

## Table of Contents

<b>No Noose is Good News</b> .....	143
➤ The News Brothers .....	143
➤ Power News Hour .....	143
➤ Truth or Dare .....	144
➤ Text Message .....	144
➤ News You Can Use .....	144
➤ News Effect .....	144
<b>The Taxil Hoax</b> .....	145
<b>The Nature of News Events</b> .....	146
➤ A Story of V .....	146
<b>Keep the Sand in the Sandbox</b> .....	147
➤ Fancy Foreign Words .....	148
➤ Diplomatic Protest .....	148
➤ Seconding That .....	149
<b>Universal Legislator</b> .....	149
➤ Unprintable Responses .....	150
<b>Suspension of Disbelief</b> .....	151
➤ Wall of Understanding .....	152
➤ Conspiracy Theories .....	153
<b>White Gold Wielder</b> .....	153
➤ The Urantia Book .....	154
➤ Prester John .....	154
Endnotes.....	155

*See Appendix NEWS – News Event & Modification Example*

*“Truth Decay is defined as a set of four related trends: increasing disagreement about facts and analytical interpretations of facts and data; a blurring of the line between opinion and fact; an increase in the relative volume, and resulting influence, of opinion and personal experience over fact; and declining trust in formerly respected sources of factual information.*

*Four drivers, or causes, of Truth Decay are described: cognitive bias, changes in the information system (including the rise of social media and the 24-hour news cycle), competing demands on the educational system that limit its ability to keep pace with changes in the information system, and political, sociodemographic, and economic polarization. Various agents also amplify Truth Decay’s trends.*

*The consequences of Truth Decay manifest in many ways. The most damaging effects might be the erosion of civil discourse, political paralysis, alienation and disengagement of individuals from political and civic institutions, and uncertainty about U.S. policy.”*

– Jennifer Kavanagh and Michael D. Rich, Rand Corporation,

[https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2314.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2314.html), captured January 18, 2018

**No Noose is Good News:** Surely, it is no coincidence that Truth Decay sounds to the English speaker like, “tooth decay.”

A News Event is the *default Interpretation* related to each of the source positions’ Power Activations that is ‘broadcast’ to all of the players in the game through the use of the News Event game forum (each new News Event is a top level thread).

- ✓ There are some instances in GGDM where another Interpretation substitutes for the News Event on the Regular Turn the Power Activation occurs. These allow ‘invisible’ Power Activations that may be deceptive to the ‘card counting’ type players who watch to see how many Powers are activated by each position each Regular Turn.

The player submitting the Regular Turn Actions for their position will provide the full text of all required News Events in the correct format, which will be posted to the forum by the Concierge when the Actions are processed. While many online games have a forum where players can post comments about and discuss the game, the forum in this game is part of the game, not just about the game, so pay attention, or you may soon find that, “A funny thing happened on the way to the Forum...” (Roman farce, Broadway musical & film, 1966). All News Events must contain the following elements:

- **The News Brothers:** Each News Event must contain the issuer, i.e. the name of the position from which it originates. The issuer of the News Event will be published on the forums with the text of the News Event (for the purposes of retaliation – err, reaction to the News Event by other positions). It’s like an official press release – they can’t be anonymous. News Events cannot have fake issuers – if you want to blame something on someone else, see Plausible Deniability, 3 Special Operations, p. 1314, *infra*.
- **Power News Hour:** Each News Event must indicate to which Power Activation it applies. This does not have to be in the text of the News Event, and it will not be published on the forums (as that would constitute unnecessary ‘free intelligence’ for the rest of the players).

The only purpose of this component is so that the Concierge may judge if the proposed News Event ‘reasonably relates’ to the Power Activation to which it belongs and to insure that there is an Interpretation properly paired with each Power Activation.

- Truth or Dare: Each News Event must include an indication as to whether it is being presented as (absolutely) True or False by the issuer (aka, ‘spin’). This component will be published on the forums as it is information necessary for other positions to react to the news.
  - ✓ The Concierge and players should be aware of the *non-sequitur*; it informs humanity’s view, both collectively and individually on a daily basis, of the universe. None are spared.
- Text Message: The News Event must contain a short text blurb which describes the news and is reasonably related to the Power Activation to which the News Event relates. A News Event may be as simple as ... text which simply states what occurred during the Power Activation ... or it may be something a little less truthful/more creative/artful. The presentation of a News Event as absolutely true or false has little bearing on the actual truth or falsity of the event described in the text message (the Concierge may exercise discretion here).
  - ✓ Merriam-Webster online dictionary at *journalism*: **2:b** writing characterized by a direct presentation of facts or description of events without an attempt at interpretation.
    - So here’s the headspin: News Events in GGDM report ‘facts’ (i.e., Power Activations or even in some sense, made-up game facts for storytelling<sup>1</sup>) and must be reasonably related to the Power Activation with which they are paired ... but they are also official Interpretations, *imposed* as ‘facts’ on the game universe, see Official Interpretation and Flavors of Fact, 1 Dreamtime, pp. 130, 134, *supra*. The tail that wags the dog. *Check?*
- News You Can Use: The subject or target of the News Event does not always have to be the issuer of the News Event, it may be adversely targeted at other positions. But it must always be related to a specific Power Activation (in terms of subject) of the issuer of the News Event, even if that Power Activation has no relation or effect on the target of the News Event (but it’s a fuzzy kind of thing, you know, a judgment call, an interpretation). The Concierge may reject or modify News Events targeted at other positions, based on his superior knowledge, if those News Events are deemed to be either impossible based on the Fundamental Realities and other factors of the targeted position, or if they are inconsistent with the evolving storyline of the game. The Concierge will exercise this authority *as rarely as possible*, preferring to give the most liberal possible interpretation to News Events.
  - ✓ Exploding Kittens not exploding?
- News Effect: A News Event must describe a concrete effect on the game, which is immediately applied to the game. The ‘effect’ of a non-adverse News Event that simply reports the Power Activation to which it is related is the Power Activation, and nothing else (a feedback loop). The further a News Event deviates from the Power Activation to which it relates, the more likely it will require some kind of an effect description. Adverse News Events targeted at other positions always require an effect. The effect should be clearly described in the text of the News Event. The effect of the News Event is considered immediate.

- ✓ “A feedback loop is a term commonly used in economics to refer to a situation where part of the output of a situation is used for new input.” – Financial Times Lexicon, captured October 8, 2017.

---

*“Arthur C. Clarke’s famous phrase that ‘any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic’ certainly applies to tech’s impact on politics and society. While technology can greatly improve how or what we do as humans, it cannot yet change human nature. Social media has made people more able to maintain relationships, but it hasn’t led to better relationships. ...*

*Social media websites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram certainly make it easier and cheaper to spread ludicrous beliefs, but these ideas existed long beforehand. The critical difference between now and 15 years ago is not the existence of social media platforms but rather that more and more people have decided to build businesses on selling nonsensical stuff to people who want to believe it.”*

– Matthew Sheffield, “Fake News: Much more than Facebook scams and Russian trolls,” Salon, September 27, 2017 <sup>2</sup>

---

**The Taxil Hoax:** Mr. Sheffield chose his words carefully because he knows it’s not a new phenomenon. For example, Léo Taxil who lived in late 19<sup>th</sup> Century France, made a career first out of satirizing and criticizing the Church and clergy, then converted to Catholicism, met the Pope personally and went on to spin wild unfounded tales about the Freemasons, whom the Church opposed.<sup>3</sup> He sold thousands of books filled with nonsense and falsehoods, continually pushed the envelope of sensationalism and creative fact-making, and filled dinner halls with gullible people who paid to hear him speak.

His career, probably not coincidentally, coincided approximately with the Dreyfus Affair and rampant anti-Semitism in France, and the beginning of tabloids. He was in short, a journalistic huckster in falsehoods. Finally, after promising to produce a witness in person at a lecture hall in April 1897, he admitted the entire run was a massive hoax, his conversion to Catholicism was a hoax, and thanked the angry audience.<sup>4</sup> He was escorted out by police in what must have been a near riot, and moved away. He died ten years later.

Information was gathered from Wikipedia articles, “Léo Taxil” and “Taxil Hoax” January 26, 2019, though I have known of this for many years previous. I especially recommend reading his interview confession published in the National Magazine, an Illustrated American Monthly, in September 1906 (he died six months later), which can be found in the Wikipedia article, “Taxil Hoax.”

- ✓ While Mr. Taxil’s strong self-serving, self-justifying 1906 public confessional will drive ethicists to fits, they also contain a sad and useful observation of public gullibility (and the state of journalism), at least in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Taxil’s comments gain credibility when considered in conjunction with other late 19<sup>th</sup> century phenomena such as Joseph Smith and the bizarre murderous career of H.H. Holmes; suggesting that Western populations in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century displayed an unusual level of credulity, probably a result of social customs, education and worldview.

- ✓ Mr. Traxil’s confession goes some long way toward explaining supermarket checkout line tabloids; the ones that hawk stories about UFOs and all sorts of weirdness. There are two sorts of tabloid viewers, the ones who find humor in the utter ridiculousness of their front page claims – the best one ever for me read, “Vampires in the US are dying of AIDS” (although the recent claim that NASA has a child slave colony on Mars is, per Mashable, enough to melt your brain) – and the ones who take tabloids entirely seriously, as if they were some sort of ‘underground press,’ printing truths that others would hide. I knew one of the latter type in my youth. But this pales in comparison to the number of people who follow – and believe – the bizarre bile conspiracy theories sent over the airwaves by certain modern talk-show hosts after the FCC withdrew the Fairness Doctrine. Still, there is a common thread from tabloid nonsense to modern political conspiracy theory and echo-chamber talk shows.

---

*“The brain is a microcosm, creating its own stories. People then live out these stories.” – Seiichi Kirima, Boogiepop Phantom (2000)*

---

*“Human nature denies the past in order to justify the present. But do you believe there is anything in the present worth justifying?”*

*– Boogiepop, Boogiepop Phantom (2000)*

---

**The Nature of News Events:** Although players can and most likely will use News Events as weapons against each other (these are called adverse News Events throughout GGDM), the News Event is not ‘caused’ by the issuer, rather, players should treat News Events as merely being reported by the issuer, whatever the outcome. News Events are neutral in nature, they represent entropy in the universe, and serve as a vehicle for players to create part of the background of the game and even engage in ‘storytelling’ (even if that story is the use of News Events as a weapon). Because News Events are not ‘caused’ by the issuer, they therefore, cannot be considered as inconsistent with any Meanings or Shared Meanings (see 3 Diplomacy generally, *infra*) that are held between the issuer and the target (though using News Events against Shared Meanings might be considered passive-aggressive behavior...playing outside the lines...stepping out).

- ✓ “We got the bubble-headed bleached blonde, comes on at five, she can tell you ‘bout the plane crash, with a gleam in her eye, it’s interesting when people die...” – Don Henley, “Dirty Laundry” (1982).

Note that News Events don’t need to be introduced to ‘explain everything’ that occurs in the game. This would be a fallacy against fuzziness. Sometimes things just happen, and the mystery serves better than the explanation. The excessive compulsion to explain everything and tie up all loose ends is a fallacy into which some famous fiction franchises have fallen.

- A Story of V: Retaliation against a News Event should only be in the form of a News Event and should not occur ‘in the game’ (by activation of the Combat Power to attack the issuer, to ‘kill the messenger,’ for example) as the *issuer* of the News Event is not the *cause* of the News Event (such actions should be considered poor decorum).

However, a distinction must be made between: 1) retaliation in-game (e.g., Combats, Break Treaty, etc.) *against issuers* of News Events and 2) perceived retaliation *by issuers* of News Events against in-game actions.

- ✓ For example, Position A launches a Raid or Strike against civilian targets at Position B's colony (see 4 Carriers & Fighters generally, *infra*), it is *colorable* for Position B to subsequently issue a News Event indicating that some peaceniks of Position A's government or population object to killing civilians, with a reasonably-related effect.
  - Merriam-Webster online dictionary at *colorable*, **1**: seemingly valid or genuine. The most common example now is 'colorable argument.'

This would actually be part of the natural storytelling flow of the game. Again, Position B is not the *cause* of the News Event (actually, Position A is) and should not suffer in-game retaliation by any other position for it.

---

*“Why these numbers matter: If we lose the confidence that good ideas will overtake bad ones in the marketplace of ideas, if we lose the sense that we may disagree with offensive comments our neighbors say but we'll defend to the death their right to say them and if we lose the willingness to honestly debate hard issues, then the United States will keep becoming more tribal and, eventually, less free.” – James Hohmann, The Washington Post, October 23, 2017*

---

**Keep the Sand in the Sandbox:** This game is for the players, and the Concierge will not intervene in player disputes about the fair use of News Events (however, News Events must follow standard forum/journalistic rules regarding acceptable language and decorum<sup>5</sup>). While there is a potential for great abuse of News Events (home planets blowing up mysteriously, and such), News Events are self-policing (as GGDM is designed to be self-policing and minimally invasive<sup>6</sup>), in that what one position can do with News Events, another position can do equally in retaliation, until either the players have wrecked the game through lack of restraint, retaliation, and escalation (sort of like, you know, what we do on Earth), or the players establish a standard, a *stare decisis*, a body of rules and precedents on what constitutes acceptable uses of News Events.

It is strongly suggested, *as an insulation against game silliness*, that News Events never be allowed to work *dues ex machina* effects as follows:

- ✓ A News Event may not work to conquer, steal, or take ownership of anything from another position. If you want to do that, you have to get your hands dirty and send in the war fleets. News Events may often be used to 'make something out of nothing' but cannot be used to take something that already exists from another position.
- ✓ A News Event may not work to directly elicit intelligence, it may not substitute as a Special Operation or intelligence question. There is, however, an overlap such that News Events may frequently act as Special Operations Black-ops or Counter-Operations, tit-for-tat.
- ✓ A News Event (except by the Concierge) may not be used to eliminate a position from the game (i.e. cause extinction) or to declare the end of the game, or to declare anyone the victor or to otherwise improperly influence the end or victory in the game.

- ✓ A News Event (except by the Concierge) cannot be used to simply make a star or planet ‘not exist.’ News Events can be used to make very bad things happen to stars, planets, whatever (all in generally poor taste), but they simply cannot ‘not exist’ once they have been discovered through exploration in the game (even if the newsmaker owns it).
  - ✓ A News Event may not be used to start, create, cancel, delete or modify another Interpretation (e.g., Kairotic Moment, Reformation, Writ, or Patent). That is, you cannot just ‘undo’ someone’s Patent with a News Event that says it doesn’t exist, nor can you ‘wish away’ a Kairotic Moment, Reformation or Thesis Statement when it is no longer convenient.
  - ✓ A News Event (except by the Concierge) cannot be used to instantly Convert or Naturalize an **alien colony**, or to cause it to defect from its current owner to another position.
  - ✓ A News Event cannot be used to cancel or delete, or even modify, a Fundamental Reality or add or remove Monads from any Public or Diplomatic Space.
  - ✓ A News Event cannot be used to create or make something exist in violation of the basic rules of the game. An exception might be made to this rule if doing so would be intriguing or of great interest to the game, but it should only be done after consideration and consultation with the Concierge.
  - ✓ A News Event should not retcon (‘retroactive continuity’) established history like a bad movie series or comic book. And please avoid nuking the fridge.
- Fancy Foreign Words: *Stare Decisis* is always the case cited by the next guy who gets caught. Apple, Inc. overlooked trademarking Steve Jobs’ name. Two brothers in Italy looking to open a clothing company started using Steve Jobs as the name of their company because they discovered it wasn’t trademarked; Apple sued them in European Court. In December 2017, Apple lost the suit even though defendants admitted freely that they intended to exploit and benefit from Steve Jobs’ name recognition (and used a similar logo, a J with a bite mark, like the Apple computer mark) without either his permission (or Apple’s permission) and without paying him or anyone for it. Presumably, if the name had been trademarked, they would have chosen another name and logo for their company. The next defendants in a similar situation will cite to this case decision when arguing they did nothing wrong.
- ✓ “*Deus ex machina* means ‘god from the machine.’ In Greek plays, no matter what happened, everything was solved in the end when a god (played by an actor strung up on ropes over the stage) came down and changed everything. In an RPG, it’s the same idea. Under *deus ex machina* GMs, the game’s rules, world, and story are all changed on whim, often several times per game. This problem often goes hand-in-hand with Monty Haul troubles: The GM gives away tons of treasure, then has NPC gods take it all away again. This is the poorest way to manipulate plots, and few players stand it for long.” – Steve Maurer, “The Pitfalls of Game Mastering,” *Dragon Magazine* #170, June 1991 (emphasis in original).
- Diplomatic Protest: A position that is the target of a News Event may file a Diplomatic Protest with the Concierge against the issuer within 24 hours of the posting of the News Event

by sending an email. The Diplomatic Protest will not be posted to the forums, unless requested.

A Diplomatic Protest does not require the activation of the Diplomatic Power, or any Power, and is not an Interpretation. Upon *acceptance* of the Diplomatic Protest, the Concierge will assess an Intervention Potential against the protestor and an Intervention Potential Plus (IP+) against the issuer of the News Event (another feedback loop of sorts).

- ✓ Diplomatic Protest has nothing (other than very generally) to do with the Diplomacy Power in GGDM.

*Hostility is not an argument.* For example, the anti-feminism I witnessed growing up in the 1970s consisted mostly of moustached, naked hostility, crude humor, and low-brow, below the waist line commentary – as is often the case in disputes between the sexes. Anti-feminism was not led by men of intellect and education writing eloquent truths (and certainly not by Bobby Riggs), rather it was a general hostility enforced by institutional and social discrimination. In reaction, political correctness and anti-discrimination legislation was introduced into the public consciousness. Thus, *a protest to a News Event should not consist merely that the target position doesn't like it*; the protest must be something more substantial regarding abuse, game wrecking, or bad decorum from the issuer of the News Event.

- ✓ “Any gun looks impressive when it fires blanks and makes a lot of noise.” – Prince Rudolf (Omar Sharif), *Mayerling* (1968).
- **Seconding That:** Any other position may second the Protest by sending an email within 24 hours of the original Diplomatic Protest email. A second to a Protest will cause the Intervention Potential assessed against the original protestor to be removed. A third to the Protest will add one Intervention Potential against the original issuer of the News Event. All subsequent support for the Protest will be ignored.
- ✓ Martin Luther protested diplomatically (in the manner of his times) abuses of Church power in 1517. His protest was seconded by burghers and some Electors of the Holy Roman Empire, whose protection he needed. He later protested the uprising of the peasants against the Electors and magnates that became the German Peasant's War (1524-1525) and was seconded in that by the magnates and Electors of Germany whose support he (thought he) needed more than the support of the masses of peasants. *When you act because you need support* instead of because something is ‘right’ you are a politician (essentially, that's the definition); by 1524, Martin Luther was a politician, if not before, if not always. Within ten years Luther was marginalized.

---

*“Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.”*

*“Act as if the maxims of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature.”*

– Immanuel Kant, *First Formulation of the Categorical Imperative*

---

**Universal Legislator:** Perhaps another way to think of Interpretations in GGDM is by way of Immanuel Kant's *universal legislator*. Kant's First Formulation of the Categorical Imperative, above, is especially relevant.<sup>7</sup>



In GGDM, the acts of the players via Interpretations become the universal laws of the game, even if only history – history may be regarded as a universal law in the same way as gravity: history will always exist, ever-present because of the directional flow of time (though there is a question of whether it is history if no one is there to record it?), see Temporal Constructural Elements, 1 Constructural Elements, p. 173, *supra*.

Kant's Third Formulation continues in part: "the idea of the will of every rational being as a universally legislating will," and in the Kingdom of Ends, he states, "Act according to maxims of a universally legislating member of a merely possible kingdom of ends." GGDM through various Interpretations makes the players the universal legislators of the game universe.

Page | 150

There are some critics who charge that Kant's Categorical Imperatives are simply a rephrasing of the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do to you." The Golden Rule can certainly also apply to GGDM (e.g., News Events, Diplomatic Protests), and is linked to the previous discussion of *stare decisis* in the game (*ut supra*). The Golden Rule, however, is never sufficient by itself to apply to all situations or religions, whereas Kant's Categorical Imperatives and universal legislator present a more complex, formal and nuanced system for resolving the ethics of acts.

- ✓ In Prof. Peter Suber's 1982 game "Nomic" the collective acts of the players change the rules of the game; as a group, the players act as universal legislators in the universe of the game. That is, in fact, the point of the game, players score points for changing the rules.<sup>8</sup> Nomic was intended to demonstrate the politics of self-amending systems, such as the U.S. Constitutional government. I believe there is a strong continuity from Immanuel Kant (d. 1804) to the U.S. Constitution,<sup>9</sup> and "Nomic" – not surprising since Mr. Suber is a professor of philosophy.
- ✓ Suppose as a universal legislator, I passed a law that every human above the age of eight years was required to nicely pet a cat every day. All cats would agree with that, even the feral ones if they could be made to understand. The dogs would probably object though (Diplomatic Protest), unless a law were passed that every dog must be petted nicely and have their head or belly scratched at least once a day. The cats would surely object to that (Diplomatic Protest), after finishing their afternoon nap, unless the barking of the dogs woke them up sooner.☺
- Unprintable Responses: Would you be offended if I told you, "Believe what you are told and do as I say because I said so and don't think or ask questions?" Of course you would and your response would probably be unprintable (aside from the question of commanding anyone to believe anything, see religion & psychiatry discussion, Dream Police, 1 Dreamtime, p. 132, *supra*). But that was the party line of the Church for over a thousand years (as Voltaire famously pointed out); anyone who thought, and thought differently, was a heretic or at least a suspect and shunned skeptic (e.g., Joanna of Castile, aka 'Joanna the Mad,' Galileo Galilei) and they launched Crusades and Inquisitions across Europe against Christians to make this point (e.g., the anti-Hussite crusades, the Roman Inquisition).
- ✓ This is reasonably similar to News Events and other official Interpretations in GGDM and on some level, will generate the same responses.<sup>10</sup> Things exist in GGDM because some of the participants say so and that may not sit well with others. This echoes religious history in the real world, but there are two important differences in GGDM: First, other than the Concierge, all participants have the same authority in

the game (that is initially, the relationship of the positions is not oppressive) and second, the participants are collectively responsible for the game universe (as opposed to being, or maybe while also being, exploitive). Within the history of major religions, neither of these conditions is usually true: Religion allied with secular authority becomes autocratic, oppressive and exploitive. The Concierge must, of course, carefully avoid the appearance of being allied with, or exploited by, any position.

It is vital that no position be able to suppress or curb the ability of another position to post adverse News Events. The dogma of the Church could not force the sun, planets and stars to go around the Earth so as to become truth. Any position that is oppressed and censored by another is less sovereign; to the extent that anyone else can tell you what to do or not do, you are less sovereign (see *Relative or Zero Sum*, 2 The Sidereal Stage p. 114, *supra*).

**Santa Claus:** *You are deep inside this dream, all right, and it is a shared mental state, so it is drawing power from **the multi-consciousness gestalt** which has now formed telepathically and...*

– Dr. Who, “Last Christmas” (2014) (emphasis added)

**Suspension of Disbelief:** Suspension of Disbelief is the first requirement for *the multi-consciousness gestalt*; to gain something emergent, one must shed rationality. This is probably why we have a difficult time defining the terms; they work better when they are fuzzy.

- ✓ “As a writer, it is your job to keep the reader believing in your story, even though you both know it’s fiction.” – Margaret Atwood, Master Class video trailer.

In creative works of fiction and works of historical narrative, the audience depends on the author to supply the relevant facts of the situation in which the characters find themselves. The actions of the characters are measured against the facts supplied. *Suspension of disbelief*<sup>11</sup> depends on many factors including the internal logical consistency of the facts presented, the character actions and results, the extent to which the audience accepts the authenticity of the presentation.

- ✓ “It’s probably obvious by now, but movies like this aren’t for everyone. Your enjoyment (or tolerance) of the story requires a very strong suspension of disbelief, as nothing is explained in any kind of logical manner. Things just happen and, like the 14<sup>th</sup> century villagers, we’ve just got to accept them at face value. The fact that these occurrences – from the Black Plague and time travel to an endless supply of easy coincidences – are perceived by their primitive minds as evidence of a divine being doesn’t really matter: within the context of this story, such beliefs are perfectly justified.” – Randy Miller III, “The Navigator: A Medieval Odyssey (Blu-ray)” review, DVD Talk, July 24, 2018.

The audience must accept the events happening in a fictional world as authentic or real to the characters in the world, unless and until the author breaks the fourth wall or provides some clue that they are not (e.g., as in dream sequences, visions of a possible future, hallucinations). Character actions in a story, and position actions in GGDM, cannot be deemed authentic if they ignore or contradict established story facts known to the character.

- ✓ I was chastised at least once by an adult in my teen youth for “talking about fictional characters as if they were real people” (exact words I recall); I believe I may have

been talking in that instance about the characters from the Saga of Pliocene Exile (Julian May, 1981) and the person I was talking to (and rambling on) probably had no idea (or care of) what I was talking about. I am sure that I was (and am) quite annoying. Who knows, but I think it likely that they were correct, in fact I feel it is so, that fictional characters in the books I read were more ‘real’ (important, mattered) to me than the people around me, my family, the masses of students in my high school, the people on the field work crews where I spent my summers: Shadows all.<sup>12</sup> I don’t remember who chastised me but I remember the chastisement, the slight embarrassment I felt, but also the resentment and unfairness of it – the characters, stories, ideas and places of fiction in my mind had greater presence than the unhappy ‘real world.’

- Wall of Understanding: “[Alexander] Cain assumes his own interpretation with cut and paste ignoring the larger context of what is going on in the passage.” – Nick Peters, “A Brief Look At Alexander Cain,” May 6, 2015 (forum post, TheologyWeb). Context is an important concept. For example, you could read the Wikipedia articles about Faust (both the historical and literary figures, which are separate articles) and Faustian Bargain and absorb a lot of facts and history; but a whole new level of meaning arises in understanding the time and place where the figures allegedly lived:
  - ✓ For example, Martin Luther was born and lived in Germany in approximately the same period attributed to the Faust characters, published the 95 Thesis during that period, and the period during which the historical Doctor Faust(s) (there may have been two) were noted as travelling throughout Germany, coincides with the German Peasant’s War, the first rumblings of the Protestant revolt against the Catholic Church and the institutions legitimized by the Church. And let’s not forget the Black Death.
  - ✓ Thus at that time there was considerable acrimony, with the Protestants calling the Church corrupt, and the Church accusing the Protestants of being in league with the devil, and false doctors and charlatans roaming about.

Another example of context, Pink Floyd’s “Another Brick in The Wall (Part 2)” taken out of *sociocultural context* when released in the U.S. market as a single, was completely misunderstood by American youth as being an anti-education anthem (i.e. what they wanted to hear – and our society is to blame for that as well); and the endless replay on MTV of the video certainly reinforced it. Those who misunderstood are not the kind who would look to find out they were wrong; they preferred to keep their selfish ignorance.

- ✓ “PINK Floyd singer David Gilmour has said it ‘wasn’t a good idea’ to release one of the band’s most famous singles because of its refrain ‘we don’t need no education.’ Gilmour, speaking on the Andrew Marr Show on Sunday, was responding to Marr’s statement that he never ‘got’ Another Brick in the Wall (Part 2) with the presenter describing its lyrics – ‘We don’t need no education / We don’t need no thought control... Teacher, leave those kids alone’ – written by Roger Waters as ‘reactionary.’ [Gilmour speaking] ‘Roger [Waters] would say that it’s all in the context; I suspect now... I’m not sure how good an idea it was to put something like that out as a single,’ said Gilmour. ‘Roger was talking about the type of teachers and teaching that was fairly common in schools when we were growing up. But I think I wouldn’t put that out as a song right now.’” – Brian Campbell, “Pink Floyd’s Gilmour regrets Another Brick in the Wall lyrics,” The Irish News, November 2, 2015.

- See discussions of the Lancastrian system, Gradgrind, 1 Colleges, p. 463, *infra*.<sup>13</sup>

➤ **Conspiracy Theories:** All conspiracy theories must begin with a statement or claim that is opposite of or contradicts in some way the official or generally accepted understanding or explanation of a historical event (or sometimes, just the state of things, such as whether Earth governments have had secret contact with extraterrestrials). Around the contradiction are added and built up a different interpretation of facts (sometimes omission of facts), and suggested ulterior motives – because there is always a question of why ‘they’ are hiding something or lying on such a scale.

The whole package is then spun rhetorically on an unsuspecting audience in a way that doesn’t provide for questioning (which is why printed conspiracy theories are less effective). Conspiracy theories can be good or bad fiction (e.g., the alleged Nazi base in Antarctica), but sometimes there are actual conspiracies; rarer still is the ability to prove them definitively.

*“White-gold was valued highly in Egyptian times. It was used as a symbol, close to the symbolic nature of yellow or white. White was symbolic of omnipotence and purity to the Egyptians – a symbol that is still valid today. Often used to represent the simple but sacred part of the Egyptian life ... Yellow for the Egyptians linked to the sun and gold, which were symbolic of their imperishable, eternal and indestructible nature. The Egyptians regularly used yellow in their art work to portray the gods, which they believed had gold bones. ... Tie white and gold together in a wedding ring and you have a symbol of purity, sacredness, eternity and an indestructible nature – all of which are the substance at the very heart of a marriage.”*

– Marie Coles, “Traditional Connotations of White-Gold From the Ancient Egyptian Civilization,” [ezinearticles.com](http://ezinearticles.com), June 18, 2010

**White Gold Wielder:** The white-gold wedding ring is a key element of Stephen R. Donaldson’s Chronicles of Thomas Covenant the Unbeliever series and the final book of the Second Chronicles of Thomas Covenant is titled, White Gold Wielder (1983) wherein Thomas Covenant finally becomes the white gold: omnipotent, pure, imperishable, eternal, indestructible, beyond the world, and symbolically married to Linden Avery.

A game of GGDM (the story) is an (hopefully) educational, stimulating, collaborative, but adversarial work of fiction created by the participants. The unique feature of participatory group fiction creation is that the group is both the author and the audience at the same moment.<sup>14</sup> The group thus has the dual and simultaneous responsibility of both providing the facts and accepting and acting on the facts of the game universe in a manner that encourages continued participation.

**Group storytelling** in GGDM is a collective emergent narrative, which is more powerful than a single-person emergent narrative created by video game play (see Emergent Narrative discussion, 3 Constructural Elements, p. 205, *infra*). With some professional postgame tweaking, the GGDM collective emergent narrative might raise to the level of a sci-fi work without characters (or maybe like Mike Resnick’s Birthright: The Book of Man (1982)).<sup>15</sup>

- ✓ To be successful as a collective emergent storytelling game, players must step out of the player view and think of the game as telling an epic history of starfaring people.

It is about these people, doing something, out there, and not about mechanics of Regular Turn actions, or failed Power Activations or regrettable decisions.

- The Urantia Book: One of the most intense and incredible (modern) acts of singular group storytelling or fiction is The Urantia Book, which may have involved up to 500 people over the course of four decades. According to the story, the book was received and written down via channeling from celestial beings visiting the Earth. Analysis has indicated that possibly up to nine people authored the book. Copyrights have expired on the book, which is now in the public domain. The free book, which is available online, is 2,197 pages in the indexed edition, which, considering the time it was created (mostly between 1925 and 1942), is astounding, and probably required many authors (if you don't accept the claimed authorship by celestial beings).

Page | 154

If you want to read it, start on Page 53 of the PDF where you will immediately find such stunning concepts as “the geographic center of infinity and the dwelling place of the eternal God” (Forward). Infinity by common definition doesn't have a center, because it doesn't have boundaries. Their description of universes of universes circling around universes is not automatically infinity, it is finite.

- ✓ “Gooch notes that while its ‘somewhat dated, elegant’ prose could be read as fiction, due to its claim of divine inspiration ‘the book invites reactions far more scathing than [it] ... might otherwise merit.’” – quote and basic information taken from Wikipedia article, “The Urantia Book,” October 6, 2018.

The Urantia Book is not mentioned here as ‘recommended reading’; I downloaded it and read most of the forward and sampled pages here and there throughout the book. I found it tedious, condescending and confusing, and not all that interesting (see Lost in Ludibriums and preceding feature quote, 2 Kairotic Moments, pp. 1435-1436, *infra*); it is not the contents of the book that are interesting (rather the opposite), but the history and existence of it.

- Prester John: One of the most curious stories circulating around Medieval Europe was that of a ‘Prester John’ who reputedly ruled a powerful semi-mythical Christian kingdom ‘somewhere’ in the East. The story circulated for centuries, unsubstantiated, was embellished and rose in popularity whenever European Christianity felt threatened, as by the Mongol invasions, Saracens, Fatimids or the Seljuk or later Ottoman Turks; Prester John was supposed to lead an army of knights to attack Europe's enemies from behind. It was popular enough that someone even tried a fraud in the form of a published letter from Prester John in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. This was in a time when Europeans were not even certain where India was located, or for that matter, Abyssinia (Empire of Ethiopia), or their extents and powers.

Prester John was associated with India at times, Abyssinia at others (Abyssinia was thought to be part of India in some texts); there was a known Jewish population in Ethiopia, the Beta Israel, who claim descent from the Tribe of Dan, and exiled Christian communities through Syria, Armenia, and Persia. Lack of European firm knowledge of anything beyond the Middle East (a solely European term, BTW) is almost comical; de Gama's ships finally reached Mozambique, Mombasa, and Malindi, just south of Abyssinia, and then onto the real India in 1498. And there was no Prester John or mythical Christian kingdom anywhere to be found. But the fevered dream had its purpose, just as people of the Cold War looked to benevolent cosmic spirits and advanced aliens to come save us from ourselves (against which Carl Sagan wrote in Pale Blue Dot (1994)).

- ✓ The *original* Battlestar Galactica (1977) was a sci-fi Prester John story – the beleaguered, embattled colonial refugees searching for a mythic kingdom of humanity to save them in the unknown depths of interstellar space.

---

*“There are not always two sides to every story.” – Bob Simon*

---



---

*“Sometimes our job – our only job – is to stand there and point: This is what’s happening. Pay attention. Look here. Help here. Fix this.”*

*– Christina Ruffini (eulogizing Bob Simon) <sup>16</sup>*

---

## Endnotes.

<sup>1</sup> Commentary & Citation: In a manner similar to the Traveller Bulletin published by GDW for the Traveller RPG game that was crucial in the unfolding Imperium Civil War in the transition from the Classic Traveller universe.

<sup>2</sup> Citation: “Christopher Blair produces false stories he insists are easily identifiable as satire rather than news. His pages can rack up millions of views, and at least part of that audience believes the material is true. Blair, 48, runs eight websites and five Facebook pages from his home in the northeastern US state of Maine. He says the claims his articles make are ‘ridiculous,’ such as that President Donald Trump’s current term could be extended by three years. But his content is widely shared by people who take it as fact, contributing to the spread of false information online. Blair – a self-described ‘liberal troll’ and political activist – says he knows what to write for his right-wing ‘target audience’ through years of ‘being embedded in their world.’ He does not hold that audience in high regard. ‘They live on... fear and hate and misinformation and very specific storylines that everybody knows aren’t true except for them,’ he told AFP. His content is rife with disclaimers: Satire. Fake news, fact-check. Nothing on this page is real. If someone clicks through to Blair’s articles, instead of instantly sharing them based on a headline, the warnings are visible. But often, it appears that people do not. Asked why people believe and share the articles, Blair answers: ‘Confirmation bias.’” – AFP, “Master of false news gives right-wing Americans headlines they believe,” February 16, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Commentary: The Freemasons became the target of the Church in France and especially Italy, because they were generally associated with the Carboneria (Giuseppe Garibaldi was a member of both) and both were strongly anti-clerical. The Freemasons were associated with France also, but the Carboneria, a native Italian organization, was very similar in all respects, except being French. Being French in late 19<sup>th</sup> Century Italy was very complicated, and not a in a good way, between the conquest of Napoleon I and the French occupation of Rome under Louis Napoleon (later, Napoleon III) in support of the Papacy. The secrecy and anti-clerical stance of the Freemasons also led to repression attempts in other European nations of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and created a burgeoning industry of story fabrication and caricature of Freemasonry (e.g., Leo Taxil) for the gullible public of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

<sup>4</sup> Commentary: See Propaganda and Cartoon World discussions of The Big Lie, 1 Diplomacy, pp. 1091, 1106, *infra*. Hitler was born in April 1889 and was about 9 years old when Taxil admitted his hoax and walked away. Though Hitler probably never referenced Taxil directly, he accused Freemasons of being a Jewish tool in *Mein Kampf*. Freemasonry was banned in Germany in 1934, their property confiscated and Freemasons were rounded up, executed or sent to concentration camps where they were considered political prisoners. From Wikipedia article, “Suppression of Freemasonry,” January 26, 2019.

- ✓ So, while people might laugh at other gullible people spending their time and money on nonsense and transparently spurious claims, and some people making money from it, these are often just symptoms of deeper social movements and problems as demonstrated by the history of the last century.

<sup>5</sup> Citation: “Journalists are obliged to report what people do. What people say is another matter. If I shoot you, my act of aggression will be described as it occurred. If I insult you I’ll be paraphrased. The American press thoroughly covered the Charlie Hebdo massacre – except it refused to publish examples of the cartoons the Islamist killers claimed to be avenging. ‘At what point does news value override our standards?’ asked Dean Baquet, editor of

the New York Times, which decided the cartoons were unprintable and as a reward was accused of ‘absolute cowardice.’ ... Virginia McCaskey is matriarch of the family that owns the Bears. If her son, George McCaskey, chairman of the Bears, tells reporters after a 5-11 season that his mom is ‘pissed off,’ what can they do but say so? But 20 years ago they wouldn’t have said so: dashes and euphemisms would have been marshaled to keep the sports section fit for eight-year-olds. It’s still fit for eight-year-olds, but they’re more worldly than they used to be. Jagoff is another matter.... *Jagoff* means the worst kind of jerk, all right, but it’s been traced back to northern Britain, where a thorn bush is known as a jaggerbush and to jag means to prick or poke. Immigrants brought jagoff to Pittsburgh, where it’s a proud regionalism....” Michael Miner, “When you call someone a jagoff, what exactly are you trying to say?” *chicagoreader.com*, January 13, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Commentary & Citation: Color analyst Bob Walk made this same argument in a Pirates baseball broadcast in June 2018 against those in baseball who are calling for a ban on defensive shifting (the baseball fad of the last 5-10 years). He said that the baseball players could defeat defensive shifting by simply hitting the ball to the side vacated by the defenders (“you could drive three school buses through the gap on the left side of the infield”) – the old baseball maxim “hit it where they ain’t” – and that imposition of a ban on defensive shifting would be an artificial rule to something the game can cure naturally.

- ✓ In a broadcast early in the 2019 season, he further commented – with some indignation – that it has taken players “three years to figure it out.”

<sup>7</sup> Commentary: Kant was trying to find a rational basis for human moral behavior and to do so, he asked us to view it from a height, to be above and outside of ourselves when morally considering courses of action. I believe some of the criticisms of Kant on this are misplaced: While Kant was trying to find a rational basis for human nature, I do not believe he was deluded in the least that humans are rational or would always follow a rational regimen of moral decision-making. He only needed to pretend that we are better than we actually are to be universal legislators.

<sup>8</sup> Citation: “Nomic is a game in which changing the rules is a move. In that respect it differs from almost every other game. The primary activity of Nomic is proposing changes in the rules, debating the wisdom of changing them in that way, voting on the changes, deciding what can and cannot be done afterwards, and doing it. Even this core of the game, of course, can be changed.” – Peter Suber, *The Paradox of Self-Amendment* (1982).

<sup>9</sup> Citation: “Kant’s enthusiasm for the French Revolution, the American Revolution and the Irish efforts to throw off the English yoke are well-known. It earned him the unenviable epithet of ‘the old Jacobian’; though he condemned the excesses of the Reign of Terror and the execution of the King and Queen, these events which turned many of his compatriots against the Revolution and all its works did not make Kant modify his adherence to the principles of the Revolution; and even it was believed that he was to go to Paris as advisor to Sieyès.” – Lewis W. Beck, “Kant and the Right of Revolution,” *Journal of History Ideas*, Vol. 32, No. 3, July-September 1971, pp. 411.

<sup>10</sup> Commentary: Just like when Peter arrived in Rome and informed them that they were sinners and had to quit their adulterous lifestyles. Whether Peter was ever in Rome is the subject of a massive debate (which I will not rehash here, *Google it*), unhappily for official Roman Catholic doctrine, but if so, it logically follows as to why he was crucified or killed while in Rome!

<sup>11</sup> Commentary: Reviewers of *The Time Traveler’s Wife* (2009) complained vaguely about an illogic of the movie or logical faults in the movie, more than one reviewer mentioned it. Whatever those are – none of the (secret cabal of) reviewers thought to back their assertions with evidence and explanation – they didn’t occur to me while watching the movie. I have seen a number of movies over the years whose faults jump out at the viewer and I usually immediately lose interest when my suspension of disbelief is disabused. However, it is also well known that holes can be poked in any plot, book or movie, starting with the underlying assumptions required and proceeding from there, and anything fantasy- or especially, science-fiction, literature tends particularly to run afoul of logic. Just as any work can be psychoanalyzed to profile the author, discover mental illness and cognitive defects (police do this, historians do this), and degrade the value of the author’s arguments and achievements. GGDM’s setting is science-fiction and the game story probably isn’t going to make categorical-syllogism sense.

<sup>12</sup> Commentary: I started working when I was 13 years old, and I am not talking about shoveling snow, mowing lawns a few times or delivering papers for pocket money or an allowance. I did *also* have an evening paper route from the time I was 12 years for over two years, so my early work days were about 12 hours and for extended times in my youth I worked seven days a week, because I also helped someone else deliver papers early Sunday morning.

<sup>13</sup> Commentary: The Pink Floyd sociocultural context discussion was originally an endnote in 2 The Big Bang; it was deleted in mid-2018 during editing as irrelevant to 2 The Big Bang. The endnote was the result of a discussion that I was having at the time with a friend about “Another Brick in the Wall (Part 2),” Charles Dickens’ Hard Times (1854) and the Lancasterian school system. I read shortly afterward (so the conversation may have been in 2015) an article where Mr. Gilmour expressed regrets over releasing it as a single in the United States. Fortunately, I was able to recover the endnote from July 2018 back up files (and amazed that I had a memory of having written it – sort of the underground burrowing effect in time) and also found The Irish News article still online, though I am not certain that is the original article I read back then, but is very similar.

- ✓ We went to see Roger Waters’ The Wall at the Consol Energy Center (home of the Pittsburgh Penguins) on July 3, 2012, it was a fantastic show. We had seats off to the side of the stage, a dozen or so rows up, and the airplane in the beginning flew right over our heads and crashed into the wall.
- ✓ I think it was the 2012 show, because it was right after we went to see the Asia 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tour at the Carnegie Library Music Hall in Homestead.

<sup>14</sup> Commentary: There is at least a colorable argument that dogma (*ut supra*) and religious morality kills fiction in a culture, especially when they are backed by legitimized force. The best-known example in the West is that of Shakespeare and his censor(s) (e.g., the Master of Revels, and the ferocious censor of the Holy Office in Spain, Guillermo Sanchez), but there were countless others, then and now (e.g., Thomas Bowdler’s The Family of Shakespeare (1807)). In a country where dogma and piety abound, the audience is not watching the works to be entertained, they are looking for violations of dogma and piety, or if they are being entertained, their line between entertainment and offense is extremely thin; there is no patience, no charitable feeling toward the entertainers. And it is well known that dogma tried to bite science as well, until it was eventually moved off to the side and tied to a leash.

<sup>15</sup> Commentary & Citation: After reading another movie review accusing the movie that I just watched – and liked – of having wooden dialogue and wooden characters (which apparently I didn’t notice), I searched the internet trying to understand the criticism. I’ve always wanted to write science-fiction short stories. But I have no feel for writing dialogue, no real feeling for characterization of humanity, and without that, any short story I might write will simply look like my text in GGDM (or perhaps something like Franz Kafka’s “Metamorphosis” (1915)). I searched for an article that can explain what makes dialogue wooden; there are a bunch of forum discussions out there, but none of them really nailed the point for me beyond the superficial. I found a long blog by fiction editor Beth Hill, giving categories and examples of bad dialogue in fiction, and I knew that I’d trip over every one of them, except perhaps that I would not replicate Ayn Rand’s 70 page uninterrupted John Galt speech. My tendentious pedant style in GGDM text, which some might call preachy at times, developed to fit the task of conveying GGDM as I envisioned it. Fortunately, it is not fiction dialogue. Only the movie 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968) struck me as being stiff. For the aspiring fiction writer: <http://theeditorsblog.net/2011/11/03/bad-dialogue-bad-bad-dialogue/>.

- ✓ I apparently don’t know jack about what makes a good or bad movie. After watching Somnus (2016) in 2018, I read about ten reviews of the movie. I was sure wooden dialogue would be tossed out, but it was not mentioned in any of the reviews. In any event, I won’t say Somnus is the best movie I’ve seen, but I didn’t think it was awful exactly – but close. Pulling the deceased wife’s head out of the ship’s AI core was the worst part. The main point that turns me off on a movie is either too much action/explosion so that there isn’t really a story (or without context, which frequently occurs in the beginning of anime series), or worse, movies that are just dumb or offend my intelligence: I hated Demolition Man (1993).
- ✓ I finally found a movie whose dialogue was soooo bad (in addition to some other issues) that I couldn’t stand to watch it: Sorceress (1982). The dialogue was apparently written by someone who played way too much Dungeons & Dragons (and smoked grass probably) in the 1970s. It is probably just like the dialogue I might write. I sat next to a Pathfinder RPG group at the club a couple of years ago and they sounded like the bad movie dialogue, especially when the GM was reading from the module or speaking for NPCs (in addition to several other issues with their adventure). In fact, the entire movie seems like it was someone’s Dungeons & Dragons adventure module, and that perhaps, is revealing about how fantasy role playing is actually conducted – imagine if your role playing adventure were made into a movie?
  - Wooden dialogue is apparently like deception in pitching in baseball, which Pirates broadcaster Bob Walk argues is something that no one really knows what it is... but it happens.

<sup>16</sup> Citation: “Bob Simon: There are not always two sides to every story,” by Christina Ruffini, CBS News, February 12, 2015.