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“There is no point in pretending to distinguish the galactic empire story as a genre. Generally speaking, such stories form part of what is known as ‘space opera’ ... The galactic empire is sort of a crystallization of space opera ... But it is the playful aspect of the galactic empire which mainly strikes the reader. This aspect led many readers, including a lot of sf fans, to despise space opera and the galactic scene... But to dismiss it just because it is playful is not good enough.” – Brian Aldiss, Galactic Empires Vol. 2 (1978) ¹

Stage Illusions: World War I was called “The Great War” until after World War II. Most ‘galactic empires’ in science-fiction stories mention only a handful of worlds (with familiar star names), vaguely referring to the masses of other worlds with no galactic spatial sense. Likewise, the empires in this game will likely only consist of a few dozen planets in a tiny patch on a trailing galactic arm. The United States, Russia, or China are exponentially more powerful, larger and more populous than the Roman Empire was in its heyday. Eras beyond the end of this game will regard your ‘empire’ as a tiny lost ancient kingdom and believe that Arthur Pendragon was the first Emperor of the First Galactic Empire, and Merlin was his Minister.

- ✓ On the internet, there is a top-down 2D view of the galaxy onto which Owen E. Oulton projected the entire area represented – a tiny patch – by the civilizations known in the Traveller RPG universe correlated to known actual stars. And that’s being very generous for illustration purposes. Traveller represented 220 x 200 parsecs in 2D.

Most human sidereal stages are actually performed on small soapboxes in the park. Our imagination has always outrun our actual abilities; I have often wondered at the effectiveness of the original performance of Henry V on stage at the Globe Theatre: How could the audience even begin to imagine the magnitude of the battle of Agincourt with only a handful of actors on the stage? We can see it better now on film, but that still falls far short of *the thing itself*, which is necessary to understand the situation and the decisions made by the characters. That *thing* we can only hold tenuously in our minds after study and reflection. So now we are experimenting with 3D VR films (e.g., the movie *Interstellar* on the Oculus Rift), stop-motion acting, etc.

- ✓ “...it would be nice to thicken the published universe into a 3D space.... However, the Milky Way is some 300 parsecs thick, with a stellar density of about 0.14 stars per cubic parsec in the vicinity of the Sun. At that stellar density, the 11k worlds of the Third Imperium would fit into a cube 43 parsecs on a side, which doesn’t allow for nearly the communications lag we find in the published universe (which measures about 220×200 parsecs). Retaining the published universe history while expanding into a third dimension would vastly increase the number of worlds found in a region that’s a year across by Jump-4 xboat. A 200×200×200 parsec space with 0.14 stars per cubic parsec would be 1.12 million stars.... That’s not practical, even with software.” – user steve98052, Mongoose Publishing Forums, November 19, 2013.

Faster-than-light (FTL) travel in science-fiction literature represents both empowerment and the illusion of empowerment. It is the power to go out *there*, it also represents some power over *time* (see time-dilation effect discussions in *Starship Jefferson* and *Assumptions of Light*, 1 Stardrive, pp. 780-781 and *Thumbing Our Nose at Einstein*, 1 Temporal Technology, p. 802, *infra*). It is the power to go and get resources, to escape the bounds of the Earth that have imprisoned human

history, to force ourselves upon the local universe. It is the power to make new history, to be different (or more of the same, but much more dangerous), across immensities of space. It is also illusion, because we are still tiny beings who cannot, for all of our achievements, drama and grandstanding, even with FTL technology, *grok* for a moment the empty immensity of time (or our immense emptiness) and space or do much about it.

The Stage is Set: The Public Space is the main playing area of the game for each position. The Public Space is composed of a continuous set of points, called Monads, forming a finite, probably irregularly-shaped plane that is generated during set up. Each position's Public Space will not be seen by or viewable by other positions.

- ✓ The ancient term “monad” has seen many uses and religious connotations throughout history; here it is used in the most basic form as a single indivisible point.
- **Standing on Spots:** Each Monad is a single distinct point of reality within the civilization's Public Space. Monads are indivisible, the most basic ‘point’ of reality. Each Monad (for game purposes) is either occupied or unoccupied, used or not used, at any specific point in time. A Monad is occupied or being ‘used’ by things placed on that Monad in the Public Space, a Monad that is currently occupied cannot be used for another placement until it is vacated. Most things placed in the Public Space will occupy a single Monad. The game also calls for ‘formations’ and ‘arrangements’ of adjacent things in the Public Space. Formations and arrangements of any sort in the Public Space are not considered ‘solid objects’; if there are open Monads within their area, arrangements and formations can overlap or interlock in the Public Space as long as each Monad is being occupied or used by only one thing at a time. Interlocking formations are defined as two formations that share a common Monad, whereas overlapping formations are those that use Monads in each other's ‘space.’²
- **The Big Actors:** It is in the nature of civilizations that Governments become the largest part of our reality; the influence of our governing authorities and systems reaches invisibly into every aspect of our civilization, our daily lives, they define our reality. Government Titles will take up more than one Monad on the Public Space; Government Titles will fill a significant amount of the Public Space for the entire game. Government Titles must be legally placed in the Public Space prior to the game. The legal placement of Government Titles is explained fully in Structural Government Titles, *et seq.*, 2 Government Titles, p. 595, *infra*.
- **Over the Edge:** Normal Galactic Space appears ‘infinite’ (or the practical equivalent) and ever expanding; what happens if or when it stops expanding is the subject of serious controversy. Of necessity, however, our reality, our Public Space, is finite and self-contained, limited by perception and need, and filled with the things that ‘matter’ at any particular time. This is not to say that it is not capable of expansion or is of a rigid form. *The ability to be both finite and self-contained, yet expandable and mutable, is a key to the Gestalt Structure of civilizations.* For game purposes, this means that the axis of the Public Space ‘wrap around,’ such that the last Monad of an axis is considered to be adjacent to the first Monad of that same axis. Thus, if the A axis of the Public Space runs from A1 to A14, A14 would be considered adjacent to A1 (this effect does not occur in the Galactic Space; x1 is not adjacent to x14). Note then, that by expansion and mutability, things that were adjacent in the Public Space may lose their adjacency. When this occurs, adjacencies will be lost.
 - ✓ Wrapping from top to bottom and side to side on a flat surface does not create a globe, it creates a donut shape. Try it with a piece of paper, bring the top and bottom

together, making a tube, then try to or imagine connecting the other two sides. Think about it the next time you are eating a donut – you are eating someone’s Public Space!

- ✓ All edges of the Public Space must meet their opposite, regardless of whether it fits or not in terms of shape, it is just assumed to happen. Due to the probable irregular shape of the Public Space, the sour cream donut (Yum!) created from wrapping the Public Space will look like one that had a bad trip from the bakery to home!
- Turnover: Only one ‘thing’ can occupy each Monad at any time, i.e. there is no ‘stacking,’ and once something is placed in the Public Space (and its relationships established), it cannot be moved except by the Concierge. Rather, the changes to Public Spaces during the game occur by ‘turnover’ as things are added and removed from the Public Space, as things come and go from the current consciousness of civilization. A successful position will be able to manage the turnover or cycling of pieces and usually have enough room in the Public Space during the game (like managing the free cells in FreeCell). Management of the Public Spaces is an important aspect of play in this game. It is possible, through Expose’ News Events, Conversion and Naturalization of **alien colonies**, advancing Technology Eras, and Reformation, to obtain additional Public Space, but it will not occur often.
- Spatial Dissonance: The arrangement and the relationship of things in the Public Spaces represents exclusively the mental structure, consciousness, cultural schema, collective cognitive schema, or epistemology of the civilization that is the Public Space. The arrangement of stars and planets in the Public Spaces bears little or no relationship at all to the actual location of those stars, planets and ships in real space (that is, the X, Y, and Z coordinates, in Galactic Space) and therefore, the Public Spaces should never be used for calculating distances in Galactic Space. Most other things placed in the Public Spaces have little or no existence in ‘real space’; to the extent that they might be deemed to have a ‘real’ existence in space, they represent collective effects of possibly widely separated people, groups, and facilities, such as research facilities on different colony planets.
- Living in Public Space: It is entirely possible for two planets, a thousand light years apart, to share adjacent Monads in the Public Space indicating that in the consciousness of the civilization, those two places are thought to be closely related, interconnected, regardless of physical or temporal distances. It is also possible, and probable, that the same stars and planets will appear on the Public Spaces of different positions at the same time, for example, if two positions have colonies on the same planet, both would have that planet on their respective Public Spaces. Having a planet or star in your Public Space also does not mean you ‘own’ the planet or star, only that you are ‘present’ there and the planet or star currently has a ‘presence’ in the consciousness of your civilization.
- Lost Places: Whenever a position no longer has a colony or a ship at a star, the star is removed from the Public Space along with any associated planet(s). Whenever a colony is captured by another position, the previous owner of the colony must remove the colony’s planet from the Public Space, which may also cause the removal of the star. The new owner must immediately place the planet and/or star of the newly captured colony on their Public Space. If there is no legal place to put a new captured colony, or planet, or star or anything from the Galactic Space that must be placed on the Public Space, non-Galactic Space pieces will be removed by the Concierge to make room as required. Objective reality trumps all.

“So all of this leads to one major question: What good reason does Uber have for developing a God View feature in the first place?”

– Patrick McGuire, “Uber’s ‘God View’ Was Once Available to Drivers,” *Vice* (Motherboard), November 20, 2014

Godhead and Pinhead: Memory from college freshman literature class, there was a literary transition around the end of the 19th century from “pinhead” to “godhead” fiction that coincided with the development of medicalized psychology (by Freud and others). In pinhead stories (e.g., Hawthorne), the reader never sees inside the character’s or narrator’s head (they are small), they never ‘see’ thoughts and feelings (you are left to deduce it), the only action is outside the characters, in the objective world (as on a stage). With the enhancement of psychological awareness, authors (I remember, for example, Guy Maupassant) began to write stories including the thoughts and feelings of characters (‘Godhead,’ bigger on the inside); the ultimate form of the story is probably Ambrose Bierce’ “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” (pub. 1890, which Kurt Vonnegut called the greatest American story) in which the entire story takes place in the narrator’s head as he is being walked out to be hanged on the bridge. The Owl Creek Bridge story relies on the objective vs. subjective passage of time, the entire fantasy takes place in perhaps a minute or less walk to the middle of the bridge, but spans days or weeks in the narrator’s mind. Godhead literature should not be confused with ‘god view’ in video gaming.

In the golden age of comics, where thought bubbles were used to reveal inner thoughts, godhead in video fiction was more common, especially in afternoon soap operas, where the camera would focus on a character’s face, and you’d hear the inner thoughts in a hollow disembodied version of the character’s normal voice without movement of the mouth, indicating the ‘voice in the head’ we all hear when thinking. The scenes also usually involved some time distortion between moments in real time, especially in a setting like a meeting, party or illegal drug transaction.

The godhead has gone out of style in movies and television shows, e.g., there were dozens of instances where we could have heard the character’s thoughts in the first season of *The Man in the High Castle*, but we never did. It has been years since I watched a new movie where the inner voice is heard; the character’s thinking is instead expressed and signaled solely in external dialogue and actions. I think cinematographers and script writers have rejected the inner voice as clunky, instead the audience relies on what they intuitively believe the characters are thinking based on what is shown in action and dialogue, and the twists, shock, and cliffhangers occur when the scriptwriter had a different thought, and the characters do something unexpected.

- ✓ The Public Space in GGDM is the ‘godhead’ model blown up to the level of civilization, it is a discussion that could have not have likely occurred a couple of centuries ago, and rests upon concepts such as the relationship of Christianity and mental health professions (see *Dream Police*, 1 *Dreamtime*, p. 132, *infra*), emotions (2 *Culture* generally, *infra*) and even the related modern concept of evil (see *Modernity Machines*, 1 *Technology*, p. 696, *infra*). All of which I would never have thought of on my own while designing GGDM; the godhead discussion in freshman lit class in college (taught by a playwright) was probably critical to the development of GGDM.
- ✓ Another striking comparison is the image in the *Andromeda* television series (2000-2005) of ships travelling through ‘slipstream’ between stars, which looks like they are navigating through a giant brain; transit time has nothing to do with actual distance,

but rather with some luck and the frequency with which ships make the same transit, e.g., like learning and neuroplasticity.

- ✓ If you search Google for “Godhead characters vs. Pinhead characters in literature” or any similar search, no relevant results are found, of course (October 16, 2019). Instead, ‘godhead’ results include religious discussions against trying to know what is in God’s head (what a ridiculous idea in any case) and ‘pinhead’ results refer to some stupid horror movie character and potential crossover movies with Michael Meyers or Freddie. Because that’s what Google and the Internet are about: the shallow, the current, the popular. So in any event, it does not appear to be a current literary fiction theory, but was useful in framing and discussing GGDM.

“For example, in 2006 the anthropologist Joseph Henrich and colleagues published a study in the journal Science based on their analysis of 15 different societies ranging from American college students to urban wage workers in Ghana to semi-nomadic foragers in the Bolivian rainforest. By having each group conduct a series of economic games, the researchers found that there was a positive correlation between how much people punished cheaters and the amount of altruistic behavior in the society as a whole.

What’s more, every society engaged in some form of costly punishment even though there was a great deal of variability between societies. The researchers’ conclusion was that altruistic punishment emerged in our species through a process of gene-culture coevolution. In other words, human psychology is biologically predisposed to enforce a system of fairness, but how much we do so depends on the culture we see reflected around us. This result was later supported by another study in 2010 that developed a model explaining how even ‘selfish genes’ could promote altruistic traits.”

– Eric Michael Johnson, “Human Nature and the Moral Economy,” Scientific American (blogs), September 23, 2013

Losing My Religion: There are very few ways to cheat at GGDM, and no reason for anyone to do so, the game is largely self-policing and is additionally, overseen by the Concierge. And there is no tangible or valuable prize for ‘winning’ the game (but it’s also free to play). Like the Peter Davidson Dr. Who episodes, the only prize at the end of the race is Enlightenment, and it’s not the diamond, but the choices.³ Obviously, any attempt to ‘hack’ another position’s game information would be considered cheating, with the predictable result that the offending players would be shamefully ejected from the game and banned. My views on potential cheating in GGDM, which I consider a minimal risk, were formed in large part by the experiences of playing two *free* turn-based online PBEM games.

- ✓ According to an interview with the band R.E.M. who had a hit song of the same name, ‘losing my religion’ is a Southern U.S. phrase meaning to lose one’s civility.
- ✓ **Judge Dredd:** Towing is for the first offense. This is your fourth violation, bar breath. You’re a menace. (1995)
- **Darkness of Silverfall:** I played in a turn-based *free* online PBEM game called Darkness of Silverfall around the turn of the millennia. I knew of the game from the pre-internet days of the early 90s when I played (and paid \$s to play) in actual PBM (Play-by-Mail or postal) games and was thrilled to find it still being run for free on the internet by the original designer. I never paid to play Darkness of Silverfall in pre-internet days. It was *free*, did I

mention that? – and there was nothing material to win by winning the game, there was no prize, you played just because it amused you. Like postal, telephone or email chess.

In the game there was a cabal of old players who had been at it for perhaps 15 to 20 years, many were probably originals from the play-to-pay PBM days. There were problems with the game design, firstly, and the game program was, secondly, buggy. This created a ‘hidden mechanics’ of the game for those who had discovered the bugs in the program and how to exploit them in addition to having mastered the strategy of the game from a hundred plays. The cabal of old players were in every game, and they usually won. While they competed with each other, they were more like old wargaming buddies (many of them may have known each other personally as well), and as a clique, they were obnoxious and abusive, and exploitive toward new players; if you played along, you could be their little buddy, but you would not be one of them.

It shortly became clear to me that they were exploiting the program bugs, and that they were not winning because they were great players, but because they knew a group of little secrets on how to exploit the bugs in the program and the illogic of the design. In the ensuing war between an alliance of new players I formed and the old guys, *I actually discovered, used and shared yet another bug exploit that they had never found* (I discovered it accidentally because I messed up entering my orders, but I figured it out), which proved my point. So, this cabal clique of old guys continued to play the game over and over, winning nothing, but racking up victories, dominating because they knew the bugs and exploits in the program? Thus, there were really two existential ‘shelves’ in the game, the old guys who could exploit the program and the new players who could never compete with them.

- ✓ Arguably, maybe they were great players. In professional sports, owners, players, coaches exploit the rules all of the time, push the envelope. But for these guys to be condescending and obnoxious to new players due to their obvious use of bug exploits and their cabal of buddies, removes any sense of greatness, of awe, for their large tally of wins (like athletes who use HGH). One of the cabal was winning each game, new players were just filler, the only real contest was between the bug exploiters. In the end, they could never see my argument on this, never admit what they were doing was wrong, I was just a loud-mouthed new player who needed to be taught a lesson.
- Empire Forge: About a year after Darkness of Silverfall, I played in another *free* turn-based PBEM game called Empire Forge. The game was young then, a few games had been completed, there were old players with a few games experience and a lot of new players, like me, coming in, quickly filling new games. Over time, I became very involved, became one of the old players. I helped improve and finish the game design’s magic system, I set up a ringer board to track every game result, a huge FAQ page, and I wrote fiction and a mythical back-story for the game. I was very open and helpful to new players and provided the FAQ page from play experience in large part because of my experience with Darkness of Silverfall.

After a couple of years, there was a game with an unusually large group of new players, I think six or seven of the ten positions were new players, with three or four older players. Early in the game, several of the new players, without warning, gang attacked my position from different directions; they had been largely uncommunicative with the older players, so I figured, ‘well, this sucks, but apparently the new players decided I was the major threat to

win the game and decided to take me out first, maybe they all go to the same high school?’ I had played in World of Kaomaris with young players who went to high school together.

I survived the onslaught with help from a couple of older allies, but finished in third or fourth place, and the game was won by one of the new players, on his very first game! The same player was simultaneously playing in two other games that I was not in, but that some of my (cabal, clique) of older players were in as well, and he won those games too, I think he won three of the first four games he completed and placed second in another. Everyone was asking who is this guy? It was a Napoleonic achievement to come in with no experience and rapidly win three games of four against experienced players with ten players in each game!

- ✓ Then the game designer/programmer who was still running the game (he wanted me to take over running the game, but I was still having fun playing and didn’t want to create a conflict of interest), discovered the ruse. Can you see this coming...? The player was registered under several different names and was using them to fill games with sock puppets, he would act as if the positions were being independently played early in the game, then allow his big main position to conquer the sock puppet positions and win the game. The designer discovered this because he was entering all of the orders from the same IP address at the same time. We were stunned that anyone would so cheat to win a *free* game with no prizes to win, other than winning. If he won any enlightenment from this it was a hard lesson. The player was banned from the game, his wins were transferred to a Hall of Shame on the ringer board.

“The warning has already been given: take your Galactic Empire with a pinch of salt. It is a gaudy balloon launched for the hell of it. See how high it goes before it pops.” – Brian Aldiss, Galactic Empires Vol. 1 (1976)

Endnotes.

¹ Commentary: The Sidereal Stage section was originally called “Space Opera.” I found some remaining references to the Space Opera section in the Expansion section during the final edit in June 2018. I think I renamed this section to The Sidereal Stage at latest, sometime in 2015. I did not discover Sukhovo-Kobylin’s “sidereal stage” of human evolution (or Russian Cosmism) until late 2018, but when understood, I found it rather fitting with The Sidereal Stage in GGDM and themes of GGDM as a whole. My files show that I discovered the word “noosphere” in August 2016, but did not know its origin with the Russian Cosmist until 2018. I have lost count of the number of these odd, almost precognition like coincidences that have occurred in designing GGDM, and I wonder, since I am not part of any circle of creative people, whether this is just the normal process of any creative work?

² Commentary & Citation: Definitions are an important part of GGDM and it is important to be very careful and consistent in definitions throughout the game. Meticulously careful.

- ✓ For example, on YouTube there is a Watch Mojo video counting down their top ten space stations in sci-fi movies and television. At the beginning of the video there is a short commentary on what they do not include in their criteria. In the case of space stations, they excluded anything with a propulsion system. But perhaps halfway down the list, they violate their own definition and end up with the Death Star from Star Wars as their top space station! Yoi! The only savior of the whole video was that they placed Babylon 5 in the top three and the fans who feel that Babylon 5 is underrated and underappreciated chimed in in praise.

³ Commentary: The MLB Hall of Fame always seems to involve a lot of hand-wringing, finger-wagging, fist-shaking debate, analysis, and oscillation; the NFL Hall of Fame has it too, but less so. Almost nothing is heard about the NHL Hall of Fame nominations.