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See Appendix MSM – Meanings & Shared Meanings Example

“In 1970, Dr. Ernest [sic] Fasan in a book titled Relations with Alien Intelligences: The Scientific Principles of Metalaw, proposed a number of principles, based ultimately on the work of Immanuel Kant and suggesting that alien species could work together to achieve rational goals. Perhaps equally important (if not more so) was the thought experiment that began in 1966 and is still underway. I am referring, of course, to Star Trek in its many forms and to the cornerstone of metalaw ... within the Federation, a doctrine of non-interference and non-intervention called the Prime Directive.

The idea behind it all is that all societies are entitled to develop in their own ways without outside interference..... Of course, as with any other thought experiments in long-running fictions ... the Prime Directive has more to do with creating plot difficulties than it does with smoothing out interstellar relations.”

– Ace G. Pilkington, Science Fiction and Futurism: Their Terms and Ideas (2017), p. 94 ¹

Time Lords Need Not Apply: A principle of non-interference has never restrained Dr. Who; it is easier to have adventures across time and space if you are free to meddle. The most egregious blatant example was deposing the elected Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Harriet Jones, after she violated a truce and withdrawal from the Earth that he arranged with aliens (“The Christmas Invasion” 2005). She had a different view of things, but he had power and the will to use it against her, without reservations, because he could.²

In Loco Parentis: Suppose an alien species offered humanity the ability to travel to other stars and will gift the knowledge to us if they are convinced the majority of humanity desires it. The very act of making this offer would be monumental to humanity, confirming everything science-fiction writers and UFO enthusiasts have speculated about for over a century – that there are technologically advanced aliens, they know about the Earth, and that travel to other stars is possible. The aliens may have concluded that the majority of humanity believes these are possible anyway, based on our science, culture and literature, thus they would (possibly) not be violating any non-interference requirement of Metalaw. Imagine that to have made such an offer (assuming it is genuine), they must have something to gain and/or are taking a risk in letting humanity loose on the Galaxy. *In loco parentis? Parens patriae?* How would they determine that the majority of humanity desires it? They would, in any event, be holding all the cards in the relationship of the two species, as in the 2001 Twilight Zone episode, “Think Like a Dinosaur” (one of the most brutal ethical dilemmas ever filmed). We may also conclude that if they discovered a means to travel to the stars, we will eventually discover it as well. But too late?

- ✓ “He teaches them how to be cats... He definitely helps them learn bite inhibition. Like how hard is too hard to bite and still keep your friends. Kittens sort of get to that stage where they bite everything and they bite really hard ‘cause they don’t know that it hurts. And so he helps, he’s got his kitten-flattening paw.” – from “Grumpy Street Cat LOVES Being A Grandpa To Foster Kittens – GRANDPA MASON,” The Dodo YouTube Channel, July 25, 2018.
 - ‘cause Grandpaw is the law!

Londo Mollari: *During the Shadow War, Sheridan risked his life and the lives of every human on this station to help save our worlds. Would the Gaim have done that for the Pak'ma'ra? Would the Drazi have done that for the Narn? No. That sacrifice must be rewarded.*

G'Kar: *Since the war, we have begun working together as never before. In the past, we had nothing in common. But now the humans have become the glue that holds us together.*

Londo: *If Sheridan's forces are defeated, then Earth will turn in upon itself. They will become isolated, or they'll turn against the rest of us. Politically, it is very wise.*

G'Kar: *Morally, it is even wiser.*

Vir Cotto: *Politics and morality on the same side? That doesn't happen every day, Deleenn.*

– Babylon 5, “Between the Darkness and the Light” (1997)

Ethics & Interpretations: The process of designing GGDM is similar to morality. In morality, you have arguments and theories about what is right and wrong. But how do you translate them into actual rules or apply them to actual recurring situations? You develop a code of ethics. Much of the difficulty with designing GGDM that I encountered 15 years ago involved the question of how to take ideas and thoughts on civilization and express them in a set of playable, workable game rules? The interpretation mechanics solved the problem.

- ✓ When playing off tile pairs in a game of mahjongg, all of the parts of the board have to work together in an intricate, invisible web of possible connections to solve the puzzle. The question of the game, is how? It would be possible to display this on a computer, but doing so would ruin the experience of the game. It is not currently possible to do this convincingly with human civilizations, or even personal relationships, on a computer screen (though VR might be interesting). As a sandbox, non-computer simulation of humanity, GGDM sits somewhere in the middle.

Between Mars & Venus: How do I shape the meaning of this for the reader? A Meaning as an Interpretation, requires the position issuing the Meaning to describe an important principle or key ‘aspect’ of the relationship between two positions, between two species. It’s sort of like when your girlfriend asks you to describe why you love her or what ‘the relationship’ means to you. But in this case, you are not required to love thy neighbor. Or perhaps how a mouse would describe a key aspect of its relationship with the cat. Two positions that are at war can still have (tragic) meaning to each other, just as they continue to share the Diplomatic Space.³ A Meaning (or Shared Meaning, p. 1132, *ut infra*) is not an automatic ‘peace treaty’ in GGDM unless positions want it to be (see Creative Sharing, p. 1133, *ut infra*); two positions can have a long meaningful relationship like Gandalf and Balrog.⁴

- ✓ I once saw a ‘real TV’ type program where the lady had a house cat and also a bird in a square cage sitting on a table near a bright window. The cat liked to lay on top of the bird cage most of the time; a towel or pad was placed on top of the cage to keep the cat and bird separated. You immediately think the cat is laying there because the bird is potential dinner, but the cat appeared to be cat napping in the video. Of

course, the cat was just being a cat and the bird knew the cat was there but still chirped because they had a long relationship and the bird was being a bird. Cats like the sound of birds chirping; it's a 'happy' sound to them. I wondered when I saw it if the two had some kind of odd relationship beyond predator and prey; if the cat ever got that bird, there would be no more chirping, no more cage. Hard to think though that the bird was happy.⁵

- What is the Meaning of This?: A Meaning Interpretation is issued by an activation of the Diplomatic Power for the purpose of Form Meanings after the two positions involved in the Meaning have had First Contact. A Meaning Interpretation satisfies the Interpretation requirement for the Diplomatic Power Activation on the Regular Turn it is formed, but does not serve as an Interpretation on any turn thereafter.

Like the Writ, the Meaning Interpretation is created by the players, belongs only to the position that created it, must be submitted with the position's Actions, and is subject to approval by the Concierge; and like the Writ, the Meaning must be consistent with the position's current Social and Estate Titles, with the position's cultural identity, and may be rejected by the Concierge. Meanings are secret unless Shared (secrets are secret, unless shared...).

- ✓ For example: **Lennier:** It is our belief that every generation of Minbari is reborn in each following generation. Remove those souls and the whole suffers. We are diminished. Over the last 2,000 years there have been fewer Minbari born into each generation. And those who are born...do not seem equal to those who came before. It is almost as if our greater souls have been...disappearing. At the Battle of the Line, we discovered where our souls were going. They were going to you. Minbari souls are being reborn in part or in full in human bodies. **Cmdr. Ivanova:** So you stopped the war in order to avoid harming your own souls? **Lennier:** Yes. But the Council knew that our people and yours were not ready for this information. It could unravel our entire society. So we could not tell our generals the reason for the surrender. We had all memory of the examination erased from Sinclair's mind and we let him go. It has been our secret. – Babylon 5, "Points of Departure" (1994).⁶

Because the Meaning serves as the Interpretation for the Power Activation on the Regular Turn it is created, no News Event is required. Thus, like Patents, it remains secret, and cannot be altered by actions of other positions (see Letters Patent, 3 Patents, p. 748, *infra*).

- It's a Morning in May: A Meaning Interpretation must have three parts. The Meaning must name the other Native Population Type toward which the Meaning is directed. Afterward, the Meaning must describe generally or specifically as necessary in one or two concrete sentences, the special significance of the other ('significant other'☺), the importance of the other race to the position issuing the Meaning. Finally, the Meaning must describe one to three Events which would be inconsistent with the Meaning. The Events which would be inconsistent with the Meaning may be caused *by either side or by another position or Concierge Intervention*, and would compel the position to pause and reevaluate the meaning of the relationship between positions.

Event is not quite the same as act – event is a neutral term – but of course they are strongly related. 'Event' was chosen so as not to be confused with Acts which are used in relation to Power Activations throughout GGDM. Events can occur without conscious acts – such as a tree falling over in a fierce rainstorm and knocking out a power line – but in the sense used in

GGDM, it means mainly things that happen as a result of conscious acts (e.g., Power Activations), as in, “When in the course of human events...” (U.S. Declaration of Independence).

Meanings attach to Native Population Types in GGDM, not positions. This can be tricky, but in most cases, it will mean the position that represents that Native Population Type in the game, with room for mischief associated with populations under control of other positions. A Meaning can be attached to a Minor Race, though sharing such a meaning is unlikely, as is having a Diplomatic Space with the Minor Race. Because of the Lost Colonist Primal State, it is possible for two positions to share the same Native Population Type.

- ✓ The rule specifies events inconsistent with the Meaning because it is easier and less proactive than naming events consistent with the meaning. Humans have a built in negativity bias, and it is usually easier for us to name what is not, than what is. See feature quote, 6 Government Titles, bottom, p. 649, and EN 1, p. 658, *supra*.
 - ✓ Think of the meanings we attach to our beloved pets, especially the little furry ones. Think of the meaning we have to them, which is very likely much simpler and much different than ours toward them. But in both cases, though we recognize individuals, people tend to like dogs generally, or cats generally, and those animals recognize humans generally, some are leery of humans they don’t know (e.g., semi-feral cats), and some (especially sniffing, tail-wagging dogs) are friendly toward all humans.
- Act Like You Mean It!: The Events described in the Meaning as being inconsistent with the Meaning must be concrete and easily identifiable within the play of the game, and only apply toward and between the position issuing the Meaning and the position named on the Meaning. It is Events which give meaning. On any Regular Turn in which either position does anything described as inconsistent with the Meaning, there is a 50% chance that the Meaning will be ‘destroyed’ (and voided, removed) as it becomes untenable in the face of actions, e.g., what would happen to the Anglo-American ‘special relationship’ if a U.S. submarine intentionally torpedoed a British-flagged oil tanker?⁷
- ✓ “‘This case demonstrated that the Trump administration has lost the art of diplomacy with allies,’ said Jeremy Shapiro, director of research at the European Council on Foreign Relations. ‘The entire nature of a close ally is that you work together to find ways to be in sync without resorting to threats.’” – Anne Gearan, John Hudson, “Trump’s strong-arm foreign policy tactics create tensions with U.S. friends and foes,” Washington Post, January 18, 2020.⁸

A Meaning that is ‘destroyed’ through inconsistent Events can never be reissued, as history and memory will show that the Meaning was false. A destroyed Meaning generates an Intervention Potential Plus (IP+) against the position that held the Meaning. The Concierge is the interpreter of Meanings and specifically, when Events occur that are either consistent with or inconsistent with Meanings. *Optionally*, Enlightenment may be applied to Meaning rolls if the Concierge is contacted in reasonable time; once allowed, this option must open be for all.

- ✓ “[Trump] has an advantage on me, he can say everything he knows about any subject in 140 characters and I cannot.” – George Will, Fox News Sunday, June 26, 2016 (video available on YouTube).
- ✓ “The notion that one should stay silent as the norms and values that keep America strong are undermined and as the alliances and agreements that ensure the stability of

the entire world are routinely threatened by the level of thought that goes into 140 characters – the notion that one should say and do nothing in the face of such mercurial behavior is ahistoric and, I believe, profoundly misguided.” – Sen. Jeff Flake, “I Will Not Be Complicit” speech on the Senate Floor, October 25, 2017.

- Quasi-Contractual Meaning: A Meaning in GGDM is not a formal contract, if a Meaning is violated, who or what has been harmed? A Meaning has only one party (like infatuation) and the harm is confidence in the worldview of the party that holds the meaning (and in GGDM, the loss of a Power Activation). Sort of like when you make a deal with yourself or firm decision to do or refrain from doing something, and then fail. After awhile, such things have no meaning in your inner world, confidence is lost in your own resolution, sense of direction and progress, and internal integrity. This is the problem of alcoholism, tobacco addiction and substance abuse when one cannot quit despite the obvious cost and bad consequences.

Worldviews (generally) and Meanings in GGDM are at best quasi-contracts with the universe (see also Spaces, 4 Beginnings, p. 46, *supra*). *Quasi-contract* at businessdictionary.com:

- ✓ “Court’s determination of an obligation of one party to another where no actual contract exists. It is based on the parties’ conduct, mutual relationship, and/or on the possibility that one would be unjustly enriched at the expense of the other. In strict legal terms a quasi-contract does not constitute a formal contract, but is a legal remedy that allows a plaintiff to recover an award or benefit conferred on the defendant.” *Id.*

As GGDM is group storytelling and participatory group fiction (see The Nature of News Events and White Gold Wielder, 2 Dreamtime, pp. 146, 153, respectively, and Unintended Consequences, 2 Entropy, pp. 236-238, *supra*), the ‘judge’ is the group generally and more specifically, of necessity, the Concierge is the ‘judge’ where game information is secret.

- ✓ One of the struggles of designing GGDM was the reduction of general ideas and abstract concepts to concrete game rules. This is why it is important that Fundamental Realities in GGDM have concrete application to the game; it is thus also that Meanings must have identified concrete Events in the game that violate the meaning (e.g., I think my dog is my friend and then he bites me). Troublesome to both Meanings and Fundamental Realities are violations of the ‘spirit’ of the thing, which is a grey area that must be adjudicated by the Concierge; of the two, violation of the spirit of Fundamental Realities should be less forgiving than violation of the spirit of a Meaning.
- One is the Loneliest Number: A Meaning Interpretation in GGDM mechanics is unilateral (like a Writ or Patent) and has no value or effect unless Shared (keep reading...), however, the actions of either side can destroy it. The Form Meaning activation is the first, and required, step toward a later Shared Meaning.
 - ✓ A Meaning can be analogized in various ways to human conditions such as infatuation with another – which is supposed to lead to mating, permanent bonding and is useless otherwise in the most practical sense (see Oliver Emberton excerpt in The Universe Doesn’t Care About Your Purpose, Dreamtime, *supra*) – or perhaps to unilateral commitments, such as we have to our pets or decorative house plants, fulfilling a gratuitous promise,⁹ or to laying flowers on a grave at regular intervals (as Joe DiMaggio did for Marilyn Monroe for the rest of his life), to which we expend effort and expect to receive little or nothing (of material value) in return.

Meanings, whether Shared or not, are part of the position’s worldview and may be considered by the Concierge in appropriate situations.

- ✓ Writs cannot be shared in GGDM, and require Fuzzy Groups unique to that culture. Patents could potentially be shared. News Events are always shared, because of the publication requirement with Power Activations. Thus, there is a spectrum.
- ✓ “Life would be so much simpler if you liked the right people. People you’re supposed to like. But then, I guess there’d be no fairy tales.” – Miss Maise, Dr. Who, “Mummy on the Orient Express” (2014).

“Every one of us is, in the cosmic perspective, precious. If a human disagrees with you, let him live. In a hundred billion galaxies, you will not find another.”

– Carl Sagan, Cosmos

“Every man is more than just himself; he also represents the unique, the very special and always significant and remarkable point at which the world’s phenomena intersect, only once in this way, and never again.”

– Hermann Hesse

Dining Room Table: Unique should not be confused with good, desirable or useful. We had a ‘unique’ dining room table when I was young; whenever the dog bumped into it, one of the legs came off and the table then tipped in that direction and had to be caught before everything – especially the kerosene lamp – dumped on the floor. Funny, not funny.

- ✓ Is something valuable because it is unique? People are often confused on that point, but no one would think our dining room table had any value, except to us because we had no other. Thus, GGDM has no inherent value by virtue of being a unique treatment of civilizations, or being a game, or a treatise. It has value to me because it is my only one.

“We are all born as molecules in the hearts of a billion stars. Molecules that do not understand politics or policies or differences. Over a billion years, we foolish molecules forget who we are and where we came from. In desperate acts of ego, we give ourselves names, fight over lines on maps, and pretend that our light is better than everyone else’s. The flame reminds us of the piece of those stars that lives on inside us. The spark that tells us: ‘You should know better.’ The flame also reminds us that life is precious as each flame is unique. When it goes out, it’s gone forever. And there will never be another quite like it. So many candles will go out tonight. I wonder some days if we can see anything at all.”

– Ambassador Delenn, Babylon 5, “All My Dreams Torn Asunder” (1998)

Persona of Star Stuff: Ambassador Delenn is sometimes Carl Sagan’s persona in Babylon 5, with the ironic twist that *she* is the leader of the religious caste (the organized priesthood) in Minbari society. While Mr. Sagan denied being religious, he was at least spiritual:

- ✓ C.f. “Star stuff, the ash of stellar alchemy had emerged into consciousness. We are a way for the cosmos to know itself. We are creatures of the cosmos and have always hungered to know our origins to understand our connection with the universe... We are one species. We are star stuff, harvesting starlight.” – Carl Sagan, “Who Speaks for the Earth,” *Cosmos*, Episode 13.

[Lennier grabs Marcus roughly by the front of his shirt and lifts him]

Lennier: *Do not touch me in that fashion. We may sometimes look like you, but we are not you. Never forget that.*

– Babylon 5, “Ceremonies of Light and Dark” (1996)

The Commonality: Lennier sounds like a racist.... Two positions which each have previously Formed a Meaning toward the other, if they are reasonably similar, may ‘share’ or develop a Shared Meaning Interpretation. You cannot personally, intentionally insult someone who does not share your meanings, but may unintentionally insult them without knowing or understanding.

The wedding of Meanings requires that both positions activate the Diplomacy Power for that purpose in the same Turn Cycle (that is, on each position’s next Regular Turn, the Diplomacy Power must be activated for the purpose of Sharing Meanings) and the Positions are required to submit a ‘merged,’ ‘combined’ or ‘wedded’ Meaning with their Actions. Meaning Interpretations cannot be Shared on the same Regular Turn they are Formed.

- ✓ The Concierge will accept or reject proposed Shared Meanings based on their internal consistency and consistency with the Meanings from which they were derived; time requirements (i.e. a probationary period) may also be imposed by the Concierge for the survival of the prior Meanings which form the Shared Meaning.
- ✓ The Concierge will not issue any pre-rulings on proposed Shared Meanings, will not indicate the parameters of what may be accepted – like an umpire behind home plate, the players will have to figure out the strike zone and tolerances as they pitch. The Concierge will not reject or accept the proposed Shared Meaning until the second Diplomacy Power Activation (see Table for Two, 1 Diplomacy, p. 1096, *supra*). It is thus possible to be stood up on the first date...
 - No pre-rulings by the Concierge is an important concept throughout GGDM; the positions must first make the effort and take their chances.

Upon acceptance of the Shared Meaning, four Monads will be added to the Diplomatic Space between the positions. Two positions at war with each other can still Share a Meaning.

- ✓ There can be only one Shared Meaning Interpretation between each two positions. Shared Meanings can be altered and manipulated by use of Special Writs, see Continental Drift, 5 Diplomacy, p. 1166, *infra*. Shared Meanings therefore are not static.
 - “Social morality requires a shared matrix of communal reality to which to relate thought and deed, and the illusion of an objective ethical esthetic requires at the very least the conviction that objective reality is more than a contradiction in terms.” – Norman Spinrad, The Void Captain’s Tale (1982), p. 211.

- “No, it’s not the speaking that’s the problem, it’s .. the listening.” – Vir Cotto, Babylon 5 movie Thirdspace (1998).¹⁰
- The Conversation: To have a conversation or any relationship, let alone a friendship, two parties must have something in common. Notably this is not required for family relationships, which are involuntary (until you are old enough to leave), but no one requires you to be friends with the people to whom you are, unfortunately, related (I have personal experience in this). The first, and minimum, requirement of a conversation is that the participants share a language of symbols and a desire to converse; language is a window to the cognition of others. Since science and math seem to be the only universals that we know, it has long been assumed by serious thinkers, that communications with sapient and technologically advanced alien species would be based on math and science; but even this is not a sure thing, as we’d first have to figure out their math system base (which will probably be related to their biology, for example, humans have ten fingers and ten toes and our counting system is Base 10) and how they account for or recognize zero in their system. Alternatively, everything in the universe is binary, that is, anything can be said to have an ‘on’ or ‘off’ state.
 - ✓ “We’re interested in communication with extraterrestrial intelligence. Wouldn’t a good beginning be better communication with terrestrial intelligence, with other human beings of different cultures and languages, with the great apes, with the dolphins, but particularly with the whales?” – Carl Sagan, *Cosmos*, Episode 11.
 - ✓ “You know, in a way I wish I hadn’t met you two. It’s much more convenient to think of the opposition as a nice homogeneous, dead-wrong mass. Now I’ve got to muddy my thinking with exceptions.” – Kurt Vonnegut, *Player Piano* (1952).
- Whispered Secrets: Meanings are secret, if you tell someone else, that’s on you; as the old saying goes, the best kept secrets are between three good friends, when the other two are dead. It is possible that if another position is aware of Meanings, they can deliberately act inconsistent with the Meaning to destroy it (thus assessing an Intervention Potential Plus (IP+), p. 1129, *ut supra*). Yet it is almost necessary that Meanings be pre-shared through informal diplomacy (i.e. private player communications) beforehand so that each position can develop meanings similar enough to officially Share a Meaning (and gain Diplomatic Space).¹¹
 - ✓ “Love endures only when the lovers love many things together and not merely each other.” – Walter Lippmann.¹²

The Events in a Shared Meaning are, of course, known by both parties to it, but now there is a secret between two positions. How long it remains a secret is up to them (like King Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville). The Shared Meaning serves as the Interpretation for the *second* Diplomacy Power Activation that creates the Shared Meaning. Each Power Activation to form the Shared Meaning must be accompanied by a reasonably-related News Event, the second is needed just in case the Shared Meaning is rejected by the Concierge (*ut supra*).

- ✓ Like Diplomatic Spaces, Shared Meanings in GGDM are anticipated to be between two positions (see *Three is a Crowd*, 2 Diplomacy, p. 1120, *supra*). *Ménage à trois* is possible, but Shared Meanings can never be solo (that’s called infatuation) and neither can Diplomatic Space. In multi-party Shared Meanings, the parties will need to adapt the rules on the fly.

- A Two-Way Street: A Shared Meaning must name two to four Events which are inconsistent with the Shared Meaning. As with a regular Meaning, an Event by either position that is inconsistent with the Shared Meaning has a 50% chance of destroying the Shared Meaning, but additionally, when a Shared Meaning is destroyed, there is a 50% chance that 1-4 randomly determined Diplomatic Spaces created by the Shared Meaning will be destroyed.¹³ Generally, the loss of a Shared Meaning or at least the loss of Diplomatic Spaces would be considered a failure that could trigger Enlightenment rerolls, but if a position wishes to use Enlightenment, they should inform the Concierge quickly (this is optional), before resolution; it's possible they may not care. Spaces not destroyed are otherwise unaffected.
 - ✓ “A compromise would surely help the situation; Agree to disagree but disagree to part.” – 10cc, “The Things We Do for Love” (single 1976, album 1977).¹⁴
 - Shared Meanings must be a compromise, there is no quota of contribution or domination by the Meanings of one side or the other forming the Shared Meaning and the Concierge will not enforce such.
 - ✓ Continuing the previous example: **Lennier**: It has been our secret. Now it is yours. It must be kept. **Cpt. Sheridan**: Then why break the silence now? I mean, why tell us? **Lennier**: Because changes are coming.
 - “Is it possible to draw an exact line between purposeful and non-purposeful action? A human fetus, a human asleep, or a person under the influence of drugs may show action that seems – to an observer – non-purposeful rather than purposeful. However, the observer is in no position at all to come up with the conclusion that a person is not acting purposefully, no matter how non-purposeful, meaningless, or nonsensical a person’s action may appear to him. Even an insane person or a person under the influence of drugs acts, and thereby aims at achieving 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.
 - “I go to parties sometimes until four, it’s hard to leave when you can’t find the door!” – Joe Walsh, “Life’s Been Good to Me So Far” (1978).
- Creative Sharing: Shared Meanings can be used creatively for many purposes, most of which I cannot imagine yet. Shared Meanings can be used as a form of peace treaty – the inconsistent Events would be violations of boundaries or initiating combat – and I do not think this is inappropriate because it is not the same as the Treaty activation of the Diplomatic Power (i.e. there is no game mechanical process requiring Concierge actions) and because acceptance of the valid right to existence and claims of another is the most basic shared meaning.
 - ✓ “Oh, it was a rebirth ceremony alright. It also doubles as a marriage ceremony, depending on how seriously anyone took it. Somebody got married the other day.” – Catherine Sakai (Jeffery Sinclair’s former lover) to Capt. Jeffery Sinclair (Station Commander) about the Minbari rebirth ceremony, from Babylon 5, “The Parliament of Dreams” (1994).¹⁵

For the calculating types, a Shared Meaning can still be beneficial if destroyed in that there can still be a net gain in Monads on the Diplomatic Spaces (as in a history of relationship, deeper understanding of the others), if that is the objective of establishing the Shared Meaning. But there is still the Power Activation cost and the assessed Intervention Potentials.

- ✓ “As Jim Mattis and I have many, many times said when we were in uniform: If we don’t fund the State Department properly, buy us more bullets.” – White House Chief of Staff, Gen. John Kelly (Ret.), October 12, 2017.

“It is noteworthy that human concern about human extinction takes a different form from human concern (where there is any) about the extinction of non-human species. Most humans who are concerned about the extinction of non-human species are not concerned about the individual animals whose lives are cut short in the passage to extinction, even though that is one of the best reasons to be concerned about extinction (at least in its killing form).”

The popular concern about animal extinction is usually concern for humans – that we shall live in a world impoverished by the loss of one aspect of faunal diversity, that we shall no longer be able to behold or use that species of animal. In other words, none of the typical concerns about human extinction are applied to non-human species extinction.”

– David Benatar, Better Never To Have Been: The Harm of Coming into Existence (2006), p. 197 ¹⁶

The Meaning of Extinction (and the extinction of meaning): All Diplomatic Spaces and Meanings are immediately lost when the position with which they are shared, directed toward, or associated with suffers Total Extinction (see Countdown to Extinction, 1 Resolution, p. 1462, *infra*). All Diplomatic Spaces but the one connecting the First Spaces are immediately lost when a position suffers Political Extinction and there is an immediate 50% chance for each Meaning directed to the Politically Extinct position to be lost. See the Resolution section for the conditions of extinction.

- Acts of Mercy: Is it an act of mercy when we take our beloved pets to the veterinarian for medical care or is it an act of selfishness? A shield against glimpsing the Void? Do we really care more about our pets than the extinction of non-human species that are not pets? I believe I have (literally) spent a year’s salary at the animal hospital, what or who was it all for?

- ✓ “Even the most beloved, pampered pet pooch cannot live forever.” – Rachel Feltman, “Are we reaching the limits of human life span?” Washington Post, October 6, 2016.

This is the same question that has been asked for millennia, when an evangelist (“Jesus Freaks out in the street, handing tickets out for God.” – Elton John, “Tiny Dancer” (1971)) says he is trying to save your soul. Whose soul is he really trying to save? Do you accept the argument that by saving his soul he is saving yours, or that you are saving each other?

- ✓ “He imagined that in forcing a youth to become a monk he would be offering a sacrifice acceptable to God. He used to boast of the many victims which he devoted annually to Dominic and Francis and Benedict.” – Desiderius Erasmus, as quoted in Life

and Letters of Erasmus: Lectures Delivered at Oxford 1893-4 (1899) by James Anthony Froude.

- See full feature quote, 4 Order, p. 569, *supra*.

“Using the Categorical Imperative and a few very basic assumptions, Dr. Fasan derives eleven fundamental metalaws of presumably universal validity. They are, in descending order of importance, as follow:

- No partner of Metalaw may demand an impossibility.
- No rule of Metalaw must be complied with when compliance would result in the practical suicide of the obligated race.
- All intelligent races of the universe have in principle equal rights and values.
- Every partner of Metalaw has the right of self-determination.
- Any act which causes harm to another race must be avoided.
- Every race is entitled to its own living space.
- Every race has the right to defend itself against any harmful act performed by another race.
- The principle of preserving one race has priority over the development of another race.
- In case of damage, the damager must restore the integrity of the damaged party.
- Metalegal agreements and treaties must be kept.
- To help the other race by one’s own activities is not a legal but a basic ethical principle.

Fasan’s metalaws are the beginning of a new era of metalegal development. Such principles of conduct may soon become a matter of survival; our thinking must be guided by metalegal precepts in astropolitical contexts.

When intelligent extraterrestrial life is discovered, mankind must be prepared, for in all of human history there will be but one first contact.”

– Robert Freitas, “Metalaw and Interstellar Relations,” 1977
(from the version on his website)

Mephisto’s Marriage Counseling: Metalaw is based on or accords with the general ideal of humanitarian based international relations post-WWII, post-Colonial era; as such, it seems to make agreeable sense at first reading. Application however has always turned out to be another matter entirely, due to politics, economics, and prejudices.

- ✓ “The philosophical underpinning is the Categorical Imperative, first elaborated by the 18th century German philosopher Immanuel Kant. The thrust of the Imperative, which holds for any rational being, is that no activity be undertaken unless it would be valid ‘as a principle of general legislation.’ If a particular course of action will lead to contradiction or a generally destructive result, it is proscribed by the Imperative. For example, if one contemplates murder, he asks: ‘Would it be desirable for everyone to murder?’ It clearly is not, since acceptance of murder as a general rule would result in the murderer’s own death, an inherent contradiction.” – Robert Freitas, “Metalaw and Interstellar Relations,” 1977 (from the version on his website).

Metalaw, as with any agreement or treaty, implies contractual ability, as commonly understood in Western jurisprudence; aliens who do not recognize philosophy, law (other than their own), or

do not have contractual ability (or cannot communicate with us: again, *alterity* – think bees, ants, Phase IV, the Arachnids in Starship Troopers, as opposed to the hominid Skinnies) will not recognize any treaty *or* obligation to others. Even in our own society, among adults who would be said to have contractual ability, there is frequent intentional or negligent disregard for the rights of others: We usually call them *criminals* and/or they get sued in civil court for their acts; thus we should not expect every intelligent species, individual or unit of the species, to respect even the spirit of Metalaw principles.

It may thus occur that certain spacefaring species would be deemed the equivalent of criminals among species that are able to *grok* metalaw. All of this circles around back to the question asked in *The Come As You Are Party*, 1 Combat, p. 932, *supra*: Why would we bring a gun when exploring interstellar space?

The rules of Metalaw stated above, though they sound warm and cozy in principle, do not insure interstellar peace; in fact, one can imagine many situations where two principles of Metalaw come into conflict or create a conflict – most of those situations have already been covered by science-fiction literature generally. The affirmative actions required by Metalaw insure that conflict will arise and species will involve themselves in the affairs of other species – even when taking into account that the principles of Metalaw are a logical hierarchy intended to be read and applied in descending order. Metalaw is thus more expansive than the Prime Directive in Star Trek, it goes beyond mere self-determination and non-interference.

- Ant Altruism: Metalaw seems to work on the unspoken assumption that any advanced species, or species who can understand Metalaw, will display altruism. It seems generally that we associate altruism with personhood, sapience, and abstract intelligence, for example, see the quote from Eric Michael Johnson:
 - ✓ “The researchers’ conclusion was that altruistic punishment emerged in our species through a process of gene-culture coevolution. In other words, human psychology is biologically predisposed to enforce a system of fairness, but how much we do so depends on the culture we see reflected around us. This result was later supported by another study in 2010 that developed a model explaining how even ‘selfish genes’ could promote altruistic traits.” – Eric Michael Johnson, “Human Nature and the Moral Economy,” *Scientific American* (blogs), September 23, 2013.
 - The longer feature quote is at 1 The Sidereal Stage, p. 111, *supra*.

Thus there is a fundamental quality difference between:

- 1) Altruism *as described in anthropology*, and
- 2) Altruism as a trait attributed to eusocial insects, e.g., bees, ants, termites.

The difference is the sapient concept of fairness. While bees may work and serve the hive without individual reproductive activity, *they are not the least interested in fairness*, as far as we can tell. Their altruism is for species survival and applies only to their hive. So it seems that altruism is a term misapplied to social caste insects, but maybe we haven’t invented a better, more specific term?

It is clear from the anthropology studies that Mr. Johnson cites that altruism is a geno-cultural trait of advanced *human* intelligence (and as Daniel Dennett points out, human and person are locally co-extensive, or nearly so, see feature quote, 2 Diplomacy, p. 1110, *supra*);

can we or should we assume that would be the case among sapient and/or technologically advanced aliens? We have hundreds of examples from nature of apparently altruistic behavior, the most famous of which are the hundreds of reported instances where humpback whales have interfered with orcas' (aka "killer whales") hunting and prevented them from killing members of other marine and mammal species (e.g., see Jason Bittle, "Why Humpback Whales Protect Other Animals From Killer Whales," National Geographic, August 8, 2016, the picture at the top shows a humpback whale apparently protecting a crabeater seal from an orca). There are many videos on YouTube of unlikely interspecies tolerance, friendships or even alloparenting – *mainly by animals under human care* – though there are examples of wild animals interspecies co-parenting, such as the lioness who helped the tigress with cubs.

- ✓ The altruism of Metalaw traces out the backdoor to Immanuel Kant's Categorical Imperatives: If you were to ask which sorts of acts would be desirable as principle of general legislation or universal law, altruistic acts and general fairness would be near the top of the list. Put another way, if in contemplating an altruistic act, one were to, as Kant urges, ask "Would it be desirable for everyone to commit altruistic acts?" It clearly is since acceptance of altruism as a general rule would result in additional acts of altruism to the probable benefit of civilization (or least likely to be detrimental to civilization). See Immanuel Kant feature quote and Universal Legislator, 2 Dreamtime, p. 150, *supra*.

"Not to be outdone, U.S. Twitter users responded with a similar mix of mindless put-downs. Proof that missing the point is truly universal."

– Emile Rauhala, The Washington Post, September 28, 2015 ¹⁷

Endnotes.

¹ Commentary: The preceding quote followed from a discussion of metalaw in Clifford Simak's 1963 short story, "New Folks Home." Metalaw is a term coined in 1956 by attorney Andrew Haley "to refer to his hypothesis regarding the proposed existence of fundamental legal precepts of theoretically universal application to all intelligences, both human and hypothesized intelligent extraterrestrial life" (from Wikipedia article, "Metalaw" retrieved July 14, 2018). The Prime Directive, of course, is a direct reaction against 500 years of European colonialism.

² Citation & Commentary: "BEFORE YOU THINK ABOUT LEAVING A NASTY COMMENT PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING. This happened in Yellowstone National Park where it is illegal to get within 25 yards of a fox or a badger, or interfere with them in any way. If I had interfered I would have been arrested, but before that could happen about 50 other photographers would have stopped me because both they and I know as much as we were really sad about the situation, badgers have rights too. They also have to eat, and feed their babies. That's how nature works whether we like it or not." – disclaimer for YouTube video, "A fox and a badger fight in Yellowstone – the whole story," posted by Judy Lehmborg YouTube Channel, February 24, 2015 (all caps in original).

- ✓ This is what the Prime Directive would look like in actual practice, if it were stringently followed, instead of a plot device. Before getting sappy about the Prime Directive, I recommend watching this video.

³ Citation: Babylon 5: **Sheridan speaking to Kosh**: The Narn and the Centauri are fighting! **Kosh**: They are a dying people, you should let them pass. **Sheridan**: Who, the Narn or the Centauri? **Kosh**: Yes.

⁴ Citation: **Gen. Heydrich**: Yes, he told me a story about a man he'd known all his life. A boyhood friend. This man hated his father, loved his mother fiercely. The mother was devoted to him, but the father used to beat him, demeaned him, disinherited him. Anyway, this friend grew to manhood and he was still in his 30s when the mother died. This mother who had nurtured and protected him. She died. The man stood as they lowered her casket and tried to cry, but no tears came. The man's father lived to a very extended old age. Withered away and died when the son was in his 50s, I think, and at the father's funeral, much to his son's surprise, he could not control his tears. He was wailing, sobbing. He was apparently inconsolable. Lost even. That was the story [Freidrich] Kritzinger

told me. ... The man had been driven his whole life by his father. When the mother died, that was a loss. When the father died, when the hate had lost its object, then the man's life was empty. Over. ... That was Kritzingner's warning.

Col. Eichmann: What? That we should not hate the Israelites?

Gen. Heydrich: No, that it should not so fill our lives that when they are gone, we have nothing left to live for. So says the story. I will not miss them. – from the movie *Conspiracy* (2001).

- ✓ *Conspiracy* – where the participants calmly discuss the Final Solution as a bureaucratic, legal, administrative problem – is one of the few movies worth a second watching. It is heavy in formalities and dialogue and is an interesting study of a combination of threats, manipulations, and appeals used by Heydrich to bring about 'agreement' on the Final Solution and interagency cooperation. It also shows Eichmann as more than just a train dispatcher. It must have been the most amazing task for the actors to portray this without a hint of horror, but that is the acting trade. Prior to the movie, I did not realize that the Chelmno camp was operating and Operation Reinhard death camps (Treblinka, Belżec, and Sobibór) were under construction *before* the Wannsee Conference in January 1942 (and the conference participants in the movie were also surprised).
- ✓ There is some objection that gassing was not discussed at the Wannsee Conference because it is not in the transcript of the conference, but it is portrayed in the movie *Conspiracy*. But at the same time, it is widely admitted that Eichmann sanitized and heavily edited the transcript of the conference, so how can we know? How can we be sure that it wasn't edited out or discussed outside the meeting during breaks? Anyway, all portrayals of the Wannsee Conference must be fictional drama and must pick and choose their points.

⁵ Citation: **Clara:** Since when do you care about the Doctor? **Missy:** Since always. Since the Cloister Wars. Since the night he stole the moon and the President's wife. Since he was a little girl. One of those was a lie. Can you guess which one? **Clara:** He's not your friend. You keep trying to kill him. **Missy:** He keeps trying to kill me. It's sort of our texting. We've been at it for ages. **Clara:** Mmm. Must be love. **Missy:** Oh, don't be disgusting. We're Time Lords, not animals. Try, nano-brain, to rise above the reproductive frenzy of your noisy little food chain, and contemplate friendship. A friendship older than your civilisation, and infinitely more complex. **Clara:** So the Doctor is your bezzy mate and I'm supposed to believe that you've turned good? – Dr. Who, "The Magician's Apprentice" (2015).

- ✓ **Later: Davros:** You have slaughtered billions of my children, as I have slaughtered billions of your race. We have exhausted the conventional means of communication. – Dr. Who, "The Witch's Familiar" (2015).

⁶ Commentary: Lennier's description of the Minbari population decline problem is strikingly parallel to Loren Eiseley's description in *The Modern Dilemma* of the 14th and 15th Century worldview of scholasticism in England: That the greatest of humanity lived in the ancient times (e.g., the Biblical prophets, Hellenistic philosophers, Church Fathers and Roman writers) and wrote down all the wisdom that was available to mankind, and each generation since has been less and less, such that the world is in twilight in the 14th and 15th Centuries (the Fifth Monarchist thought that the English Civil War portended the end of the world in 1666). It is also apparent from Lennier's description that the Minbari do not believe in or practice artificial reproduction that is often described in other science-fiction stories (see *Brave New World*, 5 Taxation & Census, p. 343, *supra*). Would they choose extinction or change?

⁷ Commentary: One could think of all sorts of outlandish pulp-fiction reasons; for example, the British tanker was carrying a terrorist-made biological agent to be released at a European port. Maybe there was an alien plague; would you go back in time and sink all ships leaving Caffa in 1346 A.D.? And why hasn't the Doctor done that already? Maybe the British government knows the reason for the American action, but cannot disclose it, and thus there is a puzzled, indignant public outcry in England over the hostile American action against their ally. Maybe the British government first said that the tanker exploded for unknown reasons, but the truth got out somehow?

⁸ Commentary: People who deride the perceived 'moral superiority' of the United States have a shallow view of history and perception. People understood that we had defeated the Nazis, opposed the Soviet Union, had fought the German Imperialists in WWI (though we arrived late), and had fought a Civil War over abolition of slavery. The United States was a huge power comprised of the descendants of immigrants who shook off the European systems. The model of the United States had triumphed, and was equated with moral superiority. Perception is power.

⁹ Commentary: Charitable promises have limited enforceability at law (i.e. specific performance, *estoppel*) if others relied upon them and were harmed by the reliance.

- ✓ "The promissory estoppel theory upholds the gift if the facts of the case clearly show that the charity changed its position in detrimental reliance upon the promise being honored. If this occurs, the donor is legally estopped to deny enforceability. This is stated in Section 90(1) of the Restatement of Contracts. No matter what state law applied, charities were usually reluctant to sue to enforce defaulted gift promises.

They didn't want to create a negative litigious image. And most of the time donors honored their gift pledges. But this all changed with the 2008 economic downturn, financial scandals, and investment rip-offs." – from Miami Herald article (original no longer available online), reported by Todd W. Sicity on Appraiser Workshops blog, January 3, 2012.

The murkiness of the subject (and various factual possibilities) makes it a favorite of law school review articles:

- ✓ "In another much smaller group of cases, the courts endeavor to leap the consideration hurdle by finding that the various subscribers to a charitable project make a multi-lateral contract among themselves and that their mutual promises, each running to the charity, are consideration for each other. In *Higert v. Trustees of Indiana Asbury University*, a typical fact situation is presented. The promisors were citizens living in or near the city of Greencastle, Ind. The promisee was the already organized Indiana Asbury University. The amount to be raised was \$15,000 to be used as a building fund, and each subscriber, including the defendant, promised to give 'one per cent on the amount of property held by us, severally, in said city and township, as shown by the tax duplicate of said county. ...' The court, in finding for the plaintiff promisee, cited with approval the reasoning found in the *California case of Christian College v. Hendley*: 'If a number of persons subscribe to a paper in which they promise to contribute money for the accomplishment of an object of interest to all, as the erection of a building for a college, and which object cannot be accomplished, save by their common performance, their mutual promises constitute mutual obligations, and are a sufficient consideration to support the promise of each.'" – T.C. Billig, "Problem of Consideration In Charitable Subscriptions," Cornell Law Review, Volume 12, Issue 4, June 1927.

The truth is that most charitable giving now is not truly charitable (as in receiving nothing material in return); the pattern has been set in televised and other charitable drives of promoting the idea of receiving something in return (e.g., gift packs, autographed items, chance to win, etc.) for the 'donation' and thus are really sales at a greatly inflated price. Those who provide the materials and services to be given away are somewhat more charitable, but often, this cost can be used to reduce tax liability to the government and as advertising or promotion, so they are receiving a benefit as well. Most common charity is thus, sadly, not really charity in the modern age.

¹⁰ Commentary: In July 2019, Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher Trevor Williams and his wife adopted a newborn baby girl, adding one to a family that already included a toddler son. During the Pirates broadcast on July 14, 2019, Trevor Williams told the reporter that while his toddler son was excited to have a new baby sister, he was mad because she can't talk to him yet. Trevor commented humorously, "Let's wait a couple of years and check back on that!"

¹¹ Commentary & Citation: According to Ambassador G'Kar in the Babylon 5 television series, every race in the universe has something equivalent to Swedish Meatballs. "I suspect it is one of those great universal mysteries which will never be explained, or that would drive you mad if you knew the truth." – G'Kar, Babylon 5, "Walkabout" (1996). I have no idea what that would be for the Pakmarah, and I don't think anyone would want to ask.

¹² Commentary: I personally admire and hold as the highest ideal, collaborative intuitive couples, such as Lewis Padgett which was the pseudonym used by the married writing team of C.L. Moore and Henry Kuttner or Nobel Prize Winners Pierre and Marie Curie. I have never found one with an intuitive grasp.

¹³ Commentary: I have never had any indication that a cat can force itself to purr, thus, when a cat purrs, it is for authentic reasons, for whatever reasons cats purr. It would never occur to them, unlike human friends, strangers, and significant others, to be inauthentic in their relations. We love cats and dogs for this reason, their simplicity.

¹⁴ Commentary & Citation: The beginning of the official video for the song, made in the 70s, is a real artifact. Not only does the video quality remind you of how television was in the 70s, but it features a conversation between two parents and their adult daughter from some daytime soap that is a true artifact of the time. My first reaction in watching it was, Wow, how does this guy get to tell his daughter that it's time for her to find a boyfriend now and then go on to suggest who she can date? It's not his choice. It's a display of the traditional patriarchal dominance.

- ✓ The first of the original 10cc videos I saw years ago was for "I'm Not in Love," featuring scenes from 1970s soaps as introductions and video along with the music. That video seems to have been removed from YouTube now (probably some stupid dispute) and replaced with Vevo videos, but a number of other late 1970s 10cc videos remain that begin with and include 1970s daytime soaps.

¹⁵ Commentary: Oh this is beautiful – to Babylon 5 fans who know the whole structure of the story: DeLenn was symbolically married to Sinclair in the first season, and literally married Sheridan in the fourth season. If I kept going, I'd have to tell the whole story arc... ☺

¹⁶ Citation: cf. Sixth Mass Extinction Event excerpt, Taxation & Census, *supra*.

¹⁷ Citation: "A gentleman will not insult me, and no man not a gentleman can insult me." – Frederick Douglass.