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“...Here we come close to one of the definitions of literary fiction. Even the best kind of popular novel just comes straight at you; you have no conversation with a popular novel. Whereas you do have a conversation (you have an intense argument) with [literary fiction].”

– Martin Amis, Experience: A Memoir (2000)

The Conversation: GGDM is the result of a lifetime of conversations with myself and the human intellectual tradition. Or more probably just myself and the ringing in my ears. I once asked my mother when I was about five or six years old, why can't everyone be a scientist? I guess my life answered that question! I now invite the reader into this conversation.

- ✓ I always keep a copy of the current version of GGDM in my pants pocket, in case Scotty beams me up (like Eli in the Stargate Universe pilot). Scotty has never been known to beam anyone up without their pants and I hope he hasn't changed his mind.

As I have envisioned it, a game of GGDM can be a sort of modern salon (and not saloon), without the idle aristocracy (or six-shooters):

- ✓ “A whole world of social arrangements and attitude supported the existence of French salons: an idle aristocracy, an ambitious middle class, an active intellectual life, the social density of a major urban center, sociable traditions, and a certain aristocratic feminism. This world did not disappear in 1789.” – Steven Kale, French Salons: High Society and Political Sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848 (2006), p. 9.

Jerome Bixby's *The Man from Earth* (2007) is a sort of impromptu salon.

“Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal; bad poets deface what they take, and good poets make it into something better, or at least something different.”

– T.S. Elliot

Acts & Scenes: “All the worlds are indeed a stage...”¹ While Vital Powers represent the authority of the government over its society, Acts and Scenes measure, in large part, the political will (and organization) of the government to act and to some extent, the popular support for government action. ‘Acts’ are markers which represent the ability to act, specifically, the ability to activate a particular Power to which they have been previously allocated by placement on the ‘Powerstrip’; while Scenes represent specific places where Actions take place.

- ✓ The Scene on the Public Space points to a place in the Galactic Space where the game looks for certain Power Activations.² It is a conduit that connects the three parts. There are other games that do this as well, regardless of how the designers may have thought of it; for example, in Queen Games' *Shogun* (2006), players lay province cards on an actions board, indicating that the action occurs in that province this turn.

Powers whose activations are location-specific require Acts and Scenes to activate the Power, whereas Powers whose activation is general throughout the civilization (such as Taxation, Re-

search, and Census) only require Acts to activate the Power. So, the activation of Powers is governed not only by the number of undisrupted Government Titles held by the position, but also by the allocation and placement of Acts and Scenes.

- ✓ “Human action is purposeful behavior. Or we may say: Action is will put into operation and transformed into an agency, is aiming at ends and goals, is the ego’s meaningful response to stimuli and to the conditions of its environment, is a person’s conscious adjustment to the state of the universe that determines his life. Such paraphrases may clarify the definition given and prevent possible misinterpretations. But the definition itself is adequate and does not need complement of commentary.” – Ludwig von Mises, Human Action (1949), p. 11.

Power Activations in GGDM should not in most cases be considered accidental, incidental or involuntary (even considering population growth *from* Census Power activations, the activation remains purposeful behavior in the game, that is, you could absurdly determine to never activate the Census Power during the game); rather, they should be considered purposeful will and agency to a desired end that is essentially, but not entirely, directed by the central authorities. GGDM Power Activations encompass fully the axiom of human action of the Austrian School.

- ✓ One view of the setup process considers that whatever is purchased with Inheritance Points (see 7 Beginnings, p. 70, *supra*) saves dozens of Acts, Scenes and Power Activations during the early game. Thoughtful players may maximize this benefit.
- On The Soapbox: The Powerstrip consists of two rows of squares, with one square labeled for each Power. The purpose of the Powerstrip is to keep a record of the Acts currently allocated to each Power. At the end of each Regular Turn, each position *receives a number of Acts and Scenes in any combination* desired equal to the number of currently undisrupted Government Titles held by the position. Acts received must immediately be allocated to a specific Power and are added to the Acts currently in that Power’s box; while Scenes must be immediately assigned to a Monad which must contain *a star or colonized planet* at the end of the turn (if not, the Scene is lost). Thus, during the Regular Turn, a position is operating with Acts and Scenes received previously, there is no ‘borrowing’ into the future in terms of Acts and Scenes. One cannot use political will, events, or opportunity that has not yet manifested.
 - ✓ Acts and Scenes can be *purchased* during setup with Inheritance Points and it is highly recommended that positions do so to be able to activate Vital Powers on the first turn of the game. Loading up for early game action might be a strategy. See Lift Off, 7 Beginnings, p. 73, *supra*. There is no provision for moving placed acts/scenes.

Power Activations require planning, and each position’s Actions sent to the Concierge must specify the allocation of Acts and Scenes expected to be received at the end of the turn. Acts and Scenes will be received in the order listed by the position, in case of a disrupted Government Title, the last Acts/Scenes listed may be lost. Thus a position can prioritize the list.

- Shoestring Production: The number of Acts and Scenes received per undisrupted Government Title may be increased with progression to the 2nd and 3rd Eras, see Player Piano, 2 Eras, p. 770, *infra*. This is not the same as receiving more Power Activations per turn. Power Activations, Acts and Scenes collectively represent the scarcity of means to ends:
 - ✓ “Action is replacing ‘a more satisfactory state of affairs for a less satisfactory,’ and man must make use of means to attain ends. Means, in turn, are always scarce with

regard to the attainment of ends. If means were not scarce, they wouldn't be subject to economizing, and so there couldn't be any action – and this is, of course, impossible to believe. It is in this sense that human action is purposeful action – that is, making use of means for attaining certain ends.” – Thorsten Polleit, “Human Action Is Purposeful Action,” Mises Institute, August 19, 2011 (available free online), quoting Ludwig von Mises, *Human Action* (1949), Ch. 1.

- ✓ See additional scarcity discussions, 1 Government Titles and 1 Corporations, *infra*.
- **Managing Act:** When a position activates a Power, a number of Acts will be removed from the Powerstrip and Scenes removed from the Public Space as the cost of the Power activation. The specific number of Acts and Scenes required are described in each of the sections detailing the Powers, however, no Power requires less than one Act to activate, and no Power requires more than three Acts and a Scene (i.e. Found College) in combination to activate. In case of error or other unforeseen events that cause a position to be short of Acts/Scenes for a Power Activation; the desired Power Activation will be cancelled and no Acts or Scenes will be removed (the Concierge will not interrupt Regular Turn processing to contact the players).

A position with five Government Titles would receive five Acts and/or Scenes per Regular Turn and could activate Powers five times. There is a 15% chance at the end of each Regular Turn (or Turn Cycle if Regular Turn Actions are not submitted or processed), *before* new Acts are placed that each remaining Act on the Powerstrip will ‘age-out’ as political will dissipates, opportunities are lost and political theatre distraction sets in...
 - ✓ Remember that, *except for Census and Taxation*, a position may activate the same Power multiple times in a Regular Turn (but not multiple Construction Powers at the same location), if they have sufficient Acts and Scenes. Insufficient RPs will not prevent a Power Activation. Each Activation costs separately, depending on purpose.
- **Box Office Receipts:** Management of Acts and Scenes, planning, and balancing competing interests and pressures are an important part of the game, as is managing the turnover and placement of pieces on the Public Spaces. Many Power Activations may also require sufficient Resource Points (RPs) be in the Treasury at the time of activation, for example, building Starships. Resources are required in addition to will and organization.
 - ✓ It is an axiom of the universe that any time anything is done – even involuntary breathing – there is a cost in resources. If a school district has to do something, whether it is fulfilling its educational mission, busing students, or something not related, like litigation, it costs taxpayer dollars (e.g., *Kitzmiller vs. Dover Area School District*). In between involuntary biological processes and the social organic enterprises of civilization, whether private or public governmental, is administration.
 - ✓ Eating and drinking are figuratively putting money in your mouth.³ Wealthy people and nations never think of it because it is trivial to them, but it occurs to any reasonable poor person at some point, and hangs in the back of their minds every day. Smoking tobacco is burning and inhaling money; this gets more figurative attention in the old political comics showing rich men smoking cigars wrapped in \$100 bills.
- **Lost Scenes:** Scenes do not occupy or use a Monad in the Public Space, but must be placed instead on stars and planets in the Public Space. Access to Scenes on a star or planet is lost if the star or planet is removed from the Public Space.

A star may have a number of Scenes equal to one *plus* the number of colonies currently in the star system maximum. A colonized planet may have one Scene *plus* one Scene for each colony on the planet. Scenes will be lost if they are attempted to be placed on a star or planet that is not added to the Public Space at the end of the Regular Turn in which they are generated. For example, if exploration of a starsystem fails due to the Scout being destroyed or failing to arrive, that star would not be placed in the Public Space as there is no ship there. Any Scenes that the position might assign to that star at the end of the Regular Turn, are lost. This is a risk a position might take to hurry development.

Scenes never ‘age-out.’ However, all Scenes on stars and planets will be lost if the star or planet is no longer on any position’s Public Space at the end of any Regular Turn.

- **Scene Snitching:** Scenes do not have owners, no one owns the Scene; *they are unaffected by capture of the colony* and simply pass with the sovereignty. Scenes are placed on planets and stars, not on colonies, *ut supra*. If a Scene is placed on a planet or star, all positions that have *presence* on the planet or in system will see it and may become the ‘scene stealer’ in theatre-speak. It thus is possible in a Balkanized colony planet situation for positions to snatch each other’s Scenes for activations at that location, e.g., see discussion in 1 Commerce, pp. 1186, 1189, *infra*. It is also possible for positions to help each other with Scenes at shared locations by placing Scenes there to be picked up later. The economy of Acts and Scenes in GGDM is such that this is a fairly major effort and an area for horse trading or allied cooperation.

- ✓ Some snitching attempts may go unnoticed: The Scene will not be used if the Power Activation fails, see *But Nobody is Home*, 2 Constructural Elements, p. 194, *infra*.

“Most of such [science fiction writers], however, only extend the consequences of our present-day paradigms into the future. There are some who present futures in which new paradigms obviously prevail. Most of them do this unconsciously, but whenever a writer tosses out a reference to working telepathy, or working faster-than-light drive, he is talking about such a future – and of one thing we may be very sure: the future will offer us new paradigms. We may kick and scream and have to be dragged into them, but they will be there.”

– James Blish, *The Tale that Wags the God* (1987) (Kindle Loc. 603-607) ⁴

Besieged Colonies: A ‘besieged colony’ is a colony that is currently under attack and the only thing that is preventing the colony from being captured is the colony’s defenses and/or the attacker’s lack of will and/or insufficient combat power. A colony is besieged on Regular Turns only to the extent that the opposing warship(s) can enforce a blockade of normal space around the colony (see *Blockade Running*, 4 Commerce, p. 1233, *infra*). A Besieged Colony cannot act as a Supporting Colony for ships (see *Supporting Colony*, 1 Movement, p. 840, *infra*), thus a colony may be besieged to deprive the owner of a Supporting Colony. Otherwise, there is no other effect on a besieged colony, that is, blockading warships cannot cause a colony besieged to lose Constructural Elements or Scenes, and cannot directly prevent the colony from executing *most* Power Activations (see *Rousing the Rabble*, 2 Disruption, p. 271, *infra*).

- ✓ A colony which has enemy Ground Units on the surface of the planet, i.e. a potential ongoing Ground Combat situation, is not a besieged colony and can be a Supporting

Colony. Ground Combat is however a Disruption Event at the colony, see Downfall, 2 Disruption, p. 275, *infra*.

- ✓ Note, however, that a colony might suffer disruption of Constructural Elements on the Regular Turn it becomes besieged due to loss of a Ship Combat in the same starsystem. See The Burning Sky, 2 Disruption, p. 275, *infra*.

- Long Telegram: The Earth (or any colony) floating in space, is like living on a tiny island in the vastness of the ocean, or like living on a farm or in a village in the middle of a vast plain: Invaders, raiders and bandits can appear at any time from any quarter without warning and approach with great speed. Without walls and vigorous defenses, all of the advantages go to the invaders (e.g., Thulsa Doom's mounted raider attack on the plains village at the beginning of Conan the Barbarian (1982)). Thus, after reliable, repeatable FTL travel becomes reality (i.e. fact), paranoia may develop naturally in nascent interstellar civilizations, guiding their development. As noted by George Kennan in the Long Telegram, February 1946:
 - ✓ "At bottom of Kremlin's neurotic view of world affairs is traditional and instinctive Russian sense of insecurity. Originally, this was insecurity of a peaceful agricultural people trying to live on vast exposed plain in neighborhood of fierce nomadic peoples. To this was added, as Russia came into contact with economically advanced West, fear of more competent, more powerful, more highly organized societies in that area. But this latter type of insecurity was one which afflicted rather Russian rulers than Russian people..." *Id.*
- High Guard: A siege condition exists after the first round of a Colony Combat when:
 - 1) The attacker does not issue any further Combat Orders, *except* Raid/Strike orders (see World in Flames, 4 Carriers & Fighters, pp. 1083-1088, *infra*),
 - 2) The attacker has units present that can initiate combat,
 - 3) The colony defenders have not retreated or cannot retreat, and
 - 4) The defenders have not or cannot Seize the Initiative (see 3 Combat, p. 971, *infra*).⁵

For example, a Carrier with a Fighter Complement, accompanied by two Era Warships, attacks a Colony. In the first Combat Round, the defenders destroy the two Era Warships, leaving only the Carrier with Fighters. The colony still has Defense Bases, which cannot retreat. The Colony Combat has not ended because all units of a side have not either retreated or been destroyed. The attacker decides not to retreat the Carrier, instead letting the Colony Combat become a stalemate by not continuing the attack (except Raids); this stalemate is called a siege. The Colony Combat can drag on indefinitely until something changes.

- ✓ See generally Combat and Carriers & Fighters sections, *infra*.

- Passive Siegecraft: The siege condition described here is a passive siege, more of a blockade of the colony planet from space and perhaps on the ground as well. In a passive siege, the main strategy is to starve the defenders, inflict privations, affect their morale, and hope for faction infighting and a traitor who will open the gates. In GGDM, most colonies are considered to necessarily be self-sufficient in food, energy and material resources, with their own manufacturing and mining, *so that a passive siege generally will not work in that way* but there is plenty of room for Special Operations mayhem. Few sieges are completely passive, perhaps the main practitioners of passive siege warfare were the Assyrians.⁶

- ✓ “The economic attack was the most simple and obvious form of siegecraft. Cities were sometimes surrounded for years by encamped foemen who reared walls of their own to cut off trade and supplies. Assyria, whose appetite for war exceeded her ability, had a peculiar addiction to blockades which endured until a new generation grew up to manhood. But the defenders were at no great disadvantage in a contest of this sort, and often they could better supply themselves than an invading army subsisting on ravaged territory. Hence the threat of starvation usually had to be supplemented by a physical attack on the walls and a moral assault on the will, nerves and courage of the beleaguered.” – Lynn Montross, War Through the Ages (3rd Ed., 1960), p. 29.

Most sieges in history feature assaults on the walls and sallies by the defenders; the besiegers are often under the threat of relief forces arriving behind them and partisan warfare against their supply and communications (e.g., Siege of Vienna, 1683). If Besiegers in GGDM want to capture the colony, Ground Combat and/or Black-op Special Operations may be necessary.

- ✓ In many periods of history, such as those of the ancient city state monarchies, or impoverished and divided Medieval Europe, siege warfare was dominant. The side that lost or declined engagement in the field could surrender control of the countryside and retreat to their supplied castle or fortified city to hold out until the attacker either gave up or circumstances changed. The attacker then had to commit to the weary task of besieging the place, while watching his rear for attackers or partisan warfare against supply lines. Bribery and betrayal were potent weapons to open the gates.
- ✓ There is story potential for Concierge Intervention and Special Operations in sieges; e.g., the food stores of Jerusalem seem to have been *intentionally, preemptively destroyed* in an *act of faith* by Zealots during the epic Siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.
 - “Hope is not a strategy.” – Mike Sullivan, Pittsburgh Penguins Coach.

“Not everyone is capable of writing junk fiction: It requires an authentic junk mind. Most creative-writing teachers have had the experience of occasionally helping to produce, by accident, a pornographer. The most elegant techniques in the world, filtered through a junk mind, become elegant junk techniques.”

– John Gardner, The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers (1991) ⁷

Endnotes.

¹ Commentary: Yes, I know that’s not quite what the original Bard said ... but it is what the 51st century clone said.

² Citation: “They are key locations in the drama that led to President Trump’s impeachment: the steakhouse table where Trump’s private lawyer set out a nameplate, ‘Rudolph W. Giuliani, Private Office.’ The upstairs hideaway, where Giuliani’s team planned its outreach to Ukraine. And the expensive bar, where Giuliani’s team met an odd figure: Robert F. Hyde, a big-talking ex-Marine who claimed to have the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine under surveillance. All three places are within 300 yards of each other, in the lobby of the Trump International Hotel.” – David Fahrenthold, Josh Dawsey, Jonathan O’Connell, “‘It was like a breeding ground’: Trump hotel’s mix of GOP insiders and hangers-on helped give rise to impeachment episodes,” The Washington Post, January 16, 2020.

³ Commentary: Need a dieting mantra? Eat less, spend less, weigh less, shit less, waste less. Works for everyone.

⁴ Commentary: The title, The Tale that Wags the God, is a rich, convoluted writer’s joke based on the common phrase, ‘the tail wags the dog.’ “Wag the dog” became somewhat popular after the 1997 movie of the same name. As Stephen King pointed out in Eye of the Dragon (written long after Blish), “God” is “dog” spelled backwards.

- ✓ “We wanted to call our show God Talk, after the famous Tappet Brothers of Car Talk fame, but the name was already taken, so we settled on The God Whisperers – ‘god’ and ‘dog’ being anagrams.” – Rev. Craig Donofrio and Rev. Bill Cwirla (“The Manly Doctors of Divinity”), from godwhisperers.org

⁵ Commentary & Citation: In Babylon 5, the EarthGov sent six destroyers to besiege the Proxima III colony (Proxima Centauri). The destroyers did not bombard the colony and did not probably have enough troops to capture the colony, instead besieging it on the ground (in GGDM terms, probably a Ground Combat where the attacker is not prosecuting) while blockading in space. The colony does not appear to have had any orbital defenses. Therefore, a siege condition occurred. During the siege, one of the destroyers intercepted and destroyed a civilian transport loaded with 10,000 people trying to escape (in GGDM terms, Blockade Running). The news of this was a major event that caused the Battle of Proxima III (Babylon 5, “No Surrender, No Retreat”), beginning the Earth Civil War.

⁶ Citation: “Encircled by walls of masonry rising abruptly from the water’s edge, and easily provisioned by the ships in its two harbors, this island city had already withstood an Assyrian siege of thirteen years.” – Lynn Montross, War Through the Ages (3rd Ed., 1960), p. 28 (referring to the ancient city of Tyre on Lebanon’s coast).

⁷ Citation & Commentary: Likewise, it takes a different sort of mind to write Young Adult fiction. After reading a summary of Paolo Bacigalupi’s young adult novel, Ship Breaker (2010), I thought it seems like it could be made into a movie if they didn’t get too juvenile. I began wondering about the definition of Young Adult fiction as a genre and I found a helpful article on Writer’s Edit, “3 Key Differences Between YA Fiction and Adult Fiction”:

- ✓ “Bearing in mind that YA [Young Adult] fiction will almost always be authored by adults, well-written YA stories nonetheless have an authentic voice that rings true to the young adult experience. This voice establishes itself in a few ways: primarily through the concerns, motivations and inner thoughts of the protagonist/s, and through the style in which the story is written or told. A teenager has different priorities, worries and thoughts than an adult, and this comes across in YA fiction. This goes some way towards explaining the prominence of certain tropes (e.g., love triangles) and the prevalence of certain themes (e.g., self-discovery and friendship) in YA. These are all typically young adult experiences, things teenagers tend to focus on more than adults. YA and adult fiction explore different sets of concerns, neither one of which is more or less important than the other.” *Id.*
- ✓ “In YA fiction, for example, a sense of immediacy and ‘in-the-moment’ storytelling is favoured, often delivered through close third person/first person point of view and/or present tense prose. Adult fiction is more likely to be told in the style of a reflection on the past, mostly using third person narration, sometimes presenting an omniscient perspective. Reflective, more ‘lyrical’ prose is often favoured over the more action/plot-focused style of many YA books. ... Let’s consider two examples, both hugely popular fantasy series, one classified as YA fiction and the other as adult: J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series and Patrick Rothfuss’ *The Kingkiller Chronicle*. Each series has a single main protagonist and a story that spans multiple years of that protagonist’s life, but there are key differences between the two that mark out their categories. Perhaps the key defining difference between the two is the voice and the way the story is told.” *Id.*
- ✓ “Our final key difference between YA and adult fiction is found in the themes of the story, and how they are explored. This can be a tricky one. Many people have made the mistake of assuming the themes explored in young adult fiction are more trivial than those of adult fiction, or that themes explored in adult fiction are off-limits in YA. This simply isn’t true. Some themes are definitely more specific to one category or the other – coming of age in YA, for example, or existential musings in adult fiction.” *Id.*

I obviously haven’t the mind to write YA fiction; my youth wasn’t that great, and I don’t want to remember it in that way: I think that writing good YA fiction probably depends on having a good youth. GGDM is *conscientiously adult* – whether you consider it fiction or not – the needle redlines on every facet described above as adult fiction.

- ✓ The best example between adult and young adult fiction is the difference between Jerome Bixby’s *The Man from Earth* (2007) and the sequel (2017). Mr. Bixby thought about and wrote the story over 30 years, there is very little action, but when there is, it is necessary. The entire work is an existential conversation wide ranging over all topics of humanity, but which remains in touch with the lives of normal people. Whereas the sequel, written in less than ten years by his son, is an ‘action adventure’ with existential musings which is the young adult or ‘new adult’ equivalent in film, and was criticized as being a pilot for a TV series (Neil Young, film review, *The Hollywood Reporter*, October 12, 2017). The sequel was underwhelming in comparison such that it was hard to review on its own merits (Anthony Ray Bench, film review, *Film Threat*, October 12, 2017). The creators uploaded the sequel to Pirate Bay in January 2018 for free distribution.