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See Appendix CON – Writ & Construction Example
See Appendix WR – Writ Examples, Land Grant Writ, Naturalization

“The law makes it illegal. A writ makes it right.” – Arthur Tugman

“HABEAUS CORPUS: A writ by which a man may be taken out of jail when confined for the wrong crime.” – Ambrose Bierce

Habeas Corpus Monkey-us: Animal rights activists have attempted to use *Habeas Corpus* cases to free animals kept privately, in laboratories or zoos, the latest example being the New York court case by Nonhuman Rights Project for two privately-held chimpanzees (June 8, 2017, the Appeals Court ruled that chimpanzees are *not persons*, see discussion of personhood, *Alien Persons*, 2 Diplomacy, p. 1110, *infra*). Similarly, in the 9th Circuit, a case brought by PETA was argued (with much tongue-in-cheek humor and many in-court puns) as to whether Naruto, “a free-living crested macaque who snapped perfectly framed selfies in 2011 that would make even the Kardashians proud” (Linda Wang, “No monkeying around: Court weighs if animal owns its selfies,” Associated Press, July 12, 2017) holds copyright on selfies it snapped with a camera that have been published in a British wildlife book. The case sought royalties on the selfies for a wildlife fund.

Form of the Writ: Writs are created by the players and submitted to the Concierge with the position’s Actions. The Writ must contain the following elements when it is sent to the Concierge:

- **Issuer:** The Writ must contain the identity of the issuing position.
- **Power:** The Writ must contain the name of the Power to which it relates, whose activation may be used to activate the Writ. Note that the Culture Power must be activated to introduce the Writ, but the Writ itself may be subsequently activated by another Power indicated on the Writ.
- **Aspect:** The Writ must contain a specific Aspect to which it relates. The Aspect chosen for the Writ must be part of the Fuzzy Group that is *actualized* to activate the Writ. Note that having and/or activating a Writ containing a specific Aspect slightly increases the chances of successfully exposing that Aspect for the remainder of the game (see *A Bustle in Your Hedgerow*, 2 Culture, pp. 365-366, *supra*).

Some well-known historical examples:

- ✓ Where anti-Semitism has long been established, political parties and governments have easily ‘pushed the buttons’ to arouse anti-Semitism for political and economic purposes (e.g., see the Black Death discussion, 1 Disruption, p. 252, *supra*);
- ✓ Where patriotism (a relatively modern concept) exists, governments and political parties can arouse nationalism (or maybe the other way around, since the two are so bound), especially when combined with a perceived threat to cultural identity and religious beliefs (see *Romantic Nationalism*, *National Mysticism*, 3 Government Titles, p. 618; see also Hermann Goering’s comments, 6 Diplomacy, EN 13, p. 1180, *infra*).

History often develops a problem with relation to Aspects: the Scottish Wars of Independence evokes in the modern reader ideas of nationalism and patriotism that simply did not exist at the time; it is certain that the Scottish participants did not feel nationalism or patriotism in the way that we do, they were fighting for feudal loyalties, feudal realms within, and

against foreign invaders (whom their leaders invited by making Edward Longshanks Lord Presumptive of Scotland), not Scotland as a nation-state, and once this is understood, much of what happened – on all sides – begins to make sense. The key Aspects transition from feudal realm to modern nation-state is the transition of the population from feudal subjects and burghers to modern citizens (Subjects & Citizens, 2 Government Titles, p. 599, *infra*).

- **Proficiency:** The Writ must contain a specific Proficiency to which it is related. The named proficiency must be part of the Fuzzy Group that is *actualized* to activate the Writ.¹
 - ✓ Writs are part of the process of defining Aspects in GGDM. Is a perception the same as an Aspect? For example, the ‘perception of a crime wave’ has been a major driving force in politics for a very long time, with various governmental reactions ranging from indifference to draconian, it was the impetuous for the creation of modern regular police forces (e.g., the perception of a crime wave in early 18th Century London). But reaction to the perception is what drives socio-politics, ranging from a concern for order and orderly worldview to personal fear of being the victim of a crime. Fear makes people willingly fork over tax dollars for police and military protection, which then becomes a Proficiency (18th Century London established the Police Proficiency College). Thus, a roundabout link is established between Aspects and Proficiencies through the need to solve a perceived problem (e.g., Joseph Tainter’s complexities).
- **History:** The Writ must be based on a specific historical event (in the game) or on a Fundamental Reality or existing Government Title of the issuing position; i.e. it must have some context in the game and that context must be reasonably related to the Aspect and Proficiency chosen for the Writ. This also serves to preserve in-game historical circumstances.

Since there are three different basis for the history of a proposed Writ, creative and engaged players should not find it difficult to cite a historical basis for the Writ. The Writ is part of the story of the position.
- **Body:** The body of the Writ contains a statement which is deemed to be absolutely true or false at the time the Writ is activated (regardless of what the players believe is true).
- **Directive:** The Writ must have an effect when it is activated, and that effect is part of the Writ. The effect must bear a strong relation to the rest of the Writ.

This is what the Writ is all about, this is where the rubber meets the road. Good Writ writers will start with the Directive and work backwards, just as politics often starts with what we want to do and builds a rationalization to do it through debate, campaigns for office, and events. A Writ is a mandate to do something.

 - ✓ For any object (sovereign ship or colony) to be affected by a Writ, the target must have an active Ideological Constructural Element at that moment. See Body Politic, 2 Constructural Elements, p. 191, *supra*. This will not block Writ activation, however.
- **Conditions Precedent:** Certain social, historical, or cultural conditions must exist for the Writ to be activated. These conditions will be part of the Writ and will be checked upon activation of the Writ. If the conditions do not exist, then the Writ activation will fail, but again, the Concierge may choose to construe the requirements somewhat liberally but refuse to accept patent nonsense. The most useful Writs are the ones with predictably recurring conditions.

“The overlap in the Venn diagram of things that men hate for women to wear and the things that I love to wear, it’s almost a full overlap on the Venn diagram, which is unfortunate for me.” – Mindy Kaling

Venn Diagram: One way to visualize Writs is as a Venn diagram where the Directive is the overlap area in the middle. Returning to the Hazy Overlapping Middle discussion in 2 Culture, p. 370, *supra*, the Fort Douaumont situation offers some elements of a potential Writ:

- ✓ [Interview] “To the French public, this was a great victory. [Fort] Douaumont was a great symbol. It was of no military significance whatsoever, but it was a symbol. It had to be recaptured. And it was seen in France as being a great victory. In Germany, it was seen as a terrible defeat. The reality is, it didn’t matter tactically. It was all about perception.” – Major Gordon Corrigan (British Army, Gurkha Rifles), Under Siege television series (2008), Episode 4.

In the previous discussion, Fort Douaumont was identified as a nominal Symbolic Constructural Element of the French sovereign and national identity that became also an Aspect of the moment during the Siege of Verdun in 1917.

- ✓ Notably, Constructural Elements are not part of the Writ format, but of course, play their part in Power Activations and Fuzzy Groups which can affect the Writ.

As a historical basis for the Writ, the Aspect might be whatever was associated with it in 1917 during the defense of Verdun, it would be related to the Combat Power, the Proficiency might be Nationhood, Security, Spirit, depending on the slant of the Writ’s directive. Conditions Precedent might either be an ongoing Ground Combat in defense of a Friendly colony or a recent successfully concluded defense of a Friendly colony in Ground Combat.

Michael: *My father made him an offer he couldn’t refuse.*

Kay: *What was that?*

Michael: *Luca Brasi held a gun to his head, and my father assured him that either his brains or his signature would be on the contract.*

– from *The Godfather* (1972)

Negotiable Instrument: Because the Writ is not published, and because the Writ cannot be activated on the Regular Turn it is issued, there is some time for the Concierge and issuing position to work out the balance and finalize the form of the Writ, if it is not acceptable as first issued. The Writ must be finalized before the next Regular Turn of the issuing position so that it can be available for activation on the position’s next turn. There is a limit, given that the Concierge is involved in tasks running the rest of the game, to how much negotiation will be allowed to finalize a Writ. The Concierge reserves the right to ultimately reject the issuance of the Writ if no consensus can be formed. In the rare event that a Writ is rejected, no compensation will be made to the issuing position.

- **Suspended Writ:** At the judgment of the Concierge, a Writ may be suspended at any time. A suspended Writ may not be activated and *does not* enhance the chances of exposing the Aspect to which it is associated (see *A Bustle In Your Hedgerow*, 2 Culture, pp. 365-366, *su-*

pra). A Writ will be suspended when it is no longer legitimate to the position, when it is being abused, or any other game reason. For example, a Writ that is closely tied to a Government Title (e.g., in the History section, *ut supra*) may be suspended if the Government Title is disrupted, abandoned, or voluntarily removed, however, it is also possible that such a Writ might continue with the current Titles long after the originating Title is lost to history.

- ✓ For example, the Writ of Habeas Corpus was invented by early legislatures and judges to curb the abuses of the absolute monarchy. If democracy fails, what happens to the Writ of Habeas Corpus?

Writs may also be suspended during or after a Reformation (and rarely) following a Kairotic Moment. A previously suspended Writ may also be restored by the Concierge, it does not ‘disappear’ upon suspension (it is instead, deprecated).

*“The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ, Moves on: nor all your Piety
nor Wit Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line, Nor all your Tears wash out a
Word of it” – Edward Fitzgerald, Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám ²*

White Wash: Should anyone ask me to change GGDM, especially to retract some of my statements, to make it softer, more acceptable for educational or palatable for public purposes, this would be my answer also. Should anyone consider altering my work after I have passed, “*The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ, Moves on...*”

If you want to add your own pre-apology insulation commentary, to distance yourself, to disparage me before presenting or discussing my work, feel free, that’s on you. But don’t whitewash my words. It seems likely to me that Omar Khayyám (1048 to 1131) was pressured to not publicly express his rational religious skepticism, and putting himself in God’s place, probably asked what if the fanatics asked God to change the world he created? The portion of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám quoted above is likely what he imagined as God’s answer, and therefore, his answer to the same demands.

- ✓ **The Doctor:** You can let me do this! **River Song:** If you die here, it’ll mean I’ve never met you! **The Doctor:** *Time can be rewritten!* **River Song:** Not those times. *Not one line!* Don’t you dare! It’s OK. It’s OK, it’s not over for you. You’ll see me again. You’ve got all of that to come. You and me, time and space. You watch us run! – Dr. Who, “Forest of the Dead,” (2008) (emphasis added).

Holy Writ: Writs are secret and will not be published or shared with any other position. As such, it is necessary that the Concierge stand as the final, unquestioned judge and interpreter of Writs. The following are some rules and factors to be considered when a Writ is submitted:

- **Consistency:** A Writ must be internally consistent and reasonable, and make sense to the Concierge within the current context of the game. Specifically, there must be a reasonable relationship between the Power, Aspect, Proficiency, History, Body, Directive, and Conditions Precedent in the Writ. There must also be a specific relationship between the Body and the Directive. The Writ is a whole package, woven of threads of a civilization.
- **Cultural Identity:** One test of the Writ will be whether the Writ as a whole constitutes an expression of cultural identity, and that it is generally consistent with the other established identity factors of the position, such as Government Titles and Fundamental Realities.

- **Circular Conditions:** A Writ may not satisfy its own condition precedent by activation; the conditions must be present before the Writ can be activated. A Writ may not use the activation of another Writ as a condition precedent. Finally, a Fundamental Reality or any effect from a Fundamental Reality may not serve as a condition precedent to a Writ, thus, Writs are of limited use in counteracting unfavorable Fundamental Realities.

“The bell in the Independence Hall tower rang at 9 a.m., and Mark Sanford took a deep breath. He grabbed a giant check for ‘one trillion dollars,’ stood next to a tiny wooden lectern, and asked me if I was ready for him to kick off a news conference announcing his bid to challenge President Donald Trump in the 2020 Republican primary. It didn’t really feel like a news conference. I was the only reporter there. ...

And when it began, the only others around besides his two aides were a family 30 yards away with a selfie stick and a group of students from Paris who wanted to know why he had such a big check. (Answer: It represented the burden of the national debt.) ... He shot me a peace sign, packed up his giant check, and headed for Harrisburg.”

– Anna Orso, “Mark Sanford kicked off his presidential campaign against Donald Trump in Philly. One person showed up.” Philadelphia Inquirer, October 16, 2019

Cost of the Writ: The activation cost of each Writ is the simultaneous *successful* activation of the appropriate Power and the actualization of a Fuzzy Group (not a Zietrice) composed of the Aspects and Proficiencies as indicated on the Writ. See 4 Culture, p. 404, *et seq., supra*. The Concierge recognizes that the actualization of a Fuzzy Group is a considerable cost. Additionally, there must also be a cost in resources (i.e. RPs) for each Writ effect. A lot of people talk about doing this or that, but without the commitment of resources, it’s all just lip service:

- ✓ “With the people and facilities we have today, we could put a human on the Moon or even on Mars within the next 10 years, if only we invest in it. But grandstanding, lofty promises, and a dearth of funding will yield the same results they always have: a nation whose greatest dreams go unfulfilled. What we can accomplish as a species is limited only by what’s physically possible and what we invest in it. Our ambitions to venture beyond low-Earth orbit are achievable, but only if we make it so. Unless there’s a plan to increase NASA’s funding to sufficient levels to send humans to worlds beyond our own, America is never going to get there.” – Ethan Siegel, “Sorry America, We’re Not Going Back to the Moon,” Forbes, December 19, 2017.

The Concierge will take into account the balance of the cost and effect of the Writ. Players and the Concierge may agree on other creative costs-effect arrangements for a Writ (for example, environmental pollution) which make sense in the context of the game.

- ✓ Failure to activate the Writ either because of Power Activation failure or by not meeting the Conditions Precedent (*ut supra*, p. 439) will cause the Fuzzy Group to fail to actualize and the Cultural Trait Pieces are *not removed* from the Public Space.

“This day, much against my will, I did in Drury Lane see two or three houses marked with a red cross upon the doors, and ‘Lord have mercy upon us’ writ there; which was a sad sight to me, being the first of the kind that, to my remembrance, I ever saw. It put me into an ill conception of myself and my smell, so that I was forced to buy some roll-tobacco to smell to and chaw, which took away the apprehension.” – Samuel Pepys Diary, June 7, 1665³

“Methought it lessened my esteem of a king, that he should not be able to command the rain.” – Samuel Pepys Diary, July 19, 1662⁴

Endnotes.

¹ Commentary & Citation: Reputation for extreme proficiency can sometimes be a liability: In the Man in the High Castle series, the Resistance knew the truck driver must be an infiltrator spy because the truck escaped from the raid on the resistance headquarters and the Nazis were never ‘sloppy’ so they must have intended the truck to escape. This is not a new shtick in movies, I have seen or heard this reasoning before; it could be applied in the game story – especially insurgencies and Special Operations – if the participants are feeling devious.

² Citation: The *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám* is an English translation of the poems of Omar Khayyám (1048 to 1131) a Persian polymath poet, mathematician, skeptic, and astronomer who lived in Greater Khorasan.

³ Citation & Commentary: “Then to the King’s Theatre, where we saw *Midsummer’s Night’s Dream*, which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life.” – Samuel Pepys Diary, September 29, 1662. Shakespeare was not loved by all; Mr. Pepys’ diary gives us an honest, clear window into what many contemporary people may have thought of his plays and works; it helps to dampen the symbolic glow applied by high school and college English literature instructors.

- ✓ Shakespeare died in 1616, *Midsummer Night’s Dream* was written in about 1595/1596.
- ✓ Samuel Pepys’ reaction to *Midsummer Night’s Dream* is rather comical considering that he is a man of many mistresses and dalliances, certainly not a man of propriety, but more one of lecherousness. He recorded his extramarital encounters in detail and in code in his diaries, a practice of many prominent men which obsessive historians have labored over the last century to decode.

⁴ Commentary & Citation: Taken out of context, the reader cannot determine whether this was stated seriously or with sarcasm or humor by Mr. Pepys (1633-1703), but it works either way.

- ✓ I once heard or read a story about King Cnut the Great (995-1035 A.D.), whose foppish and fulsome courtiers whispered to him that he was the most powerful king in the world and that he could even stop the tides on command. King Cnut (not one to suffer fools, surely) had his throne carried down to the beach, upon which he sat and commanded the waves to cease. When they did not, he had the courtiers executed for lying to the king. Perhaps this story was circulating in some form in the time of Samuel Pepys, or his comment is sarcasm about the claims of divine right of kings, divine province of kings, current in his time, an idea which originated probably with James IV of Scotland, and reached its height during the long reign of Louis XIV of France, during Samuel Pepys’ life.
- ✓ Ironically, a few days after I located this Pepys quote, there was an article reporting that the state media of North Korea suggested either that the weather parted for the North Korean leader or that the leader of North Korea can control the weather, in relation to his recent pilgrimage up Mt. Paektu (see, Kim Hjelgaard, “North Korea’s Newest Claim: Kim Jong-un can control the weather,” USA Today, December 11, 2017). The New York Post referred, that same day, to the claim that Kim Jong-un climbed the 8,700 ft. Mt. Paektu as “Big Fat Dictator tells Big Fat Mountain Climbing Lie,” reporting the same nature and weather claims, adding that the mountain (an active volcano) showed “joy” and “warm welcome” to the “illustrious leader.”
 - Personality cult is just obnoxious. No writ can cure that social ill. But Mad Max can.