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## Worldbuilding Ep. 003: Economy of the World and the Needs of the Characters

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### Worldbuilding Episode 003 Show Notes

Warning: this episode veers from story-centered principles and ends up being a laundry list of information about the psychology of human needs and how these shape behavior, and a break down of our own civilization's stages of development from a hunting-gathering economic level to a hypothetical space-based economic level. I give a warning because this is very much a textbook episode of information that ends up being a bit (cough) dry and academic. I spent a lot of time researching this one, using information from five print sources including *Guns, Germs and Steel*, but the episode ends up with a bit of content overload.

I almost didn't publish this episode, but the content is good, and I didn't want to waste the material. I also believe that the

questions I raise in the show are important ones to consider in understanding the major details of your world and the character's needs within that world.

### Introducing the World Builder's Library. Get this worldbuilding book:

*Guns Germs and Steel* by Jared Diamond-great worldbuilding resource that more eloquently and completely explains the principles I try to explore in this episode's hour.

### Key Worldbuilding Concepts

#### Maslow's Heirarchy of Needs(notes from Wikipedia)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often depicted as a pyramid consisting of five levels:

the four lower levels are grouped together as *deficiency needs* associated with physiological needs, while the top level is termed *growth needs* associated with psychological needs. While *deficiency needs* must be met, *growth needs* are continually shaping behaviour. The basic concept is that the higher needs in this hierarchy only come into focus once all the needs that are lower down in the pyramid are mainly or entirely satisfied. Growth forces create upward movement in the hierarchy, whereas regressive forces push prepotent needs further down the hierarchy.



## Suggested Worldbuilding Activity

1. The goal is to get enough details about the world's economy from this activity that you can start writing with some authority about your world, and get started with the actual story, rather than over-developing every last detail.
2. Picture a character in your world with all of his or her weapons and tools, sitting down to eat a meal in the obligatory tavern, restaurant or food establishment, and needing to repair a minor wound with medicine. Then describe this person in detail.
3. Answer the following questions, and you will have a deep enough sense of your world: Where did all of the parts that make up the tools come from? The parts that make up the weapons? Trace these parts back to the natural resource they came from (metals, lumber, hides), then explain how each was made, mined, grown or manufactured at each stage of assembly.
4. How difficult was it to acquire each piece, and what is the relative availability and value of each piece? Create a price ration (1 being the cost of one common food item in the world—in our world a car is about 20000 times what a unit of food like bread might cost). Who grew, raised, manufactured or assembled each piece?
5. Answer the same sets of questions for the character's clothes, and the food he or she is eating.
6. What taxes were incurred as the character bought the tools or weapons or food from the tavern? Who mandates the taxes, who collects the taxes, and who enforces penalties if these taxes aren't paid?
7. What is the medicine and where did it come from?
8. Note: if the world has collapsed or regressed, and the character is scavenging or has scavenged items, trace the source of the items from the origins in the previous world.

Next episode, let's get back to the story design of the worldbuilding (and away from the dry and academic stuff). Let me know if you have specific topics you'd like to hear!

Special thanks to: [Dragon's Landing Inn](#), [The Harping Monkey](#) and [Fear the Boot](#) for their support!



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