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THE INDOORSMAN VS. THE OUTDOORSMAN

If you talk to a [outdoors] man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his [indoor] language, that goes to his heart.

NELSON MANDELA

It is advantageous to one's training to explore the seemingly adversarial relationship between the Indoorsman and the Outdoorsman. There is an assumption that one tribe is adamantly and diametrically opposed to the other, but such thinking is steeped more in hearsay and stereotypical rhetoric arising from cultural clichés than any solid, factual research.

1. DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

The truth is that being an Avid Outdoorsman and being an Avid Indoorsman are not mutually exclusive paradigms of thought or living, although distinct differences can be observed between the two. Some view these two schools of thought as different ends of the same power button, each important to the functioning of society.

A great way to remember this integrative concept is the standard *I* and *O* buttons on certain devices, especially in Europe. Many Americans are confused by what these stand for, attempting to come up with various words beginning with *I*

and *O* to determine which one means on and which one means off. Some think that *I* must mean “initiate,” while *O* means “off.”

But the truth is, these symbols are actually binary in nature, which means they are not letters but rather numbers. Thus, *I* is the number 1, which means something is turned on, while the *O* is the number 0, which means something is turned off.

In this vein, one can think of the *I* as the Indoorsman, or the philosophy that brings energy to one’s way of living. Conversely, while there are times when one needs to turn something off, the *O* can represent the Outdoorsman, which refers to situations where there is actually no electricity and thus, in many ways, no hope.

2. THE DEFINING LIGHT OF LANGUAGE

One does not have to be a trained linguist or even speak more than one language to understand that words and phrases used in common dialects cannot always be directly translated. This is why, if you ever travel abroad, asking for something very simple in your native language can produce a seemingly complicated-sounding translation into the language of the region in which you are traveling.

Simply put, language generally does not translate word for word but rather thought for thought or idea to idea. For example, in English, one would say, “I am hungry.” But in Spanish this same thought is expressed in a different order of thought and word. Instead of “I am hungry,” the Spanish equivalent is “I have hunger”: *Tengo hambre*.

In much the same way, a vast array of words and phrases in the English language have various and often diverse meanings when evaluated from opposing Indoorsman and Outdoorsman perspectives. Since Avid Indoorsmanship entails so much more than merely talking the talk, it is important that you know the deeper, often hidden meanings behind the words, phrases, and expressions you use. By developing a more complete and critical awareness of the Indoorsman’s ever-developing dialect, you will grow in your comprehension as well as your ability to communicate these concepts to others who are seeking growth or mentorship in this field.

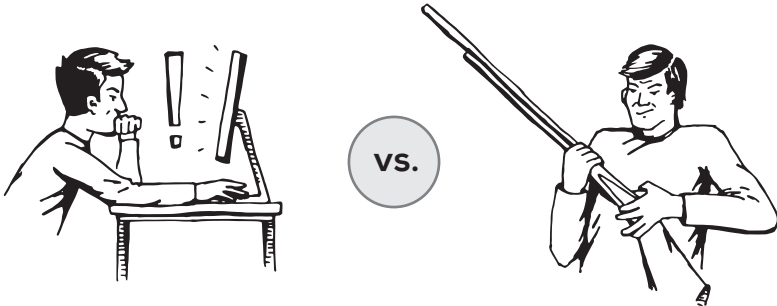
3. INDOORSMAN VS. OUTDOORSMAN INTERPRETATIONS OF COMMON EXPRESSIONS

Below are just a few common phrases whose meanings are completely different when filtered through either an Indoorsman or Outdoorsman perspective. Descriptions of these examples follow.

- Troubleshooting
(vs. Trouble Shooting)
- Being Left to His Own
Devices
- A Slippery Slope
- Outstanding in His Field
(vs. Out Standing in His Field)
- Cliffhanger
- Breaching a Firewall
(vs. Breaching a Fire Wall)
- Hacking
- Don't Poke the Bear
- Stable Employment

A. Troubleshooting (vs. Trouble Shooting)

Indoorsman Interpretation. Very few words or phrases so expressly reveal the philosophical chasm that exists between the Indoorsman's and Outdoorsman's way of life as the word *troubleshooting*. For the Indoorsman, this word means trying to ascertain the cause of a malfunction or problem, usually occurring with an appliance, device, or something else technological in its design, although certainly the word has been widened in the greater culture to include more abstract applications (i.e., troubleshooting problems in a relationship). From an Indoorsman's perspective, the purpose of troubleshooting is to discover a problem so it can be remedied or repaired.



Outdoorsman Interpretation. The Outdoorsman interprets “trouble shooting” as something else altogether; that is, the act of having trouble while shooting. This means he is experiencing a malfunction with his firearm, crossbow, or compound bow, which can be caused by any number of variables. In the case of firearms, having trouble shooting has been experienced by Outdoorsmen going back multiple generations. In the early days of firearms, it could have been the result of damp gunpowder being placed into a musket, failure of a flint to spark when the trigger mechanism was engaged, or even the random explosion of the firing mechanism, causing damage to the firearm and also injury to the Outdoorsman using it.

B. Being Left to His Own Devices

Indoorsman Interpretation. For the Indoorsman, the interpretation of devices is completely different from that of the Outdoorsman, even though there is a similarity in outcome. In both cases, the person in question is left alone, but for the Indoorsman, there is no insinuation of scheming, ploys, or the like. It is much more literal, simply meaning that the Indoorsman values his or her time on a device such as a smartphone, tablet, or television. To leave him to his own devices simply means to respect his desire for a little solitude now and again to catch up on social media or simply to amuse himself with funny GIFs or YouTube videos.



VS.

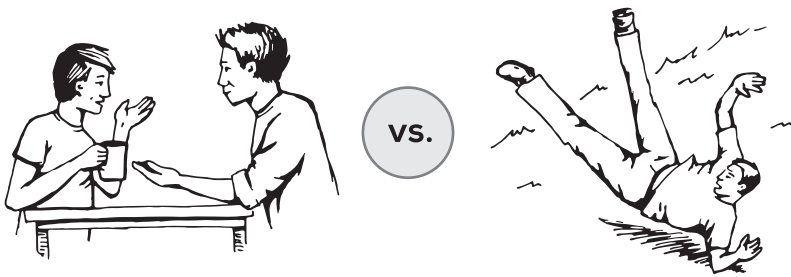


Outdoorsman Interpretation. This particular expression carries striking similarities in interpretation between the two perspectives in that in both cases it denotes a desire to be left alone in some capacity. The real difference is found in the meaning of the word *devices*.

For the Outdoorsman, the word *devices* in this expression carries with it something less akin to a literal interpretation and closer to an abstract viewpoint. It would be best defined as a ploy, a dramatic literary tool, or a scheme. So, then, the expression “leaving someone to his or her own devices” means “to let somebody do as he or she wishes” instead of giving the person direction or assistance.

C. A Slippery Slope

Indoorsman Interpretation. For the Indoorsman, this phrase is not literal but is obviously understood to be an idiom. This should be expected, as the Indoorsman tends to avoid situations in the outdoors where there would be anything slippery or sloped. To him, this phrase simply means that a decision, path, comment, or relationship may lead to difficulty in the future, as in the case of a metaphorical foot unexpectedly slipping on a metaphorical slope.



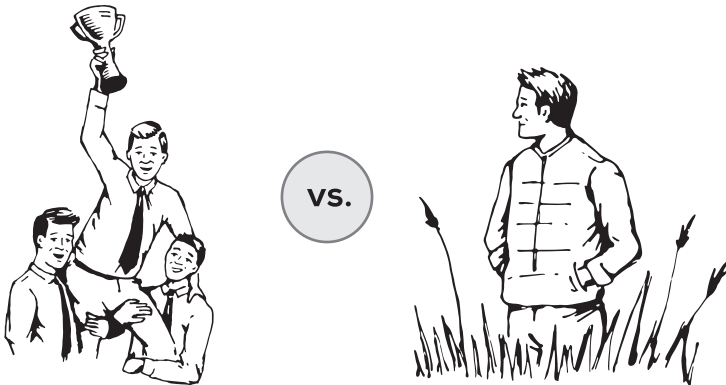
Outdoorsman Interpretation. For the Outdoorsman, slippery slopes are commonplace. The amount of time he spends outdoors leads him to traversing diverse terrains, including crossing rivers and streams and climbing and descending mountains. When he begins to walk or climb back down from an elevated position, especially depending upon the climate and recent weather patterns that may cause the

terrain to be wet, muddy, or icy, it is common for the slope to become slippery, causing him to lose his footing and possibly fall to the bottom of the hill, mountain, or crevice being navigated.

D. Outstanding in His Field (vs. Out Standing in His Field)

Indoorsman Interpretation. Indoorsmen are often high achievers, studying hard in their respective fields and advancing to positions of leadership and prominence. As instinctive troubleshooters (see previous entry), they face difficulty and change with a remarkable sense of emotional elasticity and fortitude. They are undeterred (or are deterred to a much lesser degree, depending upon the avidness of their Indoorsmanship) by the onslaught of technological and communication issues that plague the world and the workplace to the extent that they are sought out as champions who can resolve whatever issues arise.

For these reasons, they are often recognized by their employers, managers, directors, and the like for their outstanding work performance. So to be “outstanding in one’s field” means to excel in one’s job or area of study, which means *field* is defined in the abstract sense as a subject, area, topic, discipline, theme, or domain.



Outdoorsman Interpretation. For the Outdoorsman, the phrase itself changes slightly as the interpretation moves to a more literal plane. For him, he may also

pursue the same level of excellence in his respective course of employment or study, and because of his predilection for the outdoors, this will often entail him actually being “out standing in his field.”

Again, this is not meant to diminish in any way the intentions or efforts of the Outdoorsman, but his heart is more bent to the literal definition of a field as a meadow, pasture, grassland, ground, countryside, or lea. Such a field is a perfect place for tracking or hunting various animals, including certain fowl that can be rustled by a hunting dog while the Outdoorsman is out standing in the field, giving directions to his canine companion to retrieve the most recent prey.

E. Cliffhanger

Indoorsman Interpretation. Indoorsmen are students of culture and storytelling. With a propensity for being comfortable indoors and for using various forms of technology, the Indoorsman is no stranger to the finer points of the concept of narrative and all that it entails. In many ways, he is the counterpart to the ancient Greeks who analyzed the depths of setting, character development, exposition, climax, and resolve.

To that end, the Indoorsman can generally be successfully engaged regarding the ongoing story lines of the most popular television shows and movies being shown at present. Early twenty-first-century Indoorsmen are always up to speed on classic stories, including that of the both geographically and relationally confused characters of ABC's *Lost*. Many other shows could be referenced here, but suffice it to say that the Indoorsman knows them much better than the Outdoorsman. This attention to the detail of story continues with each passing year and with the advent of more and more stories—and the Indoorsman stands (or more likely sits) ready to discuss these with whoever approaches him in person or online.

So he knows that a cliffhanger is an emotional, often shocking, unresolved ending to an episode or season of a show or movie—one that requires resolution in the next episode or movie. This is one of the areas of life in which the Indoorsman can lose his cool due to the emotional anguish or excitement that can result from a cliffhanger, especially when a show is being watched from week to week as opposed to being binged via a streaming service.



vs.



Outdoorsman Interpretation. The Outdoorsman is also familiar with cliffhangers, but the stakes are much higher for him, sometimes including his very life itself. In the case of this particular interpretation, the definition of the word is explicitly stated within itself: actually hanging from a cliff.

Some extremely avid Outdoorsmen are known to climb steep rock faces and mountains without the safety of ropes or equipment. This is rare *and* dangerous. Most Outdoorsmen who attempt to do any sort of climbing do so in groups and use climbing equipment, such as harnesses, helmets, gloves, carabineers, and tightly wound rappelling ropes. In these cases, a cliffhanger can still cause great excitement, but more so for the purpose of entertainment rather than survival.

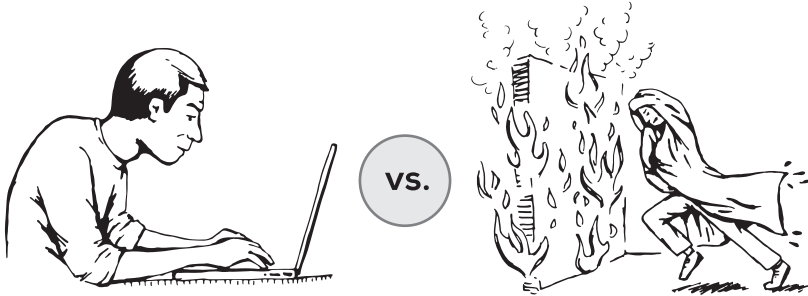
F. Breaching a Firewall (vs. Breaching a Fire Wall)

Indoorsman Interpretation. It is rare for anyone who is in charge (or even just simply working part time) in the fields of networking, IT, or web design *not* to be an Indoorsman, even if only as an amateur. Thus, the term “firewall” is very familiar and very important to these people, because they know it to be a critical, digital line of defense for their companies. Furthermore, they are often tasked with installing and monitoring these firewalls, which are features of a computer system or network designed to block unauthorized access while still permitting outward communication.

A breached firewall means that a nefarious online foe has found a way to break through whatever online security measures are in place for the purpose of stealing proprietary and/or personal information or possibly planting a destructive virus

that can erase or corrupt all the information, records, and systems of an organization or its employees.

To the Avid Indoorsman, a breached firewall is a life-and-death situation, presenting a clear and present danger that must be faced with swift and definitive action in order to quell the malicious aggression of online enemies.



Outdoorsman Interpretation. The Outdoorsman is generally completely unfamiliar with the Indoorsman's concept of firewalls. In fact, most Outdoorsmen sleep soundly at night under the stars, never knowing that somewhere in a control room or a back corner office, a brave Indoorsman is actually saving the world by battling against the online attacks of enemy governmental regimes and the madmen who lead them with iron fists. The Outdoorsman's ignorance is no doubt bliss as he struggles to know how to plug in his computer, much less access the unseen digital wars that rage all around him.

For the Outdoorsman, though, there is significance to the idea of a "fire wall." For him, it means that a wall has caught fire inside whatever overnight lodge he is visiting or lean-to shelter he has constructed while hunting or camping. As many of these types of shelters do not have electricity, much less fire alarms, his awareness of the fire wall results from waking up to the smell of smoke and witnessing such a wall consumed in flames.

Much like the Indoorsman, a fire wall is a life-and-death situation to the Outdoorsman as well—perhaps even more so. In these situations, he will remember his training as a child regarding what to do during a fire. First, he will get low to avoid

inhaling the smoke. Next, he will surround himself with a thick blanket (preferably a wet one, which is one of the only times the term “wet blanket” is used in a positive manner). In this case, the term “breaching the fire wall” means the Outdoorsman has no other choice but to run headlong into the flames so as to break through the burning wall and reach survival on the other side.

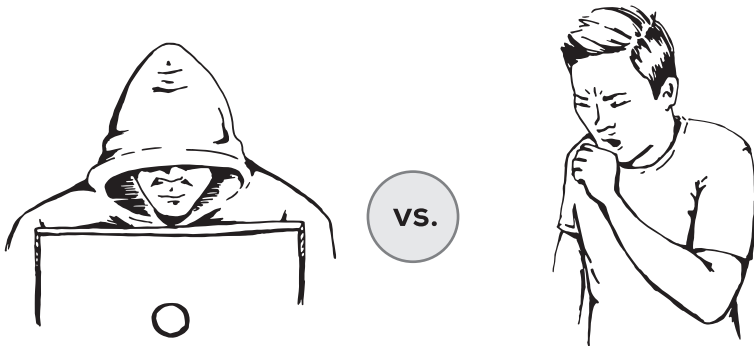
A couple of interesting observations can be made regarding the Indoorsman and Outdoorsman perspective on firewalls (or fire walls). The first is that the Indoorsman is attempting to repel a breach, while the Outdoorsman is attempting to create a breach. Second, the Indoorsman is attempting to better guard his indoor world from would-be intruders who would do him and others harm, while the Outdoorsman, as always, is attempting to leave the indoors as quickly as possible. It is also no surprise that breaching a fire wall only serves to reinforce the Outdoorsman’s faulty assumptions about the danger of the indoors, even though, in most cases, fire walls are caused by a careless or foolish safety mishap on the part of the inhabitant—in this case, the Outdoorsman himself.

G. Hacking

Indoorsman Interpretation. Much like the breach of a firewall, the Indoorsman is no stranger to the hacker, which is a nickname for a person who uses computers to gain unauthorized access to private data. The hacker is the individual who is attempting to breach the firewall. Other nicknames for hackers include cybercriminals, pirates, computer criminals, keyloggers, keystroke loggers, hacktivists, and cyberpunks (the last being the Indoorsman’s personal favorite nickname for these ne’er-do-wells).

The reality of the world of hacking for the Indoorsman is that he is going up against another qualified Indoorsman, just not of the avid persuasion but rather the evil persuasion. If the Indoorsman were a superhero, the hacker would be his archnemesis—his powerful, bizarre opposite and equal. The hacker must be taken seriously because the very survival and welfare of the indoors—and thus society itself—is at stake. This is why there are billion-dollar industries as well as dedicated government agencies staffed with professionally trained Avid Indoorsmen to vigilantly repulse all the advances of our cyberenemies.

So, to the Indoorsman, hacking is nothing to sneeze at.



Outdoorsman Interpretation. For the Outdoorsman, however, hacking is absolutely something to sneeze at, literally. In his colder, bacteria-laden outside world, hacking has nothing to do with computers, cybersecurity, or the fate of the modern age. Rather, it has everything to do with the development of a nagging cough resulting from exposure to cold or wet weather, as well as from compromising one's immune system by extreme fatigue resulting from waking up to fish or hunt before sunrise for weeks, months, and even years on end. His persistent cough is often referred to as hacking or a hacking cough.

All this being said, the Outdoorsman's definition of a hacker is a far cry from the Indoorsman's definition. This is definitely one of those cases in which the two definitions should never be mixed, for obvious reasons.

H. Don't Poke the Bear

Indoorsman Interpretation. This lesser-known colloquialism is mainly used in the southeastern and midwestern United States, but it is still one with which Indoorsmen should fully familiarize themselves. It means that when something is seemingly going well, it should not be overengaged. By doing so, even if one's intentions are good, one can disrupt a delicate equilibrium that may never be recovered.

Other expressions that may be more familiar that express a similar imperative include "Don't upset the apple cart" and "Just leave well enough alone." The central message is, "When things are going well, it is wiser not to intrude into the situation with too much unnecessary change."

The most relevant example of this principle in the Indoorsman's life concerns the presence of children as well as adults who are not normally around children on a daily basis. Parents usually recognize the fragile balance of peace that sometimes randomly occurs when groups of children are playing together. It is a rare and beautiful thing, like a light snow in June or a double rainbow occurring simultaneously with a solar eclipse.

The point is, when children are at peace, they should be allowed to remain unfettered by outside interruptions and distractions. Even if there are a few screams here and there, Avid Indoorsmen know all is well as long as the screaming diminishes quickly and is not followed by children entering the adult space with tears or tattling.

Enter the well-meaning cousin, aunt, uncle, or grandparent. These kindhearted grown-ups can destroy the peace in a matter of seconds by entering the children's space, offering to help them find new games to play, inquiring if they are hungry or thirsty, or any other number of unnecessary engagements with the children. In this case, the children usually respond with crying, screaming, unreasonable requests, and a general sense of dramatic entitlement because their peace has been disrupted, thus reminding them to do the same for others.

Someone poked the bear.



Outdoorsman Interpretation. The Outdoorsman, on the other hand, interprets this expression very differently—and literally. Very few instances can be imagined

in which one would be close enough to a bear to actually poke it with a stick or even a hand and, of course, even fewer logical instances for doing so.

Outdoorsmen take bears very seriously, which is why so many other expressions and references have arisen in their culture related to bears and bear behaviors. The protective nature of a female bear with her cubs causes Outdoorsmen to sometimes refer to any seemingly overprotective mother (even human) as acting like a mama bear. Other bear references include being as hungry as a bear, being smarter than the average bear, or giving someone a bear hug.

Outdoorsmen in the wild will often equip themselves to be ready to face any bears they may encounter. If they are hiking or camping in national parks or in other areas where bears are endangered or where firearms are prohibited, they will carry bear spray, a type of pepper spray or capsaicin that is used to deter aggressive bears in wilderness environments.

So, then, for the Outdoorsman, the idea of happening upon a bear and then deciding to poke it would be the most foolish action imaginable. Hunt it? Sure. Run from it? Perhaps. Poke it? Never. Though the paradigms and applications are different for the Indoorsman and the Outdoorsman, this particular expression actually carries similar meanings for both groups; that is, don't do anything unnecessarily stupid.

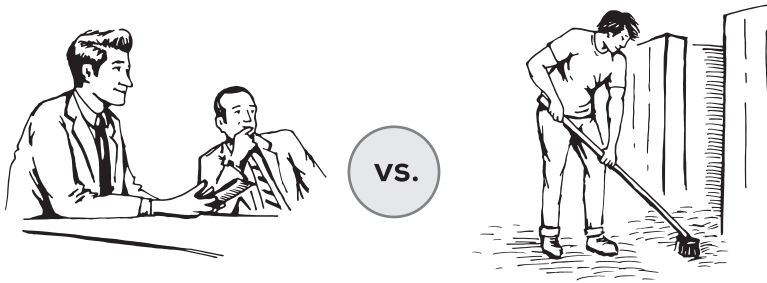
I. Stable Employment

Indoorsman Interpretation. This one hits close to home for the Indoorsman as he seeks to undo the gross stereotypes that plague his tribe. Many Indoorsmen, especially those of the millennial generation, feel unjustly characterized on social media and in the mainstream media as feeling entitled, unwilling to work at conventional jobs, and generally shiftless in their approach to employment, changing jobs over and over again when previous ones do not reach their unrealistic expectations.

But like most stereotypes, the ones levied against Indoorsmen are generally inaccurate. Indoorsmen are some of the most prolific and hardworking members of our society, especially considering that they often work to maintain the digital and technological infrastructures that keep that society intact and at peace.

So, for the Indoorsman, just because he may not be digging ditches, clearing forests, or pouring concrete does not mean he is not an indispensable member of

the workforce. Stable employment, then, means a job—probably worked indoors—for which he is paid a fair wage and has the ability to move up the ladder (not to be confused with a job that actually entails climbing a ladder, which would probably not interest him). Rather, a job is considered stable if he can count on remaining employed for an extended period of time.



Outdoorsman Interpretation. For the Outdoorsman there is a similar interpretation of stable employment in the sense of a job that pays a solid wage with good benefits and longevity of opportunity. But there is also a chance that the Avid Outdoorsman would interpret this term as something else altogether.

It is entirely possible that stable employment could mean work done around farm animals, on a ranch, or, more specifically, in a barn. This is a stable job in the most literal sense of the word. And considering the disposition of the Outdoorsman, this kind of job could very well be exactly what he is looking for.

Such jobs include herding cattle, cleaning stables, training horses, or even working for a rodeo. Some may find it difficult to believe, but many Avid Outdoorsmen have found stable employment in the extremely volatile rodeo environment. It is a seemingly perfect combination of wild animals, outdoor recreation, danger, and living on the road, which satisfies at least part of the Outdoorsman's desire to live outdoors. In this particular case, the Outdoorsman can actually be applauded by fans and, in some cases, experience notoriety by being broadcast on various television rodeo shows both real and reality based.

While this may seem to be counterintuitive to the Outdoorsman's general

aversion to extreme social interaction, there remains a sense of being a loner, especially if the Outdoorsman becomes a bull rider. All of the Outdoorsman ideals of ruggedness and fearlessness are sufficiently met in this lifestyle, or at least in this projected persona.

So while the Indoorsman seeks stable employment by working a long-term job from his computer or in an office area in which teams of people accomplish multiple tasks together, the Outdoorsman may seek stable employment by working as a farmhand, rancher, or even rodeo clown—also known as the roughneck clown, one of the unique versions of clowns that exists.¹

In other words, even if an Outdoorsman is somehow forced to wear makeup, he is going to wear it as ruggedly as possible in order to satiate his inner desire to mirror the harsh outdoors as much as possible through his life—and even his appearance.

Of course, this would not be the first time Outdoorsmen have worn some sort of makeup, although they would never call it that, opting instead for the more resilient sounding “face paint.” Face painting has been a mainstay of Outdoorsmen for millennia, highlighting the rugged facial features of Native American warriors, Scotch-Irish warriors, Asian warriors, Australian aboriginal warriors, and the like. One need only remember the blue war paint that Mel Gibson (portraying William Wallace) splattered on his surprisingly clean-shaven-for-a-warlord’s face in the movie *Braveheart* to recognize that, to the true Outdoorsman, there is a major difference between makeup and face paint.

To that end, unless one desires a slow and agonizing death at the tip of a bloody saber or the head of a huge mallet, it would probably behoove him never to approach a face-painted warrior—or even a clown, for that matter—before a battle or a rodeo to compliment his “makeup”—even if it does bring out his eyes.

Just leave it alone...that is, don't poke the bear because this is a slippery slope.

1. Check other reputable resources, Indoorsman or otherwise, to learn more about the many various types of clowns.