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*See Appendix CTC – Continuous Turn Cycle Example*

*See Appendix PAT2 – Power Activations Tables 2 – Normal Sequence of Power Activations*

*“The view that machines cannot give rise to surprises is due, I believe, to a fallacy to which philosophers and mathematicians are particularly subject. This is the assumption that as soon as a fact is presented to a mind all consequences of that fact spring into the mind simultaneously with it. It is a very useful assumption under many circumstances, but one too easily forgets that it is false. A natural consequence of doing so is that one then assumes that there is no virtue in the mere working out of consequences from data and general principles.” – Alan Turing, Computing Machinery and Intelligence (1950)*

**New York City, 150,000 Years Later:** Sixty years apart, or 150,000 years apart, they are both talking about emergences.

- ✓ cf. “Mathematics, law of averages. Let a complex system repeat itself long enough, eventually something surprising might occur.” – Inner Number 6, Battlestar Galactica, “Day Break” (epilogue in New York City, 2010).

**Rhetorical Questions:** Is ‘surprising’ inherent in or necessary to the concept and/or definition of emergences? Is the surprise simply a matter of our (very) limited intelligence; would the universe be clockwork to a higher intelligence? Or at least a set of known and closed probabilities? Is something emergent simply because of our current framework? E.g., has emergence simply replaced mythopoeic thinking in the modern age (see Mythopoeic Thinking discussion, 1 Temporal Technology, p. 809, *infra*)? Is emergence a category error? To wit:

- ✓ “Unlike classical physical processes, some quantum mechanical processes (such as quantum teleportation arising from quantum entanglement) cannot be simultaneously ‘local,’ ‘causal,’ and ‘real,’ but it is not obvious which of these properties must be sacrificed, or if an attempt to describe quantum mechanical processes in these senses is a category error such that a proper understanding of quantum mechanics would render the question meaningless.” – from Wikipedia article, “List of unsolved problems in physics,” captured April 7, 2019.

Can something not surprising be an emergence? Can emergences be useful if they are unpredictable? Is our only option to recognize that emergences happen, and that the concept is the best explanation for the observed phenomenon, but beyond our current understanding and ability to predict?

**White Moves First:** When a computer plays against a human opponent, any move the computer makes, one can assume that the computer has worked out all consequences several moves out because of the processing differential between the computer player and the human player. Given the time periods (years, decades, centuries) that are likely represented by a turn in GGDM, the players and Concierge can assume on a certain level that all of the consequences of an act or fact have already been played out, determined, and are known to the populations in the game. That is the processing levels are the same, given time. This may be partially represented by use of Enlightenment rerolls (see ‘do over’ discussions in Foresight and Vampire Suicide, 2 Colleges, pp. 472, 478, *infra*). However, at the same moment, the game is really about the *human players* who may not see all of the possible consequences of a move, and who, through game play, work it out from the data presented to them by the game.<sup>1</sup>

- ✓ “As we know, the main problem of all chess programs is the very large number of continuations involved. The number of all potential positions is in the order of  $10^{128}$  ... which is vastly larger than the number of atoms in the known universe (a pitiful  $10^{80}$ ). It is clear that no computer or any other machine can solve the game by looking at all possible continuations. ...

For the computer, it is only a question of what depth of search is required to match human strategic skill. The machine Deep Blue, which Kasparov played in Philadelphia and New York, consisted of an IBM SP/2 server equipped with a large number of special purpose chips, which do the fast calculations. Each chip is capable of processing two to three million positions per second. By using more than 200 of these chips, the overall speed of the program could be raised to 200 million positions per second. ... Today’s top PC programs ... run at up to 1,000,000 positions per second on the fastest available hardware, and realistically have a playing strength in classical chess of over 2600. They are a match for all but the top 100 players in the world; in rapid forms of chess only the top dozen or so humans can compete.

The extensive opening books that are used play an important role in the strength of computers. The collective knowledge and experience of many generations of human masters can easily be stored on a hard disk and accessed during the opening phase of the game. Even the micros know tens of millions of opening positions, and have access to full statistics for each of them.... Very often a program will play fifteen or more moves of a game before it starts calculating moves for the first time. Without the benefit of this human knowledge in the openings, the programs would be considerably weaker. While computers are gaining a substantial advantage from the vast amount of opening knowledge that has accumulated in the history of chess, they also profit from research at the other end of the game.” – Grand Master Boris Alterman, “How to Beat your Chess Computer,” undated blog article.<sup>2</sup>

Even the best human players do not and **cannot process the number of continuations** that a computer must process to match the best human players. So how does a computer lose to a human? Do humans have some asymmetrical advantage against a computer opponent with raw processing power? Additionally, note that the current strength of computers is largely due to the accumulated experience of humanity at the game of chess, e.g., opening moves, five-piece end-games. And of course, there is the classic religious quandary (not confined to Abrahamic religions): If our creations can defeat us, then might we not defeat the entities who created us?<sup>3</sup>

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*“To everything (turn, turn, turn)  
There is a season (turn, turn, turn)  
And a time to every purpose, under heaven  
A time to be born, a time to die  
A time to plant, a time to reap  
A time to kill, a time to heal  
A time to laugh, a time to weep”*

– The Byrds, “Turn! Turn! Turn!” (1965)

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**Turn, Turn, Turn:** All Actions received by the Concierge within a day will be processed the next day if possible. For example, the Regular Turn Actions received between 12:00 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, will be processed sometime on Thursday (as the Concierge's schedule allows). Ideally, the schedule should be set such as to avoid a backlog or piling up of unprocessed Actions, which disadvantages the positions whose Turn Periods come after, because of results they could not possibly know when submitting their own Actions.

- ✓ The following section is the first mention of the game-critical triumvirate of Acts, Scenes and Power Activations. These will be introduced at length over the next several sections.
- **Clockwork Universe:** All turns received in a day period will be processed together, not consecutively, based on the order they were received, as follows: All Power Activations requiring one Act, *will process first*, then all Power Activations requiring two Acts and/or an Act and a Scene will process second, and so forth until all Actions are processed (see also Managing Act, 3 The Sidereal Stage, p. 123, *infra*). Power Activations also requiring a Scene will process after other Power Activations requiring the same number of Acts without a Scene, Scenes act as tiebreakers in the processing sequence. If two Power Activations are tied in Acts without any Scenes, or require the same number of Acts and Scenes, they will be processed in the order of Powers listed in 2 The Sidereal Stage, Table of Contents, *infra*.
  - ✓ For example, Players A and B both submit Actions on Tuesday, and Player B's Actions arrive first. Player B's Power Activations requiring one Act will process before Player A's Power Activations requiring one Act. However, if Player B has a Power Activation requiring an Act and a Scene, it will process after Player A's Power Activation requiring one Act and no Scenes.
  - ✓ Actions costing *no Acts and one Scene* will process before those costing one Act.
  - ✓ One Act is **added to** the cost of Power Activations that are not associated with an uninterrupted Government Title, if those are used in the game, see Associates & Acquaintances, 1 Government Titles, p. 580, *infra*. This is an *optional rule* in the game that can change the processing sequence of a position's Power Activations with any disruption or change in Government Titles, representing differing priorities of a succession of governments. It could be really fascinating and really annoying.
    - It is strongly suggested that any computer assistant for the game provide the position players with a current list of Power Activation processing sequence by purpose, updated for current Government Title associations.
    - The order should be the same whether Regular Turns are being processed individually or batch processed by a computer assistant in a way that all Regular Turn actions of positions submitted in a day are intermingled. In the latter situation, there may occasionally be a competition between positions as to whose order is processed first, affecting the other position's orders that are processed second. It depends on how the program is written.
  - ✓ Finally, a special 'exception' has been created (of game mechanical necessity) when Unloading RPs at a colony from Cargo Ships shares a Scene with a Construction Power Activation at the colony on the same Regular Turn: Normally, the Construction Power which requires an Act and a Scene will process before the Commerce Power activation for the purpose of Unload RPs which also requires an Act and a

Scene by virtue of the order in which the powers are listed in 2 The Sidereal Stage, Table of Contents, *infra*. However, as they are sharing a Scene (see Material Handling, 1 Construction, p. 664, *infra*), and the unloaded RPs must be used that turn or are lost, the Unload RPs action is processed before the Construction Power so that they may be used that Regular Turn.

- The gist of it is that the process is preplanned as one overall continuous action at the colony by the arrival of the Cargo Ships with RPs and the activation of the Construction Power at the colony with Unload RPs activation of the Commerce Power. It still costs two Power Activations, two Acts and one Scene total.
- **The Mouse in the Clock:** Each Power Activation requires an Interpretation. The default Interpretation is a News Event for most Power Activations. Players submitting Actions for their positions are required to provide the Interpretation (including the text of a News Event, if necessary) to go with each Power Activation and to make it clear to the Concierge exactly what the players desire to do. Any Power Activation without an Interpretation will not be processed. Players will not post News Events to the forums (though players are free to make other appropriate posts to the forums), rather, the Concierge will post all News Events to the forums when the turns are processed. Note that there are other kinds of Interpretations which may be used sometimes to accompany a Power Activation.
- ✓ The News Events section of the forums that is part of the game will be closed to posting or modification by anyone except the Concierge and players. There may be general topic discussion sections of the forums for player and/or public discussion, *depending on how much time the Concierge wants to spend moderating forums*. Posting in discussion sections may be restricted to only players in the game.

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*“In the context of comments posted to online news sites, the presence of a recognizable journalist engaging with commenters has been found to be associated with improved quality of deliberation with reduced incivility and increased evidence-based discourse, as compared with when no one engages with commenters or when an unidentified staff member from the news organization engages with commenters. Discussions surrounding news of health or abortion topics are more relevant but with fewer genuine questions posed than news of topics on education, crimes or guns, and economy. News of education topics has less uncivil and more relevant comments than the other news topics. People provide less evidence in their discourse when discussing news of economy topics as compared to the other news topics.”*

– from Wikipedia article, “Online Deliberation,” citing to Natalie Jomini Stroud, Joshua M. Scacco, et al, “Changing Deliberative Norms on News Organizations’ Facebook Sites,” *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, Volume 20, Issue 2, March 1, 2015, Pages 188–203 (available free online)

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**Online Deliberation:** “The term online deliberation describes the emerging field of practice and research related to the design, implementation and study of deliberative processes that rely on the use of electronic information and communications technologies (ICT). Online deliberation is a relatively new field.” *Id.*

While the internet at first held forth great promise for public discourse, many news organizations have closed the comments sections for their editorials and news stories because they were overwhelmed with racist, sexist, myopic, narcissistic (and all synonyms), unintelligible, ignorant, un-informed, uneducated, insulting or trolling, politically incorrect, phobic, spam and unwanted advertisements, sometimes pornographic, and otherwise inappropriate public postings. In other words, humanity at its usual.<sup>4</sup>

- ✓ “Researchers have questioned the utility of online deliberation as an extension of the public sphere, declining the idea that online deliberation is no less beneficial than face-to-face interaction. *Computer-mediated discourse is deemed impersonal, and is found to encourage online incivility.* Furthermore, users who participate in online discussions about politics are found to make comments only in groups that agree with their own views, indicating the possibility that online deliberation mainly promotes motivated reasoning and reinforces preexisting attitudes.” – from Wikipedia article, “Online Deliberation,” captured October 23, 2019 (emphasis added).

**Intermissions:** The Concierge is the doorkeeper and the janitor of the universe. Please do not contact the Concierge and ask if another position has submitted Regular Actions or Combat Orders (if you are not a combatant). Please do not contact the Concierge and ask the status of a combat or any information that might be construed as ‘free intelligence’ on other positions. The Concierge will give very limited information about other positions, and will always first consider tossing you out an airlock and slamming the door in response to such questions, out of fairness.

- **Emergency Halts:** While the game is designed to run continuously, the game is nothing without the players, and consideration will always be given to halting the game for genuine emergencies. However, the established turn period for each position to submit Regular Turn Actions, and the possibility of multiple players playing each position, should be sufficient to work around most real-world emergencies that might interrupt the game. Therefore, an emergency in this game would be something that cannot be fixed or resolved shortly by reasonable efforts, which might then prevent a position from entering Regular Turn Actions (this is not the same as simply not entering Actions without explanation). Emergency halts will be considered on a case by case basis and will be granted sparingly.
- **Time Stop:** This game is not a computer program, GGDM will always require regular manual processing by the Concierge (with the hope that automated aids might be developed later).<sup>5</sup> This includes tracking all of the turn data, updating the position information, responding to emails, and monitoring the forums decorum. Running the game will be a daily activity for the Concierge. The Concierge will do their best to keep up the daily activities of the game in a timely manner, however, should it become necessary, the Concierge may from time to time call a halt to the game (for example, when the Concierge is on vacation, putting in overtime, on trial for treason, or off saving the world, or during the Holidays). Whenever any halt to the game is called (i.e. the game is placed in ‘temporal stasis’), the turn calendar will be adjusted accordingly and the players will be informed of when the game restarts.
  - ✓ “Yahweh has claimed it, yes – he has pronounced Time Stop and torn it down.” – The Chairman speaking to Lucifer about the Rapture in Robert Heinlein’s Job: A Comedy of Justice (1984).
- **Then The Bomb Drops:** It is (sadly) possible that a halted game will never restart, that the halt is tantamount to ending the game, see End of History, 1 Resolution, p. 1456, *infra*, for

discussion on ending the game. Even with automated aids to help with the bookkeeping functions and/or a game manager-client system, the game will still always be run manually by the Concierge. This game can never be a fully-automated, human-free game program.

- ✓ “Then the bomb drops. Your game master fails to show up (‘I know it’s inconvenient, but I really should be at the birth of my baby’) or shows up but is burnt out from work stress (‘. . . then my office caught fire and we missed deadline.’). Contrary to popular opinion, GMing is not a paying profession (if it is, please let me know where to send my resume). Most GMs also have another life, one that pays the bills, feeds the children, or provides themselves with an education. Sometimes, the last thing a GM wants to face is a group of excited role-players. In these situations, a stoic GM might adopt a ‘the show must go on’ attitude and push on regardless, often with disastrous results, there is nothing more depressing to a group of players than spoiling what has been, at until this point, a long and enjoyable campaign. A far more sensible solution is for the GM to admit that tonight would not be a good time to continue this particular campaign (‘but watch out next week gang!’); he or she should take a break.” – Lee Sheppard, “In Praise of One-Night (gaming) Stands,” *Dragon Magazine* #192, April 1993.

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*“Avoid sarcasm and facetious remarks. Without the voice inflection and body language of personal communication these are easily misinterpreted. A sideways smile, :-), has become widely accepted on the net as an indication that ‘I’m only kidding.’ If you submit a satiric item without this symbol, no matter how obvious the satire is to you, do not be surprised if people take it seriously.” – Jerry Schwarz, Usenet Post, 1983*

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### **Godwin, Poe and the Laws:** Why do we use emoticons?

- ✓ “Without a winking smiley or other blatant display of humor, it is utterly impossible to parody a Creationist in such a way that *someone* won’t mistake for the genuine article.” – Nathan Poe, christianforums post, 2005.

This has come down as *Poe’s Law* and has been generally expanded to any subject.

- ✓ Both the preceding citation and the feature quote above are from the Wikipedia article on “Poe’s Law,” retrieved September 15, 2017, and were linked back to the original source material.

Godwin’s Law:

- ✓ “As an online discussion grows longer, the probability of a comparison involving Hitler approaches one” (see also, *Reductio ad Hitlerum* fallacy).

Further, “If you mention Adolf Hitler or Nazis within a discussion thread, you’ve automatically ended whatever discussion you were taking part in and lost the debate.” *Reductio ad Hitlerum*.

- **Rhetorical Rules:** “The first renowned salon in France was the Hôtel de Rambouillet not far from the Palais du Louvre in Paris, which its hostess, Roman-born Catherine de Vivonne, marquise de Rambouillet (1588–1665), ran from 1607 until her death. She established the rules of etiquette of the salon which resembled the earlier codes of Italian chivalry.” – from Wikipedia article, “Salon,” captured October 23, 2019.

- ✓ “To be considered deliberative discussion, argue scholars, the communication and the involved interactants’ behavior has to meet criteria established by the principles of political equality and egalitarian reciprocity.” – from Wikipedia article, “Online De-liberation,” captured October 23, 2019.

In addition to Godwin’s Law and Poe’s Law, there remain basic rules of rhetoric that apply to any serious discussion or argument, e.g., the following from the movie *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer* (2007):

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**General Hager:** Let me make this clear for you and your pack of freaks. I’m the quarterback, you’re on my team. But I guess you didn’t play football in high school, did you, Richards? [Hager starts to walk away]

**Reed Richards:** You’re right. I didn’t. I stayed in and studied like a good little nerd. And fifteen years later, I’m one of the greatest minds of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I’m engaged to the hottest girl on the planet. And the big jock who played football in high school, he’s standing right in front of me asking me for my help, and I say he’s not going to get a damn thing, unless he does exactly what I say and starts treating me and my friends with some respect.

This movie dialogue is, of course, every nerdy teen boy’s dream (precisely the audience that comic books have always catered to). The computer industry reminds us that back in the mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> Century, they were the nerdy, dorky kids who built the technology for an industry that now runs the world (pretty much, an Estate Government Title of sorts).

- ✓ I watched the movie for Galactus and the Silver Surfer, whom I remembered from the days I read *Epic Illustrated*, it wasn’t an awful movie, but not one I’d watch again.

The comeback response is set up by a classic rhetorical mistake – the same one allegedly made by Bishop Samuel Wilberforce (aka “Soapy Sam”) against Thomas Huxley (aka “Darwin’s Bulldog”) at the British Science Association meeting in 1860 – of personally insulting an opponent to end the argument.

This makes General Hager a poorly-written character and sacrifices credibility in the movie as it is very unlikely that any General-grade (i.e. flag) officer (or any officer) would make that mistake (cf. General Hammond in the *Stargate SG-1* series). Flag officers are usually calculating and tactful, if forceful, with their choice of words and are aware of rhetorical rules. If General Hager had perhaps been a sergeant instead, and tossed a few cuss words, the dialogue would have been more believable.

- ✓ Players in GGDM should endeavor to be General-grade officers and not Sergeants in the game and on the forums. Don’t be Soapy Sam either.

The writers get away with this shoddy dialogue not only because it appeals psychologically to the needs of the target audience, but also because insults and putdowns are the common level of argument – as demonstrated by social media – in our society, it’s the feel good, slam-dunk moment that does not prove any point; it is the argument fallacy of giving into doing what feels good instead of doing what is constructive and right for the argument.

*“‘Damned gravitor,’ said Squadron A’s 2nd-Flight leader over the communicator, ‘cut out just as we finished off the lobster fleet. I was signaling for assembly on my ship, and aimed to cut a little swath through crab-land before going home. Instead, we’ve been streaking off on our own for the last week, and provisions are slim on these little boats, I’ll tell you that! What outfit did you say you are?’*

*The strange, roughly minnow-shaped ship, not a great deal bigger than the scout answered promptly:*

*‘Interstellar Patrol. We have a few openings for recruits who can qualify. Plenty of chance for adventure, special training, top-grade weapons, good food, the pay’s O.K., no bureaucrats to tangle things up. If you can qualify, it’s a good outfit.’*

*‘Interstellar Patrol, huh? Never heard of it. I was thinking of the Space Force.’*

*‘Well, you could come in that way. We get quite a few men from the Space Force. It’s a fair outfit, but they have to kowtow to Planetary Development. Their weapons aren’t up to ours; but their training isn’t so tough, either. They’d be sure to let you in, where we’re a little more selective. You’ve got a point, all right. It would be a lot easier – if you want things easy.’*

*‘Well, I didn’t mean—’*

*‘We could shoot you supplies to last a couple of weeks, and maybe a Space Force ship will pick you up. If not, we could help – if we’re still in the region. Of course, if not— The flight leader began to perspire.*

*‘Listen, tell me a little more about this Interstellar Patrol.’*

– From “The Claw and the Clock,” by Christopher Anvil (1971)

## Endnotes.

<sup>1</sup> Commentary: “White Moves First” is just a tradition in chess. In the hundreds of thousands of recorded chess games, white has a slight advantage, but that advantage would accrue to whomever moved first. I have always wondered if there was some racist undertone to ‘white moves first’ but whatever the case, no racism is intended here.

<sup>2</sup> Commentary: The article mentions both Deep Fritz and Deep Junior so it may be reasonably dated sometime after 2003. According to the Wikipedia article on Deep Junior, Boris Alterman was involved with the openings book for the program. Thus, he was part of the “GM team supporting the machine.” *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> Citation: “When you have a match between such different opponents as humans and computers, you have to look at the different strengths and weaknesses of both sides during the competition. Playing against a chess computer means facing something that doesn’t have any nerves – similar to sitting across the table from an IRS agent during a tax audit. It’s quite clear what the weaknesses of a human being are – primarily our vulnerability to outside interference. We could catch a cold, be easily distracted, and so on. Obviously, we are not in the position to calculate as deeply as the machine, but we can compensate for that. It’s less clear what the weaknesses of the machine are, but a computer specialist or a chess specialist can point them out.

At the top of any evaluation by a computer, we always see the material. It always tries to translate quality and time factors into numbers that represent the mathematical balance of material. As for the opening strategy, this is quite a dangerous part of the game now, since there is a huge amount of theory on specific openings and many lines that can be exploited further by the GM-team supporting the machine. My first principles in games against computers [is] to avoid the main lines and to accept an inferior position after the opening, hoping that outside of the theoretical routes the machine will lose its horizons and will start making positional mistakes. The negative side of such a setup is that such a strategy dramatically limits your active opportunities; nonetheless, this decision has worked perfectly well many times. Computers often overestimate their chances and make positional mistakes, giving me a serious positional advantage. For example, [Deep] Fritz may weaken its king without much hesitation, simply destroying the pawn protection of the king and not paying much attention to the king’s safety before it becomes too late.” – Grand Master Boris Alterman, “How to Beat your Chess Computer,” undated blog article.

- ✓ “California’s surreal 1960s truly began one Los Angeles morning in ‘63, when pioneering dadaist Marcel Duchamp met stark naked Eve Babitz. Duchamp had by then semiretired from art to play chess. Babitz was just beginning her career as a cultural provocateur.” – Eve Babitz [Editor’s Introduction], “The Chess Player Stripped Bare,” *Esquire Classic* (free article), April 1, 2018.
  - The resulting image, which has been copied hundreds of times by others, is a classic of chess distraction. There is also the ‘chess and cleavage’ dress code debate at chess tournaments, which many feel is *sexist and unnecessary*: Would a woman who has no cleavage issue be banned from playing in a chess tournament because she is very pretty? Should she cover her face?

<sup>4</sup> Citation: “Football’s an amazing sport to watch from the comfort of your own home or bar stool. Football’s a lot less fun to watch in person because of the high risk that you’ll encounter fans like the ones at Heinz Field who started a stumbling, sloppy fight just a few rows back from the field on Sunday night. It’s moronic, pointless aggression caught on a cell phone, which makes it the perfect metaphor for America in 2018. ... This is like an internet comment section come to life. What’s got these fools so riled up? Who cares? These gents don’t exactly look like they’re discussing, say, climate change policy or the opioid crisis, topics worthy of real full-throated passion.... There’s an actual play going on in the background! Which is, of course, the best time to start an idiotic flopping-fists semi-riot. ... You know these types of people, even if you’re not physically brawling with them: the get-in-your-face guy, the cheap-shot artist, the clamoring crowd, all that free-floating rage just looking for a target. Let’s break down our cast of characters [note, he references player names on the backs of jerseys worn by fans in the video]:

- ✓ **Hoodie Headbutter**: Just about the only person in the frame not wearing a team jersey. H.H. reps the team, son, not just one player. He also apparently favors ridiculous, premeditated (see: removing his lid) overreaction over reasoned discussion. [note, the fight started when this guy headbutted the next guy]
- ✓ **Not-Troy Polamalu**: He brought a plastic spoon to a gunfight. Totally unprepared for the savagery that comes his way, he’s knocked to the concrete before he’s even ready. He gets back up and wades back into the fight – an achievement in foolish determination – only to take a right to the face and drop again. And then, indignity of indignities, he’s the one getting blamed for the brawl! A reminder: in-stadium fights, as in internet fights, there are no winners.
- ✓ **Not-Antonio Brown**: Not-Polamalu’s apparent companion, her first instinct is to go right at H.H. rather than check on N-P. It’s always all about keeping the fight going.
- ✓ **Not-Casey Hampton, Not-Maurkice Pouncey, Not-Lawrence Timmons**: The Greek chorus here, trying and largely failing to restrain H.H. Lots of volume, very little actual effect. These guys are every clown who adds a ‘what about’ comment or injects political subtext into every single conversation. These guys may in fact be you....

So you know who’s the real hero in this whole absurd mess? Look a few rows down and to the right. At the 41-second mark, you can see a cat in another Pouncey jersey with a gray hoodie underneath. He takes a look up at the fight, sees the idiocy unfolding, and turns back to what’s really important here: the game. He probably spent a lot of money for those seats, and he’s not going to let a horde of brawling dimwits spoil it for him. That’s the role model we ought to emulate. Pretty much everyone else here is a total embarrassment. America in 2018, everybody!” – Jay Bushee, “How a Pittsburgh Steelers fan fight explains America,” *Yahoo Sports*, December 3, 2018.

- ✓ [Note, at about the one minute mark in the video, a Pittsburgh City Police officer arrives and the fight stops. If you think that officer’s salary isn’t a miniscule part of the high ticket price, I have a bridge in San Francisco that I’d like to sell you.]
- ✓ Personal Experience: I won the first World Championship of the World of Kaomaris (WOK) PBEM back around 1999. The game hosted the top ten players and I was a new player with a couple of WOK games’ worth experience, but was invited in because three of the top ten were unable to participate; so the last three spots were made invitational. I played the Championship game in a way that was opposite of what was expected (i.e. devised a different strategy), of what was the norm in the WOK community. This was noted on the forums during the six months the game ran, I was criticized, unflattering comments were directed at me for how I was playing the Championship game because I wasn’t going along with the way everyone else was playing the game. As the end approached, and I won, a great hostility grew on the forums, my victory was demeaned as being somehow improper (it was a game program, I didn’t violate any rules) or that I had not really won the Championship Game because of this or that ... In the end, being 20 years younger than I am now, I was left feeling not like a victor, but like a creep who did something wrong, my victory was

taken away by the ‘yeah but’ snipers or ‘what about’ rabble rousers. This is the only time I was ever champion of anything – no matter how meaningless and trivial it may seem (an international community of about 50 players) – and thus it remains in my memory, but the guttersniping is the primary memory.

<sup>5</sup> Commentary & Citation: Amazon is notorious for using automations or bots to control its listings while it equally notoriously fails to keep out counterfeit sellers from China, dishonest sellers, and many other problems. They suffer a commercial version of the Scunthorpe Problem, *but should do better*. For example, I received the following notification email from Amazon on March 8, 2019 (well over a year after I stopped selling): “We are writing to let you know that the following detail pages have been removed from our catalog: ASIN: 1601252420, SKU: 13-YCWD-G9K0, Title: ‘GameMastery Campaign Coins: Gold (10,50,100)’ This product has been identified as a nonmonetized or monetized bullion, or a gold, silver, palladium, platinum, or bronze coin. Amazon prohibits the listing and sale of these products, except monetized bullion, which is allowed in the Collectible Coins section of Amazon.”

Basically, the morons at Amazon (Amazon workers pride themselves on being called Amabots) used a program to find all listings with ‘gold’ and ‘coin’ in them and then delisted all those that were not in the “collectible coins” category. In fact, the item they delisted refers to a toy coin for role-playing games, that has not a trace of actual gold in it; they were heavy I recall, but they were not gold. The iAmamorons assume that because their program identified that it has ‘gold’ and ‘coin’ in the description, it must be bullion? Rather than having a *human* check before sending out mass emails to sellers? If I were still selling on Amazon, I might spend a week arguing with iAmamorons in seller support, or I might not because I have not had these in inventory for many years. Another example:

- ✓ A couple of years ago, I received a similar notification of removal email for a WWII military miniatures set I was selling. The morons at Amazon had used a bot to search all the listings in toys & games for “rifle” and delisted every entry it found (like Google in 2018). Their intent apparently was aimed at toy guns being sold on Amazon (and why is that a problem exactly that requires all that effort to fix?), but they only use sledgehammers to crack walnuts at Amazon and thus, because the listing included “riflemen” (as in miniature riflemen, metal or plastic WWII soldier figures), the catalog listing (which I did not even create) was delisted. It took a week of aggravation and emails to Amazon before their “legal department” (imagine needing a lawyer to figure out that a listing for WWII miniature soldiers doesn’t have anything to do with toy guns being sold on Amazon) cleared the item to be relisted. Amazon makes marginal profits each year, why do they pay their “legal department” every time we have to go around their Amabot nonsense?
- ✓ This is but a couple of the dozen or so instances where I was victimized as a seller by the Amabot stupidity of Amazon; other instances included being delisted and accused of trademark violations or disputes that were factually wrong or that I had nothing at all to do with because no one at Amazon (that is, the people who push the actual buttons) understands a bit about trademarks but they are scared out of their shoes of litigation (isn’t that a nice contradiction) but are not scared of victimizing dozens of innocent sellers because sellers on Amazon are ignorant, disorganized and plentiful and there will always be more due to Amazon’s success as a platform. Everyone who sells on Amazon knows what are the problems (including using foreign call centers for customer support who use templates to solve problems instead of thinking and understanding), but Amazon either does not know how to solve the problems, or refuses to implement effective solutions due to costs and inability to admit (*ever*) that they are wrong and clueless.
- ✓ On April 8, 2019, I received the following email (in part) from Amazon: “As part of our ongoing efforts to protect our customers and enhance the customer experience, we are updating the requirements to offer products that qualify as pesticides or pesticide devices. Pesticides and pesticide devices include a broad set of products, and it can be hard to identify which products qualify and why. You are offering, or have previously offered, products that are affected ... To continue your current offers on affected products after June 7, 2019, you will need to complete a brief online training and pass the associated test. You will not be able to create new offers on any affected products until you receive approval. You are required to take the training and pass the test only once, even if you have offers on multiple products. This training will help you understand your obligations under EPA regulations as a seller of pesticides and pesticide devices.”
  - I have never sold pesticides, I sold games. The item in question from my inventory was a Q-workshop Spider Web dice bag in linen. Apparently, that is “a pesticide or pesticide device” by Amazon’s standards because it has the word ‘spider’ in the title. It is not hard to see why these guys are incompetent and ineffective at resolving issues that *actually matter*, like preventing counterfeit sellers and scam artists. I wonder if Amazon employees must undergo this online training and pass the associated test to handle linen dice bags with the image of a spider web on them?