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*See Appendix DE&A – Disruption Events, Inactive Constructural Elements & Apostasy*

*See Appendix KM – Kairotic Moment Example*

*“History in its day to day is not a morality play. But sometimes there is a clear chastisement, a moment when the judgments of providence seem stark.... They may find out soon enough that all this bargain bought them was an even harsher reckoning, and that all they will inherit is the wind.”*

– Ross Douthat, *New York Times*, October 12, 2016

**Critical Mass:** All Aspects from the Aspect List of all positions are collected into a master list for the purposes of Kairotic Moments (the list could be called ‘The Fall’ or the ‘Tome of Doom,’ etc.) It is important to remember for Kairotic Moment purposes that several positions may have the same Aspects on their List, though no two Aspect Lists should be identical.

The ‘percolation point’ that triggers a Kairotic Moment in GGDM is determined by Exposed Aspects. At the beginning of the game, a critical mass number is determined. At the end of each Turn Cycle (see *Buzzing Lightyears*, 4 *The Streams of Time*, p. 101, *supra*), all current Aspects are counted (a snapshot) and the Aspect that has the greatest total presence on *all* Public Spaces, ‘wins’ the Turn Cycle (a sort of zeitgeist).

- ✓ In addition to the normal cycle of Exposing Aspects, Aspects from Trucking Transactions also increase the number of Aspects on Public Spaces. See *Fairies Wear Boots*, 4 *Commerce*, pp. 122-1228, *supra*.

If two or more Aspects are tied, both ‘win.’ When one Aspect has been dominant a number of times in the game equal to the critical mass number, a Kairotic Moment is triggered for *all* positions that have that Aspect currently on their Aspect List.<sup>1</sup>

- ✓ This is *not the same as counting the number of times an Aspect has been Exposed in the game*, which was another possible mechanic for Critical Mass that was rejected because it aligns less with the idea of zeitgeist.

The Critical Mass number is effectively, the minimum number of Turn Cycles the game will run before a possible trigger of a Kairotic Moment (assuming the same Aspect wins every cycle, which is not likely). Each Turn Cycle won by a different Aspect will stretch the time before the occurrence of a Kairotic Moment. It is suggested, therefore, that Kairotic Moments are better in the mid- to late-game than the beginning (unless part of a big story plan by the Concierge), and thus the Critical Mass number should be greater than or equal to ten (or six), with the bottom parameter adjustable to participants’ tastes. It could also be set so high as to be unlikely to occur in the game, see shelf-life discussion, *It was the End of History*, 1 *Resolution*, p. 1456, *infra*.

- Meditations of the Overmind: If the game is being run manually, the Concierge will have to generate the Critical Mass number and track Aspects ‘wins’; if, as I assume, the game is being run with computer assistance, there is no need for the Concierge to either know the Critical Mass number or count Aspects at the end of each cycle and track wins. Let it be a surprise! Additionally, when a Kairotic Moment is triggered and the Concierge becomes aware of it, the Concierge is not required to allow it to occur or proceed, Kairotic Moments are at the discretion of the Concierge and should be used as a storytelling tool or maybe just to shake up a dull game position. However, if a computer assistant is used to run the game and track the data, a Kairotic Moment cannot be triggered until the requirement is fulfilled, thus the Concierge would not be able to create one that doesn’t exist.

- ✓ Since the Concierge is the gatekeeper – like a Judge is the gatekeeper of evidence and instructions presented to a Jury at trial – it is possible that a triggered Kairotic Moment may never occur in the game (and there is no appellant court!). This is a waste of a good storytelling potential; a good overmind is a terrible thing to waste!

As noted in Aspects A to Z, 2 Culture, p. 324, *supra*, each position has its own secret list of Aspects that are available to the position; this helps to reduce the effectively infinite list of possible Aspects to a manageable number (dominant in that species) for the game. It is possible that the same Aspects may appear on two or more lists and because of that, those Aspects may dominate the game and trigger the Kairotic Moment. It is also possible that a position that Exposes (not to be confused with the Expose' News Event, 4 Writs generally, *supra*) the same Aspects repeatedly (an unrealistic mechanic, but necessary for the game) could somewhat manipulate the Kairotic Moment.

- ✓ The possibility of player manipulation is considered negligible, as during the game, other concerns and circumstances – not the least of which are Conflict Checks for Government Titles, will push and pull at Power Activations and resources. It would require an extreme effort with results of questionable value to manipulate a Kairotic Moment trigger. Since the Aspect lists are secret (unless shared privately), participants may also be surprised by the sudden trigger of a Kairotic Moment if two positions share the same Aspect.
- ✓ If the term 'Kairotic Moment' reminded you of 'erotic moment,' well, I wouldn't bet the Ancient Greeks weren't thinking of that too, since *eros* is a Greek word and the root of erotic (and used in psychiatry). And if 'critical mass' makes you think of something else related to the sexual encounter, you need to stop reading now!

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*“In social dynamics, critical mass is a sufficient number of adopters of an innovation in a social system so that the rate of adoption becomes self-sustaining and creates further growth. The term is borrowed from nuclear physics and in that field it refers to the amount of a substance needed to sustain a chain reaction. Social factors influencing critical mass may involve the size, interrelatedness and level of communication in a society or one of its subcultures. Another is social stigma, or the possibility of public advocacy due to such a factor.*

*Critical mass may be closer to majority consensus in political circles, where the most effective position is more often that held by the majority of people in society. In this sense, small changes in public consensus can bring about swift changes in political consensus, due to the majority-dependent effectiveness of certain ideas as tools of political debate. Critical mass is a concept used in a variety of contexts, including physics, group dynamics, politics, public opinion, and technology.”*

– from Wikipedia article, “Critical Mass (sociodynamics),” January 29, 2019

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**Unpublished Book:** Assuming for the sake of argument that GGDM is an ‘innovation,’ what is its critical mass? How many readers, how many players, how many mentions on social media? Fifty players is probably not sufficient, but does that depend on the social position and education level of those players? A game with fifty professors? Is critical mass synonymous with ‘success’ of my little project? See also RELIGION SUBLIME discussion, 1 Fallen to Earth, p. 1504, *infra*.

- ✓ My accounting instructor, Ms. Mary Oliver Weaver, always reminded her classes that ‘assume’ makes an ASS of U and ME. That’s good advice for accounting students, accounting is based on actual records and math.
- ✓ Most people (and I mean 99.9999%) won’t spend half an hour reading any part of GGDM (that leaves just 3 people in America out of 300M who will read it). We are not interested in our civilization unless threatened with extinction.

As Oliver Emberton reminds us (see *The Universe Doesn’t Care About Your Purpose* excerpts, *Dreamtime*, *supra*):

- ✓ “Write an unpublished book, you’re nobody. Write Harry Potter and the world wants to know you. ... You may hate this. It may make you sick. Reality doesn’t care. You’re judged by what you have the ability to do, and the volume of people you can impact.” (oliveremberton.com, 2014)

GGDM will be little more than an unpublished book when I am finished and upload it to my web domain. Whatever delusions I may have had 20 years ago, and whatever you may think of my particular neurosis, work in the legal profession has provided me with a very realistic (if sickening<sup>2</sup>) appraisal of reality – and I have evolved an understanding over the decades of the meaningless of my life project to anyone but me. But, from religion, and history, we have come slowly to understand that the things that make the smallest initial impact have the greater chance of long term effect, whereas the momentary, shallow things, are viewed by millions of people, make tons of money, but will pass like a surface ripple:

- ✓ “Unfortunately, the same rule applies to all talents, even unsavory ones: get naked for one person and you might just make them smile, get naked for fifty million people and you might just be Kim Kardashian.” *Id.*

The ‘critical mass’ for GGDM is therefore, temporal, not spatial. And in the millennial tradition of Western philosophy, this is the real deal: The sacrifice of fame, fortune, and happy life (or our illusion of it) for post-mortem effect.<sup>3</sup>

I have tried to imagine what sort of emergent end might arise from GGDM. I cannot, I never get far in that. I just have no imagination anymore. I am more prone to accept that nothing at all will happen, that my life work is worthless and pointless. Whatever result I might fancy is meaningless because I have no evidence, no reason to believe that it could happen. What reason or cause would you assign to that? That I am curmudgeonly and that the legal, military, and business world has made me cynical, shortsighted, angry, has crushed my childhood imagination (*à la* the Lancasterian reflected in Charles Dickens *Hard Times* (1854) and Pink Floyd’s *The Wall* (1979), see Gradgrind discussion, 1 Colleges, p. 463, *supra*). Or is it the Absurdity.

Or is it the problem and nature of emergence, that by the very concept it is unpredictable, beyond human imagination? Did Jesus or Buddha anticipate the emergent effects of their acts? To assert that they did, to assert that Christianity was the intent of Jesus or that Buddhism was the intent of Buddha or that Buddha intended both,<sup>4</sup> is to suggest either that they could predict emergences or that such things were pre-destined, had already happened before they happened and the Legislators knew it.

- ✓ See also *The Core of Christianity*, 1 Kairotic Moments, p. 1423, *supra*.

And no, I don’t think I’m Jesus or Buddha. Don’t be ridiculous.

- ✓ “One big question is: what percentage of a population is necessary to create a critical mass? According to researchers at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, the answer is a mere 10%. Computational analysis was used to establish where the shift from minority to majority lies. According to director of research Boleslaw Szymanski: ‘When the number of committed opinion holders is below 10 percent, there is no visible progress in the spread of ideas. It would literally take the amount of time comparable to the age of the universe for this size group to reach the majority. Once that number grows above 10 percent, the idea spreads like flame.’ The research has shown that the 10% can comprise literally anyone in a given society. What matters is that those people are set in their beliefs and do not respond to pressure to change them. Instead, they pass their ideas on to others.” – Shane Perry, “Critical Mass and Tipping Points: How To Identify Inflection Points Before They Happen,” Farnham Street (blog), July 2017.<sup>5</sup>

Thirty million players/followers of GGDM? As Noah (Bill Cosby) said: “Riigggh! Who is this really!?”

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*“The average man may be capable of benefiting by initiation, or he may not; it also depends upon his capacity; but each individual should have the opportunity of advancing to the highest development of which he is capable.”*

– Dion Fortune, The Esoteric Orders and Their Work (1928)

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*“You know after any truly initiating experience that you are part of a much bigger whole. Life is not about you henceforward, but you are about life.”*

– Richard Rohr, Adam’s Return: The Five Promises of Male Initiation (2004)

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**Wells of Initiation:** Down the spiral stairs... When the Kairotic Moment process is loosed upon the game by the Concierge, *a place must be chosen* as the location (see Terra Sancta, 1 Kairotic Moments, p. 1420, *supra*). There are many possible criteria for choosing a location, but the default might be the sovereign colony which is adjacent to the most pieces on the Public Space of the Aspect that triggered the Kairotic Moment. So much the better it is if the colony also fits other criteria or if it fits the story arc best (and if the Concierge has a great idea...).

It is possible that if two or more positions share the key Aspect of the Kairotic Moment on their Aspect List, that the game might experience simultaneous Kairotic Moments in two or more positions. This *might require separate target planets* for each position (lending perhaps a ‘Mormon-like’ mystery to the game) or if a single Balkanized or other suitable location is available on both Public Spaces, perhaps this is even better! It is also possible for the game to experience rapid fire consecutive Kairotic Moments featuring different key Aspects if several are near the Critical Mass and continue to be Exposed. That could be an interesting twist in the story.

- ✓ The Wells of Initiation are located at Quinta da Regaleira, Portugal, and are a UNESCO World Heritage site. Fortunately, Portugal has not involved itself in a European war since WWI and has otherwise escaped widespread destruction.

- Nine Landings: When the Kairotic Moment is triggered, all Aspects of the triggering position are immediately checked for ‘conversion’ to the Aspect that triggered the Kairotic Moment. There is a 25% chance that each Aspect currently on the Public Space will immediately change to the key Aspect of the Kairotic Moment. If converted, they will be replaced on their Monad by the key Aspect as if they were newly Exposed Aspects (see *A Bustle in Your Hedgerow*, 2 Culture, p. 365, *supra*) and will thereafter ‘age-out’ normally.

As this is not part of a Power Activation, and due to the nature of the event, it is not likely that Enlightenment should be applied to reroll Aspect conversions.

- ✓ While not ‘destroying’ Fuzzy Groups, the sudden change in Aspects might cause the Fuzzy Group to become unusable for the purpose for which it was formed. Likely, changes in Aspects will destroy a Zeitrice formation. During the time of the Kairotic Moment, Writs that use the key Aspect will be easiest to activate and most powerful.
- Winded: It is vaguely possible that no pieces of the key Aspect will be on the Public Space when the Kairotic Moment is triggered; this could occur if two or more positions share the same Aspect on their Aspect Lists (blame this mess on the other guy!). The more positions that share the same Aspect, the more likely and the sooner it will trigger the Kairotic Moment. If the Concierge allows the Kairotic Moment to trigger, *it is irrelevant if any pieces of the key Aspect are currently on the Public Space* of the target position(s), the ‘conversion’ process will still happen (which kind of solves the problem...).
- Rose of the Winds: During the course of the Kairotic Moment effect, there is a chance that each Aspect that is Exposed by the position will instead of the chosen Aspect become the key Aspect of the Kairotic Moment. The chance for each is equal to the current intensity level times 10%.<sup>6</sup>

This may constitute a ‘failed die roll’ that can trigger the use of Enlightenment if it has been dedicated to this Power Activation.

- ✓ If the key Aspect of the Kairotic Moment is Exposed by activation of the Culture Power for the purpose of Exposing Aspects, the chance of Exposing the Aspect is enhanced by the addition of the current Intensity Level times 10%, thus, at Intensity Level 3, the chance of Exposing the key Aspect is 80%.

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*“Beyond a certain point, the whole universe becomes a continuous process of initiation.” – Robert Anton Wilson*

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*“Bereavement is the deepest initiation into the mysteries of human life, an initiation more searching and profound than even happy love.”*

– Dean William Ralph Inge

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*“...spirituality alone will not take a man far in the Mysteries; he must have intellectual powers as well.” – Dion Fortune, What Is Occultism?<sup>7</sup>*

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**Down the Rabbit Hole:** Dion Fortune (d. 1946) was a prominent female occultist in England in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Richard Rohr is an American Franciscan Friar and ordained Roman Catholic priest. Robert Anton Wilson was a self-described ‘agnostic mystic.’ William Ralph Inge was an Anglican priest, Professor of Divinity and Dean of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London.

Rhetorical Questions: When you read above that Dion Fortune was an early 20<sup>th</sup> Century female occultist, did her words suddenly have less impact? When you read that Richard Rohr and Dean William Ralph Inge were ordained Roman Catholic and Anglican priests, were you relieved? When you read that Robert Wilson Anton was a ‘self-described agnostic mystic,’ did your eyes roll? Do any of the feature quotes above intuitively strike you as ‘wrong’? You didn’t think this was going to be easy, did you?

Spirituality without intellect becomes superstition:

- ✓ “When you believe in things that you don’t understand, Then you suffer, Superstition ain’t the way” – Stevie Wonder, “Superstition” (1972).

Yet it will always persist, because much of what humans believe is unfalsifiable (“This isn’t right. It’s not even wrong.” – Wolfgang Pauli, see also FOURTH DEGREE OF SEPARATION, 3 Fallen to Earth, p. 1543, *infra*). Can you ‘prove’ or ‘disprove’ that you had seven years of bad luck because the 13-month old baby broke the mirror, no matter how farfetched? This is no different than religion and no different than the Minbari belief about human souls in Babylon 5.

Rhetorical Question: Is death a Kairotic Moment? How opportune and teachable is death?

**Unfinished Well:** There are four opportunities for a Kairotic Moment to affect (or infect) the Aspect pieces of another position (this does not apply to Constructural Elements, *ut supra*):

- 1) Balkanized colony planets,
- 2) Sharing the same colony system,
- 3) Ships returning with inactive Constructural Elements that cannot be reactivated (as described in Wave Motion, *et seq.*, 2 Kairotic Moments, p. 1433, *supra*), i.e. **apostasy** due to contact with another position’s Kairotic Moment, and
- 4) Shared Meanings and MegaCorporations (see 2 Corporations generally, *supra*).

As discussed in Tsunami, 2 Kairotic Moments, pp. 1434-1435, *supra*, it is quite debatable if a Kairotic moment for one species translates to another, but there are *possible emergent effects* on the subsequent recipients, and thus, it is possible, but limited in the game and serves mostly game-story purposes.

- ✓ “You’ll have some fun now with me and all the gang, Learning from each other while we do our thing...” – Fat Albert television show (1972-1985) theme song (performed by Michael Gray, Kim Carnes and Edward Fournier).<sup>8</sup>
- Frontier Outpost of Syene: Aspects adjacent on their owner’s Public Spaces to any **alien colonies** on a Balkanized colony planet or in the same starsystem with a Friendly or Naturalized colony of the position affected (afflicted) with a Kairotic Moment may be affected.
  - ✓ During the initial trigger of the Kairotic Moment described in Nine Landings, above, there is a 15% chance that each Aspect *adjacent to* **alien colonies** on their owner’s Public Space, may either be converted to the key Aspect of the Kairotic Moment (if it is on the alien’s Aspect List), or to a random Aspect (present on the alien’s Aspect

- List) or simply eliminated. Ten percent is subtracted if the **alien colony** is on a different planet in the same system, making the chances of effect negligible (5%).
- ✓ During the time that the Kairotic Moment is in progress, there is a chance equal to the current Intensity Level times 5% that an Exposed Aspect placed next to the **alien colony** will change to another Aspect or fail before being placed, if the **alien colony** is on a Balkanized planet with a Friendly or Naturalized Colony of the Kairotic Moment position. If the **alien colony** is in the same system, but not on the same planet, the chance is reduced to a percentage equal to the current Intensity Level of the Kairotic Moment (i.e. 1%, 2%, or 3%).
  - ✓ However, 20% is added to either of the preceding chances (after other adjustments) if the Kairotic Moment position's colony is also Terra Sancta for that Kairotic Moment.
    - For example, the M.A.N. position is undergoing a Kairotic Moment at *Intensity Level 3*: 1) during the initial trigger, **alien colonies** on the same planet as a Friendly or Naturalized M.A.N. colony have a 15% chance (this is not affected by Intensity Level) of each adjacent Aspect either changing to another Aspect or being eliminated, the chance is reduced to 5% if the **alien colony** is on a different planet; 2) during the alien's Regular Turn, there is a 15% chance that newly Exposed Aspects placed adjacent to the colony planet on the alien's Public Space will change to another Aspect or fail before being placed (this occurs after a successful roll to expose the Aspect) if the colony is on the same planet as a Friendly or Naturalized colony of the position undergoing the Kairotic Moment, or a 3% chance if on a different planet in the same system.
    - If the colony owned by the position undergoing the Kairotic (cathartic) Moment (e.g., "weeping martyrs" – Beowulf (2007)) is also the Terra Sancta of the event, 20% is added to each of the chances described above, so that the chances become 35%, 25% and 23%, respectively.

Players of alien positions probably should not get angry at players of another position due to the spreading effects of a Kairotic Moment. A Kairotic Moment, more so than a News Event even, is not caused by the position that is experiencing it. But historically, there have almost always been foreign repercussions in such situations, e.g., the Jewish-Roman Wars and the War of the First Coalition (these examples are offered in the loosest sense of major sociopolitical change combined with other factors drawing major foreign reactions).

- ✓ The ancient trading city of Syene (previously Swenett, now Aswan) is the "frontier outpost" mentioned in Carl Sagan's story of Eratosthenes at the Library of Alexandria in *Cosmos*, Episode 1. Syene was at the 'head of the Nile,' the southernmost reach of Egyptian civilization (generally), the southern gateway to Egypt just north of the Tropic of Cancer. It is now at the head of Lake Nasser to the south, one of the largest manmade lakes in the world, created by the Aswan Dams constructed in the 1960s.
- Ship of Fools: Each ship:
- 1) With an inactive Constructural Element that is blocked from reactivation due to **apostasy** from interaction with an **alien colony** experiencing a Kairotic Moment (see *Wave Motion*, 2 Kairotic Moments, p. 1433 *supra*),



- 2) That “Unloads, Loads or Transfers Cargo, Population, Supplies or any Enhancements (including Looting and Trucking)” at any Friendly or Naturalized colony owned by its position, (*Id.*)
- 3) Has a 25% chance, at the end of the Regular Turn, of causing any *Aspect* adjacent to the colony to either change to something else or be eliminated (this occurs after elimination due to aging).

This effect does not occur if the Power Activation fails, and may be subject to Enlightenment if Enlightenment was dedicated in the Power Activation and some rerolls remain unused.

This is different from the effects on colony Constructural Elements from interaction with Kairotic Moment position’s ships described in A Total Gurgler, 2 Kairotic Moments, p. 1433, *supra*. The effects described above come from *friendly ships* that have interacted with colonies currently undergoing a Kairotic Moment, then return to colonies owned by their position. The effects are also different because they effect Aspects on the Public Space, not Constructural Elements on a ship or colony.

- ✓ “Mad is the captain of Alpha Centauri, We must be out of our minds, Still we are shipmates bound for tomorrow, And everyone here’s flying blind ... Mad is the crew bound for Alpha Centauri, Dreamers and poets and clowns, Bold is the ship bound for Alpha Centauri, Nothing can turn it around!” – Crystal Gayle, “We Must Believe in Magic” (1977).
  - This performance is a Muppet Show classic, available on YouTube.
  - Sir Edward Coke (1532 – 1634) famously wrote something puerile about a ‘ship of fools’ in the front cover of his copy of Sir Francis Bacon’s *Novum Organum* (1620) for which he has been roundly ridiculed since.
- Diplomacy in the Hive of Scum & Villainy: Ten percent is added to all of the preceding chances (i.e. as described in *both* of the preceding sections) of changing or eliminating adjacent Aspects if the **alien colony** in question is located on a planet that is Hosting a MegaCorporation, regardless of the current ownership or Native Population Type of the colony that is Hosting. Additionally, five percent is added to all of the preceding chances if the alien position and the position experiencing the Kairotic Moment have a Shared Meaning.

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*“Can’t stop falling  
Heartaches calling  
Finds you after the fall  
Saints or sinners  
Take no prisoners  
What’s left after you fall  
No not much no!”*

– Journey, “After the Fall” (1983)

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**After the Fall:** When the Kairotic Moment has completed, run its course, passed – see Intenseit, 2 Kairotic Moments, p. 1430, *supra* – the Aspects Lists of all positions that had the Key Aspect on their List may change.

- ✓ As has been noted throughout GGDM, words and concepts such as smile, technology, emotion, are new to our culture and date from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries and later. The modern concept of divinity may have been shaped by sailing the vastness of the oceans. Even the modern concept of ‘evil’ is much different than it was before emotion entered our worldview (see discussion, *Modernity Machines*, 1 Technology, p. 696, *supra*). Similarly, the expectation of romantic love crept into marriage and reproduction during the Renaissance, which had before been the province of family alliances, business and practical utility. Other ideas have deflated, such as the ‘majesty’ attached to royalty. The process of pragmatic ethics has applied to our sense of right and wrong, evolution has affected religion, the Moon and Mars have become part of our Public Spaces. Ground Zero means now something much different than it did when I grew up in the Cold War. And if it weren’t for science-fiction imagination, the word ‘temporal’ would still mean now, and not reference time travel, and so on.

When the Kairotic Moment has passed, there is a 3% chance per Regular Turn Cycle elapsed since the trigger, that each Aspect on the Aspect Lists of the positions that had the Key Aspect – including the Key Aspect – may change to another Aspect. Any pieces of that Aspect on the Public Space at the time will simply change to the new Aspect. It’s messy, but necessary.

Thus, Aspect Lists may change throughout the game, and this may affect Writs, Fuzzy Groups and even Government Titles. Changes in Aspects should be also reflected on the master list for the next Kairotic Moment.

- ✓ It is possible that the Concierge may do this manually, with or without die rolls, plugging in new Aspects that fit the story.

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*“So what is a ‘cosmopolitan’? It’s a cousin to ‘elitist,’ but with a more sinister undertone. It’s a way of branding people or movements that are unmoored to the traditions and beliefs of a nation, and identify more with like-minded people regardless of their nationality. ... In the eyes of their foes, ‘cosmopolitans’ tend to cluster in the universities, the arts and in urban centers, where familiarity with diversity makes for a high comfort level with ‘untraditional’ ideas and lives.”*

– Jeff Greenfield, “The Ugly History of Stephen Miller’s Cosmopolitan Epithet,” *Politico Magazine*, August 3, 2017

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*“Alexandria was the greatest city the Western world had ever seen. People from all nations came here to live, to trade, to learn. On a given day these harbors were thronged with merchants and scholars, tourists. It’s probably here that the word ‘cosmopolitan’ realized its true meaning of a citizen, not just of a nation but of the cosmos. To be a citizen of the cosmos.”*

– Carl Sagan, *Cosmos*, Episode 13

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**Hitting the Bottom Well:** Kairotic Moments in GGDM are disappointing;<sup>9</sup> they are neither moments nor particularly kairotic. They are like the picture of the guy diving into an Olympic sized pool that has no water; they are like a hotdog with no bun or anything to put on it – unless you are starving, a hot dog is about the bun, cheese, chili and condiments for a quick guilty lunch or good times in the park with someone! Can you hear the music in your head?

- ✓ “Saturday in the park, I think it was the Fourth of July,” Chicago, “Saturday in the park” (1972).

Hot dogs by themselves aren’t very appetizing, and neither are Kairotic Moments in GGDM.

In an attempt to simulate deep social change, the game mechanics of the Kairotic Moment create extended chaos that has some power to spill over to other positions. But it does not create long-term change, only simulates that it might have happened through ‘conversion’ of Aspects and Constructural Elements. This is true generally of GGDM throughout, while much is said, little is accomplished, the parts and structure of civilizations are named and presented deductively, but mechanically, the game is an exercise in strangely named parts and numbers, pushing pieces around the Public and Galactic Spaces; without interaction and emergent storytelling, it is like a clown-car sized boiled hotdog.

- **Silence of Science Fiction:** Rarely does science fiction literature – at least the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century stuff I read in my youth – dip into the (potentially explosive) discussion of organized religion; other than Canticle for Leibowitz, Dune and Battlestar Galactica – the latter skirted around organized religion, only showing a vague polytheistic religion and the priestess – Dr. Who’s Church of the Papal Mainframe (aka Church of the Silence) is definitely one of the oddest entries on the subject of spacefaring churches. Of course, nothing is as it appears in Dr. Who and further development of the Church’s back history would be interesting.

I am apparently not the only one who has noticed this:

- ✓ “Science fiction will sometimes address the topic of religion. Often religious themes are used to convey a broader message, but others confront the subject head-on – contemplating, for example, how attitudes towards faith might shift in the wake of ever-advancing technological progress, or offering creative scientific explanations for the apparently mystical events related in religious texts (gods as aliens, prophets as time travelers, etc.)....

Some science fiction works portray invented religions, either placed into a contemporary Earth society (such as the Earthseed religion in Octavia Butler’s Parable of the Sower), or in the far future (as seen in Dune by Frank Herbert, with its Orange Catholic Bible). Other works examine the role of existing religions in a futuristic or alternate society. The classic Canticle for Leibowitz explores a world in which Catholicism is one of the few institutions to survive an apocalypse, and chronicles its slow re-achievement of prominence as civilisation returns....

Orson Scott Card has criticized the genre for oversimplifying religion, which he claims is always shown as ‘ridiculous and false.’” – Wikipedia article, “List of Religious Ideas in Science Fiction,” captured August 9, 2018.

I really don’t see the point of science-fiction’s aversion to the issue. If science-fiction writers want to be literary – that is, talk about themes and issues universal to humanity – it cannot shy from religion. If science-fiction writers are afraid of offending someone’s religion – or

even their own – they should probably pursue another vocation. If science-fiction editors and publishers are afraid of offending the market – well most people who read sci-fi works are not religious fundamentalist, and science-fiction is notably not popular outside the West.

- ✓ Star Trek: The Next Generation occasionally wandered into Absurdity; Dr. Crusher and Data awaken a 20<sup>th</sup> Century ‘rock star’ Stan who is one of three people found cryogenically frozen in an old Earth ship:
  - **Dr. Crusher:** There was ... deterioration in every system of his body, probably from chemical abuse. Unbelievable! **Capt. Picard:** Sounds like he hated life. But he had himself frozen, presumably to go through it all again. **Dr. Crusher:** Too afraid to live, too scared to die. – ST:TNG “The Neutral Zone” (1988).<sup>10</sup>
  - In this episode at the end of the first season, the writers and producers tried hard to demonstrate how much the mental daily lives of 24<sup>th</sup> Century humans were different from those of the Cold War 20<sup>th</sup> Century. As usual, it was easier to say *what is not* in the 24<sup>th</sup> Century as compared to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century than *what is*; that is, exactly how people live day to day in the 24<sup>th</sup> Century existence. To do that would require answers to the Void.

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*“The sacrifice of the intellect ... is a concept associated with Christian devotion, particularly with the Jesuit order. It was the ‘third sacrifice’ demanded by the founder of the Jesuits, St. Ignatius Loyola ...*

*The concept was taken up in a more individualistic sense by the Jansenist thinker Blaise Pascal, and particularly by the existentialist thinker Søren Kierkegaard, who thought that the act of faith requires a leap into the void, which amounts to a sacrifice of the intellect and reason. This was quintessentially expressed in the traditional dictum, **credo quia absurdum**, ‘I believe because it is absurd.’ This view of faith is rejected by the Catholic church, which regards reason as a path towards direct knowledge of God.*

*The phrase is often used in a pejorative sense in writings on the psychology and sociology of religion – e.g.: Max Weber states: ‘There is absolutely no ‘unbroken’ religion working as a vital force, which is not compelled at some point to demand the credo non quod, sed credo quia absurdum – the ‘sacrifice of the intellect.’ According to Paul Pruyser, ‘Sacrifice of the intellect, demanded by a good many religious movements and blithely if not joyously made by a good many religious persons, is surely one of the ominous features of neurotic religion.’”*

– from Wikipedia article, “Sacrifice of the intellect,” captured February 23, 2019  
(emphasis in original)

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**Leap Into the Void:** One of the color fillers that an astute observer might feel is missing is ‘faith.’ GGDM does not attempt to simulate ‘faith’ beyond the general function of loyalty (or perhaps disloyalty when the existing civilization or powers violate one’s faith).

It should be clear by now that the writer of this simulation has little faith (in a religious sense) and none to share (and is not here to dispense Peter Pan advice), and neither does much of science-fiction literature or empirical positivist science: Faith is a thing we use to voluntarily blind ourselves to the Existential Void.<sup>11</sup> How does one simulate faith?

- ✓ For example, character stats in many role-playing games include such attributes as intelligence and wisdom (or some other combination) reduced to numbers (reduced to the ontic) on whatever scale the game uses. Back when I was a player, there was endless debate about what is meant by the wisdom stat, which usually devolved into judgment-from-experience-type arguments – even though most D&D starting characters are teenagers (as opposed to Traveller RPG). But what character stat (or in GGDM, civilization stat) is going to indicate whether the player character is prone to *sacrificium intellectus*? Do most D&D players even know what that means? Is this the point then of the attempts at ‘Christian Dungeons & Dragons’ games?

One might assume that the group’s cleric and paladin must have faith of some sort, but then there is magic and spells they receive every day just for being ... whatever they are (from apparently low-hanging gods & divine petsitters), and that is rather empirical (factual, demonstrable, repeatable), even if fickle and not a matter of faith. Faith is not something that is clearly necessary for even clerics in D&D, it is more of a Roman-style *quid pro quo* religious transaction or *a divine grant of arms*, than religion. No, the players themselves, through the logic of their character (such as it is) must decide whether faith exists.

*Sacrificium intellectus* is related to anti-intellectualism, they are at least close cousins; one says we cannot know, the other that knowing and understanding are contemptable, both call it pretentious. Compare *sacrificium intellectus* to Voltaire’s “Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.” See full feature quote in 1 Reformation, p. 1383, *supra*. Voltaire had absurdities long before Camus was born!

- ✓ “Now, from the point of view generally accepted in the sciences, that of an unbiased striving for truth, it is not clear why one should bring oneself to a *sacrificium intellectus*, to an abandonment of *critical* method, simply because traditional articles of belief might have to be jettisoned, even though they have grown dear to our hearts. Any scientist who is prepared to sacrifice the rules of the game when one of his pet convictions is at stake voluntarily excludes himself from the scientific enterprise, even if he is institutionally defined by it.” – Hans Albert, Treatise on Critical Reason (1985), p. 145 (emphasis in original) (found on Google Books).
  - ✓ “No thank you. A God that would demand the sacrifice of the intellect or even the crucifixion of the intellect is not a God worthy of worship. Imagine moving at death from the shadow lands of this life into the divine presence only to find that God is nothing but irrational power personified, the apotheosis of arbitrariness. What could be more horrible? Far, far better would be to be annihilated at death.” – Bill Vallicella, “Sacrificium Intellectus,” Maverick Philosopher (blog), March 14, 2010.
- Simulating Faith: I have not really put my mind to the task, but it cannot be properly said that faith cannot be simulated because it is irrational, when we also consider *war* to be *irrational* and there are tens of thousands of war simulation games (as is GGDM), both commercial and official military training programs (e.g., ARTBASS in which I have participated) and computer modeling and projection (e.g., as in those used for nuclear war projections, as seen in movies such as *By Dawn’s Early Light* (1990) or *Wargames* (1983)). Whether, when, and where ‘faith’ enters into the game is color that is left for the participants to fill between the lines.

- ✓ “Faith is the belief in something for which there is no conclusive evidence. To demand concrete proof of God’s existence contradicts the very notion of faith, which requires a person to examine their interior world rather than anything on the outside. But faith does not preclude logic. Choosing to demonstrate faith in humanity’s ultimate goodness, despite all the evidence to the contrary, allows us to embrace certain religious teachings. But it does not relieve us of the responsibility of choosing which teachings express that faith and dismissing those that do not.” – Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, *New York Times*, January 11, 2017.
- Faith Aspects: Faith is probably part of supra-legitimacy and happiness meta-aspect. ‘Faith’ could appear as an Aspect in GGDM. Recall that Aspects are not, strictly speaking, emotions, but are more like (in one sense) glimpses of a civilization that appear under certain circumstances and at certain times. However, because Aspects can be Exposed regularly, they may also be considered part of the underlying ‘zeitgeist’ of the civilization. Thus, ‘faith’ as an Aspect could be regarded as either or both if the participants want to allow it in the game.
- Philosophical Suicide: Can one have ‘faith’ without *sacrificium intellectus*? Five centuries ago, the answer would probably have been in the negative, or at least a qualified negative. However, the term ‘faith’ has been secularized and disarmed, such that one can now express rational faith in something (even if ironically) like a friend, or an old reliable vehicle, without resort to religious meanings. In the view of some (a shrinking minority), ‘faith’ has been cheapened thus and I am certain Dietrich Bonhoeffer would have been one of those.
  - ✓ Thus if ‘Faith’ is an Aspect on the Aspect List of one or more positions, participants may eventually need to address whether it is taken in a current secular sense or in the sense of *sacrificium intellectus*?

Overlapping the life and times of Bonhoeffer was Albert Camus, who considered *sacrificium intellectus* a form of ‘philosophical suicide’ in which one gives up their reason, their volition, becoming – in the words of Yahweh in Robert Heinlein’s *Job: A Comedy of Justice* (1984) – “golems.” That places Camus in the Voltaire tradition, but a slightly different problem:

- ✓ “From this point of departure he proceeds to his critique of the different ways of ‘philosophical suicide,’ which he characterizes as so many ways of speculative evasion. All existential thinkers quoted by Camus have realized the futility of reason, all them are seen to have recourse to some transcendent entity as *raison d’être*: Husserl to his ‘extratemporal essences’ of innumerable phenomena, Chestov and Kierkegaard to a deity whose loftiness consists precisely of His incomprehensibility, indeed in His inconsistency, arbitrariness, inhumanity. Chestov is quoted as saying: ‘We address ourselves to God only to obtain the impossible; as to the possible, humans suffice.’ Such deity, to Camus, shows all the features of the absurd; He demands, in the old way, the *sacrificium intellectus*. In point of fact, it could be said that Tertullian’s *credo quia absurdum* has arrived, in the modern situation, at a *vivo quia absurdum*. ... Camus rejects the ‘philosophical suicide’; he refuses to accept any transcendent ... but seeks to remain within the pale of this world and to maintain himself on his scarce certitudes. He likewise discards ... physical suicide, because this also, in its ultimate consequence, resolves, dissolves the absurd, implying acceptance. ‘The point is, to die irreconciled and not of one’s own accord.’” – Erich Kahler, *The Tower and the Abyss* (1957) (emphasis in original) (available free on Google Books).<sup>12</sup>

- “Chestov” is Lev Shestov (1866-1938), Russian existentialist philosopher, b. Kiev (Russian Empire), d. in Paris, France.
- Compare, “...a deity whose loftiness consists precisely of His incomprehensibility, indeed in His inconsistency, arbitrariness, inhumanity.” (*ut supra*) to The Urantia Book:
  - “God is not hiding from any of his creatures. He is unapproachable to so many orders of beings only because he ‘dwells in a light which no material creature can approach.’ The immensity and grandeur of the divine personality is beyond the grasp of the unperfected mind of evolutionary mortals.” (Part 1, Paper 5 from Wikiquotes, but the book is free online).
  - Cf. to Robert Heinlein, Job: A Comedy of Justice (1984).

*“The ending finally reveals the motive behind Ken Park’s suicide: he has impregnated his girlfriend who responds to his question asking if she wanted to keep it by asking if he wishes he’d been aborted himself. Realizing that he’d rather never have been born, he sets out to the skate park to kill himself.”*

– from Wikipedia article, “Ken Park,” captured July 29, 2019

**The Modern Spectre-rum**: Absurdism is considered to be in a spectrum with existentialism and nihilism (Camus denied being an existentialist), anti-natalism is probably considered nihilistic. Most people think of nihilism as irrational, a teenaged attitude toward life, but anti-natalism has many rational arguments (e.g., Kantian imperative). The film ending of Ken Park (2002) is anti-natalist, but demonstrates a divergence from Camus’ absurdism: He commits suicide. Camus might ask, once you have been born – without consent and against your will – what is the point of committing suicide? The probably-not-accidental social implications of Ken Park is another teen pregnancy with the father dead – just like in any war. On the other side, the three remaining teens in the story have a threesome encounter – possibly a symbolic hedonistic act related to Camus’ early writings, demonstrating the opposites of anti-natalism and absurdism.

- ✓ The film was banned by the Australian government before it could be screened at the Sydney Film Festival. That’s always good publicity for a film. While the issue is explained in legalese, a maze of regulations, (<https://www.artslaw.com.au/article/the-banning-of-ken-park-a-brief-review-of-the-facts-and-issues/>) one is left to wonder if all of this is cover for any range of visceral objections to unsimulated sex (pornography), anti-natalism, hedonism, absurdism, or a general dislike of the entire disturbing, artistic subject treatment in the film.

**Sebastian:** *The city was drowning in decay .. chaos, immorality. A message needed to be sent, etched in blood, for all the world to see: a warning. In the pursuit of my .. holy cause, I .. did things, terrible things, unspeakable things. The world condemned me, but it didn’t matter, because I believed I was right and the world was wrong. I believed I was the divine messenger. I believed I was—*

**Sheridan:** *Chosen?*

**Sebastian:** .. I was .. found by the Vorlons. They showed me the terrible depth of my mistake, .. my crimes, my .. presumption. I have done 400 years of penance in their service. A job, for which they said I was ideally suited. Now, perhaps, they will finally let me die.

**Sheridan:** I think that might be wise.

**Sebastian:** Good luck to you in your holy cause, Captain Sheridan. May your choices have better results than mine. Remembered, not as a messenger, remembered not as a reformer, not as a prophet, not as a hero, not even as Sebastian. Remembered only .. as Jack.

– Babylon 5, “Comes the Inquisitor” (1995) (final scene)<sup>13</sup>

## Endnotes.

<sup>1</sup> Citation: “Critical mass, which is sometimes referred to as tipping points, is one of the most effective mental models you can use to understand the world. The concept can explain everything from viral cat videos to why changing habits is so hard. Sometimes it can seem as if drastic changes happen at random. One moment a country is stable; the next, a revolution begins and the government is overthrown. One day a new piece of technology is a novelty; the next, everyone has it and we cannot imagine life without it. Or an idea lingers at the fringes of society before it suddenly becomes mainstream.

As erratic and unpredictable as these occurrences are, there is a logic to them, which can be explained by the concept of critical mass. A collaboration between Thomas Schelling (a game theorist) and Mark Granovetter (a sociologist) led to the concept’s being identified in 1971. Also known as the boiling point, the percolation threshold, the tipping point ... critical mass is the point at which something (an idea, belief, trend, virus, behavior, etc.) is prevalent enough to grow, or sustain, a process, reaction, or technology. As a mental model, critical mass can help us to understand the world around us by letting us spot changes before they occur, make sense of tumultuous times, and even gain insight into our own behaviors. ... In sociology, a critical mass is a term for a group of people who make a drastic change, altering their behavior, opinions or actions. In some societies (e.g., a small Amazonian tribe), just a handful of people can change prevailing views. In larger societies ... the figure must usually be higher for a change to occur.

The concept of a sociological critical mass was first used in the 1960s by Morton Grodzins, a political science professor at the University of Chicago. Grodzins studied racial segregation – in particular, examining why people seemed to separate themselves by race even when that separation was not enforced by law. His hypothesis was that white families had different levels of tolerance for the number of people of racial minorities in their neighborhoods. Some white families were completely racist; others were not concerned with the race of their neighbors. As increasing numbers of racial minorities moved into neighborhoods, the most racist people would soon leave. Then a tipping point would occur – a critical mass of white people would leave until the area was populated by racial minorities. This phenomenon became known as ‘white flight.’” – Shane Perry, “Critical Mass and Tipping Points: How To Identify Inflection Points Before They Happen,” Farnham Street (blog), July 2017.

✓ See also Excerpt of Sweet Trial – Closing Arguments in Tribes in the Night Sky, *supra*.

<sup>2</sup> Commentary: It’s like wearing a military uniform – it’s not ‘supposed’ to be comfortable, your happiness and comfort are not the military’s first concern. Nor is it a concern of the universe or even the rest of humanity.

✓ A co-worker at the law firm once commented that our negative view of social media (and of the stupid things people say on social media) is due to the fact that we work in a law firm and handle employment cases.

<sup>3</sup> Commentary: One of the very first points that I taught young attorneys who worked on our FINRA cases is that *in order to work in the financial industry, you must be obsessed with money*. If I were obsessed with money, I would have become a stock broker or CFA instead of a paralegal. This is the reason they are heavily regulated and the reason why FINRA is a corrupt, incompetent, and untrustworthy (or at least inherently suspicious, think about it) arbitrator of financial industry disputes.

✓ For example, the real reason why pre-hearing depositions are not allowed in FINRA arbitration is not cost or expediency, it is so that industry witnesses can lie, fudge, and change their story while testifying at the arbitration hearings, as long as there are not documents or other ways to catch them lying. This is also a



reason why regulations have made the documentation requirement heavy in the industry. Plaintiff attorneys in FINRA cases become good at catching the little lies and combing voluminous documents.

It is also the reason that employee forgivable loans (EFLs) are common recruiting tools and are the way in which the industry controls newly-hired brokers and financial advisors. To understand the financial industry, and FINRA cases, one must understand the industry's massive rewards, the heavy regulation, and neurotic obsession with money. People who work in the financial industry are not smarter than or do not work harder than people who work in a law office, and they are certainly not 'better people' because they make money out of other's money, but they earn (and spend) vastly more income because of where they work.

<sup>4</sup> Commentary & Citation: And how about this: Some people have asserted that Jesus was influenced in his preaching by contact with Buddhist monks. This is reflected in the dialogue of the movie *The Man from Earth* (2007), though I had heard the idea previously, since we know little of Jesus life for the first 30 years and much of what we know might have been made up afterward by people who never knew him. It's almost like the second Big Bang.

<sup>5</sup> Citation: "With exceptions so rare they are regarded as miracles of nature, successful democratic politicians are insecure and intimidated men. They advance politically only as they placate, appease, bribe, seduce, bamboozle, or otherwise manage to manipulate the demanding and threatening elements in their constituencies. The decisive consideration is not whether the proposition is good but whether it is popular – not whether it will work well and prove itself but whether the active talking constituents like it immediately. Politicians rationalize this servitude by saying that in a democracy public men are the servants of the people." – Walter Lippmann, *Essays in the Public Philosophy* (1955).

<sup>6</sup> Citation: "The Rosicrucian manifestos heralded a 'universal reformation of mankind,' through a science allegedly kept secret for decades until the intellectual climate might receive it. Controversies have arisen on whether they were a hoax, whether the 'Order of the Rosy Cross' existed as described in the manifestos, or whether the whole thing was a metaphor disguising a movement that really existed, but in a different form. In 1616, Johann Valentin Andreae famously designated it as a 'ludibrium.' Some esoteric scholars suggest that this statement was later made by Andreae in order to shield himself from the wrath of the religious and political institutions of the day, which were intolerant of free speech and the idea of a 'universal reformation,' which the manifestos called for. ... By promising a spiritual transformation at a time of great turmoil, the manifestos influenced many figures to seek esoteric knowledge. Seventeenth-century occult philosophers such as Michael Maier, Robert Fludd, and Thomas Vaughan interested themselves in the Rosicrucian world view. According to historian David Stevenson, it was influential on Freemasonry as it was emerging in Scotland." – from Wikipedia article, "Rosicrucianism," January 31, 2019.

- ✓ The 'esoteric scholars' above may have seen parallels to The Grand Inquisitor by Dostoyevsky.
- ✓ The 'Rosy Cross' is part of the design of the Rose of the Winds at the bottom of the Wells of Initiation at Quinta da Regaleira, Portugal.
- ✓ Rosicrucianism is an example of "an intellectual mutation that had been taking root since the Thirty Years War" and the doubts sown by "the Jesuit image of a near utopian civilization governed by moral sages uncorrupted by intolerance, passion, or material desire" described by Prof. Raymond Birn in the quote in 2 Kairotic Moments, p. 1433, *supra*.

<sup>7</sup> Commentary: What is Occultism appears to be a later book of collected writings by Dion Fortune that was gathered and edited by Garth Knight in the 1990s, approximately 50 years after her death.

<sup>8</sup> Commentary & Citation: As discussed previously in *More Than a Feeling*, 1 Temporal Technology, pp. 808-809, *supra*, unless you are Peter Pan, you cannot refuse to grow up, it will just happen. *There is but one chance at parenting and educating children and it must be done right, there are no do-overs, and the consequences are profound for most of the next century.* It is thus a crime against our society when children are warming seats and being passed along in school, but it's also an inevitability because they cannot be held back for long and will eventually graduate or drop out, into adulthood. This very same reason is the only reason that might justify interference in the development or affairs of another alien sapient species (see discussion of Minor Races in *Mathó Thípila* 4 Diplomacy, p. 1140, and *Metalaw* in 3 Diplomacy, *supra*), because it *seems* inevitable that short of extinction (or because of impending extinction on Earth, as in the 2014 movie *Interstellar*), humanity will eventually break out into space colonization and possibly interstellar travel. But, if our history has taught us anything, we must be very careful, very suspicious of our intentions and hold sacrosanct the existential space of other species; there is simply *no way to retroactively construct European conquest and colonialism as anything intended to be beneficial to the natives or their civilizations or humanity* – and Christian missionary activities, conversion and evangelism makes the farce malodor.

- ✓ "If you would lift me up, you must be on higher ground." – Ralph Waldo Emerson.

<sup>9</sup> Commentary: Kairotic Moments, even rewritten during the final edit, are disappointing to me as the designer. GGDM doesn't have the tools to explain in any meaningful way – without players to make an emergent story from game mechanics – the problem set out in the beginning: The emergent effect of early Christianity on the entire Western worldview coming down to the present day, was the early Church part of the mechanism of change, or did it just happen along when Classic Antiquity was collapsing of its own absurdities, when the Great Migrations were reaching Europe, when the European-Mediterranean world was changing? It has no ability to explain the ripple changes of Buddhism spreading out from the mountain tops of Nepal, or the transition from Brahmanism to Hinduism, or the effect of Confucianism (a non-religious example) along the coasts of China. There is obviously something missing or mismatched in this process, like having a lug wrench when you need a hex key. GGDM, without human players, has failed to turn one into the other, to take the outside in, and turn the inside out.

<sup>10</sup> Commentary & Citation: Later Stan tries to get Dr. Crusher to give him recreational drugs, tries to get Data to have a party ... because he can't stand silence, being alone with himself and not doing anything. Stan is the type of 20<sup>th</sup> Century stock character Alanis Morissette sang about seven years later:

- ✓ “Why are you so petrified of silence? Here can you handle this? [music stops, moment of silence] Did you think about your bills, your ex, your deadlines, Or when you think you're going to die? Or did you long for the next distraction?” – Alanis Morissette, “All I Really Want” (1995).

<sup>11</sup> Commentary: Whatever ‘faith’ I have might be called negative or pessimistic faith: I am sure that somehow something stupid and annoying, and totally pointless except for the foregoing, will happen whenever I try to do anything (whether important or not), including GGDM. Except that, is it faith if it is based on living experience and repeated observation? I believe this is true for all of humanity, but we go about pretending it isn't so. How many times does *the* stupid thing have to happen before it is no longer random or coincidence or just bad luck? I would not be surprised if something inexplicably asinine occurred in relation to GGDM. Do I think the universe is malevolent toward us? It makes as much sense as any other explanation and is consistent with a lifetime of observation, especially those who claim oppositely that the universe is benevolent toward us because we exist, because life evolved on the Earth, because abiogenesis happened.

- ✓ The Existential Void is not Camus' “philosophical suicide”; it is not a benevolent deity or a substitute for one, it is not even a malevolent form, it is nothing, nothingness, the inherent meaninglessness of the universe against which emergent humans build meaning. If this makes it a benevolent thing to you, then so be it, but if you happen to be on an EVA in orbit, take off your helmet and see how benevolent the universe really is to humanity.
- ✓ Nor should Mr. Case's four orders of natural phenomenon (and my trumpeting of it) be taken as a case of “philosophical suicide” in the Camus' sense. Mr. Case's four orders are simply a matter of observation, the same as that of Tyco Brahe and Johannes Kepler, and appear to have been derived from Comte with adjustments for the updated knowledge of his time. If you believe they demonstrate a higher benevolence or the hand of a deity, so be it, that's your faith. I renew the invitation for you to take in the freshness of space helmetless while on an EVA to test the benevolence of your faith.

<sup>12</sup> Commentary: News media highlights suicides and unintentional-intentional suicide by drug abuse and prescription drug overdosing by ‘celebrities’ and there seems to be a special sense of *schadenfreude* when the victim is a pornographic performer or hated criminal (in the 80s, it was Fundamentalist playing up suicides allegedly related to Dungeons & Dragons). Studies have shown that certain professions – most notably, ambulance drivers and paramedics – have higher than average rates of suicide. The correct sociological question to ask with celebrity, porn performer and famous criminal suicides is whether the rate of suicide in that group is greater than the population average, and whether we perhaps feel some satisfaction as a society when famous people die by suicide or overdosing?

<sup>13</sup> Commentary: Sebastian in Babylon 5 is Jack the Ripper, sent to test Captain Sheridan who is about to turn history. Babylon 5 explains the sudden disappearance or end of his murder spree in November 1888. Among the seven police suspects, six others identified by the press, and sixteen others listed as suspects identified by later authors, none are named Sebastian (from Wikipedia article, “Jack the Ripper suspects,” January 29, 2019). Thus, either J. Michael Straczynski was being careful to avoid historical figures or was saying everyone, all the theories, were wrong.

- ✓ From this scene, “you don't know Jack” acquired a special meaning for Babylon 5 fans.