a jar of pickles for your grandmother. It might be cutting and stacking a couple cords of firewood for your mother. It might be wrestling and roughhousing with a bunch of the young dudes in the tribe, in their teens and twenties, without getting gassed out in the first fifteen seconds. You need to demonstrate to people that being physically fit is better than being lazy now, not just in some dystopian nightmare

204And really, who the fuck wants that job? You're responsible for all the decisions, good and bad, that you make, and everybody is watching you, every moment, just waiting for you to fuck up.

205I walk around at about 10-11%, but I don't spend a whole lot of effort getting "ripped." I've been as low as 8%, and that was a motherfucker to maintain.

206Your belly dunlap'd over your belt.

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future.

In order to establish a culture of strength within your tribal *ørlog*, you have to define it, within your tribal grammar. You need to determine a set of metrics. You can achieve what you can measure. What defines strength to you? What defines “*getting stronger*” to you? How does that change from role-to-role within the *innangarð*?

One of the most important things I've discovered, as a professional teacher in the civilian training industry, is the importance of performance-driven “soft” standards. Setting a “hard” performance standard of “*You need to be able to squat 300 pounds,*” is completely pointless when you're talking to a 110-pound accountant in her forties²⁰⁷, who has never lifted anything than her college textbooks. The same applies when you tell some cappuccino-sipping kid in his early twenties that he needs to be able to deadlift 2.5x his bodyweight. If he weighs 150 pounds, you just told him you want him to lift 375 pounds. You might as well have told him you want him to fuck the Playmate of the Month. He's going to look at you like you've got a dick growing out of your head. You've got his interest, but he's not going to believe it's achievable. He's going to turn around, walk back into the house, and resume his video game.

No one expects a 60-year old grandfather to be able to perform at the same physical level as his 20-year old grandson²⁰⁸. No one expects a woman to perform at the same level as her husband²⁰⁹. That's okay though, because they're probably not fulfilling the same roles in the tribe. My wife isn't going to deadlift 400+ pounds for repetitions—at least not anytime soon—for her PT. I don't expect her to. I also don't expect her to pick up two five-gallon buckets of wet concrete and pack them across a house-building site for multiple trips any time soon though. What I do expect is for her to help me build the *fríð* of our clan, by helping establish a culture of strength within the tribal *ørlog*. That means, she does have to meet standards, they're just not “hard” standards. They are performance-drive “soft” standards.

While you should have solid, outcome-drive goals for standards of performance as a goal to strive for, what really matters for the initiatory process—and within your tribe—is that there are performance-drive standards urging people to do their PT, so that they are getting stronger today than they were yesterday, and stronger tomorrow than they are today. You can—and should—have challenging “hard” standards, including metrics that mark the completion of different stages of the initiatory process. They need to be strenuous, and they need to be standard, but those standards may be different for different groups of people within the *innangarð*, based on their role within the clan, as well as—yes—their age and physical ability to achieve them.

207The “*Strongest Woman on the Planet,*” Becca Swanson has squatted 854 pounds. She is 6'7” tall, and weighs 310 pounds...

208Although, in the current imperial culture, that's far from accurate. I've seen a lot of older farmers and ranchers, in their sixties and seventies that were significantly stronger and fitter than their twenty-something grandkids, even though the younger adults grew up working on the ranch.

209Again, generically true, but not necessarily accurate. While genuine, the physiological differences in muscle size, type, and density are not as insurmountable as most of the “men are naturally physically stronger than women” crowd wants to believe. I guarantee you that most of that crowd is not half as strong as Annie Thorisdottir, the 2011 and 2012 Crossfit Games champion. More specifically, they are averages. In any given relationship, it's entirely possible that the wife could have superior genetics, and a better work ethic than her lay-about husband, and be significantly stronger and more fit than he is.

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My very prim-and-proper, ladylike grandmother—in her nineties—is not going to suddenly go start flinging her body weight overhead in an Olympic Snatch. It just is not going to happen, and I don't expect her to. Does she really need to squat her bodyweight on a barbell? Probably not. It doesn't mean she shouldn't strive to be stronger today than she was yesterday, and it doesn't mean we don't encourage her PT, but my grandmother is not going to grab a rifle and run to the sound of the guns. She has more important roles to play in the clan.

She still does her PT though. She does her cardio on the exercise bike every day for 20-30 minutes, and she does her strength training with her little one- and five-pound weights. There's no sense whatsoever, in telling her she needs to “*squat her bodyweight*” because anything less is useless to the tribe. Doing so is going to do nothing except discourage her efforts.

Valkyries, Valholl, and the Spirit of the Samurai

Contrary to popular current mythology, dying in battle was not a ticket to sex with Valkyries, getting drunk on mead, and partying with Odhinn in Valhalla, in pre-Christian Germanic belief. The most commonly accepted view of the mythos—among those scholars that accept that the belief system actually encompassed Valhalla as an afterlife destination, which is far from universal among historians and archaeologists—is that the Valkyries, the “Choosers of the Slain,” would scour the battlefield dead, and select half of them to bring to Odhinn’s Hall. The other half went elsewhere (Freyja’s Hall, but that’s not actually germane to the conversation here).

Thus, in the ancient Germanic warrior culture, regardless of how brave you were, how hard you fought, and how well-trained you were, there was only a 50/50 chance that you would get to go to Valhalla. Ultimately, the choice was outside of your control. So, why would a warrior train for war, venture forth gladly to the battlefield, and then perform valorous acts that almost guaranteed death in the long run, if there was only a 50% chance of getting what you wanted?

In his classic treatise on the philosophy behind the Samurai code of “Bushido,” entitled Hagakure, and often billed as “The Book of the Samurai,” retired Samurai-turned-monk Yamamoto Tsunetomo wrote that “the way of the samurai is found in death.” He admonished young warriors to calmly accept that death would occur on the battlefield, regardless of the efforts of the individual. Despite this, the samurai trained in earnest for battlefield effectiveness from youth onward. It didn’t matter that you calmly accepted that you were going to die, you still trained hard to be as lethal as humanly possible.

There is a school of philosophy that was originated in ancient Greece, and codified by Roman philosophers like Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, and Seneca. That school was called “Stoicism.” It was probably not what you think.

In the modern colloquial, “stoic” has a meaning that is not congruent with the origin of the word within that school of philosophy. In our use, stoic is defined as enduring pain or hardship without showing emotions or complaining. When we read the ancient philosophers like Aurelius though, we see that he—by many considered the definitive writer of the school of Stoicism—greatly mourned the deaths of his sons. He grew angry with poor performance by his subordinate military commanders. Bereavement and anger are contrary to the modern use of the word stoic, but the greatest writer on the school of philosophy that gave us that word was more than willing to admit that he felt both emotions. How does that work?

More importantly, what do northern European tribal warriors, Japanese samurai, and ancient Roman philosophers, have to do with modern preparedness culture, and training? Pretty much everything.

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Whether we use the Roman term “stoicism,” or we discuss Germanic warlords and Japanese samurai, we’re talking about the same thing. Stoicism is the calm acceptance of responsibility. It is the acceptance that I am responsible for what I am capable of controlling. I cannot control what anyone else does or does not do. I cannot control the outcome of events.

We don’t worry about the outcome. We focus our efforts on what we are responsible for. It doesn’t matter if I hit a Master classification on the IDPA Classifier. What matters is whether I take responsibility for the actions—the training—that will allow me to achieve that. It doesn’t matter if I hit a sub-1:00 second draw to first shot break with my Glock. I cannot control that.

Sounds counterintuitive, doesn’t it?

It makes sense though, when you stop trying to control anything except yourself. Rather than trying to hit a 1:00 second draw to first shot, focus on executing the draw, sight alignment, and trigger press as fast as you are capable of, while still performing each step of the process as correctly as you are capable of. If you get a 1:00 second draw to first shot, great. If you don’t, but you did everything as fast as you were capable of, and still did it as perfect as you are capable of, great.

When the bell tolls for you, and you are in a gunfight, you have exactly zero control of the outcome. You have zero control over who you will be fighting. You have zero control over what training he has had. You have zero control over his speed and accuracy. You have zero control over whether he moves at the moment you break your shot, causing you to miss. You are not in control over anything that you are not in control of. Accept it. Embrace it. Accept responsibility for what you are responsible for.

So, what are you responsible for, that will make a difference? Why bother training, if we don’t have control anyway?

You are responsible for you. You are responsible for your actions. You do have control over who your enemy will be fighting. You have control over the training you will have had. You have control over what speed and accuracy you will be able to achieve. You have control over whether you are fit enough and fast enough to move. You are in control of everything that you are in control of. Accept that responsibility.

The Germanic warrior trained hard, to be better than his foe, so that he could perform valorous acts on the battlefield, and hoped that the Valkyries noticed, and took him, if it turned out that his foe was better than him. The Samurai trained hard so that he could perform well, so that hopefully his ancestors would recognize his honor in the afterlife.

We can set “hard” standards. “You need to be able to achieve X in XX:XX seconds, and then you are qualified.” If you’re willing to accept that, fine. Accept responsibility for it. Perhaps it will be enough.

The better way; the Stoic way, accepted by warrior cultures throughout history, around the world, is to take responsibility for yourself. Accept that you have absolute control over what you have control over, and don’t worry about the rest of it. If you take the responsibility you need to take, then you will perform. If you don’t, you will fail.

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You cannot control whether you achieve X in XX:XX. What you can control is, “I will do XYZ every day. I will try to perform better and faster, every time I perform XYZ. If I do this, eventually, I will achieve X in XX:XX, then I will continue to improve.”

“Hard” standards of performance are, by definition, minimal standards. “Soft” standards are superior to hard standards. They require stoic acceptance of the struggle. They require you to continue trying to improve. “Hard” standards are about “stay safe.” “Soft” standards are about “screw safe, stay dangerous.”

Establishing a culture of strength in your tribal ørløq though, requires more than just having standards that everyone should do PT. You have to strive to incorporate strength and vigor into the very fabric of the culture of the tribe as a catalyst for action. Part of that may be incorporating physical activity into the recreation of the tribe. Your ancestors didn't “workout,” in the sense of exercising in highly regimented routines and monotonous ways like running on treadmills in a gym. They didn't focus on abstract goals like burning calories. They lived. Their PT was their work and their play. They incorporated it into the culture of their tribes, through their recreation. They trained for sport.

“Weapons training was a favorite sporting activity and probably essential for young men...tests of physical strength included wrestling, fistfighting, and the lifting of heavy stones.” They ran and jumped, and swam, and they competed against one another when they did it.

If you want to begin establishing a culture of strength within your tribe, host a feast party in the spirit of the cultural value of gift-exchange, but include physical feats and competitions as part of the recreation, rather than sitting around drinking beer and telling stories of high school grid-iron glory. This is an ancient tribal tradition. We see it in account after account of the historiography of tribes: Amerindian foot races, and wrestling, and archery competitions; stone throwing and jumping for height in the Germanic-Scandinavian tribes, and of course, the still hugely popular—if mislabeled—Highland Games of Hibernia and Caledonia²¹⁰.

It may be as simple to start as a momentary lark, offering a spontaneous wager to see who can carry a heavy rock in the yard the farthest distance, or who can split the most pieces of oak firewood in two minutes. It may also be as formal as telling people beforehand that there will be physical competitions and challenges involved, and offering prizes to the winners.

It draws on the inherent competitiveness and ego of people, in their desire to look good in front of friends and family. I guarantee you, in a group of husbands and wives, boyfriends and girlfriends, offering this type of competition is going to call on their evolutionary instincts. The men are going to want to impress their friends and their lovers, and the women are going to want their men to impress the other women, which raises their own status socially, for having the strongest mate. That shit is straight evolutionary biology. Repeat it often enough, and it becomes part of the tradition of the tribe. It not only establishes the importance of physical strength and vigor, but it also directly builds the *fríð* of the tribe, as people cheer for each other, and laugh at their escapades.

“As any rugged man age eighteen to thirty-five can tell you, diets are for women and organic food is

²¹⁰Misnamed, because the competitions and events were not limited to the Highlands. Hibernia and Caledonia were the Roman names for Ireland and Scotland, respectively. Using them here was mostly intellectual snobbery on my part. I was showing off.

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*for hippies*²¹¹.” Creating a tradition of recreational celebrations of strength and vigor will go a lot further in establishing a culture of strength than telling people that they need to do squats, deadlifts, and overhead presses, and that they need to eat this, this, and that, but not that, that, and this.

Finally, we need to be prepared, as thegn—leaders—to help our people along the path. We need to be ready to serve as guides and mentors. One of the things I've noticed about preparedness culture, as I've taught training classes in the civilian sector, is that there is a very strong tone of greed involved. From people who prepare solely out of fear of “*losing all the [material] stuff I've worked for,*” to the commonly voiced, shared attitude of, “*if you show up at my house, when you didn't have the foresight to prepare before, I'm not giving you shit,*” there is a decided flavor of the impact of the imperial culture of greed involved.

Don't get me wrong; I get where it comes from. My wife and I have worked our asses off for everything we have. We've scrimped, scrounged, and saved to achieve. We've had to tell our kids “*no,*” and we've gone without, a lot. I get it.

Nevertheless, we refuse to succumb to the corporate cultural value of greed. If someone in my clan of kith-and-kin showed up on my porch tomorrow; if they had lost their job and house, and they didn't have any place to stay for the foreseeable future, and they had no food for themselves or their kids, what am I going to do? Am I going to tell them, “*tough shit, you should have worked harder?*”

Not just “*no,*” but “*FUCK NO!*” I'm going to have the wife throw some grub on the stove, while I rearrange some furniture. I'm going to move the youngest kid's crib into the older kid's bedroom, and we're going to make up a bed. I'm going to pull out some of the extra sleeping bags and air mattresses for their kids. We're going to feed them, and we're going to give them a place to sleep. If they're out the next day looking for a new job, awesome. I'll give them money for gas, and have the wife pack them a lunch. If they're not out looking for a job? That's fine too. I've got plenty of chores they can help out with. If they need a few days to deal with their setbacks psychologically? That's okay too.

What I'm not going to do is punish people that I care about, for shit that is just not really their fault.

As members of your kith-and-kin wake up to the realization that “*shit just ain't right,*” they're going to look around for guidance and leadership on how to deal with the changes in circumstances. If you're providing that, by being a moral exemplar of ørløq, and establishing a culture of strength, one of the lessons that they are going to realize is that being stronger and more fit might—just maybe—be really fucking useful. As a thegn within your tribe, when that happens, you have an obligation to your innangarð, to be ready to provide them with ideas on how to get stronger and more fit. That may even require material support, whether in the form of taking time out of your own busy schedule to coach them for a few days or weeks, or giving them—or at least long-term loaning them—some of the basic equipment they need to get started.

We need to establish a culture of strength, within our tribes, so that we have the strength, individually and collectively, to achieve our mission, “*to protect the customs, values, traditions, and the people of the clan.*” Hamingja is not just “good luck.” It's the result of good judgment and wisdom, within the context of the cultural morality of our tribe's ørløq. Surviving the decline of the American Empire cannot be left to “chance.” We have to prepare, in order to ensure that the customs and

²¹¹Durant, John; **The Paleo Manifesto: Ancient Wisdom for Lifelong Health**; 2013

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traditions and values that we hold sacred survive.

“For most of human history, the art of the hero wasn't left up to chance; it was a multidisciplinary endeavor devoted to optimal nutrition physical self-mastery, and mental conditioning. The hero's skills were studied, practiced, and perfected, then passed along from parent to child and teacher to student. The art of the hero wasn't about being brave; it was about being so competent that bravery wasn't an issue. You weren't supposed to go down for a good cause; the goal was to figure out a way not to go down at all. Achilles and Odysseus and the rest of the classical heroes hated the thought of dying and scratched for every second of life. A hero's one crack at immortality was to be remembered as a champion, and champions don't die dumb. It all hinged on the ability to unleash the tremendous resources of strength, endurance, and agility that many people don't realize they already have.”²¹²

Self-Sacrifice to Establish the Culture of Strength

My wife and I own more 35- and 50-pound kettlebells that we can collectively use at any one time. I use—at most—two Olympic barbells, and up to 500 pounds of plates, a squat rack, and a power cage for my basic barbell training, but we own three Olympic barbells, and almost 1300 pounds of plates, as well as two benches and an extra power cage. Why? Why do I bother keeping a bunch of extra, superfluous physical training equipment around? I could sell it online, and spend the money on something else.

If it comes down to it—and it has, more than once—I can loan that equipment out to people that will use it, but can't—or simply won't—go out and buy the equipment yet.

Is there a risk they might sell or pawn it, or that it will simply disappear into the pile of shit in their garage? Absolutely. However, we're talking about people with whom I already have *fríð*. There is already trust and loyalty there. If they violate that, by stealing our things, or pissing on my gifts, then they've outlawed themselves from my *innangarð*. They've actually done me a favor, showing me that I cannot trust them. If I can't trust them with gym equipment, I certainly cannot trust them with the lives of my family. I'd much rather learn of their betrayal over a couple hundred dollars worth of gym equipment, than over the corpses of my children.

If I took the typical prepper/survivalist, rugged individualist position however, I'd say, “*If they want to get fit, they'll go spend the money and build a gym, just like I had to do!*” That would be ignoring the fact that I was in a position of being able to do so, and they might not be in the same position. This is the spirit of self-sacrifice, that we've belabored so much. It's not even a major self-sacrifice, but it builds the spirit of the culture of self-sacrifice within the *örlog* of the tribe.

²¹²McDougall, Christopher; *Natural Born Heroes*; 2015

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fffAfterword

*Cattle die, kindred die,
Every man is mortal:
But the good name never dies
Of one who has done well.*

--Havamal, stanza 76²¹³

This has been the hardest of three books to write. It required a lot of introspection to write, as I dove deep into the values and beliefs I was taught as a child. While my previous books required simply regurgitating information I had been taught and learned, and the lessons I learned in applying those skills, this required that I look at the very reasons for my core beliefs to write. I hope it is as valuable as I believe it is. It was the lessons within this book that have allowed me to achieve everything I have achieved in my life.

I once wrote, “my religion is my family and my family is my religion.” This book explains why. I’m not worried about the afterlife. If I live a good life in this world, and leave a lasting legacy, I will have repaid the debts I owe all of my ancestors, real and mythic. If that’s not enough to land me a seat in the banquet hall with my ancestors, then they are way more a bunch of uptight assholes than I believe they are.

Looking at the cycles of history, the path we are on is well-marked, if we’re just willing to open our eyes and read the signs flashing by. If we choose to ignore them, we’re likely to end up in a shitty neighborhood in Hoboken, and let’s face it—nobody wants to go to Hoboken! By observing the road signs approaching, and comparing them to the road map that history provides, we have the opportunity to choose the route we follow, and find a destination worth seeking. Good hunting!

I have learned two very important lessons in recent years, as a result of writing and teaching. The first is that it is true that “*no man is an island*.” We are as much a product of the influence of our

213Auden and Taylor transl.

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current friends and acquaintances as we are of our upbringing. The second is that, while I may not agree with everything a person does or says, I can still value their friendship, and enjoy the friendship-building benefits of gift-exchange, even through the virtual communities of the Internet. As beta-readers for this book, as mentors, students, and friends, my gratitude to (in no particular order):

- Jack Donovan, for writing the forward to this, and for the bad-ass Gungnir ink on my shoulder. Also, for allowing me to bounce ideas off him, even as we were both in the process of writing books on almost identical subjects. I believe, like Jack, that our books approach the same subject from different angles, and are probably great compliments one to the other.
- Paul Sharp. I've watched Paul from a distance, like some sort of creepy cyber-stalker, for a long time, as he's developed as a writer, sharing his wealth of knowledge on the fine art of fucking people up. When I finally had the opportunity to train with him in person, it was every bit as rewarding as I expected it to be. Go and seek training with him. If nothing else, you'll discover why he is still my body-image idol.
- Cecil Burch. Cecil is probably one of my favorite people in the world, outside of my kith-and-kin. Inarguably one of the most dangerous men I know, he looks like an adorable Teddy bear of an accountant. Seriously! He looks like a fucking accountant! I pity the poor dumb ass that decides to start shit with him, although I kind of hope I'm there to watch when it happens. Training with Cecil, like training with Paul, was everything I anticipated.
- Greg Ellifritz, of Active Response Training, has been a cheerleader for my efforts almost since the beginning it seems like. When many people were still under the impression that I was some sort of anti-cop, anarchist agitator, advocating the violent overthrow of the government, Greg—who IS a cop—was smart enough to know better. Thanks, dude!
- Ian Wendt, of Special Circumstances, Inc, makes what are some of the wickedest-looking purpose-driven cutlery in the world—and the purpose is hurting bad people, which I can always get behind, even if I can't afford it. More importantly to me, Ian has been there, as a virtual shoulder to cry on, when I needed to vent about any random bullshit in the universe that was driving me batshit crazy. Thanks, dude!
- Jim Chappelow, the Barbarian Economist, pretty much wrote—or at least rewrote—the entire section on financial and commercial collapse, when my ignorance of the finer points of the subject became self-evident even in my ignorance. Thanks, man!
- Scott Martinez has the disturbing habit, when I've been slacking on my own PT, and just when I'm thinking of making excuses to continue to do so, of randomly sending me books and manuals on PT programs that guilt me into going out and slinging some iron around. Thanks for the guilt trips, dude!
- Ash Hess, SFC, US Army. SFC Hess has spent the last several years, between 10th Mtn Div, and Ft. Benning, helping drive the adoption of better doctrine for teaching young soldiers to run their weapons more effectively. It's the work of the gods, trying to renew the spirit of our ancestors in the young soldiers that are the remnant of our cultural heritage of the strength, and I love him for it. More importantly to me, when I see or hear something that just completely sets

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me off, I know I can count on Ash to be there and listen to me rant. Thanks, brother!

- My brother-from-another-mother, Michael Moore, former 2/75 Ranger (Old Scroll-type) and 101st LRS, and his lovely family, have welcomed us into their home and family, as family. Love you brother, and say hey to my little Ranger buddy, Will (I bet I'm the first one to give him a mention in a book!)
- I first met Robert Pierce as a student in one of my classes. Later, I ran into him again at a class with Cecil Burch. Recently, Robert made a comment about his Jitz coach that really struck a chord with me, reminding me that—even when I'm frustrated that I'm not achieving anything with my teaching efforts—there are people out there taking those lessons and following through, doing the work. Thanks, buddy!
- Christopher Allen, aka “Thor.” Dude, I love you, and thanks for being a beta-reader, even though you never really did give me any feedback, except, “more! Give me more!”
- “Texas Frederic Bastiat.” “Tex” was a student in a class, before becoming a friend, and my living moral exemplar of what living a truly Christian life should be. Thanks, buddy!
- Jim Gary. Former US Army Cav Scout (*Don't hold the gay against him, he can't help it. It's a Cav thing.*). Jim showed up at a class I was teaching in central Arizona, and I haven't seemed to be able to get rid of his ass yet. He's turned out to be a helpful assistant instructor at various times, and he's smart enough to take my advice, so, despite being a Cav Scout (*which, by definition means, “he's gay,”*), he's not too bad. He's been a solid sounding board, when I've struggled in ways to put what I'm thinking into—hopefully—solid, articulate presentations of the concepts. Plus, he's got a hot, Asian wife, which speaks for good taste, if poor judgment.
- Lee Pratt is the best work partner a dude could hope to have. We were partners when I first started writing and was teaching classes on the side, and more than once, he pulled slack for me so I could get some article or lesson plan finished in time. Thanks brother, and you know, if you need me, you just gotta call.
- The friends of my youth took me in, as if a day had never passed, when we returned to my hometown, after two decades. That's frið, and there's no amount of money that can buy the security and contentment that offers. I hope each of you can have the same level of frið with your own innangarð.
- To all the students and readers, thank you for continuing to listen to my rants and raves, even though sometimes even I wonder why you bother anymore. I hope you got as much value out of this one as you have my other work, and I hope you continue to do so.
- Finally, but far from last of course, to my wife and daughters, my sincerest, most heartfelt love and adoration. They've put up with my mental—and physical—absence for three books now, and countless classes, even as I've dragged them around the country. No man was ever prouder of hearth and home as I am, thanks to the efforts of them. I love you.

To a false friend the footpath winds

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*Though his house be on the highway.
To a sure friend there is a short cut,
Though he live a long way off.*

--Havamal, stanza 34²¹⁴

214Auden and Taylor transl.