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“If the majority of referees like your research, you can be certain that you are doing boring work. To push forward ideas that will matter to the world, you and I may as well accept that we are going to have to upset people and crawl through the trenches of muddy carping and explosive criticism. All referees – and I suppose that must include me – are subconsciously looking for manuscripts that play back to them ideas they already find familiar and palatable, and ones that lend support to their own prior research. That is bad and sad. However, it also happens to be human.

Of course, all referees will tell you that they are open-minded, write gently and are on the lookout for work of fabulous creativity. But they aren't. It is hard for a human being to absorb ideas that are of first-order originality; such ideas, by definition, barely compute. Moreover, it is emotionally difficult for reviewers to be charitable about others' manuscripts. Schadenfreude survives, if quietly.

...The simple truth is that the scholar who is tired of referees is tired of life. Journal reviewers are going to keep on being incoherent, making fundamental mistakes, being childlike and gratuitous, forcing us to cite their irrelevant articles, thinking that after 20 minutes they understand our work better than we do after 20 months, leaving out the crucial references they claim have already shown the finding, and all the rest.”

– Andrew Oswald, Prof. of Economics, University of Warwick, contributor to, “The worst piece of peer review I’ve ever received,” Times Higher Education, August 6, 2015 ¹

ORIGINALITY IN ALIENS: In the been-there, done-that genre of First Contact movies (whether alien invasion or not), *Arrival* (2016) is a good example of a “first-order originality” that barely computes. The same is true of *Close Encounters* (1977), compared to what came before, and *Contact* (1997) (notice the 20^{ish}-year cycles?). I have seen comments online that *Arrival* was an ok movie, an average movie, the sure sign of people who didn't *grok* it, and went to see exploding buildings and alien weapons and were disappointed they didn't get more of the same old.

- ❖ In fact, I suspect the attempted sabotage and explosion inside the alien ship was just so that the movie had an action scene. Why didn't the heptapods know this was going to happen? Or did it have to happen?

The aliens in *Arrival* are playing a game of cosmic chess on a grand scale, their trip to Earth was to move the pawn of humanity into position in 3,000 years for some unknown event they can already see, that is already *actual* to them.

- ❖ While most ideas of ‘first-order originality’ ‘by definition barely compute’ – *No!* NASA does not have a child (sex) slave colony on Mars! See *Child Slave Colony on Mars*, 4 *Expansion*, p. 928, *supra*. That is, not all ideas of either first-order originality or that barely compute are meritorious.

FUZZY MODELS: So what method have I engaged in?

- ❖ “In every one of these fields of investigation the student may proceed either by the historical method, which seeks to *depict* concrete reality in all its concreteness, or by the analytic, processual method, which tries to give an account in terms of abstract generalizations, mechanisms, processes, laws and principles.” – Clarence Marsh Case, *Outlines of Introductory Sociology* (1924), p. xvii (emphasis in original).

I set out to construct a workable model of human civilization on the broadest scale (now called macrosociology which seems to have begun to be generally recognized about the same time I started working on this project), the ‘workability’ of the model would be reflected in the fact that it was playable as a game with endless possible courses and variables, to teach the players or bring forth what they know intuitively. In terms of Mr. Case, I have proceeded by a somewhat ‘processual method’ extracting process of civilizations from history, philosophy and social sciences thinking.

- ❖ If I ever were accused of being a pioneering mind or a foremost intellect in the area of macrosociology (or anything else), it would be more a statement about the underdevelopment, the poor state of the art in our current civilization. In this, I have a good feeling that Albert Einstein would agree, “I have no special talents. I am only passionately curious” (1952). Pragmatically speaking, compared to now, physics in the late 19th Century was ‘underdeveloped.’ So is the glass half full, half empty, or both?

The model is constructed from observation of what we can see, but not quite see. I find this somewhat akin to the way that physicist and chemist constructed or learned the structure of the atom and sub-atomic universe. And the way in which astronomers and cosmologist have constructed the seen and unseen nature of our universe back to the beginning.

I freely admit that some of what I have done is art, much of it is more philosophy than anything else – which is inherently damning in the current world for anything that wants scientific instead of literary respectability – and compromises must always be made for the sake of the model or simulation. Nothing here is invented or new; I have taken what mostly already exists in our intellectual tradition and assembled them (perhaps) in new ways.

- ❖ Napoleon did not invent new weapons to defeat his enemies. The weapons used in the Napoleonic Wars were the same weapons that had been used the previous century; Napoleon radically changed the tactics and combined them in ways, with speed, efficiency and precision not seen before. He did however, embrace emerging non-military technologies, such as the telegraph and new food preservation technology.

Broadly speaking, there is absolutely no empirical basis for the structures or many of the deductive claims offered in GGDM. As such, GGDM is a work of philosophy at best and/or just my considered personal opinion, at worst. In the senses of the standard definition of fact, philosophy is no more than considered opinion anyway. It is not certain how any of this is verifiable in the current sense.

✚ **GESTALT STRUCTURES:** I did not start out with the idea that civilizations are gestalt structures. I can assure the reader that I had not even heard of such a thing in December 1992. I probably first encountered the term ‘gestalt’ about the time I graduated from Point Park College, in the spring of 1997. I recall coming across an article on Gestalt Psychology or Gestalt Therapy in the Encyclopedia of Psychology at the newly-opened Library Center. I do not believe that I began thinking of civilizations as a gestalt structure until at least 2002.

- ❖ *Intellectus Magna:* The common thread of intellectuals through all ages, times and places is simply that they become fascinated, obsessed with a problem – one that others ignore or do not see as relevant, one that might not even exist yet – and pursue the problem until the results matter to others; until it changes the future world. This is the point of post-graduate training, especially of the liberal arts tradition; to learn to

frame the problem with which you are obsessed. One possible reason for my failure of post-graduate training is that I had already framed my problem. Another possible reason was immaturity. Given our penchant for accepting negative reasons...

While my references to civilization as a gestalt structure may at times sound more like faith than reason, I do not fall into the same criticism as Thomas Aquinas, who is accused of knowing the answer before beginning the inquiry and simply reasoning his way to a predetermined result (that is, justification of his Catholic faith). I am guilty more of deductive reasoning than *sacraficium intellectus*, though in some senses, they apparently appear the same: What is the difference between deducing your way to God's existence and deducing the elements of a 'large scale distributed structure' and declaring that it is a gestalt?

- ❖ Cf. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's "Omega Point"; he was a Jesuit priest who was trained in paleontology and geology and thus had to come face to face with science and geological and biological evolution of the Earth. He could not shelter in willful ignorance like others and assert that the Bible was literal and inerrant, so he reasoned his way into accepting both, a solution that is not quite scientific and not quite Christian. Unlike Aquinas who reasoned or rationalized his way to an affirmation of his faith (a predetermined result), many of Chardin's ideas were later banned by the Church from discussion (for obvious reasons). Petty dogma is the Church tyrant.
- ✚ PROBATIVE VALUE: I do not think that my method here falls then, properly or firmly within any of the accepted scholarly methods. Yet, my method is scientifically accepted when it comes to the sub-atomic (with the concession that their hypothesis are testable and falsifiable), and, alternatively, while not precise and testable, my model nonetheless carries meaning and clarity and has probative value on the subjects of human civilization. My model then might be called a fuzzy model.
 - ❖ You could choose to think of GGDM as 'Stellar Conquest reimaged.' I don't, but it might be reasonable to analogize the development of GGDM from Stellar Conquest as being like the difference between the original Battlestar Galactica and the reimaged Battlestar Galactica, or the original Star Trek and Star Trek TNG. In each case, the series benefitted collectively from improvements in technology, budget and marketing, audience sophistication, development of new writing and filming styles, and twenty-five or more additional years for the writers to live and think about the story. And, although the original Battlestar Galactica was intended to 'cash-in' on Star Wars, and was done on a low budget, there was something to it of its own merit that would not, with the lifetime dedication of Richard Hatch, just fade to black.
 - ❖ A friend says that I am working on an "advanced logic problem" – I am not even sure what that means, therefore it is unlikely to be correct. I suppose it might be if you think of it as a "fuzzy logic" problem, but again, I don't think of GGDM or fuzzy logic in that way.
 - ❖ You might declare GGDM a masterful, deep, and cutting edge work of social philosophy, a *magnum opus*, that engages the reader and players in a conversation about civilization, or you might call it bloated 1990s-style pretentious blathering incoherent esoteric nonsense with too many endnotes, quotes and unnecessarily long introductions by an unqualified author. Either interpretation would be equally colorable. At this

point, GGDM is either a mess, an amazing work, or an amazing mess; your interpretation? What you cannot call it is a scholarly work. It is a multi-purpose work, without peers, from influences in our current civilization. I might, in my unusual vanity, determine that GGDM is an unusually and exhaustively complete work, a treatise, my *magnum opus* by default as I have not written and will not likely write anything else of such length and completeness.²

- Saying that someone has a lot of influences in their work is a polite way of saying they have no new or original ideas, just repackaged day-old donuts. In the mid- to late-80s and into the 90s, on training exercises, we received MREs with packs of M&Ms with 1980 and 1984 Olympics logos, they were really hard and stale. GGDM is a 25+ year old box of post-apocalyptic Cold War survival ration donuts.

✚ FAILED INTELLECTUAL: When analyzing GGDM or parsing my written words, don't give me credit for more intelligence than you see before you on the page. There is nothing clever here to be teased out by deep-sounding critical analysis like Chaucer's light social criticism in the Canterbury Tales. After more than 25 years of parsing my own thoughts, there is nothing hidden or obscured in GGDM, my argument is what you see before you and I believe I have polished my words and ground the subjects of GGDM down to the finest points. But I am still basically a failed intellectual. As my mother would say, "Well bully for you!"

"Defeasible reasoning is a particular kind of non-demonstrative reasoning, where the reasoning does not produce a full, complete, or final demonstration of a claim, i.e., where fallibility and corrigibility of a conclusion are acknowledged."

– from Wikipedia article, "Defeasible reasoning," captured April 7, 2020

FALLACIES: Of all of the fallacies that might be thrown at GGDM – and I don't think I could possibly imagine them all³ – the one that probably sticks best is the charge of 'circular reasoning'; GGDM may be an extended exercise in circular reasoning – GGDM 'begs the question' if you will. That is, GGDM perhaps begins with a conclusion – or perhaps it didn't but somewhere along the line, the conclusion moved to the starting position – followed by premises and parts that each in turn must be accepted as true – are in need of being accepted as true – as much as the starting conclusion, and whose acceptance depends on accepting the starting conclusion.

For example, consider the following argument:

- 1) Jane is a prostitute,
- 2) Men give Jane money,
- 3) Jane has sex with men.

This is a circular argument: The conclusion is presented first, and acceptance of the premises as support depends on the conclusion being accepted first. When presented properly:

- 1) Men give Jane money,
- 2) Jane has sex with men, and
- 3) Therefore, Jane is a prostitute.

...the failure of causality becomes immediately obvious: The argument fails to state that men give Jane money for sex. There may in fact be no relationship between the two, perhaps her father and brother gave her money for her birthday (and they are not incestuous) and she had sex with her boyfriends, BFF's husband or complete strangers at some indeterminate time. But the circular argument tricks us into providing causal and temporal links that are not there.⁴

- ❖ On December 4, 2017, the lawyer representing the President of the United States said:
 - “(The) President cannot obstruct justice because he is the chief law enforcement officer under (the Constitution’s Article II) and has every right to express his view of any case.”

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This argument is so mind-bogglingly flawed, that my co-workers just shook their heads and uttered, “What?” or “Huh?” It is an example of how circular arguments are sometimes used in public, it is the King’s Argument: The King can do no wrong because he’s the King (and all that is wrong is against the King, not by the King); to accept that the king can do no wrong, you must accept the implication that being king places him above mortal error or that anything he does that appears ‘wrong’ is part of a divine play. The NR_x was the likely intended audience for the lawyer’s statement.

- In November 2018, the aforementioned attorney (Michael Cohen) pled guilty to the charge of lying to Congress in closed-door testimony. So now he’s a felon. In August 2019, he pled guilty to eight other charges and was sentenced in December 2019. He was automatically disbarred from practicing law in New York State. I am sure he has plenty of money and isn’t worried about not being able to practice law, but I wonder – when he was young and in law school, did he say, “When I grow up, I am going to be a famous attorney who is a felon someday!” Anyway...

✚ PROBLEM OF INDUCTION: Science, the bedrock of the modern world, has a fatal fallacy as well. It is the bedeviling question of knowledge, known as the Problem of Induction.

- ❖ “Induction is the glory of science and the scandal of philosophy.” – C.D. Broad.

It has been around for a long time, but the current version was introduced by David Hume in the 18th Century who characterized attempts to prove science inductively as a circular argument. Science has this problem; science – which is built on induction – cannot be proven inductively by empirical evidence, that is, science cannot be proven scientifically. Induction is only valid inductively. On the street, people accept circular reasoning every day, often not directly (as would raise eyebrows), but hidden circular reasoning often passes unnoted.

- ❖ Induction can be a form of circular reasoning, for once a rule has been created by empirical evidence and inductive reasoning, the rule can become the starting position of the scientific argument – that conclusion, the scientific law, followed by questionable premises, that this is a universal law that can be ‘proven’ by continued empirical evidence in every place and time.

Asking the previous section’s question a different way, what type of reasoning was used to ‘solve’ the original problem put forth to which this game design is offered as a solution? Certainly, the design was an application of deductive reasoning, in a top-down reductionism. That is, in trying to figure out how to simulate a civilization, I took the civilization as a whole ‘thing’ or singular complex system, and broke it down into parts and subsystems until I felt

that I had a workable model of a civilization. This means I started with the premise that civilization is a whole thing or singular complex system and then decided what pieces and parts it must consist of, much as science does with the universe (e.g., the ‘dark matter’ solution).

- ❖ What I have done may be akin to an alien or someone not from our era finding a cell phone and assuming it is a whole system. It can be taken apart and examined, in a sense, it is a system in and of itself, a system of circuits and so on, but it is also at the same moment, not a whole system because it is useless without the network and other cell phones to call.

Along the way, playability and clarity of game rules presentation was always an issue; that these were procedural rules of a complex simulation game keeps all of the theory and speculation roped to the Earth (*à la* Francis Bacon). Having broken civilization down into its constituent parts, however, I then insist – largely on a metaphysical basis – that civilizations be viewed holistically and that the thing that is called a ‘civilization’ is greater than the sum of the parts I have used to describe it. Is this useful and sustainable as a view? Is this fallacy?

- ❖ To insist that civilization is greater than the sum of its parts, based on the parts I have deduced in this simulation might just as easily mean I have mistaken the original whole from which the parts were derived. That is, I don’t have the correct framework to see the whole, if you are a positivist, reductionist thinker, it’s the ‘something’s missing’ or ‘we are missing something’ problem. For others, it is faith.

Now, in regards to GGDM, the intro section begins by stating that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This is a conclusion (or assertion) and not a proof. *The ‘disconnect’ from circular reasoning or inductive logic, is that you don’t necessarily have to accept the conclusion in order to accept the ‘parts’ into which I have divided civilization in the game rules.* The parts can stand each on their own and in combination, which may or may not ‘add up’ to the initial conclusion. Even if GGDM is oddly circular, this does not diminish in any way its value in the current form, as a simulation and game about civilizations. Imperfect examples are as instructive as perfection.

- ❖ Rhetorical Question: What is the difference between *reductio ad absurdum* and mockery? Isn’t mockery necessarily absurd? Shall we proceed? After you...

✚ FALLACY OF MATTERS: Much of what is said in this work would or will be considered controversial, to the extent that anyone thinks it *matters*. I don’t care. Or as the lawyer’s joke about the value of oral contracts goes, this work is not worth the paper it is not written on.

- ❖ What is the purpose of being ‘cool’ (as in being fashionably attractive, hip and all that in style, looks, behavior, language, attitudes)? To attract the opposite sex and have agreeable friends, to be amusing, sociable, histrionic, to stand out. The less one cares about those things, the less one cares about being ‘cool.’ Can one be both ‘cool’ and controversial? I doubt the word is used as much now in the under-20 crowd – not however that they are any less shallow – but rather that the word mostly belongs to the pre-millennial generation (where good was bad, and bad was good); cool has lost its coolness (‘cool’ is not ‘hot’ now). “When I say she was cool she was red hot, I mean, she was steamin’!” – Thin Lizzy, “The Boys are Back in Town” (1976).

Any alleged controversial statements or positions herein are tenable and defensible. I would only be accused of expressing angst in a literary game; angst is virtually synonymous with

literature/literary and *is a fact* in the third and fourth orders of natural phenomenon. All of which is a long-winded way of saying I expect to get piled on like Jared Diamond, to the extent that anyone thinks what I say *matters*. The difference is that the Pulitzer Prize and Ph.D. and having Professor next to your name makes people *look*, makes your opinion *matter* more.

- ❖ The world pretends to care about racism, so piling on Prof. Diamond was the sport of the season. What sport I might be, I do not know exactly. I suspect that I might be accused of being a ‘globalist’ which has recently become a derogatory term and the sport of the season, whilst, ‘racist’ has become so overused, ordinary, old fashioned and boring, that the term is now sort of neutral. Ideologically, anti-globalism is still racism with a new name and the cover of nationalism.

To those who have not understood some of the more acrid and caustic comments; I would suggest that they have not grasped the concept of the existential void.

- ❖ You don’t like what I have written? You don’t like my opinions on the universe, your religion, and humanity’s relationship to the universe? Don’t read it, forget about it then. Go read a comic book instead, it will make you feel better. If you go squawking about it, more people will have to read what I wrote to understand the complaints (Streisand Effect), so the worst thing you can do for my work is to put it down and go quietly away. Isn’t that rather ironic? Don’t dust off your Bothered About Dungeons & Dragons placards (BADD since MADD was already taken in 1980; there is a YouTube video whose title suggests LoTR is demonism), GGDM isn’t that sort of thing – people who read GGDM are those who are ready to read it, and that includes very few high schoolers because GGDM is not a flashy video. Eventually, you will realize that I have at least a good chance of being correct. It makes no difference whether you like it or not. It makes no difference whether I like it or not. Maybe you’ll come back then and read my words again, maybe not.

I tend to think, in fact, that the less flattering and the less any statement is liked by the reader, the more likely that it is a profound truth. There does seem to be a relationship between profundity and denial; this is the basis of satire.

If it *matters*, argue and debate it in a socially constructive way – because everyone has an agenda, ideal, or worldview they are trying to advance – and find your own truths. I believe that at least some will come to see that I am correct, for whatever it’s worth.

- ✚ KISS-OFF FALLACY: My personal fame, or infamy as the case may be, will not help this project and while I will be liked or disliked by many (to the extent it *matters* to them), I do not seek notoriety.
 - ❖ “If you go back to the theory – this is the mind of Joseph Campbell – that heroes are the agents of evolution, the means by which one world is shattered and the new world is created, they’re not for their own sake, their purpose, like Mad Max at the end of Mad Max 3, is over. Once the kids are free, they’re going to go off and start something new [and] he can’t be part of that. He’s too fixed in his ways. At least that’s his function. He recognises that he’s not so important, just a chance of a renewal is much more important than an individual.” – George Miller as quoted by Anne Bill-

son, “George Miller Talks about Mad Max, Heroes & Tina Turner: The 1985 Interview,” previously unpublished interview published on Multiglom: The Anne Billson Blog, May 12, 2015.

- ❖ Whatever you think I have achieved in GGDM, it is far less than what I should have achieved, and our society is not benefitted by applauding or praising underachievement. How many of us actually deserve awards, applause and praise?

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I must think at this point that I have said my peace on the subjects addressed in the game – as I have been writing this for a half-lifetime with no-counterargument from anyone outside my head⁵ – media interviews, blog posts, social media comments by me will not add much but confusion and cognitive dissonance. Like Judge Wettick said, “Read my opinion.” But who knows? I might keep writing if only for the unworthy purposes of defending my dissertation, annoying certain people, and having no unpublished thoughts, as Christopher Hitchens noted (“How to be a Public Intellectual,” Prospect Magazine, May 24, 2008).

- ❖ After reading through GGDM, you may feel that I have no unpublished thoughts. At some point along the way, I decided to ‘lay it all out there’ and hope that I had time to finish the project. I may only get one chance to do this, and I have been *damned lucky so far*. This is what I am, this is what I think, and what I think I am.
- ❖ **Capt. Picard:** I wish, I wish time had allowed me to know you better. **Mark Twain:** Well, you’ll just have to read my books. What I have is pretty much there. – Star Trek: TNG, “Time’s Arrow, Part 2” (1992).

You wish to heap abuse and criticism on my work? I’ve already beat you to it (and I’m not done yet), and I can do a better job. My thoughts and writings are so worthy of contempt that I cannot help it. You will find that it’s not much fun to troll someone who already agrees with you, who doesn’t really care what you say, and who is probably half nuts already (bearing in mind what Erasmus said on that subject). So let us skip that exercise and get back to the conversation of civilizations as I have already admitted that my being is contemptible.

- ❖ “It is also a fallacious *ad hominem* argument to argue that a person presenting statements lacks authority and thus their arguments do not need to be considered. As appeals to a perceived lack of authority, these types of argument are fallacious for much the same reasons as an appeal to authority.” – from Wikipedia article, “Argument from Authority,” captured April 7, 2020.

If instead you wish to heap praise and acclaim on my work, save it, because I will never be convinced, it’s too late, and it would not be good for the world anyway. *In causa?* Not here, save them for the posthumous; I would also be a better person for not being feted: As much as the idea might be personally satisfying – in a self-puffery way – I must reject it as contrary to my stated views. My personal satisfaction is irrelevant to the argument. *Nemo*.

- ❖ There are a lot of people who paid a lot of money, migraines and years, to earn that Ph.D. Let them have it, I will not trespass with honorary degrees or titles. I will be satisfied simply with and to be Concierge One and will pass into the Void. Likewise, prizes, awards, medals, grants are for the young, for those who need encouragement, goals, recognition and support; I do not seek these as they will do little now.
- ❖ Some may argue that my attitudes or lack of ‘self-confidence’ or discomfort ‘in my own skin’ are a symptom of lack of completion and if you want more, I didn’t attend

my high school graduation and failed to complete post-graduate education. Whether that is true or not is irrelevant, honorary degrees will not tell me that I am completed, and it will not make me a good man. Or solve the problem of being here.

- ❖ At the end of the Pittsburgh Pirates 2019 season, Steve Blass, player and Pirate’s broadcaster of 60 years combined with the organization, retired. His retirement was announced in January, so they had plenty of time to go through the process and build-up. The last weekend of the season was a three-game home stand, and the Mayor of Pittsburgh declared Saturday, September 28, 2019, “Steve Blass Day” and the MLB allowed the Pirates to use specially-marked game balls for the weekend. There was an on-field ceremony, speeches, and the broadcasters feted it out to the max, it became sappy, sentimental, emotional, repetitive, absurd. It was barely kept in bounds and on the last afternoon game, they changed their tune slightly by repeating several times that this was not a eulogy for Steve Blass; I am sure it was brought up in a production meeting that they were maybe overdoing it, but had to let it run its course. Mr. Blass was good through the whole thing, and played his part well.⁶

I like Mr. Blass, I certainly don’t begrudge him anything, but I don’t see fully the value in how he was feted in the last weekend, I have a different view apparently. People have made arguments about this public feting thing for millennia, but *adapting* (not quoting) a line from Camus, I say that the point is to ‘die unthanked, unfeted, unsatisfied and not of one’s free will.’

- ✚ PREACHY FALLACY: Some movies are criticized for being preachy. Every *serious* movie (including comedies in their own way) is preachy, or else it is not literary – in short, to be literary is to be somewhat preachy, *preachers and literature have always been connected* – and that is what separates serious movies from the rest of the mindless garbage in the theatres and on television. But the difference is in how it is done; compare Tomorrowland (2015) with Interstellar (2014), two movies with overlapping messages.

Claims of having no agenda are similar to claims of making no claim; such claims are very soft and easy targets in the philosophical community, it seems almost a waste of good paper to refute them (fortunately, I am not using any paper):

- ❖ “The first aspect of Nagarjuna’s statement is a brazen claim to have no claim. This, of course, is self-contradictory. Every proposition that claims to be meaningful and true (whether about some experience or about abstraction, whether positive or negative) is an assertion, a claim. To pretend making no claim, even as one plainly makes one, is a breach of the law of identity: it is denying that a fact is a fact. There is no logical way to deny or criticize the theses or methodologies of others without opening one’s own discourse to evaluation. All denial or criticism is discourse and all discourse is subject to logical review. To pretend the logical possibility of dispensation is dishonest...” – Avi Sion, Paradoxes and Their Resolutions: A Thematic Compilation, p. 209.
- ❖ “How much more should I, who am but dust and ashes, and so prone to error, desire that everyone should bring forward what he can against my doctrine. Therefore, most serene emperor, and you illustrious princes, and all, whether high or low, who hear me, I implore you by the mercies of God to prove to me by the writings of the prophets and apostles that I am in error. As soon as I shall be convinced, I will instantly retract all my errors, and will myself be the first to seize my writings, and commit

them to the flames.” – Martin Luther, “Speech before the Diet of Worms” (1521), Paragraph 7 (delivered in both Latin and German).

I think I would have liked to have known Martin Luther and Desiderius Erasmus. Though Martin Luther and I would have disagreed mightily on many things – mainly the whole God and religion issue – and many things have happened and become known in the last 500 years that lead me to much different opinions than he held in the early 16th Century; I find myself impressed by and attracted to his writings, ideas, speeches, and life and fascinated by the events of the Reformation. He was a man of mind, no fool, who was surprised by what he unleashed.

✚ FALLACY OF SERIOUSNESS: Would you say that I took this game project far too seriously? Is that a fallacy now? I have heard this criticism or observation applied to movies, stories, and people, that they/it took them/itself too seriously. I simply don’t *grok* the concept. Yes, I understand the meaning of the words and the intent, but I don’t and never have comprehended how one can take themselves and their work too seriously. Or take anything too seriously.

- ❖ If you are not going to take your works seriously, what will you take seriously?
- ❖ If you are not going to take humanity seriously, what will you take seriously?
- ❖ If life is a joke, it is one in very poor taste and I am not required to laugh.

To intentionally expect or attempt not to take anything seriously is just a sidestep away from claiming to make no claims. Or claiming to have no agenda. Or avoiding any hint of being preachy or literary or philosophical. Or intellectual. While in some cases, not taking anything seriously is intended to be disarming, it ends by disarming the mind of the speaker.

People who don’t take anything seriously (I have met a few) – the ‘don’t worry, be happy’ life-is-a-party, fight-for-your-right-to-paaaaarrty! crowd – are fluff floating away in the breezes of their lifetime. The very phrase in question – ‘take too seriously’ (and variations) – is stretched and contorted. The more you look into the combination of words, as St. Augustine argued in On Christian Doctrine (397 A.D.), the less you can be sure of their meaning. Our words seem to become alien even to us when we stare at them too long.

Walk with me for a moment. If we begin with the assumption that GGDM is probably the only work I will ever finish, or the only work of this magnitude that I will ever create (and given my age and my life, this is not a farfetched, baseless assumption), and that it is worthless, irrelevant and silly (or will be perceived to be) and not taken seriously by anyone but me, then why not put everything into it if I don’t care what you think? I have no publisher, no editor to please but myself. What if it is my only opportunity to get everything ‘on paper’ (though no paper is involved), to get it all out, say what needs said?

There is perhaps a pretzel logic – to feel the need to write it all down even if no one will read it or take it seriously, or give it any worth at all – but it is fact to me in a third-order-of-natural-phenomena way. And it is the way the human mind works,⁷ and we need to stop pretending that it doesn’t and that it’s never correct.

✚ SILLY SPACE GAME FALLACY: There are ‘fallacies’ to be found in my work that have nothing to do with the work itself; for example, that I do not have a ‘Ph.D.’ after my name and/or that I chose to express my thoughts in the form of a simulation game rather than a polished book from a big publishing house or an article in an academic magazine or learned journal.⁸

- ❖ If you are reading GGDM for the commentaries or as a thesis, the game rules sections will just be in the way, an annoyance, distraction from understanding the arguments. If you are looking at GGDM as a game, the commentaries, even for a sandbox game, are excessive, distracting, and unnecessary. If you are reading GGDM for laughs, I hope I have entertained you, but I don't really care if I have.

Perhaps you think that someone who actually has a Ph.D. in anything would never have chosen this form of expression or wasted their time? For those who wish to engage in such bias, or who cannot understand or who disagree with the simulation, who don't 'get it,' or who skipped ahead without reading the whole work; it's just another silly space game and it doesn't matter.⁹ You can forget about it and move on. Fuzzy models are not real anyway.¹⁰

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- ❖ “What moral obligation do you have to those who willfully refuse to open their eyes and deem you mad for seeing?” – Norman Spinrad, *The Void Captain's Tale* (1982).
- ❖ My comments here are only anti-academic to the extent that academia is (ironically) anti-intellectual or resulting in intellectual constriction of our civilization through dictation of form. Many a professor has acted as intimidating censor.

✚ APPEAL TO AUTHORITY FALLACIES: “An argument from authority... also called an appeal to authority ... is a form of *defeasible argument* in which the opinion of an authority on a topic is used as evidence to support an argument. It is a well-known fallacy, though some consider that it is used in a cogent form when all sides of a discussion agree on the reliability of the authority in the given context. Other authors consider it a fallacy to cite an authority on the discussed topic as the primary means of supporting an argument. ... Historically, opinion on the appeal to authority has been divided: it is listed as a valid argument as often as a fallacious argument in various sources, with some holding that it is a strong or at least valid argument and others that it is weak or an outright fallacy.” – from Wikipedia article, “Argument from Authority,” captured April 7, 2020 (emphasis added).

It is quite possible thus, that any and all of the hundreds of quotes throughout GGDM – which I characterize as guest speakers in the conversation – are in fact ‘appeal to authority’ fallacies (i.e. A is an authority on a particular topic; A says something about that topic; A is probably correct, and I quote it). Where is the line drawn, as I have no ‘authority’ on the subjects of which I speak (other than GGDM)? Is it possible then that the quotes are all appeals to authority to validate my point? If so, then what can be said of any scholarly work that is loaded (as they usually are, and are required to be) with citations and quotes from or to other articles, studies, and books?

- ❖ “The argument from authority is based on the idea that a perceived authority must know better and that the person should conform to their opinion. This has its roots in psychological biases such as the Asch effect.” *Id.*

Thus, citations and quotes are an admission that there is no objective standard of human knowledge, that knowledge is woven as a self-supporting web, built on consensus, and at the same moment, the conceited conformity of saying, “See, I am not the only one who thought like this!” Many high school teachers are delighted to see a student paper that is mostly a mass of quotes and citations, which represents success in teaching students scholarship in preparation for college; it is not expected that high school students know enough or possess any independent or original thought.

- ❖ “In college I learned how to learn from other people. As far as I was concerned, writing in college didn’t consist of what little Annie had to say, but what Wallace Stevens had to say. I didn’t come to college to think my own thoughts, I came to learn what had been thought.” – Annie Dillard quoted by Lawrence Malcolm, “Lunch with Annie Dillard,” April 30, 1982 (free online).

In college, I was full of my own thoughts, quite full of myself, as you might imagine.☺ And original thought is harder to grade, for example:

- ❖ “Ironically, as a student, Jacques Derrida submitted a paper on the topic of ‘time’ to his director of studies, Louis Althusser, who passed the essay to his colleague, Michel Foucault, saying, ‘I can’t grade this.’ Foucault’s response was, ‘Well, it’s either an F or an A+.’” – Willy Maley, Prof. of Renaissance Studies, University of Glasgow, contributor to, “The worst piece of peer review I’ve ever received,” Times Higher Education, August 6, 2015.

✚ MEDITATIONS FALLACY: To the extent that some might call me crazy, I am as crazy as Descartes: Who can say with certainty that Rene Descartes did not embrace the existence of the malicious demon he described hypothetically in Meditations on First Philosophy (1641)?

- ❖ Is the Existential Void to which I refer throughout like Descartes’ Demon? Would Descartes if he were me, have used the term Existential Void? No one but Descartes thought that his demon was real; it was only hypothetically applicable to him as to discussion of his own existence, the only thing of which he could be certain. I am certain he never maintained that the demon was there for everyone who simply avoided looking at it, unlike the Existential Void.

It is quite likely that Descartes and other great minds of our civilization would, in the current time, find themselves committed to a special institution with padded rooms, to be forgotten, and to the extent they ever wrote great works, to be forever stained with the label of ‘former psychiatric patient’ by which their thoughts and lives could be dismissed out of hand. ‘Former psychiatric patient,’ is like ‘recovering alcoholic’ or not having a Ph.D. after your name.

- ❖ Do you think I am a former psychiatric patient or recovering alcoholic or should be?
- ❖ Has thinking become a fallacy in our civilization? If so, we no longer are.

“There is a difference between an assertion and an argument. An assertion is just a point of view, an opinion. An argument goes further. An argument is a point of view supported by reasons that demonstrate the view is a good one.... What is often passed off as an argument turns out to be nothing more than a point of view, an assertion devoid of reasons. But you don’t simply want the persons view; you also want the reasons for that view.

Think of it like a house. The opinion is like the roof and the reasons for holding the view are like the walls. You want to find out if there are any walls holding up the roof. Do they have reasons for their view or are they merely asserting? And if there are walls (reasons) you want to see if the walls will hold the roof up. So once you properly understand a persons’ view an appropriate question might be, ‘How did you come to that conclusion?’ or, ‘Can you give me some reasons why you believe that?’ or, ‘Why would you believe a thing like that?’”

– from Duane’s Mind Blog, “Assertion vs. Argument,” November 16, 2007

APOLOGIZING TO THE CHOIR: The unintended irony here is that Duane’s Mind Blog is a Christian apologetics blog, and in particular this article, is intended to instruct Christians on arguments with *non-believers* as the article calls them (you know, *us and them*), and how to demonstrate that their arguments are mere assertions. The blog is quoted here because it does provide a useful discussion of the difference between assertions and arguments; however, Christians fail generally to realize that their ‘arguments,’ especially regarding God and Creation, are simply assertions of faith:

- ❖ Their evidence consists of: the universe is here (it must have started somehow), we are here (it must have happened somehow) and this dusty old book called the Bible, which was *written by men*, tells how it happened. A sort of ‘Anthropic principle.’
- ❖ The rest of it, that there is a god/supreme being (a First Cause without a Cause) who must be the creator, and the creation stories, are mere unfalsifiable assertions, mythopoeic origin stories to cover what our ancestors did not know, could not know, and what we still do not know, cannot know (which is why Christians still think they have an argument). The Big Bang has simply replaced God (or maybe you think God caused the Big Bang? Or was the Big Bang?): A First Cause without a Cause.
- ❖ When the Christians argue subjects other than the Creation, God, and Afterlife (for which there is no evidence at all, it is neither testable nor deducible from any principles or evidence – If I were to say, prove to me that there is an afterlife, what evidence do you have? I’m waiting.), they are really making philosophical arguments (what is real – metaphysics, what is good – ethics, and how to think – logic) which can be treated as such, *sans* religion and their ancient prophets and priests can be treated as secular philosophers.

Assertions only become arguments when preaching to the choir. Much of our political discourse in recent decades (as pointed out by various pundits) is preaching to the choir; the sides are not trying to convince the other of their reasons and arguments, instead most speeches and writings are directed to people who do not need to be convinced, and are probably (or usually) written by people who don’t know an argument from assertion. Both sides are more interested in riling up their base by hammering away with assertions, because, as Chris Cillizzia pointed out:

- ❖ “Campaigns – especially those for president – are rarely won and lost on ‘carefully thought-out policies.’ They are almost always won on emotions – positive ones or negatives ones.” (CNN Politics, September 6, 2017).

ASSERTIONS, ABSURDISM, ARGUMENTS, AGING: Is Albert Camus’ absurdism an assertion or an argument? The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy seems to treat it as a set of assertions:

- ❖ “He ignored or opposed systematic philosophy, had little faith in rationalism, asserted rather than argued many of his main ideas, presented others in metaphors, was preoccupied with immediate and personal experience, and brooded over such questions as the meaning of life in the face of death. Although he forcefully separated himself from existentialism, Camus posed one of the twentieth century’s best-known existentialist questions, which launches The Myth of Sisyphus: ‘There is only one really serious philosophical question, and that is suicide’ (MS, 3).” (article “Albert Camus,” revised, April 10, 2017).

Thus, the reader may, if it suits them, regard some of my side commentaries as assertions rather than arguments: If absurdism is an assertion, if Descartes demon is a hypothetical, then my Existential Void may be both or either.

- ❖ “Acceptance or rejection of factual assertions is a far more important process than logical validation of arguments. *Not only are assertions more persuasive than arguments; this is desirable, since we want our beliefs and actions to be reasonable and not just rational.* When do we resort to argument? Real speeches heavy on arguments aim to present the speaker as calm, serious, and knowledgeable. *In public life, one argues not in order to demonstrate the claim for which one is arguing, but to show that one shares the common prejudices or values that appear in the presuppositions and conclusions of one’s argument,* and to demonstrate mastery of the subject matter by displaying relevant knowledge in coherently organized detail. Arguing is thus a way of presenting facts and principles so as to show one’s character as worthy of trust.” – Michael S. Kochin (Tel Aviv University), abstract of “From Argument to Assertion,” *Argumentation: An International Journal on Reasoning*, August, 2009 (emphasis added).

Abstracts of journal papers are clearly assertions. In some college courses, I had to submit a 150-word proposed topic for my term paper, we were instructed to write it as if no one could argue with us; it was to avoid arguments, therefore, it was a 150-word assertion of the proposed topic. GGDM is my something-less-than-a-million-words proposed college term paper topic.

GGDM is far more than a paper abstract or a proposed topic (at about 2000 pages) but does it present an argument or is it just an extended and overblown set of assertions? I have had difficulty deciding this, but I lean toward the side of argument; throughout the process of GGDM, I have sought to gain mastery of the subject, present it coherently and in organized detail, and to impart mastery onto the reader. *A master class in human civilization by an unqualified author.*

I did not start out as an absurdist (but no one could have blamed me if I did) and neither did GGDM begin with absurdism or any philosophy at all. Like all youths, I grew up with the idea that there had to be some elusive higher meaning, I was in the sciences program in a STEM high school, served in the military during the Cold War, and though I rejected organized religion at age 16, I probably or apparently still believed in some higher meaning to it all, even if I was too dumb to figure it out. Whether or not I do now, is a question, but I am still too dumb to figure it out. I read Camus’ *The Fall* (1956) in my last semester of college in World Literature, I was 29 years old, and I loved it, though I knew nothing about absurdism, I had been introduced to existentialism via an undergraduate Abnormal Psychology lecture on Viktor Frankel. *The Fall* felt to me at the time, in style terms, a bit like reading Machiavelli’s *The Prince* as a fictional story.

The intellectual journey of my 40s seems to have been toward a syncretism of absurdism and a gestalt macrosociology.

- ❖ The fact that early peoples raided and fought for food, mates, land to migrate into, space to live, control of water sources and minerals, and eventually for ideas, kings, and politics – speaks to the absurdity of it all: We did not ask to be, no one asked to be here, and if we were not here, we would not be fighting for anything or about anything or to protect anything, because there would be nothing. Anthropic principle.

✚ ALBERT, THELMA & LOUISE: When Camus (d. 1962) said that the only real serious philosophical question is suicide, he surely wasn't speaking only about individuals; nearly everyone agreed by that time that global thermonuclear war would be the suicide of humanity – along with whatever other meanings one might choose to read into it. The world nearly preceded *Thelma & Louise* (1991) over the cliff in my lifetime and the lifetime of my parents, and we are still sitting parked 100 yards from the Grand Canyon.

- ❖ Tragedy and absurdism are natural allies, tragedy has always known absurdism, long before absurdism knew itself. Tragedy is the original playwright absurdism. *Thelma & Louise* is a tragedy, so is Hard Times (1854). Tragic characters make questionable decisions, caught in bad circumstances, with an absurd result, often suicide.

I am a walking cognitive museum of the Cold War, especially the last two decades, more so, I believe, than the rest of my cohort. We seem to have forgotten so soon after 1989 that we, as a civilization, both the nuclear superpowers and the rest of the world, struggled for 50 years with the concept that *we* had created a situation where *we* could wipe humanity – and most or all of life on Earth – off the map permanently in an hour of madness. Living under the Sword of Damocles, we feasted on the resources of the Earth and worried about oil running out. *We* had created our own ticket to oblivion, God didn't call the end of the world (some read God into nuclear weapons though) and there was no giant meteor to blame.

✚ HONG & JESUS: Syncretism when combined with the word, 'religion,' as in 'syncretic religion,' is usually not regarded positively, especially by the faithful of the original religions. It is the nature of the thing called faith – at least in modern exclusive religions capable of extremism – that syncretic religion is always considered a dangerous heterodoxy; the strongest example being the Taiping Rebellion where the Europeans, not accepting the God Worshipers' heterodox version of Christianity, eventually assisted the Qing in defeating the rebellion. For example, the question on Reddit Ask Historians:

- ❖ "Why did the French and British help the Qing instead of the Christian Heavenly Kingdom? The Qing required the assistance of the French and British to defeat the Heavenly Kingdom. Why didn't the west help the Heavenly Kingdom who were fellow Christians, and also pushed many more western/liberal ideas?"¹¹

Science also does not appreciate syncretism with philosophy, unless it is presented as public science education by a scientist – sort of like psychiatric drug prescription by a medical doctor. It is particularly unappreciated by disciplines who struggle to be recognized as sciences.

✚ JOANNA & ALBERT: Has anyone ever wondered about the mental health of Albert Camus? During the Cold War, the Soviets were internationally condemned for diagnosing political dissidents with the (unrecognized outside of the Soviet Bloc) mental health condition, "Sluggish Schizophrenia" (alternatively, Slow Progressive Schizophrenia) for which they could be confined to mental hospitals, drugged and reconditioned (the KGB was in charge of Soviet Psychiatry, go figure?). I remember this discussion of punitive psychiatry from one of my undergrad psychology courses.

Suppose that Albert Camus had lived in a theocracy, Papal state, or perhaps before the Age of Reason? Would he, like Diderot, have been incarcerated, would his writings on absurdism have been convicted of lunacy – as only a madman would question the wisdom of ancient religious texts (see 1 *Fallen to Earth*, *supra*), give up the chance of eternal salvation, or deny

the afterlife – for which he would be sent to the asylum? Because, once a mental patient, always a ‘former mental patient’ for life.

It is reasonably likely that Joanna the Mad (Queen Joanna of Castile) was deemed mad and imprisoned by her brother Ferdinand of Aragon in part because she expressed skepticism of the Roman Catholic Church and was reticent toward Catholic confessional, expression, and religious ritual – no ruler of Castile, Aragon, or any relative of the Holy Roman Emperor (she was mother of Charles V; her mother, Isabella, established the infamous Spanish Inquisition) could ever rule while having any doubt about Christianity or the Catholic Church! Which incidentally also made Ferdinand effectively ruler of *Castile and Aragon* ... hmm, how convenient was his brotherly concern for his sister’s spiritual and mental wellbeing! She may have had to be protected by hypocrisy to avoid being subjected to her mother’s Inquisition.

- ❖ Joanna the Mad was a natural skeptic (Tim Minchin should write a song). She was not ‘mad’ or ‘insane’ but that world she lived in – Europe constantly churning with ethnic, dynastic, religious strife – was, in our view, quite insane.¹² And in the view of future generations, perhaps even the millennials, the 20th Century world was insane.
 - “But Spinoza’s naturalistic theism, for instance, was a far enough cry from Judeo-Christian orthodoxy in an age that discerned little light between skepticism and atheism.” – Michael Robbins, “Atheists Used to Take the Idea of God Seriously. That’s Why They Mattered.” Slate Magazine, July 8, 2014.
 - Spinoza was born in 1632, Joanna of Castile was born in 1479, if anything, Europe had become *less tolerant* by Spinoza’s time.
- ❖ I have thought, perhaps wistfully, in the past that there may come a day when Fundamentalist (literalist) Christians might be confined to mental institutions... but I guess that would be a violation of the First Amendment or Free Speech and Freedom of Religion in any nation that actually practices the concept. I began to wonder though, whether someone could be committed to a mental health hospital for talking to ghosts, if they are not otherwise harmful to themselves or others? That’s a really interesting question, which I am sure leads to a long discussion in medical schools about the abuse of medicine for political and social suppression and the ethics separating treatment of true medical conditions from acting to suppress political dissent.
- ❖ On the other side of the table, of course, is someone who probably thinks that in a properly Christian world, people like me would be sent to reform and reeducation camps (like a North Korea-style theocracy) and that I am mentally ill for rejecting personal salvation and salvation of humanity offered by their God, for rejecting and cursing their Lord’s creation (e.g., “Many is the time I’ve cursed the lord’s creations!” – Foreigner, “I Need You” (1977)).

The most absurdist thing one might say of an intellectual is that he has gone crazy trying to figure out the universe. If Camus went crazy trying to figure it out, certainly lesser minds have no chance of remaining sane, unless dumbness is a virtue. One might also ask whether I arrived at absurdism on my own or was it ‘just in the air’ as part of my cultural milieu? Well, I am certainly not very intelligent, while it *may feel as though* absurdism has been the natural progression of my life, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy notes of Camus:

- ❖ “He regards thinking about it as ‘provisional’ and insists that the mood of absurdity, so ‘widespread in our age’ does not arise from, but lies prior to, philosophy.... Accepting absurdity as the mood of the times, he asks above all whether and how to live in the face of it.” – Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy article, “Albert Camus,” captured June 11, 2018.

Might I have arrived at it had someone else not thought of it first? Perhaps, someone had to be first, but I am no Camus (and I must wonder truly that no one else saw the Existential Void before); my route and endpoint were much different: A simulation game describing a union of structuralist macrosocial ideas with a vague sort of metaphysics of civilizations.

- ✚ CARL & ALBERT: Carl Sagan in some of his views seems to agree vaguely with Albert Camus’ absurdism, however, what separates and prevents Carl Sagan and I from being true Camus Absurdist, is that neither of us rejects rational knowledge. To wit:

- ❖ “But Camus also thinks it absurd to try to know, understand, or explain the world, for he sees the attempt to gain rational knowledge as futile. Here Camus pits himself against science and philosophy, dismissing the claims of all forms of rational analysis: ‘That universal reason, practical or ethical, that determinism, those categories that explain everything are enough to make a decent man laugh’ (MS, 21).” *Id.*

Dr. Sagan, of course, believed entirely in science and rationality, more so than 99% of the human population and he took it upon himself to bring that understanding to the audience; even while his rejection of religion and afterlife, and fully-lived life for the now, is a Camus model (*Id.*), a personal syncretism perhaps. GGDM attempts, if not rational understanding, to be a workable model of civilization. But out around the edges is a dualism that acknowledges both a rational, deterministic approach and a philosophical view of human absurdism.

- ✚ NEIL & CHRIS: The universe is not your friend, or a good neighbor, or on your side (and neither is your insurance company in case you believed the commercials) and its cold, empty, endless expanses of absurdity (like an insurance company) are not here for our kindergarten wonderment or security.

- ❖ “I suppose one reason that I’ve always detested religion is its sly tendency to insinuate that the universe is designed with you in mind. Or even worse, that there is a divine plan into which one fits whether one knows it or not. This kind of modesty is too arrogant for me.” – Christopher Hitchens, *Hitch-22: A Memoir* (2010).

In the Hitchens’ view, Carl Sagan’s Cosmos series performs the same sly trick as religion, suggesting that the universe is our wondrous playground (see 2112 Absurd Words, *supra*).

In my reasoning then, the universe is either indifferent to us – as most non-religious people believe – or exists to annoy, anger, and irritate us with utter pointless stupidity (there seems to be some evidence on that point, but we refuse to look. Why do we refuse to look? Because we can’t handle the truth, like *A Few Good Men* (1992)). Or more likely, is just fatally flawed like David Hume’s creator. Neil deGrasse Tyson has expressed his own Absurdity:

- ❖ “Every account of a higher power that I’ve seen described, of all religions that I’ve seen, include many statements with regard to the benevolence of that power. When I look at the universe and all the ways the universe wants to kill us, I find it hard to reconcile that with statements of beneficence.” – Neil deGrasse Tyson, Neil deGrasse

Tyson, at the University at Buffalo, Q & A session, April 9, 2010, video is available on YouTube as of September 2018.

Any honest human (or even sapient intelligence) cannot deny the Absurdity in the name of science. And this, I think, is what bothers scientists the most, what keeps them up at night.

“It is one of those books that is either complete rubbish or a work of consummate genius, nothing in between!”

Probably the former, but I’m hedging my bets.”

– Richard Dawkins, [The God Delusion](#) (2006) commenting on Julian Jaynes, [The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind](#) (1976)¹³

Endnotes.

¹ **Commentary:** See the Sokal Hoax for a practical demonstration of cognitive/confirmation bias in academia.

✓ “But – let me tell you my cat joke. It’s very short and simple. A hostess is giving a dinner party and she’s got a lovely five-pound T-bone steak sitting on the sideboard in the kitchen waiting to be cooked while she chats with the guests in the living room – has a few drinks and whatnot. But then she excuses herself to go into the kitchen to cook the steak – and it’s gone. And there’s the family cat, in the corner, sedately washing its face.”

‘The cat got the steak,’ Barney said.

Did it? The guests are called in; they argue about it. The steak is gone, all five pounds of it; there sits the cat, looking well-fed and cheerful. ‘Weigh the cat,’ someone says. They’ve had a few drinks; it looks like a good idea. So they go into the bathroom and weigh the cat on the scales. It reads exactly five pounds.

They all perceive this reading and a guest says, ‘Okay, that’s it. There’s the steak.’ They’re satisfied that they know what happened, now; they’ve got empirical proof. Then a qualm comes to one of them and he says, puzzled, ‘But where’s the cat?’” – Philip K. Dick, [The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch](#) (1965).

² **Commentary:** At the time of publication of GGDM, I am almost the same age as Harry Braverman was when he published the single book for which he is considered one of the foremost social thinkers of the 20th Century.

✓ It doesn’t matter what some damned preacher who never knew me says about me at the funeral, just read what I wrote; that is my testament if you will.

³ **Commentary:** I would, in fact, not be surprised to be told or to be shown that I am all wrong. But at least, my critics are going to have to do some work, hundreds of pages might be written, and it will *matter* to them at least.

⁴ **Citation & Commentary:** [Circular logic as satire](#): “The Cabinet received quite a bit of mail today, most of it hot to the touch. Hot with the indignation of ASU students and faculty reporting that the University has seen fit to bestow its 2015 ‘Pioneer Award’ on Professor Matthew C. Whitaker. The cheerful announcement that Professor Whitaker has been honored by the University for ‘long-term dedication to the quality of life of African Americans’ did not, somehow, elicit cries of ‘Well done!’ Instead, observers noted that since Professor Whitaker has publicly brought shame on the university three times within two years, and has repeatedly committed actions that would cause students to be penalized or even expelled, he should not be given an award. The Cabinet was in a mellow mood, and initially thought, well, it’s an award for public service; Professor Whitaker is part of the public; giving him the award does him a service; what’s not to like?”

On second thought, yeah. It’s appalling. And the Cabinet is additionally unsettled by the fact that even had Professor Whitaker not been a plagiarist, his long-term dedication to the quality of life of African Americans appears to consist of being an extremely well-paid professor of African-American history and the director of the Center for Race and Democracy at Arizona State University. Thus the University has given Matthew C. Whitaker an award for occupying the lucrative position the University has given him. And when those disgusted by serial plagiarizing suggest the professor should be gently encouraged to put his talents to different use, the University can respond, ‘But he wins awards! We ought to know, because we give them to him!’ Why, yes. Perhaps next year, ASU will give Matthew Whitaker a special award for having won a lot of awards from ASU. Or perhaps Arizona State, which prides itself on its commitment to sustainability, will give Professor Matthew C. Whitaker an award for having steadfastly declined to expand the footprint of human knowledge. APS, the power company who is the Center’s corporate

sponsor – and on whose behalf Professor Whitaker continues to write articles deploring net metering, all without disclosing his financial relationship to the power company – would surely approve: Arizona State University Reuse, Recycle, and Repurpose Award for Scholars. That, Professor Whitaker does indeed deserve.” – from The Cabinet of Plagiarism, January 16, 2015 (<http://cabinetofplagiarism.blogspot.com/>).

✓ Dr. Whitaker resigned in early July 2015.

⁵ **Commentary:** However, every time I read something, someone else’s voice gets inside my head, and sometimes they argue with me, until I bribe them by adding them to GGDM somewhere. ☺ There is a multitude in my head.

⁶ **Commentary:** Were Howard Cosell still around, he would have launched into a frothing rant about it because the retirement of Steve Blass in a way seals the ‘jockocracy’ he criticized from the late 1970s onward; Steve Blass began his post play broadcasting career (1983) in the late Howard Cosell era. He was thus one of the objects or group of ex-athletes turned broadcasters against whom Cosell railed (Howard Cosell never played sports, ironically).

⁷ **Commentary:** e.g., “He [Joe DiMaggio] was jealous of the attention she [Marilyn Monroe] received from other men, which is an odd and problematic attitude for a man married to an international sex goddess. ... Why DiMaggio thought it would be useful to catch his ex-wife in bed with another man is a mystery. It certainly could have damaged Marilyn’s career... Still, photographs exposing Marilyn’s affair with Hal Schaefer now would not be proof, per se, that she left Joe for someone else, and it certainly would have done nothing to repair their marriage. Quite to the contrary.” – Jon Ponder, “Wrong Door Raid: The Celebrity Scandal That Irked Sinatra, Made a Fool of DiMaggio – All at Marilyn Monroe’s Expense,” Playground to the Stars, December 7, 2010.

⁸ **Commentary:** Of course I don’t know anything, because I am a nobody (*nemo/necuno*). Just like a great man is great because ... well ... he’s great!

- ✓ Tim Minchin has the argument down pat: “I only read one book, but it’s a good book, don’t you know; I act the way I act because the Good Book tells me so; If I wanna know how to be good, it’s to the Good Book that I go; ‘Cos the Good Book is a book and it is good and it’s a book; I know the Good Book’s good because the Good Book says it’s good; I know the Good Book knows it’s good because a really good book would; You wouldn’t cook without a cookbook and I think it’s understood; You can’t be good without a Good Book ‘cos it’s good and it’s a book; And it is good for cookin.” – from “The Good Book” (2009).
- ✓ On November 1, 2018, I decided that henceforth, I will sign all of my emails as *nemo*. Not to avoid attribution or responsibility, but so that if I receive no response and if the correspondence is never even read, the recipient has a reason: Because *nobody* sent it.

⁹ **Commentary & Citation:** Take a moment to appreciate the beauty: Dr. Paul Linebarger, a Chinese scholar, who wrote *psychological warfare manuals for the U.S. government* as a professor at Duke and Johns Hopkins Universities took advantage of the self-created official blind spot to write science fiction under the pseudonym of Cordwainer Smith because science fiction was considered trivial and nonsensical; not worth official scrutiny. As ‘another silly space game’ GGDM pokes intellectual academia in the same self-created blind spot both by being science fiction and a game, it will not be regarded as serious work in macrosocial or macrostructural theory, despite the advantages of the simulation approach that led naturally to macrostructural thinking.

- ✓ See, Walter Jon Williams, “The What-He-Did: The Poetic Science Fiction of Cordwainer Smith,” October 7, 2016, Tor.com.

¹⁰ **Commentary:** I have a specific recollection that when Eric Rudolph’s book was published (his “manifesto” as the news called it), one high-level law enforcement official who was interviewed referred to it as “second-rate college freshmen writing” and indicated that there was nothing new or novel (and hence, don’t waste your time reading it). I would assume that the laudable goal of the commentary was to prevent others from being radicalized or acting out based on Rudolph’s writing (I am sure that they don’t really care that we might waste our time reading it), which is now freely available on the internet (should you feel like *wasting* your time reading that instead of this). Were it not for Rudolph Hess, very likely *Mein Kampf* would have also been characterized as ‘second-rate freshmen writing’ in 1925 Germany. *Mein Kampf* is also widely available on the internet (if you feel like *wasting* your time reading it).

¹¹ **Citation:** See https://www.reddit.com/r/AskHistorians/comments/3r3cef/why_did_the_french_and_british_help_the_qing/.

¹² **Commentary & Citation:** I love historical costume dramas, especially if historically accurate and existential. One night I was surfing TV channels and chanced upon *Flesh + Blood* (1985). I was captivated. After watching the film for awhile, I said to myself, ‘everyone in this film is nuts!’ I didn’t mean ‘nuts’ in a good, comedic way. Rather, the film seemed to accurately portray the conflicted insanity of the period on a personal level in a way that I had not fully envisioned before.

- ✓ The later Polish film, *With Fire and Sword* (1999) accomplishes the same effect.

¹³ **Commentary:** I think you know where this is going by now, in regards to GGDM.