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“The smarter and more sophisticated we get, the brighter animals appear to be. That is natural enough. The smarter a person or society gets, the less individual people need to have dumb things around them to lord it over and feel superior to. That works with the relationships between different kinds of humans just as it works between humans and animals. We have come to a time when we can emotionally tolerate animals being cognitive so, by decree, as well as by degree, they are.”

– Roger Caras, *A Cat is Watching* (1989), pp. 194-195 ¹

Times Intertwined: Roger Caras was VP of Stanley Kubrick’s production company from 1965 to 1969 and was involved in the 2001: A Space Odyssey film project with Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke. During this time, he was also a special naturalist correspondent for The Today Show, starting in 1964; he replaced Cleveland Amory who was fired from The Today Show in 1963 for airing extreme (and unapproved) views on animal rights and sport hunting. I read books by both in my youth, but did not know their histories were intertwined.

- ✓ The interesting question is whether that would happen today? Give it a thought. The pro-sport-hunting lobby doesn’t have the same weight and media (the Public Space) has shifted such that extreme views are now the norm (it sells advertising) rather than the exception on the airwaves, social media, and all the internet places where people post. People with important names still do get fired, but not for the same reason.

“Do we, when we gratify a cat’s obvious desire to be the ultimate hedonistic materialist, deprive it of the need for cognition and therefore of cognition itself? We cannot answer that question, for our own cognitive powers fall short of the task.” – Roger Caras, *A Cat is Watching* (1989), p. 13

Animal Intelligence: A similar question has been asked of dogs: Are domesticated dogs more or less intelligent than wolves?² Although foxes were domesticated early, modern dogs are not descended from them, it is probable that foxes were found too skittish to hunt and guard.

- ✓ When interacting with an animal, you have to go at their pace. You can lead a pet or semi-feral cat to food and shelter, but you can’t make them eat or go into the shelter, regardless of your intentions or the wisdom of doing so. With some effort, you can learn their ‘language’ and earn their trust, but even then, you cannot make them do – short of being mean, and that doesn’t work either with cats – what they don’t want to do. We had a similar discussion in a philosophy course once on whether “love thy neighbor” is a command and what sort of a thing it is; if not a command. I cannot command you to “love thy neighbor,” none of us has that power. If there is a God, it experiences the same in dealing with humans as when we interact with animals.

Perception: It seems that for millennia, humans assumed that animal sensory perception was as good as or superior to human perception in all ways.³

This is very likely the origin of Plato’s Allegory of the Cave; the question: what in Ancient Greece would have been known to Plato that would make him think that humans are not capable of perceiving the full range of reality? It is very likely that Plato thought that animal senses were

better than human senses, and if true, reasoned that humans are experiencing a shadow of reality. Like being chained in a cave, facing the back, watching shadows dance across the wall from a flickering campfire (see Plato, “Allegory of the Cave”).

- ✓ “Why cats were given such terrific peripheral vision when they spend so much time looking down their noses is difficult to understand.” – Roger Caras.

Modern knowledge holds that humans have ten times more cones (receptors) in our eyes than cats do, meaning that humans see more hues and see the world more sharply than cats do; though cats have better peripheral vision (a wider range of vision) and detect movement better, consistent with their role as predators (and depend more on their other senses which actually are superior to human senses). There are many fine articles and image examples to be found on the internet comparing what a human sees to what a cat probably sees. These examples are possible because of advanced image manipulation technology and because *humans can see better than cats*. What does a cat see when it looks at a computer, or anything natural or human-made in the world? It sees what a cat sees and not what a human sees. *See?*

- ✓ What does our music sound like to them who hear things we cannot? We can also imagine, with less certainty, the intelligence and cognitive processing of cats. Cats remind us somewhat of eternal infants.

Were we to encounter an alien intelligence greater than ours – and it seems quite likely – we would not be able to fully understand their level of intelligence and cognition – imagine a plant trying to make First Contact with cats? A cat cannot be made to see what a human sees, nor can a cat be made to understand human cognition.

- ✓ “You cannot expect everything even from the friendliest cat. It is still a cat.” – Cleveland Amory.

The greater alien intelligence would eventually be able to model our sense and cognition, in general terms at least, like we do for cats and dogs.⁴ It would be impossible for us to reciprocate (see *a priori* discussion, Crack in the Temple, 1 Beginnings, p. 27, *supra*), just as a cat cannot see the world in human sharpness and hues. And this frightens us because we sit at the top of our little heap of dirt, looking mostly down instead of up.

- ✓ Standing on a pile of dirt looking down is precisely the point of the venerable childhood game, “king of the hill,” and all of the adult metaphors based on it. Or in the case of my youth memory, we used piles of snow left by the school district snow plows after they cleared the concrete playground, the snow turned soon to slick ice.
- **Pulling the Blinds:** One of my favorite perception questions – and I do not know where I first encountered this, but I am certain that I am not the originator – is how could someone who is a (real) psychic (as in extra sensory perception) explain to a non-psychic what it is like to be a psychic? The analogy I recall was, how can you explain to a person who has been blind since birth what is a color?
 - ✓ I watched a scene in some fictional romance movie (I don’t remember the title if I ever knew it) where the boy explained color to the blind teenaged girl (his love interest) by use of textures – it’s a great love scene, I guess, but I didn’t think that worked particularly well, but it was an interesting approach.

- ✓ In the Amazon rotoscope animated series *Undone* (2019), they seem to hint at this; the protagonist is a deaf girl who has an implant and a hearing aid. When her hearing aid is out, all you hear are muffled, indistinct voices; the story is about those who can see beyond reality (maybe it's about progressive schizophrenia, what is the difference?), which would be analogous, as they suggest in the story, to a deaf person hearing for the first time; she says she “never realized silence was so loud.” (Episode 2).⁵

Babylon 5 in several instances touches on these issues in a setting where part of the recent backstory is the sudden appearance of verifiable psychics in the 22nd Century (who call mundane people “blips”). How would we model a greater alien intelligence then?

- ✓ “For someone who is color-blind, the chapter on the cat’s eyesight, I am sure, is one thing, quite different from what it would be for someone with what we like to think of as a full range of color vision. My chapter about hearing can be read by a hearing person or a deaf person or a person in between where most of us dwell.” – Roger Caras, *A Cat is Watching*, p. 219.

In the old days, there were articles in *Dragon* magazine discussing this problem in *Dungeons & Dragons*: How to play deity NPCs and other NPCs of greater intelligence, wisdom and age than the normal mortal player characters. Among the advice I recall, the DM should assume the superior intelligence NPCs would know things that they should not possibly or reasonably (by our standards) know, and they should be able to react swiftly, intelligently and proactively to any tricks or actions by the PCs, based on their superior foresight and intellect.

- ✓ “A cat knows how to anticipate. If they didn’t, they could never hunt birds or mice or other sportingly fleet prey. They can anticipate and perhaps plot a prey’s trajectory just as a ... retriever can plot the arc and descent of a tennis ball or Frisbee, but a cat can’t understand the concept of anticipation and therefore is unable to allow for it in other species. So this is where we have them almost surely. Cats virtually always underestimate human intelligence just as we, perhaps, underestimate theirs.” – Roger Caras, *A Cat is Watching*, p. 17.

“It is well known that Sir James Frazer, the distinguished British student of primitive magic and religion, makes a great point of the fact that all over the world magical practice seems to resolve itself into two principles of thought: that things once in contact with each other continue to act at a distance, or, second, that like things produce like results, that is, that the imitation, with proper ceremonial, of a natural phenomenon by the magician will initiate, for example, a real rainstorm.

Concealed behind these two widespread branches of magic, Frazer believed, was a single spurious ‘scientific’ principle which was common to the primitive and untutored mind. That principle he proclaimed as a mistaken Law of Sympathy, the conception ‘that things act on each other at a distance through a secret sympathy.’ Magic, as viewed by Frazer, is thus a kind of falsely conceived science based upon a naive projection of human desire upon the exterior universe.”

– Loren Eiseley, *The Modern Dilemma* (1962), Kindle Loc. 328-330

The Slide-ways View: Frazier’s view seems to be the current common view of physics and psychiatry. Consider the Frazer analysis of primitive magic (*ut supra*) in relation to Henri Frankfort’s mythopoeic thinking quote, discussed briefly in 1 Temporal Technology, p. 808, *supra*.

The game rules do not assume the existence of any sensory abilities beyond those which existed in the species’ primal state, and which have been subsequently enhanced by technology (i.e. the game does not assume the existence of psychic abilities unless specified by a Fundamental Reality). And in the fine tradition of most science-fiction trope, the aliens – the races in the game – are assumed to have the same sensory ranges and organs as humans, or at least animals on Earth, which is part of the process of placing them on the same galactic shelf as humans (see discussion, 1 Technology and 1 Diplomacy, *supra*), and saving a lot of production costs in movies.

The point of systems such as radar, night-vision systems, and infrared cameras, microphones and listening devices, is to gather information from electromagnetic spectrums above and below our normal sensory range or at a spatial distance beyond our sensory range, and reduce, display the results within our sensory range in a way that is useful. Therefore, even with ‘advanced technology’ to expand our ability to collect data, the basic sensory package of the human species has not changed, the basic human does not have any means of naturally sensing and collecting data about the environment that we did not have a million years ago. The same goes with the ability to process the information received, we have superfast computers, we still have the same cave-brain.

- ✓ “...We are too content with our sensory extensions, with the fulfillment of that ice age mind that began its journey amidst the cold of vast tundras and that pauses only briefly before its leap into space.” – Loren Eiseley, “The Hidden Teacher” (1969).
- Majik: Magic always refers to the improbable or impossible non-causal occurrences based on our current knowledge and understanding (see Intonation of the Three, 1 Technology, p. 688, *supra*). The idea of ‘magic’ suggests divine intervention and/or the operation of forces which we cannot understand, but which presumably are accessible to us.⁶ Like quantum entanglement and quantum tunneling.
 - ✓ See discussion of intuition in You Already Knew It and Improbables, 4 Colleges, pp. 505-506, *supra*.

My cats see things that appear on my computer screen, but no matter how they bat at it, they can’t touch it, stop it, or catch it and eat it. Can’t smell it, the kitten meowing on my screen has no smell. We understand what it is on the screen and why we cannot not touch it; we have interface tools (e.g., the mouse) that allows us to ‘touch’ what is on the screen. But to my cats, it might as well be (and probably is) magic; this is not dissimilar to *a priori* being a function of sapience as discussed in Crack in the Temple, 1 Beginnings, p. 27, *supra*.

Understanding is a relative matter, a matter of perceptions, and there is already a suggestion of ‘magic’ in the game in line with Clarke’s Law, in the form of *Uber Alles*. From our perspective, the technology of the 2nd and 3rd Eras might as well be magic, and thus the *Uber Alles* are able to ‘grant’ abilities upon reaching a new Era, without need for detailed explanation (which would be impossible given our current state of understanding). It might be possible to introduce into the game a concept of ‘actual’ magic which is not technological (as in *Uber Alles*) or biological based (which would probably be called telepathy or psionics instead of magic), but again, it would require extensive and careful consideration beforehand by the players and the Concierge.

- ✓ Star Wars is a fantasy story in a science-fiction setting. Nearly everything in Star Wars would transfer one for one to a classic high fantasy movie with dragons, flying castles, planar portals, good and evil. The Force is just magic in a science-fiction setting; it operates essentially the same way magic does when imagined by modern technological-influenced fantasy writers, it happens without explanation or cause to certain special people at important places in the story. It substitutes for technology and allows characters to know in advance things they could not know otherwise. It is however, significantly different than primitive concepts of magic.

Magic is a pre-technological concept. Very few now have an understanding of magic in the pre-technological sense.⁷ In most fantasy, especially fantasy role playing games, magic is a crude substitute for technology effects, without any internal logic or justification. I have long suspected that our pre-technological ancestors would not have understood magic as a personal servant or tool at the bidding of the sage, diviner or caster. Nor would normal humans have been able to imbue magic – divine power – into normal artifacts or natural objects. The way our pre-technological ancestors viewed magic and the way we treat magic in fantasy are both very revealing of different worldviews at both ends of 2,000 years of humanity. There is a deference, fear, and mystery to magic that has been lost and replaced by egocentric, materialism, and vainglorious individual empowerment.

- ✓ Curiously, our current understanding of quantum entanglement suggests that our primitive ancestors were – somewhat correct – though in ways they could have hardly imagined. The implications of quantum send a shiver through our consciousness and modern worldview.

Some sort of “techno-mage cult” – which has had some popularity in science-fiction literature – might be possible in GGDM. Personally, I have never been entranced with the techno-mage idea or compelled by the visions of such presented on television (e.g., Babylon 5). Techno-mage cult ideas share the same root as Western Esotericism, attempting to return enchantment to the future technological worlds of science-fiction, and projecting into humanity’s future, a return of ‘knowledge’ rejected by science, rationality, and modern intellectuals.

- Farsight: It is possible, within the scope and course of a game, for species to develop profound, new, heretofore unknown biological-based sensory abilities (i.e. telepathy,⁸ empathy, ESP), biological-based abilities to manipulate matter and energy (e.g., telekinetics, psychokinetics, pyrokinetic) or biological based abilities to affect the behavior of other creatures (i.e. mind-control, coercion, hypnotic suggestion), either individually (i.e. special talents, the term Robert Heinlein used in *Starship Troopers* (1959)) or as a group effort (i.e. a meta-concert, the name that Julian May gave to group focused mental powers in the *Pliocene Saga* (1981)).⁹ Such a development must or will likely become part of the greater game story arc.

It is possible that such developments might be included as part of the *Uber Alles* for the 2nd and 3rd Era, or it could accompany the transition from the pre-Interstellar Era to the 1st Era, for example, the sudden appearance of verifiable telepaths coincided with interstellar travel in Babylon 5 and were critical underpinning to the entire story arc. It is a development, however, that the players and the Concierge would need to work out in some detail before being implemented since the game mechanics don’t really support it. A psychic is a walking causality violation, things ‘appear’ to them before they ‘appear’ in the universe. Such new abilities can never be allowed to become all powerful or to unbalance the game but could be fun.

- ✓ “Some of the intelligence people I’ve talked to know that remote viewing works, although they still block further research on it, since they claim it is not yet as good as satellite photography. But it seems to me that it would be a hell of a cheap radar system. And if the Russians have it and we don’t, we are in serious trouble.” – Congressman Charles Rose, Chairman, House Sub-Committee on Intelligence Evaluation and Oversight, Omni magazine, July 1979.¹⁰

Calling it “a hell of a cheap radar system” demonstrates a stunning ignorance of the phenomena and typical Congressional political thinking. But the Congressman may have been repeating what he and his colleagues were told when they questioned the funding (i.e. they were manipulated); in 1979 we cannot let the Ruskies get something we don’t have, no matter how crazy it sounds! The world hung by a thread, dependent entirely on NATO’s deterrence power, the U.S. Navy and Air Force SAC; and the needle could not be allowed to move even a tick in favor of the Warsaw Pact. What is far more interesting is that a Congressman was commenting on remote viewing in a 1979 magazine article; the Star Gate program was closed and declassified in 1995. Program documents are online at the CIA archives.¹¹

People misunderstand the CIA’s brief interest in psychic abilities during the Cold War; it’s not that the CIA or the government thinks there are reliable and controllable psychic abilities in the population or individuals (the G-men probably thought it was a bunch of malarkey), but rather, that if there are, just in case they were wrong, the CIA wanted to be there to take control and keep it secret, keep it from the Ruskies. Hence, the CIA reportedly funded experiments at Stanford Research Institute and interviewed researchers and subjects.

“In this story humanity has been selecting for super intelligence. However there are always some throwbacks born – ‘norms’ as they are called. The norms are always at a disadvantage, not just because of their lower intelligence quotient but also because of the restrictions and discrimination that they face. One norm, a poet, rises up as a voice for the oppressed and becomes a Moses for his kind – asking ‘Pharaoh’ (the government of the su-norms) to build spaceships so he and his people can leave Earth and have [a] place where they can be free. Will the World Council agree? Or will the norms be second-class citizens forever?”

– Summary by Bev Hankins (March 1, 2013) of Joseph Green’s short story “Let My People Go” (1973) on My Reader’s Block (blog)

Let My People Go: “Let My People Go” might be the source of or inspiration for arrogant telepaths in the Babylon 5 television series who call normal people ‘blips’ and treat them as second-class citizens. Babylon 5 simply flipped the numbers making the ‘su-norms’ (in the form of telepaths) the minority but they still nearly ended up ruling the planet.

Generations of intellectuals have considered and writers have toyed with the concepts and consequences of reliable and operational telepathic abilities among humans and aliens. Most of these musings have not ended with a favorable conclusion, much having to do with the wall between the sexes. Are men ready to let women into what they really think, want, and feel, and vice versa? To experience (mentally only) what it is like to be the other sex? Are we ready for a new telepathic priests and ruling class or are we willing to live in the fish tank of a communal mind? It is clear that widespread telepathic abilities would require an entire different and new framework, a new culture that is centuries or millennia away from today.

- A Bowl of Biskies: If any human population demonstrated an evolutionarily significant developmental advantage over the general population, one of two courses would occur:
 - ✓ The group would either become the rulers or controllers of a significant part of civilization or be marginalized, controlled or eliminated by the current government, or ...
 - ✓ The group would assume control of humanity and thereafter, either find a way to evolve the rest of humanity to their level, or eliminate mainstream humanity, or eventually be overthrown, marginalized, controlled or eliminated.

Marginalization can take many forms, including, in an interstellar setting, departing into the unknown to found new colonies far away from the current governments. This is a theme which was explored in *Babylon 5* via the telepaths, especially the last season, and various short stories – such as the one where a Moses-like leader of normal kids (*ut supra*) wants to lead his people to a new planet, or self-imposed or forced exile, such as Khan Noonein Singh (can you still hear Captain Kirk screaming his name?) and the Auguments in *Star Trek*.

- ✓ “Let My People Go” (1973) by Joseph Green and “A Bowl of Biskies Makes a Growing Boy” (1973) by Raymond F. Jones were part of a ‘young persons’ anthology compiled by editor Roger Elwood called The Other Side of Tomorrow (1973). Many people seem to remember reading it long ago – as I did sometime around 1980 – but don’t remember the title or titles of the stories; there are at least three asked and answered questions relating to this on SciFi StackExchange (the last from 2016) and I found another on Google Answers (from 2005). Mark L. Irons on his site (article “Sick Tomorrows,” rdrop.com), and some others on StackExchange and Goodreads have commented that the stories are very dark and disturbing for anyone, let alone young readers; rather, the collection is *about* young people in dystopian futures but not very suitable *for* young people to read. So now you know why I am nutso...

“Asymmetric Advantage: an asymmetric advantage goes beyond a normal advantage of knowledge into the realm of having asymmetric information and knowing things others do not. For example, others may be aware of certain operations of our business, but only we can actually do those things. If we have an operational advantage we have an asymmetric advantage. A Patent can [be] used to establish this kind of advantage, but not necessary if the advantage takes skill and discipline others find it difficult to achieve or retain long term. Asymmetric advantage is based on knowing something that creates value or has an edge that others don’t. An asymmetric advantage is protected and maintained through the distinctions between knowledge of a concept vs. actually being able to do it.

The Illusion of Asymmetric Insight is useful to maintain an asymmetric advantage because people perceive their knowledge of others to be greater than what it really is. The overconfidence of others is also helpful, since a person’s subjective confidence in his or her judgments and knowledge is greater than the objective accuracy of those judgments, and overconfidence is even asymmetric: this is more true when confidence is high. Disruptive competitive edges are based on having an asymmetric advantage.”

– Mike Shell, “Asymmetric Advantage,” *Asymmetry Observations* (asymmetryobservations.com), captured June 26, 2019

De-Mystification: Mysticism and mystical arts is humanity’s natural drive for the asymmetrical advantage. So is magic and telepathy. Humans have never been satisfied with the empirical world; there has to be more, there has to be a way around it. When we could make up stories to explain creation and the phenomenal world around us (i.e. mythopoeic thought), mysticism and such were natural fits and adjuncts to that world. Empiricism has proven corrosive to mysticism, tearing away veils, pretense of learning, making squares fit into squares and nothing more and nothing less, all measured and explained and testable, repeatable. The sociocultural reaction was Western Esotericism and Theosophy, various Hermetic Orders and neo-Pagan movements.

The classic socially-sanctioned asymmetric advantage is the licensed practitioner – sorry but your New York City psychic friend probably isn’t licensed or insured, for which entry is exclusive and for which the group of licensed practitioners are granted practice monopoly over an important practice in our civilization; e.g., medical doctors, lawyers, engineers. You know, or think you know, what a doctor, lawyer or engineer does, but you cannot do those things (legally, anyways) and probably lack the skill or discipline to even try (e.g., Oneal Ron Morris, 2011, Natalia Jiminez, 2020). What they know and their exclusive right to practice, combined with the needs and procedures of our civilization, creates value. *De-mystification* (as well as burgeoning need and technology) has cut into this slightly, creating a class of unlicensed staff para-professionals, more than clerical workers, who work under the licensed professional, e.g., paralegals, noting that such is the critical practice of medicine that physician’s assistants, nurses, therapist, and such are usually required to be certified and licensed but still must be supervised by a physician.

- ✓ Can you imagine someone suing their psychic advisor or astrologer for malpractice in the same way they might sue their financial advisor, stock broker, mutual fund manager, lawyer, CPA, doctor, architect, or doctor?
 - In Babylon 5, certified human telepaths were forced into a sort of ‘licensed guild’ called PsyCorps for the purposes of control and self-policing, but in fact, it became a highly cohesive organization that took over the government. Those who refused to join were forced to take medications to suppress their abilities (e.g., Ivanova’s mother). PsyCorps telepaths were allowed to charge fees for their commercial services during interrogations, investigations, explorations, and business negotiations; I assume they were barred from casinos, the stock market, baseball, and certain professions, so by dint of their psychic abilities (which they did not seek or want, like being born) they were excluded from normal socioeconomic existence, forced into PsyCorps. I assume they could be sued for malpractice ... but what is the point of it? They were above the law; *their only profession is psychic – imagine your only profession is male or female?*

Asymmetric advantage is eroded by *imperfect execution* and *cognitive limitations*: Even if a batter in baseball could read the pitcher’s mind perfectly, he still might not get a hit because pitchers frequently don’t execute their pitches; in fact, in that case, the worse the pitcher is, the less useful the psychic ability of the batter! The batter might be hit in the head by a bad pitch because he is not looking for where the pitch is, but where it is supposed to be due to his psychic abilities.

- ✓ “The first test came on March 21, 1918. The British had long known that the blow would fall on their front, and even the exact date had been learned. But a surprise can be achieved in method as well as time or place, and no one in General Gough’s Fifth Army

had any conception of the havoc which would soon be wrought.” – Lynn Montross, *War Through the Ages* (1960, 3rd Ed. p 741), discussing the first use by the Germans of infiltration tactics that were invented by a French army captain (WWI *Sturmtruppen*).

Similarly, the Tetris-like falling tile game Hashira provides a preview on the right side of the next three tiles that will fall on the board. I have been undecided as to which results in better play: To take the cognitive moment to glance over and see the next three tiles, so that I can play the current falling tiles more effectively, or to use all of my cognitive speed to react to the current set of falling tiles?

- ✓ That is, even if a psychic can see the future, there is significant cognition that is used in the process and in processing the information (which may not have complete underpinning at that moment, drama fiction loves to use that) as opposed to simply, naturally best reacting to what is happening without precognition of the moment?¹²

In the game Hashira (or any Tetris-like falling tile game) the increasing speed of the game forces the player from the former to the latter; at some point with the board space significantly filled, space shrinking fast, and tiles falling faster, there is no time at the end for precognition of the next set of falling tiles. The question then is whether early game precognition extends the time to that point when it is not possible to glance over at the preview of the next set of tiles; theoretically the final scores should provide the answer, but that result has been inconsistent.

- Magical Thinking: “Men often become what they believe themselves to be. If I believe I cannot do something, it makes me incapable of doing it. But when I believe I can, then I acquire the ability to do it even if I didn’t have it in the beginning.” – Mahatma Gandhi.¹³
 - ✓ Cf. “For a strong adversary (corps) the opposition of twenty-four squadrons and twelve guns ought not to have appeared very serious, but in war the psychological factors are often decisive. An adversary who feels inferior is in reality so.” – Field Marshal Carl Gustav Baron Von Mannerheim, “Father of Modern Finland.”

Which of the above represents mystical thinking as opposed to practical observation (or even a Kantian synthetic *a priori* proposition)? The problem with most motivational quotes is that that they contain an element of magical thinking, some more openly, some more disguised. Motivational quotes usually appeal to our childish sense of the world, where God watches over each and every moment of our lives, the world cares about just us, and things we need or want badly just appear for no particular cause (Santa, Easter Bunny, Tooth Fairy, our birthdays) or because we *really wanted it*. Motivational quotes appeal to that time when we (most of us) experienced unconditional love from our parents (however short that may have been); most are of the same ilk as cargo cults:

- ✓ “...the belief which began among Melanesians in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that various ritualistic acts such as the building of an airplane runway will result in the appearance of material wealth, particularly highly desirable Western goods (i.e., ‘cargo’), via Western airplanes. ... In attempts to get cargo to fall by parachute or land in planes or ships again, islanders imitated the same practices they had seen the soldiers, sailors, and airmen use. Cult behaviors usually involved mimicking the day-to-day activities and dress styles of US soldiers, such as performing parade ground drills with wooden or salvaged rifles. The islanders carved headphones from wood and wore them while sitting in fabricated control towers. They waved the landing signals

while standing on the runways. They lit signal fires and torches to light up runways and lighthouses. In a form of sympathetic magic, many built life-size replicas of airplanes out of straw and cut new military-style landing strips out of the jungle, hoping to attract more airplanes. The cult members thought that the foreigners had some special connection to the deities and ancestors of the natives, who were the only beings powerful enough to produce such riches.” – from Wikipedia article, “Cargo Cult,” July 31, 2019.

Wouldn't this be a fun basis for a RPG adventure? In countries with extreme poverty and low literacy and/or substantial superstition, could the landing of planes with cash, goods, and military equipment in exchange for narcotics be viewed somewhat in this way?

- ✓ **Rhetorical Question:** What is the difference between magical thinking and faith? Are either or both a failure of causal logic or empirical thought, or are they reliant upon belief in some as yet unseen dynamic. Is there ever a case for Justified True Belief? A primitive human vigorously rubs a stick on a rock while calling on ancestors, wood spirits and the mythopoeic fire god to grant him fire; is this faith or is it magical thinking (when the physical dynamics of friction are unseen, unknown to them)?

Open Face GGDM: If a human player were psychic, Mahjongg (or any card game) would be a perfect information game. A perfect information game is one in which nothing is hidden, like a game of chess or the tile game Hive (promoted as “nature’s chess”). The speed of solving the Mahjongg board would still be limited by the physical movement speed at which the tiles could be played off in pairs and solving the game would depend on the correct sequence of decisions; it would still be possible for a puzzle to be unsolvable.

An open public information game of GGDM – where the Public Space, Matrix, Power Strip of each position and all information about Galactic Space are always available to everyone, would be somewhat like a psychic playing Mahjongg – the information utility however would still depend on players looking at, studying and processing of the information, and the mental states and communication between other players, outside the game information, would still be unknown.

“Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historical facts and person-ages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.”

– Karl Marx (speaking about Emperor Napoleon III of France)

History and Perception: I knew and read little about Emperor Napoleon III when I was young. The main event with which he was associated in my youth was the surrender at Sedan; that was his historical legacy (like Benedict Arnold). There are a number of possible reasons why he was not widely discussed in the Anglo-sphere when I was young. One is a heavy Anglo bias to the histories I read (and certainly in our schools, as I commented elsewhere, most ‘world history’ courses in American schools of my youth were really U.S.-justification courses).

Another is that he is overshadowed by the rise of Germany, and the following World Wars, in which play, he is but collateral damage, thus the focus on his surrender at Sedan. Another is that his role in the Italian unification – another subject little taught or understood in America of my youth, again possibly because they were the minor losers of WWII – was not appreciated and I

barely heard of Garibaldi before I was 30 years old. The perception of the 19th Century history of France and Italy in the United States through our public school teaching was thus: That they were unimportant – they were not part of the ‘U.S. justification’ except when we had to liberate one and defeat the other in our great 20th Century crusades. *Pax Americana*.

Finally, most American students who learned about the American Civil War in grade school are unaware of, never heard of the concurrent French invasion of Mexico in December 1861 (or even the Taiping Rebellion in China), other than if they happened to see Clint Eastwood and Shirley MacLaine in *Two Mules for Sister Sara* (1970), which doesn’t exactly give the subject serious treatment. In fact, Mexican history in American public schools consists of the Aztecs, the Mexican-American War, the Pershing Expedition of 1916-1917, and the Zimmerman Telegram. If it doesn’t have to do with the United States, we aren’t interested in learning. If it wasn’t for the lessons on the Louisiana Purchase, half the country would never have heard of Napoleon because he didn’t invade the United States.

- ✓ “Every year a new army comes along and says ‘feed us, we are fighting for your liberty.’ The only thing they ever liberate are my chickens.” – Mexican farmer, from *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* (aka *The Adventures of Young Indiana Jones*).

As an intellectual adult, in the context of GGDM, I have found in the period of the French First Republic and Second Empire, fascinating and missing information about the forces in play on the Continent in the 19th Century. And as I came to understand the Opium Wars (see 3 Commerce, p. 1216, *supra*), the Taiping Rebellion (I only knew of the Boxers Rebellion because they teach it in Marine boot camp) was both crucial and also fascinating as a phenomenon in itself.

- Play Dates: In Iran – according to a respondent to Herman Wong’s question, cited in “How the Hiroshima bombing is taught around the world,” (see full cite in *Atomic Bombings 70th Anniversary excerpts, The Secret of Fire, supra*) – they are taught that Japan surrendered after the first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and then the U.S. dropped the second bomb on Nagasaki “just to test it.” *Id.* Accepting this hypothetically as fact, this is consistent with the Iranian Revolution’s cultural and political villainization of the United States – and it would certainly make sense to surrender after someone dropped a nuke on you if you knew that is what happened (which the Japanese didn’t immediately) – but is not consistent with historical facts accepted in most of the world outside of Iran:

- 1) The first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945,
- 2) The second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945,
- 3) The surrender by the Emperor of Japan was recorded on a phonograph on August 13 or 14, 1945 (and was hidden when the Imperial Palace was stormed by mutinous officers led by Major Kenji Hatanaka, who attempted to prevent Japan from surrendering) to be played over the radio,
- 4) The surrender of Japan by the Emperor (i.e. the Jewel Voice Broadcast) was broadcast over Japanese radio to the population on August 15, 1945.

Thus a simple chronological examination exposes *the way in which widespread perception can be altered for political purposes by simply changing the date of a historical event*:

- ✓ For example, if the United States wanted to vilify Great Britain, the date of the Treaty of Ghent (December 24, 1814) ending the War of 1812 could be moved back in the history books (to say, August 1814) so that allegations could be made that the British

commander knew the war had ended when his troops attacked the U.S. forces at the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815. To this could be added, without alteration, that two ships were captured, a fort surrendered, and another battle took place, all in early 1815, after the Battle of New Orleans (the last action of the War of 1812 was the Battle of the Sinkhole, May, 24, 1815).

- ✓ On the other side will be those who will – if they have not already – argue that the U.S. government (apparently with the cooperation of the rest of the world outside of Iran) changed the dates in the history books to make it appear that Japan had not yet surrendered on August 9, 1945. And that I have been brainwashed by public education. I don't think that is likely for the reasons cited below – and that the government would also need to destroy all old copies of newspapers, *à la* Orwell's 1984, but in any case, this is an argument necessitating *widespread scholarship* in our civilization – reading from a wide variety of sources, reading from original works, reading reliable secondary sources and translations. And above all, thinking critically, detecting errors, and making colorable arguments.

For those who understand, altering history is the true danger of Wikipedia and not all of the usual near-nonsensical criticisms that have been addressed previously in GGDM. Except that Wikipedia is not controlled by the government (unless you love big conspiracies, e.g. Jimmy Whales is an android, alias, alien, or made-up person), is a creature of the internet, and that a body of scholarship and information exists outside of Wikipedia such that, unless everyone is a moron, there is little danger of history being altered by a Wiki. Wikipedia articles are usually patrolled by people who understand the subject matter independent of Wikipedia, and Wikipedia also insists (as it is an encyclopedia) that articles cite to reliable sources and not be original research.

- ✓ When faced with an argument, it is not a bad approach to ask yourself what would be required to be true for the other side to be correct? In the preceding discussion, ask what would be required for Iran to be right (about anything) and the entire rest of the world to be wrong. The absurdity of their position (on just about all issues) becomes apparent. The U.S. is not also immune to this problem, and our main faith is that the adversarial arguments will eventually lead to truth (in the media, in history, in the courts, in science, in technical disciplines, in the humanities and philosophies). GGDM News Events sort of work that way.

“There is no international law or treaty that calls the Internet into existence or forces everyone to use the same standards and technology. Rather, it is a voluntary effort of people around the world.... The global consensus at the heart of the Internet exists by virtue of trust built up over decades with people from all over the world collaborating on the technical design and operation of the network and the web. ICANN is a critical part of this global consensus. But if the United States were to reverse plans to allow the global Internet community to operate ICANN independently, as Sen. Cruz is now proposing, we risk undermining the global consensus that has enabled the Internet to function and flourish over the last 25 years.”

– Op Ed by Tim Berners-Lee and Daniel Weitzner, “Ted Cruz is wrong about how free speech is censored on the internet,” The Washington Post, September 20, 2016

Media Fact Checking: A sizable portion of our professional media is dedicated to ‘fact checking’ claims by politicians. Yet it has seemed to become less and less effective in recent years, as politicians receive a ‘free pass’ from the public as to claims they make, because it’s just political theatre. Fact checking anything does little good in situations where people don’t care much for facts and prefer conspiracies and wild assertions; where hyperbole rules the public discourse.

ICANN Understand: By way of introduction, Sir Tim Berners-Lee is considered the inventor of the internet and is the director of W3C. Few individuals have had such impact on Western civilization in such a short time. Co-author Daniel Weitzner is the Director of MIT’s CSAIL Decentralized Information Group and teaches internet public policy at MIT. He has also held the post of Deputy Chief Technology Officer of the United States.

The arguments over releasing ICANN from U.S. control to make it a true international body have precedent in the French decision in 1875 to release control of the metric system:

- ✓ “In the 1870s the French made a crucial decision to turn control of the system over to an international body. In 1875, most of the leading industrialized countries (including the United States, but not Britain) signed the Treaty of the Meter. The treaty established the International Bureau of Weights and Measures, which has presided ever since over what we now call the International System of Units. It also provided for distribution of copies of the metric standards throughout the world and for continuing consultation and periodic revision and improvement of the system through regular meetings of a General Conference of Weights and Measures. The 26th General Conference is scheduled for November 2018.” – Russ Rowlett, “The Metric System,” <http://www.ibiblio.org/units/metric.html>, last revised April 27, 2018.

There has been popular resistance to the adoption of the metric system in the United States and Britain, even though the U.S. signed the Treaty of the Metre in 1875 with 16 other nations.

- ✓ In a similar move, President Ronald Reagan allowed worldwide access to the U.S. GPS system following the downing of Korean Airlines Flight 007 in 1983.

However, the story of the proto-internet thinking goes back possibly to the end of WWII. For example, Ted Nelson coined the terms hypertext and hypermedia in 1963. Vannevar Bush described a proto-internet in an essay published in *The Atlantic* in 1945 which was eventually called Memex. Project Xanadu established in 1960 began to attempt implementation of these ideas, and there is a running vision dispute between members of Project Xanadu and WC3 or Berners-Lee about true implementation of the hypertext concept.

“This tendency found its most effective advocate in a follower of Pythagoras named Plato. He preferred the perfection of these mathematical abstractions to the imperfections of everyday life. He believed that ideas were far more real than the natural world. He advised the astronomers not to waste their time observing stars and planets. It was better, he believed, just to think about them.”

Plato expressed hostility to observation and experiment. He taught contempt for the real world and disdain for the practical application of scientific knowledge. Plato's followers succeeded in extinguishing the light of science and experiment that had been kindled by Democritus and the other Ionians. Plato's unease with the world as revealed by our senses was to dominate and stifle Western philosophy.” – Carl Sagan, Cosmos, Episode 7

Endnotes.

¹ Commentary: I have a copy of this book and have read it several times over the years, I may have had this book in my library for 20 or more years now (along with Cleveland Amory's The Cat Who Came for Christmas). As of August 2018, a full, searchable copy of A Cat is Watching – surely one of the most astute studies of cat and human psychology and behaviors – is available on Google Books. The word-search function helped me find something that I knew was in the book, but where the index was unhelpful, and I was looking in the wrong part of the book.

² Commentary: I do not dislike dogs, I had a collie named Ladd (because I couldn't name *him* Lassie) through my youth that I loved very much and I am sure we made quite a ruckus because, as everyone knows, dogs and children are natural companions. Many dogs passed through my youth, often unfortunately, but Ladd lived to old age. As an adult in my current cognitive state, I find dogs – my neighbor's four dogs or the houses with dogs that I walk past on the way to the store – annoying. They go bonkers over everything and anything, they have no restraint or sense of proportion, and cannot be made to understand, they can only be disciplined with great effort and patience. Thus, I do not desire to have a dog, quite aside from the natural objections of the dozen or so cats that I care for daily.

³ Commentary: A user on YouTube posted a one-minute video of two wild foxes jumping around on a large backyard trampoline. Lots of viewers liked it. *Twelve years later*, a sharp viewer posted a comment explaining the foxes' jumping around on the trampoline as hunting activity, pointing out that the jumps were clearly 'hunting jumps' and theorizing that the foxes heard higher pitch squeaking from the coil springs and thought it was small prey; the vertical jumps were the same as they would make when hunting mice or small rabbits. Doubtless, everyone who viewed the video over twelve years thought they were just playing cute. Hence, replies to the post called the poster a 'killjoy' for rationally explaining the behavior, and this turned into a spat (not involving the OP) over people who resent people who are smarter than they are, etc.

⁴ Commentary: Although cats are social creatures, the cat tribe that lives on my front porch is a bit of an unnatural creation by virtue of the fact that I feed them, provide water and milk, provide heated, comfortable places to sleep, have a fenced in yard fronted by hedges, and provide them with toys and attention. That is, by virtue of being what I am – the SQ and cognitive difference between cats and humans – and the economic and material power of human civilization, I have created in the cats something more than they would do naturally. This may be what happens if humans encounter a more intelligent and advanced alien species (it was hinted at in *Babylon 5*), that their being may unite lower SQ or less intelligent or less advanced species into some unnatural level of coexistence and interaction.

⁵ Commentary: My ears have been ringing since I was an early teen, I am sure they were when I was about 13 or 14; my mother told me then that it was because someone was thinking about me. I hardly believe that now since my ears ring frequently (I cannot imagine any reason why people would waste their brainpower constantly thinking about me), but I guess her comment might have been linked to the idea that 'psychic phenomenon' is a form of hearing above the common level, to the idea that thoughts have sound (*à la Dune* (1965)). According to Mayo Clinic:

- ✓ “Tinnitus is the perception of noise or ringing in the ears. A common problem, tinnitus affects about 15 to 20 percent of people. Tinnitus isn't a condition itself – it's a symptom of an underlying condition, such as age-related hearing loss, ear injury or a circulatory system disorder. Although bothersome, tinnitus usually isn't a sign of something serious.” – from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/tinnitus/symptoms-causes/syc-20350156>.

The Mayo Clinic represents likely the 'official party line' of modern medicine on every subject. Another place I read years ago linked Tinnitus to stress or even to intense thinking. So it goes round, thoughts have sound... Whatever the case, I certainly passed the hearing test to enlist in the Marine Corps when I just turned 16 and went to boot camp when I was 17. I believe they said that I had a slightly 'higher end' hearing range than normal. After being in Marine artillery for a couple of years, I was tested again and had lost 'low end hearing' and was diagnosed with 'noise induced hearing loss' meaning that I have a hard time hearing in a crowded room or if there is ambient

background noise. This is what the military calls ‘artillery ears’ – we joked about it when I was in the artillery. The doctor said it would get worse with age, and I can say definitely that my ringing ears may have got a little more frequent and louder with age ... but I also probably think more intensely in my advanced years.... ☺

⁶ **Citation:** Corollary of Clarke’s Third Law: Any sufficiently advanced magic is indistinguishable from technology, a variation of which is noted on TV Tropes and stated in a 2008 comic called “Genius Girl”: Any sufficiently analyzed magic is indistinguishable from science! See Intonation of the Three, 1 Technology, p. 688, *supra*.

⁷ **Citation:** WWII in southern England: **German commander:** “There’s the witch!” **Subordinate:** “You said there was no such thing as a witch, sir.” – Bedknobs and Broomsticks (1971).

⁸ **Citation:** “Telepathy, for instance, is in trouble with the scientific community for one main reason: it is in complete conflict with that paradigm we call the electromagnetic theory. We do know, of course, that across the skulls of every one of us race minute electrical currents; and the movement of electrical currents produce radio waves. However, these have been measured by Rolf Ashby, Adrian Walter and Grey Walter, and one can now say that if the nearest person to me has a radio receiver in his skull, his chances of picking up the radio broadcasts from my skull are about as good as his chance of making an audio recording of a smoke-signal. So that kind of transmission is out. Telepathy is therefore impossible.

When we look, however, at the evidence which has been gathered, and we make the temporary assumption – as we must – that some of this evidence has been honestly gathered, and honestly reported, and may represent real instances, we find also that it is characteristic of telepathy that its strength of reception does not vary over distance – even over long distances. Now we are in trouble with something much greater than the electromagnetic theory: we’re in trouble with the inverse square law itself. To me this means one of two things. It means either that telepathy is impossible, by two different paradigms, or else it tells us that the electromagnetic theory is the wrong paradigm to apply here. Now I have no idea what the right one might be; and one of the problems of telepathy is that nobody who has ever worked seriously in the field, and is respected as honest and responsible, has himself ever managed to come up with a decent model for how it works. There is no altering this paradigm to the ones we know don’t work in order to account for this evidence.” – James Blish, The Tale that Wags the God (1987) (Kindle Locations 572-587).

⁹ **Citation:** “Special Talents” were psychic individuals who assisted military units in Robert Heinlein’s Starship Troopers (1959); “meta-concert” is a term used in Julian May’s Saga of the Pliocene Exiles (1981) to describe a cooperative effort of a group of meta-psychic individuals.

¹⁰ **Commentary & Citation:** There is an extremely rich joke contained in the 100th episode of the television series, Stargate SG-1, which was titled “Wormhole X-Treme” and aired on September 8, 2001. The SG-1 team is sent to act as technical advisors for a campy, idiotic sci-fi television series called Wormhole X-Treme (a TV show within a TV show) because it will supply plausible deniability if anyone discovered the actual Stargate program and made it public. The mission is also cover for the real objective of the operation, the team is looking for an amnesic alien; at the end of the episode a real alien space ship arrives and the filming crew thinks it is just a cool special effect!

- ✓ But the real joke is that the *actual Star Gate project* to develop telepathic location abilities (i.e. remote viewing), for spying on the Soviets is deemed a failure and was declassified in 1995 (FOIA documents can be found online at <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/collection/stargate>). This now provides plausible deniability to any claims made that the CIA and U.S. law enforcement are currently using telepathic abilities for investigations (for example, if someone saw the 2000 film, The Gift). Ingo Swann, whose science-fiction novel Star Fire (1979) I read in about 1983 was part of or associated with the Star Gate Project. Whatever history may think of Ingo Swann and his associates, I liked Star Fire when I read it.
- ✓ The underlying idea is quite clever and interesting: That the popularity of video science-fiction and the fertile imaginations of a century of science-fiction authors and screenwriters provides plausible deniability to *any* secret, outlandish government project or investigation.
- ✓ And of course, if anyone claimed that there actually is a secret Stargate on Earth, the TV program SG-1 would provide plausible deniability for the government to dismiss the investigative exposé as a crackpot who watches too much television! The same is true of Close Encounters (1976).

¹¹ **Commentary:** I saw a video on YouTube in mid-2019 whose title seemed to indicate that some civilian group is still trying to ‘develop’ remote viewing as a psychic ability. Or maybe it is a secret U.S. government program pretending to be civilians and posting on YouTube to create plausible deniability. Big money if it ever works!

¹² **Citation:** “Muad’Dib could indeed see the Future, but you must understand the limits of this power.” – from Arakis Awakening by the Princess Irulan (Dune, 1965).

¹³ **Citation:** cf. “Anyone who believes that the laws of physics are mere social conventions is invited to try transgressing those conventions from the windows of my apartment. I live on the twenty-first floor.” – Alan Sokal.

3 Information – Perception