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“How is it that hardly any major religion has looked at science and concluded, ‘This is better than we thought! The Universe is much bigger than our prophets said, grander, more subtle, more elegant’? Instead they say, ‘No, no, no! My god is a little god and I want him to stay that way!’”

– Carl Sagan, shortly before his death ¹

“I don’t want to believe, I want to know.” – Carl Sagan

DEATH OF A YOUNG GROUNDHOG: Late in the afternoon of a late June workday, I was walking along Grant Street in front of the Federal Courthouse, on my usual way home. I glanced over toward the Federal Reserve Bank and was stunned to see a groundhog running to and fro in the rush hour traffic across the street. A bus pulled up to the stop in front of the Federal Courthouse on my side of the street, and I lost sight of the groundhog, so I walked back a bit hoping to see him safely on the sidewalk on the other side.

Suddenly, he emerged from under the Port Authority bus. I think some people must have slowed down to allow him to get that far. He emerged from under the center of the bus at least 20 feet from me, came up on the sidewalk, then suddenly went off the curb and back under the bus as it started moving forward. No one was near him, he just saw people, sidewalk, the big building in front of him, and turned to flee. I looked away and saw a lady standing at the bus stop avert and close her eyes. We both knew what was about to happen; when the bus cleared down the street, the critter was dead, killed under the wheels of the bus.

I admit to being slightly upset at the senseless death. No one could have saved him or helped him, unless they had the power to freeze him in place. Yelling or lunging for him would have been futile, if I had even thought of it at that moment.

I do not know where the groundhog came from or why he was there; he must have been living somewhere and was spooked out. He was not large by groundhog standards, I think he was young, maybe a yearling, with his coat still dark. The bus driver certainly didn’t know he was there and had the bus not hit him (or had stopped), he would have run back out into the center lanes traffic. Sadly, it reminds me of the video game Frogger that used to be fun and seemingly harmless, in the gaming arcade days of my youth.

Somehow the creature found itself in a situation outside of its normal habitat, a situation that evolution, instincts and its processing power, were not prepared to survive. Undoubtedly, the creature was scared and confused; cars are much larger and move much faster than anything a groundhog would know in the wild. Their movements would be completely *alien* to it.

Humans, and especially young children, and occasionally entire civilizations, sometimes find themselves in situations for which evolution, physical abilities, sentience quotient, and civilization, has not prepared them, such as migrations and displacement, peer and political pressure, epidemics, riots, crowd stampedes, accidents and catastrophes, sudden violence, warzones; the European invaders were *aliens* to the Native American world and brought death, diseases, alcohol.

- ❖ Situations and conditions beyond our evolution and civilization – the fish out of water scenario – are the core of horror literature, especially science fiction, supernatural

and post-apocalyptic horror, people placed in lethal situations for which they are not prepared and do not understand (but which the audience has a god-view).

Increasingly, this is the situation in which humanity has placed the rest of life on Earth – and probably itself – as population expands and pollution and climate change accelerate the process, the remaining wilderness of the world is the groundhog running in center city rush-hour traffic.

And, unless some creature of higher intellect – probably *alien* – observes the demise of groups of humans and life on Earth, whom they cannot save or help, and chooses to remember and reflect upon it, we will simply perish, fates unknown to a meaningless universe.

✚ HUMAN WORTH: ‘Human Worth’ is like religion; if I do not believe in it, you cannot convince me otherwise, if I do believe in it, you will never take my dignity. How many really believe in human worth other than their own?

- ❖ The value of someone’s life in our legal system is expressed in dollars. We have no other means to frame compensation and survivorship. The system creates an inherent inequality between the dead, the life of a McDonald’s employee is less valuable than the life of an attorney based on their projected lifetime wages and economic support benefit to their parents, children, and spouses. It creates a *cognitive dissonance* because most of us don’t think of it in this way; I discussed this many, many times at the law firm where I worked. But some have taken it to heart as if that is the measure of someone’s human worth; it may be that it is factual and calculable, but it is most likely also that it reinforces their ego *vis-à-vis* others who make less money than they.
- ❖ “It’s a little hard not to be an elitist when you’re making millions of dollars a year.” – Walter Cronkite.

People who point out the value of a life, the contributions to culture and society of each individual, how many people were enlightened, entertained, or made to laugh, are answering *the wrong question*: The value of someone’s contributions to the world of their time and to posterity is not an answer to the question of absurdity, the self-evident injustice (in the Kantian sense) of having been placed here without our consent (however absurd that may seem).

Their answer is the favorite of fiction writers, priests, motivational and positive psychology speakers, it makes us feel human worth of our lives until the moment you realize that it’s not an answer to the question.

“Where did the universe come from? Asking this question is a hallmark of our species. There’s a natural tendency to understand the origin of the cosmos in familiar biological terms. The mating of cosmic deities or the hatching of a cosmic egg or maybe the intonation of some magic phrase. The big bang is our modern scientific creation myth. It comes from the same human need to solve the cosmological riddle.”

“These are not easy questions. Cosmology brings us face to face with the deepest mysteries with questions that were once treated only in religion and myth. ‘Who knows for certain? Who shall here declare it? Whence was it born? Whence came creation? The gods are later than this world’s formation. Who then can know the origins of the world? None knows whence creation arose or whether He has or has not made it. He who surveys it from the lofty skies. Only He knows or perhaps He knows not.’ These words are 3500 years old. They’re taken from the Rig-Veda a collection of early Sanskrit hymns.” – Carl Sagan, Cosmos, Episode 10

RELIGION: Conspicuously absent from the human structures in GGDM is any direct treatment or description of religion as a part of the gestalt structure of civilizations.² Like most science fiction (much of which is distinctly uncomfortable with religion³) literature, Gestalt Genesis-Day Million assumes as a baseline that technologically-advanced civilizations would be secular and scientific with some pre-technological religion vaguely hovering in the background as a historical leftover, whose creation myths⁴ have been debunked by science. However, such assumption leaves a large gaping hole in the identification of the internal structures of human societies.

- ❖ This discussion immediately bypasses the thorny threshold question of whether sapient alien life (technologically advanced or not), whether ‘humanoid’ or otherwise, would have, need or conceive of religion (and what that might imply). The model of the game is quite obviously human civilization, and players are free to adapt.

I have some ideas of where the inquiry might begin and the probable outcome within the structures described in this game design. Here are some important initial questions to ask:

✚ IS THE RELIGION PROSELYTIZING OR NON-PROSELYTIZING?: This is a key question for game purposes; history has shown what happens when a proselytizing (i.e. missionary) religion obtains sovereign power. This is the stuff of literary historical drama and catastrophe.

- ❖ “In the case of the righteous unlearned, ‘It may be supposed that such persons would have desired Baptism explicitly if they had known its necessity’ and, by extension, God may permit them to attain salvation. ...

With regard to the fate of the unlearned, Willard Francis Mallalieu, a Methodist bishop, wrote in Some Things That Methodism Stands For:

Starting on the assumption that salvation was possible for every redeemed soul, and that all souls are redeemed, it has held fast to the fundamental doctrine that repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ are the divinely-ordained conditions upon which all complying therewith may be saved, who are intelligent enough to be morally responsible, and have heard the glad tidings of salvation. At the same time Methodism has insisted that all children who are not willing transgressors, and all irresponsible persons, are saved by the grace of God manifest in the atoning work of Christ; and, further, that all in every nation, who fear God and work righteousness, are accepted of him, through the Christ that died for them, though they have not heard of him. This view of the atonement has been held and defended by Methodist theologians from the very first. And it may be said with ever-increasing emphasis that it commends itself to all sensible and

unprejudiced thinkers, for this, that it is rational and Scriptural, and at the same time honorable to God and gracious and merciful to man. ...

According to Qur'an, the basic criteria for salvation in the afterlife is the belief in one God, the Last Judgment, acceptance and obedience of what is in the Quran and ordained by the prophet, and good deeds. As the Qur'an states:

Surely those who believe (Muslims) and those who are Jews and the Sabians and the Christians whoever believes in Allah (God) and the last day and does good – they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.

The problem of the unevangelized does not arise in religious or spiritual traditions such as deism, pandeism, and pantheism, which do not include any revelation or require obedience to revealed rules. In deism, some believe that individuals will be judged by one's obedience to natural laws of right and wrong to be obtained by the exercise of reason alone, and so, failure to exercise reason in the effort to make this determination is itself the cause for punishment.

In Buddhism, all beings, whether evangelized or not, will continue to be reborn until they have achieved Nirvana. However, Buddhist scholars have said that '*any suggestion that enlightenment is immediately available to anyone who really wants it, even if he has never heard of Buddhism, is likely to be received with incredulity or even resentment.*'

Dante attempted to answer this question with the first level of Hell in the Divine Comedy, where the virtuous pagans live. They are described as those who lived before the time of Jesus and therefore unable to enter Purgatory or Heaven. Amongst them is Virgil, Dante's guide through Hell and Purgatory." – from Wikipedia article, "Fate of the Unlearned," captured October 1, 2019 (emphasis added).⁵

✚ IS THE RELIGION WORSHIPFUL, DEFERENTIAL OR PHILOSOPHICAL?: Or put another way, to what extent did the Greeks (and other ancient polytheistic religions) *actually believe* their gods existed and did they worship them the same way that later pejorative monotheistic religions worshipped? See also Dream Police, 1 Dreamtime, p. 132, *supra*.

- ❖ For example, Roman religion has been described as 'contractual' in nature. Roman religion was an element of the state, rites were important to state functions and leaders would often hold both state and religious office. The Romans were non-pejorative, they did not seek to convert anyone to their religion, only requiring that conquered peoples recognize the Roman religion in mesh with local traditions and myths (syncretism) and build a Roman temple. The Romans were not fanatical, extremist or militant with regard to their religion; they were practical and economic in administration of the wider empire. Finally, the 'contractual' sense implies that they have the right and position to bargain with the Gods; that is, that the Gods needed their worship as much as they needed the Gods' favor. Compare to Abrahamic religions.⁶ Yet, even Abrahamic religions (and possibly all religions) have a 'contractual' feeling or arrangement, the modern kind is deferred mostly to the afterlife.

The most direct expression of the 'contractual' relationship in fiction that I recall is Fred Saberhagen's Books of Swords series (1983-1984), where the 'gods' are infinitely powerful as long as they are worshipped, but fade away at the end when people start to question them and stop deferring to them.

✚ IS THE RELIGION ORGANIZED OR INDIVIDUALIZED?:

- ❖ “Spirituality vs. Religion. These two concepts often coexist, but they certainly don’t have to. Spirituality occurs and exists within. It’s an experience that one harbors inside their soul and mind. On the other hand, religion exists within the masses. You join others in one set of beliefs to practice and worship a higher being and holy books that exist outside of yourself. Look at religious leaders if you need help distinguishing between the two. They weren’t part of the religion they created, but spiritually-oriented individuals. Buddha didn’t subscribe to Buddhism and Jesus didn’t subscribe to Christianity. They weren’t religious, they were spiritual. People can also be religious but not spiritual if they don’t view themselves as containing the ultimate knowledge they seek and simply accept the word of another individual or establishment without question. Or if religion and spirituality function as a trend or something to tout over other people, you unquestionably are not spiritual.” – Sarah Braddock, “Spirituality vs. Religion: Which is Best for You?” undated article appearing on metiza.com and metizamagazine.com.

Incidentally, Ms. Braddock just admitted that Christianity (and Buddhism) are ‘made up’ religions; Buddha wasn’t a Buddhist, and Christ wasn’t a Christian.

- ❖ “Religion is belief in someone else’s experience. Spirituality is having your own experience.” – Deepak Chopra.

✚ HOW HAS THE RELIGION ADAPTED TO SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, INTERSTELLAR TRAVEL AND EXPOSURE TO THE LARGER UNIVERSE?:

- ❖ “‘How could he be God and leave extraterrestrials in sin?’ asks the Rev. George V. Coyne, the former director of the Vatican Observatory ... ‘After all, he was good to us. Why should he not be good to them?’ This has engendered a sort of how-many-angels-can-dance-on-the-head-of-a-pin argument about whether Christ died for the entire cosmos, or whether the son of God or the metaphysical equivalent has to be born and die on every populated planet. Each alternative sounds ridiculous on the face of it. The first alternative would make Earth the center of the universe again, not just in space but in time, carrying the hopes for the salvation of beings that lived and died millions or billions of years ago and far, far away. The second alternative would be multiple incarnations, requiring every civilization to have its own redeemer – ‘its own adventure with God,’ in the words of Professor Peters. That is hardly better. As the old troublemaker Thomas Paine wrote in *The Age of Reason*, ‘In this case, the person who is irreverently called the son of God, and sometimes God himself, would have nothing else to do than to travel from world to world, in an endless succession of deaths, with scarcely a momentary interval of life.’” – Dennis Overbye, “Do Aliens Know It’s Christmas?” *New York Times*, December 22, 2014.
- ❖ *Cf.* “Let’s suppose that, against all odds, they do find life. What would it mean for biblical interpretation? It depends on the type of life discovered. Intelligent life is ruled out, because we know from Heb. 9:24–26 that Christ died for sins once, and only once – for the sins of humanity. He did not have to ‘suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world’ (i.e., the universe). Nowhere in Scripture is there any hint that Christ became incarnate for the sins of any other beings. For this reason, it is

highly unlikely that alien intelligence (as opposed to fallen angels impersonating aliens) will ever be found. But what about non-sentient, e.g. microbial, life? Though one cannot rule it out, it is highly unlikely that this exists, either. All of creation seems focused around mankind on earth, and the plants and animals are part of our life support system.

All life is intelligently designed. Only humans are made in the image of God, have fallen into sin, and are in need of salvation. Christ Jesus provided grace uniquely to humans by His death on the cross and His glorious Resurrection. Unverifiable speculation about life on other planets may be fun, but in the end, it is futile. We can know for sure what we need to know: that God has provided for our physical and spiritual needs on our superbly designed planet.” – David F. Coppedge, “Extrasolar planets: a challenge to biblical cosmology?” *Creation* 36(3):42–44, July 2014 (creation.com).

- ✚ WHAT IS THE EMOTIONAL CORE OF THE RELIGION?: This inquiry began when I asked the question of why Iceland converted to Christianity? Is the destruction of pagan sacred places by invaders, as happened to the Saxons (a deliberate subjugation campaign by Charlemagne), enough or is there something more? Eventually, my thinking arrived at the idea that each religion has an emotional core, or core group of emotions to which it appeals. Religion then, is an emotional need or experience, and all accounts that do not address this are fallacious. So it should come as no surprise that the competition between religions is a competition for base emotions of the audience. The competition is won when a religion becomes the culture.
- ✚ WHAT DOES THE RELIGION SAY ABOUT THE AFTERLIFE⁷ AND THE EXISTENTIAL VOID?: Empiricism is a *rejection of the habit of making factual statements about things of which the speaker cannot possibly have knowledge*; it stood thus in stark contrast to the world of religious dogmatism and scholasticism in which Sir Francis Bacon lived (see PANGLOSS DOESN'T VISIT OFTEN and WHEN THE WORLD WAS NEW, WHEN THE WORLD WAS OLD, 1 Fallen to Earth, pp. 1495, 1497, *supra*). Conversely, empiricism by its nature must abide strictly by its own limitations, to which sapience refuses to be held. And thus, we come full circle as philosophical conjecture and new age religion leap into the twilight, always keeping just beyond the bounds of empirical knowledge.
 - ❖ “You’re in such a strong position when you understand the scientific process because all you say is, ‘Do you understand that the great breakthrough of humanity was figuring out how to make decisions about things whilst discarding human foibles? So, anecdotal evidence involves all your subjectivity – if we do it like this we don’t have that anymore. Why, surely do you understand how powerful that is?’ And if they don’t, then that’s what you have to explain to them. It’s an extremely powerful thing and a very basic thing.” – Tim Minchin interview, *The Skeptic Zone* (podcast), April 17, 2009.
 - ❖ I think that if on any one day, each of us individually had the choice to have never existed, the world’s population would be immediately halved, the other half having – not merely died or vanished – but never existed. In some religious sense, this might pass for Judgment Day. But do not miss the forest here for seeing only the trees, it is very likely that only humans – of all the creatures of the Earth – question their existence and it likely that only humans would wish to have not ever existed. The Existential Void is the curse of intelligence.⁸

- ❖ It seems most likely that the universe is a prison to torment and annoy us for no particular reason at all. All things being equal, it is as good an explanation as any. I might offer that we are constantly being punished for being alive and trying to accomplish anything, or for doing nothing – it doesn't matter which, except that the punishment is just as likely to be for no reason at all, for no transgression, for none other than the 'amusement' of the universe. Some people think god and the universe are the same (which would be very sad if true). And further, if anything at all happens after we die, there is no reason to believe that the punishment will end, that we will go to heaven or wherever, or that the punishment and torment will not simply continue in another guise. Heaven may well be punishment too.

You can tell me I am wrong, write volumes, I don't care, I am a 'big boy' and I can handle it (especially after I am dead, a curious fringe benefit of that condition in the 'marketplace of ideas'). But can you honestly tell me that you think what I say might not be true? Does it seem true to you? If you think this is moral, mortal sickness, who do you blame? My statements do not violate any sense of empiricism because they are being offered not as facts that I know, but rather, as the daily feelings of an intellectual who has parted and peered through the layers of veils our ancient ancestors constructed separating us from the Existential Void.

- ✚ ONE RELIGION OR MANY?: How many religions or spiritual traditions are being carried into galactic space? Is one religion dominant and can all the religions be grouped as similar enough to be considered one for game purposes? Has one or more major religious groups stayed at home?

- ❖ “Dr. [Geoffrey] Marcy, with tongue fairly firmly in cheek, evoked what he called ‘the multi-god model of the universe.’ There might be room in the universe for more than one truth, he said, if every inhabited planet had its own gods. The inhabitants might be as certain of their beliefs as we humans are of ours. ‘The deities have carved out their operating galactic territories, like so many cosmic Corleone families,’ Dr. Marcy said. ‘Only with SETI research,’ he went on, referring to the search for extraterrestrial intelligence, ‘will we learn whether our particular God is alone in the universe.’” – Dennis Overbye, “Do Aliens Know It’s Christmas?” New York Times, December 22, 2014.

What a fun idea for a game! How much of science-fiction's vast content has dared to discuss any other than one particular Western religion being carried into space and to the stars? Christianity only makes sense within the limited framework of the time it was created and the mortal thoughts of humans.

- ✚ IS THE RELIGION PORTABLE?: That is what is the relationship or dependency of the religion on the original Homeworld for context, organization and sacred places and qualities?

- ❖ “Some 500 ‘Saudis and other Arabs,’ most of whom are probably Muslim, have signed up with a private company, Mars One, which promises to bring them to the Red Planet to establish a permanent human colony. But a new fatwa may force those would-be astronauts to put those plans on hold. This week, a United Arab Emirates-based group called the General Authority of Islamic Affairs and Endowment (GAIAE) has issued a fatwa against living on Mars, reasoning that such an attempt would be akin to suicide, which is prohibited in Islam. ‘Such a one-way journey

poses a real risk to life, and that can never be justified in Islam,’ the committee said. ‘There is a possibility that an individual who travels to planet Mars may not be able to remain alive there, and is more vulnerable to death.’ (In case you’re wondering: There is a fierce debate among Islamic scholars as to whether suicide bombings are forbidden or permitted because they are a ‘supreme form of jihad,’ in the words of influential cleric Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi. Some Muslim clerics have even issued fatwas in support of suicide attacks despite the seemingly rock solid prohibitions against it under Islamic law.)” – Katelyn Fossett, “What a Bummer for Muslim Astronauts: A New Fatwa Bans Travel to Mars,” Foreign Policy, February 20, 2014.⁹

Mars One’s Response (in part):

- ❖ “If we may be so bold: the GAI AE should not analyze the risk as they perceive it today. The GAI AE should assess the potential risk for humans as if an unmanned habitable outpost is ready and waiting on Mars. Only when that outpost is established will human lives be risked in Mars One’s plan. With eight successful consecutive landings and a habitable settlement waiting on Mars, will the human mission be risk-free? Of course not. Any progress requires taking risks, but in this case the reward is ‘the next giant leap for mankind.’ That reward is certainly worth the risks involved in this mission.

Mars One respectfully requests GAI AE to cancel the Fatwa and make the greatest Rihla, or journey, of all times open for Muslims too. They can be the first Muslims to witness the signs of God’s creation in heaven, drawing upon the rich culture of travel and exploration of early Islam.

The lives and journey of the first Mars settlers will tell us more about our place in the universe than any other humans before us.

The Fatwa prohibits Muslims from going to Mars, but not from applying to Mars One’s mission or training for the mission. In the next ten years, Mars One is open to working with the GAI AE to assess the risk of the mission as the unmanned settlement is under construction. Hopefully before departure of the first crew, the GAI AE will cancel the Fatwa and support the Mars One mission.

As Ibn Battuta also wrote: ‘Travelling – it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller.’” (available on marsone.com)

Walter M. Miller, Jr.’s novel, *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1959), ends with the transfer of Church authority to a colony ship bound for the stars to escape a second pending nuclear apocalypse on Earth.

“You can safely assume you’ve created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do.”

– Anne Lamott, *Travelling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith* (1999)

PROBLEM TO SOLVE: It seems likely that Ms. Lamott might have been thinking of the late Fred Phelps at just that moment.

That religion has not been directly simulated in the structures of GGDM suggests that it’s a frame of reference problem, very similar to quantum mechanics.

- ❖ “Unlike classical physical processes, some quantum mechanical processes (such as quantum teleportation arising from quantum entanglement) cannot be simultaneously ‘local,’ ‘causal,’ and ‘real,’ but it is not obvious which of these properties must be sacrificed, or if an attempt to describe quantum mechanical processes in these senses is a category error such that a proper understanding of quantum mechanics would render the question meaningless.” – from Wikipedia article, “List of Unsolved Problems in Physics,” captured June 18, 2018.

That is, *strictly within the framework provided by the GGDM rules*, religion may act like a quantum mechanical category error, as described above. Religion has been discussed in relation to happiness (i.e. as the meta-aspect), legitimacy (religion’s secular ‘unity of opposites’ being security, the ‘supra-legitimacy’), aspects (Kairotic Moments, faith Aspect) and Constructural Elements (i.e. apostasy). When presented in this way, the problem seemed better handled by judgment and interpretation of the participants, and Concierge Interventions to determine which properties to sacrifice to manifest religious effect in that moment of the game.

This is not to say that a ‘meta-structure’ could not be developed by participants if desired; we are not entirely clueless on this issue. For example, a possible starting point might be Mircea Eliade’s classic hierophany:

- ❖ “HIEROPHANY (from Greek hiero-, ‘sacred,’ and phainein, ‘to show’) is a term designating the manifestation of the sacred. ***The term involves no further specification.*** Herein lies its advantage: It refers to any manifestation of the sacred in whatever object throughout history. Whether the sacred appear in a stone, a tree, or an incarnate human being, a hierophany denotes the same act: A reality of an entirely different order than those of this world becomes manifest in an object that is part of the natural or profane sphere.

The sacred manifests itself as a power or force that is quite different from the forces of nature. A sacred tree, for instance, is not worshiped for being a tree. Neither is a sacred stone adored, in and of itself, for its natural properties as a stone. These objects become the focus of religious veneration because they are hierophanies, revealing something that is no longer botanical or geological, but ‘wholly other.’” – from Encyclopedia.com article, “Hierophany,” captured October 2, 2019 (emphasis added).

Expressed in this manner, a hierophany is a ‘fuzzy concept’ and ties religion, or at least expression of the sacred, to Fuzzy Groups in GGDM terminology (see Fuzzy Concepts, 4 Culture, p. 404, *supra*), and as such, might find expression in Writ activations. A hierophany is also implicitly an interpretation, as the previous quote makes clear, the stone or tree has no innate quality or intrinsic value of ‘sacredness.’

- ✚ **STEPPING STONES:** Within the game, religion would have to consist of a number of interrelated structures, but the relationship of these structures would have to exist in a slightly different way than can be currently described in the game terms. Or perhaps more accurately, religion might be a ‘quasi-structure’ or ‘meta-structure’ which the game is not designed to handle directly. This would be an interesting problem for the players to solve; I have twisted my ankle a few times on stepping stones while crossing shallow creeks and runs...¹⁰

1. A religion would almost certainly have to begin with a Fundamental Reality; the pre-technological religion – if it still has any force at the beginning of the game – would have to begin as a Fundamental Reality. It is possible that a new religion could develop

as a result of the story of the game, but in most cases, the religion of the Native Populations would be ancient and pre-technological.

- ❖ The Fundamental Reality ‘religion’ is not as onerous as it might seem in the game, it is well known that religion can be bent any way desired, e.g., preceding quote discussing fatwas for or against suicide bombings in Islam.
2. Religions address psychological and emotional needs of their society (must have a function), legitimacy and worldviews and as such, in game terms, they would have some relationship to Aspects and Constructural Elements (see ‘asabiyyah’). Perhaps Aspects that are identified with the emotional core of the religion would have more staying power and certain other Aspects would be eliminated or marginalized.
 - ❖ One interesting effect or consequence of the major world religions has been the spread and internalization of ‘reproductive consciousness’ in the population. Marriage and various measures to control who can reproduce and when have embedded firmly the idea that heterosexual intercourse causes pregnancy.
 3. Other parts of the civilization might be affiliated with the religion, depending on circumstances, for example, Colleges (e.g., Madrasa in Islam, and/or the original Medieval European universities requiring theology studies) or Government Titles (especially social titles, but religious organizations historically have been an estate title as well).

Religion would certainly be involved – positively or negatively – in conversion and naturalization or genocide of **alien colonies**. We have discussed that already...

- ❖ An interesting and informative historical example is the introduction of Christianity into Japan, China and Southeast Asia. In Japan, Christians were persecuted, segregated, and marginalized; the community there remained small and isolated. In China, the result was one of the largest and most brutal civil wars in history (the Taiping Rebellion, little known to the West), followed by a collapse and rejection of Christianity (and the duality) and return to traditional Chinese culture. Another interesting study is the introduction of Islam into India, the birthplace of the ancient Hindu and Buddhist religions and the rise of the anti-Muslim Sikh Confederacy.¹¹

Religion could certainly continue to effect populations on Conquered, Converted and Naturalized Colonies. Religion could also make planet Balkanization (as the term is used in this game) impossible, difficult, or easy. Religion has also played a large role in the legitimacy.¹²

- ❖ Science-fiction, the “literature of ideas” according to James Gunn, developed in the very milieu that serves as the baseline assumption of future society. Science-fiction literature has not fared well outside of Japan and Western technological/industrial culture; there is, to my knowledge, very few Islamic or Hindu/Buddhist science-fiction writers, nor is science-fiction – especially as satire – welcome by religious extremist (e.g., where they kill atheist bloggers and the police do nothing) or places where authoritarian regimes don’t want people to dream or have unapproved ideas.
 - See also “Defining ‘Science Fiction,’” Gunn Center for the Study of Science Fiction (<http://www.sfcenter.ku.edu/SF-Defined.htm>).

✚ **NO TRANSFER, NO TICKET:** While I have been significantly tempted to apply the structures of GGDM to situations in the real world, I would advise caution in doing so, as the game itself is a simulation or ‘model’ of civilization made on conjecture; not a coherent theory.

The simulation has grown to the level of being very complex, but it falls far short of the complexity of the real things that it simulates (e.g., a combat simulation is cannot really be like the real thing!). It is as if I painted a picture (albeit, a dynamic picture, not static), theories can and have been developed about various paintings and pictures, and pictures can be painted based on an art theory, but the painting or picture itself is not a theory.

There are significant areas of human history and civilization (or even scenarios dreamt by fiction writers, intellectuals and academics) that would be difficult to simulate within the structures of GGDM. The game therefore, is not Asimov's psychohistory (and I admit to being peculiarly infatuated with the idea, merging with Alan Parsons' "Games People Play" (1980) when I was young); it has **no** predictive value, it is **not** testable or verifiable, it is therefore, a work of intuition and philosophy (as is most of social science in a Baconian sense), and probably some wishful thinking, in the guise of macrosociology and with a whiff of ontology. The best possible result is that some of the ideas and simulation inspire discussion and learning. I have, however, described a framework for why it *matters*.

“A knowledge of the existence of something we cannot penetrate, of the manifestations of the profoundest reason and the most radiant beauty – it is this knowledge and this emotion that constitute the truly religious attitude; in this sense, and in this alone, I am a deeply religious man.”

– Albert Einstein, The World as I See It (1949)

“Einstein's conception is closer to mine. His God is somehow involved in the immutable laws of nature. Einstein has a feeling for the central order of things. He can detect it in the simplicity of natural laws. We may take it that he felt this simplicity very strongly and directly during his discovery of the theory of relativity. Admittedly, this is a far cry from the contents of religion. I don't believe Einstein is tied to any religious tradition, and I rather think the idea of a personal God is entirely foreign to him. But as far as he is concerned there is no split between science and religion: the central order is part of the subjective as well as the objective realm, and this strikes me as being a far better starting point.”

– Wolfgang Pauli (1927), quoted by Werner Heisenberg in Physics & Beyond (1971)

THE ZERO SUM PROBLEM OF RELIGION: In the inherited and developed Abrahamic Tradition, there is but one God, who is all powerful, all knowing and all good (more formally described as 'omnipotent,' 'omniscient,' 'omnipresent,' 'omnibenevolent,' 'almighty,' 'transcendent,' etc.).

If this is so, God does not need us to do anything, such a being can do what it wants, does not need to waste any effort on what we want or trying to convince us to do what it wants, and we are just in the way. It doesn't need our volition. It doesn't even need to convince us to be good and moral or worshipful; we could simply be changed or remade to be so at a whim.¹³

- ❖ “Are you never afraid of God's judgment in denying Him? Most certainly not. I also deny Zeus and Jupiter and Odin and Brahma, but this causes me no qualms. I observe that a very large portion of the human race does not believe in God and suffers no visible punishment in consequence. And if there were a God, I think it very unlikely that

He would have such an uneasy vanity as to be offended by those who doubt His existence.” – Bertrand Russell, “What is an Agnostic” (1953).

- Despite Bertrand Russell’s excellent explanation of “What is an Agnostic,” most agnostics are people who don’t really want to argue about whether or not there is a God (in any sense), especially with certain people who haven’t a care about evidence, facts or reason. There are many more interesting things; “bugs, for instance” – quoting Clarence Darrow, another famous early 20th Century agnostic (see excerpt of Closing Arguments in the Sweet case, The Next Season, *supra*).

If God needs to counsel, cajole, guide, teach, impose laws, punish, test, or anything else described in the Bible, if it needed to sacrifice its ‘son’ or avatar on Earth for us, then it is not all powerful, all good, and all knowing in the absolute sense. If it even needs our worship, it is so lessened (even more narcissistically absurd is the oft-repeated claim that God has a plan for us). The all-powerful God would have made golems (as in Robert Heinlein’s Job: A Comedy of Justice (1984)); in the strict zero-sum sense, God is diminished by having created volitionals.

- ❖ This is the zero-sum problem of Christianity, Judaism and Islam: No one has ever explained or examined why God needs us; we simply have no evidence on the issue other than idealized parental assumptions.

The other frequently asked question in Christianity, “If God is all knowing, all powerful, and all good, why is there Evil in the world?” almost gets there, but also misses the point. The answer is obvious when the question is answered out of context. The fact that the question is asked is the answer to the question.¹⁴ He/She/It isn’t.

- ❖ People don’t realize what a thorny problem they create when they proclaim “God Hates Fags” (popularized by Fred Phelps, Westboro Baptist Church protest signs) – as if their God is powerless to do anything about ‘fags.’ ‘Fags’ everywhere should rejoice because the powerlessness of their God (not to mention their intellect) is inherent in the statement. God is apparently powerless before volitionals or is restrained by a higher power still or by circumstances we don’t know – or doesn’t hate ‘fags’ enough to do anything. Or doesn’t exist. Occam’s Razor; Hitchen’s Razor.

This then must have been one of the first points of contention with the existing and established Roman state religions which were ritualistic and contractual in nature; the Romans believed that the gods needed their worship and they needed the gods’ favor. The Romans believed in a *quid pro quo* relationship with their gods that was incomprehensible to Jews and early Christians whose god was tyrannical, paternal, and demanded utter submission, whose only benefit was a “pocketful of mumbles, such are promises” (Simon & Garfunkel, “The Boxer” (1970)).

- ❖ There is probably a colorable correlation between the decline in practicing Christianity and decline in the understanding and knowledge of the Roman Empire. The New Testament is an artifact of the Roman world; study of the New Testament leads to study of the Roman Empire in general, can also stretch to ancient Greece and ancient Egypt, but leads to widespread ignorance of cultures and history beyond Europe.
- ✚ CHILDREN’S GOD: The Genesis Mandate and Ten Commandments seem like they were written for children. Because they were. By children. Like Doctor Moreau’s laws to the Beast Folk. See Mythopoeic Thinking discussion, 1 Temporal Technology, p. 809, *supra*.

- ❖ **God:** (standing on a chair behind Noah, he rings a bell once) NOAH! **Noah:** (Looks up) Is someone calling me? (Shrugs and goes back to his work) **God:** (Ding) NOAH!! **Noah:** Who is that? **God:** It's the Lord, Noah. **Noah:** Right ... Where are ya? What do ya want? [whining] *I've been good.* – Bill Cosby, “Noah” skit, transcript from iComedy TV (emphasis added).
- ❖ “Swing your partner by the hand; Have a baby if you can; But if the voices in your head; Say to sacrifice your kid; To satiate your loving God's; Fetish for dead baby blood; It's simple faith, the Book demands; So raise that knife up in your hand! ... Good is good and evil's bad; And kids get killed when God gets mad; And you'd better take a good look; At the Good Book.” – Tim Minchin, “The Good Book” (2009).

We have made progress: If anyone attempted now to do what Abraham tried to do to his infant son, Isaac, in the name of God, they would be heavily sedated and locked in a padded room. Or incarcerated for life for murder. *Yet, this story is the basis and the core of three major world religions!* As the BBC pointed out (Kelly Grovier, BBC Culture, “The second a father saved his son,” March 11, 2016), the rote repetition of the Biblical story of Abraham's intent to kill his son at God's command has rendered the horrific moment of ritual infanticide emotionally empty. The parental horror of the concept is gone, the moment of salvation is lost in the empty stares of bored students filing past old paintings in the museum. And it doesn't take long for novelty to wear off now:

- ❖ “The realist in Snider knows that the schoolyard-fence-rattling message of Twisted Sister and its crown jewel ‘We're Not Gonna Take It’ has been diluted by karaoke bars, commercials and sports arenas – and yes, a certain Broadway musical.” – Rolling Stone Magazine, October 28, 2016.

✚ FREE WILLY: That we have and/or were given free will to choose detracts even more from God's absolute power, goodness and perhaps, knowledge, in the zero-sum sense. Conversely, to the extent that we are compelled by divine will or intervention to do anything or refrain from doing anything at all, is a corresponding reduction in our free will (like GGDM Interventions...). This has always been a thorny problem in religion and philosophy. Most religion easily settled on the concept of surrendering to divine will as it went hand in hand with the superiority of divine wisdom and/or obedience to the creator, *in loco parentis*.

- ❖ “The problem of freewill makes its first large-scale appearance in a religious context, when men had come to believe that here was one God, omnipotent, omniscient, and concerned with human action. The problem of freewill was first definitely stated as a problem of Christian theology. The problem arose, in fact, from a number of different roots in Christian belief: Christianity asserts on the one hand that man does freely choose his actions, but also asserts on the other hand statements not evidently compatible with this, for instance that God being omniscient knows from all eternity what actions a man will in fact perform.” – Bernard Williams, Freedom and The Will (1963), p. 5.¹⁵

From a philosophical point of view, free will might just as well be a myth as we are all hemmed in by decisions made by others both before we were born and during our lifetime;¹⁶ none are actually free, and cultural rebels trade their little freedom for delusion of freedom.

- ❖ “Rebels can never really be free.” – Dr. Stephen Griffith, Lycoming College. I think this memorable line was part of a lecture in the Philosophy of the Occult course. The

point was that rebels must always be against something and that forms their existential boundary. See also *Rebels, Romans and Ruins of Religions*, 1 Constructural Elements, p. 182, *supra*.

It is thus in the latter half of the 20th century that philosophy and psychology (in the wake of WWII, and during the Cold War) settled on the idea of existential freedom; that we are all free to act and live within the confines of our existence, which is determined by the universe and the world we inherited from others. Existential freedom does not exclude the idea of divine will or intervention, as those would simply add *additional boundaries* to our existence.

“I would love to believe that when I die I will live again, that some thinking, feeling, remembering part of me will continue. But as much as I want to believe that, and despite the ancient and worldwide cultural traditions that assert an afterlife, I know of nothing to suggest that it is more than wishful thinking.”

– Carl Sagan, *Billions & Billions: Thoughts on Life and Death at the Brink of the Millennium* (1997)

POINT OF NO RETURN: A fully developed human religion has four essential parts: Creation and cosmology, life and death, moral and ethical codes, and symbols and rituals. All of the world’s major religions cover these areas, any belief system that does not is not generally a religion.

With regards to life and death, human religions, very broadly speaking, have settled on two models over the millennia: afterlife and reincarnation.

- ❖ Models that posit an immediate afterlife (that is, the soul continues to exist in another place) tend to regard life on Earth as a transit across the stage, a momentary imprisonment, and the afterlife as a moral judgment of your deeds on Earth.
- ❖ Whereas the reincarnation idea seeks to connect life with death, such that death is never really the end, but just a stage in a cycle; the concept here is not one of punishment but of just deserts, that is, one gets what they deserve in the next incarnation. All of it seemingly comforting. The cosmology of reincarnation then usually goes on to express that the cycle has an ultimate philosophical end, a teleological purpose, of creating perfect, enlightened beings, that one may eventually attain no matter what is their current station in life on Earth.

Escape from the saṃsāra – “the cycling of all life, matter and existence” or the “cycle of aimless drifting, wandering or mundane existence” (from Wikipedia article, “Saṃsāra”) – is the goal of even religions that embrace karmic concepts. Thus, ‘reincarnation’ religions are actually based on a trick of *reverse psychology*. It is thus an error to think that those religions want or think in terms of eternal imprisonment on this Earth; rather the point of their philosophic traditions is escape by a somewhat longer route than those same concepts in the West, to wit:

- ❖ “The Saṃsāra doctrine is tied to the Karma theory of Indian religions, and the liberation from Saṃsāra has been at the core of the spiritual quest of Indian traditions, as well as their internal disagreements.” – Wikipedia, *Id.*
- ❖ “Adherents engage in practices such as prayer, veneration of ancestors, nonviolence, and vegetarianism with the goal of union with God and freedom from saṃsāra.” –

from Wikipedia article, “Caodaism,” June 19, 2019. Caodaism is a monotheistic syncretic religion from 19th Century Spiritism created by a native colonial French administrator in Vietnam in 1926.

Viewed in this light, Christianity’s direct ascension to heaven or damnation in hell looks like a cheap parlor trick. Earth then, is a school, a petri dish, a morality play on the road to somewhere. Both believe, necessarily, in a soul that is indivisible and indestructible, eternal yet Earthly.

- ❖ Even new religions, New Age, neo-Pagan and UFO religions, follow these models. There is truly nothing new in religions in this sense for the last 10,000 years. If you want to start a truly new and innovative religion, start with a new model of life and death and build from there. The third alternative, that absolutely nothing happens after death, that you just cease to exist, has not worked out well as the basis of any religion or politics; logic, practicality and empirical evidence have no place in religion.

Religion began and continues to exist mainly because we are afraid to die and irked to live – avoiding the Void. Animals probably do not have religion precisely because they probably don’t have any *concept of death*, especially their own (they seem to only be afraid of bodily injury),¹⁷ both of which go hand in hand with whatever is the advanced mental state we call sapience.

- ❖ **Regarding Concepts:** “...but a cat can’t understand the concept of anticipation and therefore is unable to allow for it in other species. So this is where we have them almost surely. Cats virtually always underestimate human intelligence just as we, perhaps, underestimate theirs.” – Roger Caras, *A Cat is Watching* (1989), p. 17.
- ❖ **Regarding Mortality:** “They [dogs and cats] seem closed off from their own mortality and the peril of it all. That level of comprehension would appear to be ours alone.” – *Id*, p. 208.

We still have difficulty explaining death to children, we choke up and don’t know what to say when their pet or grandparent dies. When I was young, the typical cover was that the decedent went to sleep but could not be woken up, most children don’t notice the decedent isn’t breathing. Among the very first archeological signs of religion are deliberate and ritualistic burials at least back to 80,000 years ago. Until science and philosophy can state definitively what happens when we die (and not as a matter of faith in what we cannot possibly know), religion will remain the main human psychological element.

- ❖ The veneration of human skulls by Neolithic peoples suggests that they intuitively understood that the human head is the center of our personhood. We should not make the assumption that they were only displaying trophies of enemies killed in war (for example, the way hunters mount animal heads for display), as there is evidence, from other sites in the period, that skulls of family members and friends were also kept, altered and decorated for veneration. Perhaps this is some precursor to the idea of afterlife featured in every world religion for the last 3,000 or more years. The key with the finds is we have no context in which to place them, we don’t know the language spoken, there are no writings from this period, no real idea of their social structures, religion or relationships, we don’t know what they believed or what the ritual veneration of skulls meant to them. We are not even sure of what *we* believe now.

Life and death are so central to religion that all else bends to it;¹⁸ cosmologies, creation myths, moral and ethical codes, symbols and rituals all revolve around how a religion chooses to address birth, life, and death.

- ❖ And for those who believe in reincarnation, living over and over again, “*déjà vu or what you please*” (Aerosmith, “Kings and Queens” (1977)), instead of a straight trip to the afterlife – are you sure that this is what you really want to believe? To live over and over again, century and millennia, shackled to this stupid reality? How do you know you are not living in a prison cell? Like the characters in a science-fiction television episode who thought they were in an underground prison when in fact, they were in an orbital prison (with artificial gravity – because it’s science fiction!)? Of course, the Western heaven may equally be a prison cell (a padded room instead of a dungeon cell in hell) – one with no exit and no chance for renewal. The universe makes no guarantees of teleological transcendence. What evidence is offered other than wishful thinking and human psychological need?

“Agnosticism, in fact, is not a creed, but a method, the essence of which lies in the rigorous application of a single principle ... Positively the principle may be expressed: In matters of the intellect, follow your reason as far as it will take you, without regard to any other consideration. And negatively: In matters of the intellect do not pretend that conclusions are certain which are not demonstrated or demonstrable.”

– Thomas Henry Huxley, “Agnosticism,” *Popular Science Monthly* (April 1889) ¹⁹

“... many professing agnostics are nearer belief in the true God than are many conventional church-goers who believe in a body that does not exist whom they miscall God.”

– Leslie Weatherhead, *The Christian Agnostic* (1965)

Endnotes.

¹ Citation: “‘This is a deathwatch,’ Carl told me calmly. ‘I’m going to die.’ ‘No,’ I protested. ‘You’re going to beat this, just as you have before when it looked hopeless.’ He turned to me with that same look I had seen countless times in the debates and skirmishes of our twenty years of writing together and being wildly in love. With a mixture of knowing good humor and skepticism, but as ever, not a trace of self-pity, he said wryly, ‘Well, well see who’s right about this one.’ Sam, now five years old, came to see his father for one last time. Although Carl was by now struggling for breath and finding it harder to speak, he managed to compose himself so as not to frighten his little son. ‘I love you, Sam,’ was all he could say. ‘I love you, too, Daddy,’ Sam said solemnly. Contrary to the fantasies of the fundamentalists, there was no deathbed conversion, no last minute refuge taken in a comforting vision of a heaven or an afterlife. For Carl, what mattered most was what was true, not merely what would make us feel better. Even at this moment when anyone would be forgiven for turning away from the reality of our situation, Carl was unflinching. As we looked deeply into each other’s eyes, it was with a shared conviction that our wondrous life together was ending forever.” – Ann Druyan, Epilogue to Carl Sagan’s last book *Billions and Billions* (1997), p. 271.

² Citation: “Science does not require theory to explain all ([Braverman] 282-283). Marxists are insistent that their brand of social science is truly scientific.” – Frank Elwell, *Macro Social Theory* (2009), Kindle Edition, p. 75.

³ Commentary: Notable exceptions being the classic books, *A Canticle for Lebowitz* (1959) and *Dune* (1965), and the Babylon 5 television series (1993-1998), and the reimaged Battlestar Galactica television series (2004-2009).

⁴ Citation & Commentary: “Many people who say they believe in God no longer mean a person, or a trinity of persons, but only a vague tendency or power or purpose immanent in evolution.” – Bertrand Russell, “What is an Agnostic” (1953).

- ✓ Most Westerners who accept evolution and modern science tend to think, assume, without realizing it, that humans are the purpose of evolution, life on Earth and perhaps the universe. That is, secular teleological beliefs have simply replaced ancient creation myths in Western secular society.

⁵ Commentary: Once you make factual assertions about God of which you cannot possibly know, what’s the difference in saying that ‘virtuous pagans’ who lived before Christ would have embraced Christianity?

⁶ Commentary: Because religion was a state matter in Rome, that is, religious observances were state ceremonies, the Roman leadership had divine sanction and claimed divine lineage (later the Imperial Cult), priests were state officers often holding other military and civil authority appointments, and the Roman Senate had the power to confer *divus* on living and deceased leaders, failure to observe or neglect of the Roman gods was *treason*. The Jews (and Christians) simply could not accept this.

- ✓ “Stricter Christians didn’t mix with non-Christians. More importantly, they didn’t worship other gods along with their one god. Much of ancient civic life – the holidays and public festivities which were many people’s only opportunity to eat any quantity of meat – was wrapped up in sacrifice to the various deities of a flexible and syncretic Greco-Roman pantheon. Good Christians were expected to shun these celebrations, the festivals and ceremonies their fellow townsfolk kept at the centre of their social lives. That made Christians very strange.” – Prof. Michael Kulikowski (Pennsylvania State University), “Christians were Strangers: How an obscure oriental cult in a corner of Roman Palestine grew to become the dominant religion of the Western world,” *Aeon*, January 30, 2017.

We cannot imagine with anything but horror, a state where it is treason to neglect worship of the official state religion; though the Church in the recent past has been happy to crusade against and execute people (e.g., Catharism) for heresy – a form of doctrinal treason within the Church.

⁷ Commentary: Any claim by any church or religion to have any authority or influence (or knowledge even) over what happens after death is just an absurdity beyond words. Is the Church or religion greater than the god it worships? This was no small matter five centuries ago when the Protestants objected to claims of Papal authority over purgatory. Nor is it a minor matter when it leads to mass suicides, such as Heaven’s Gate or Jonestown.

⁸ Commentary & Citation: It appears as though I have naturally wandered into a sort of anti-natalist position (e.g., 2 *Constructural Elements*, EN 9, p. 202: “the gift of life is a set of shackles” and *THE ONTOLOGICAL TERRORISM OF GGDM*, 3 *Fallen to Earth*, p. 1529, *supra*), though I had never heard of anti-natalism as a formal philosophical argument until I stumbled upon an interesting quote from David Benatar in September 2018. I have, of course, long been aware of the sentiment of one wishing they had never been born (e.g., “I don’t want to die, I sometimes wish I’d never been born at all.” – Queen, “Bohemian Rhapsody” (1975)) – I think it is common to humanity, and that anti-natalist sentiment can be traced back to ancient Greece (long before it was given a formal name in modern philosophy) and even to the ancient Biblical Israelites, suggests that I am correct.

- ✓ “Did I request thee, Maker, from my Clay, To mould me Man, did I sollicite thee, From darkness to promote me, or here place?” – John Milton, Paradise Lost (1667), Book 10, 743-745. Mary Shelly cites these lines in *Frankenstein*.
- ✓ “Mr. Samuel says he remembers first having anti-natalist thoughts when he was five. ‘I was a normal kid. One day I was very frustrated and I didn’t want to go to school but my parents kept asking me to go. So I asked them: ‘Why did you have me?’ And my dad had no answer. I think if he’d been able to answer, maybe I wouldn’t have thought this way.’” – Geeta Pandey, “Indian man to sue parents for giving birth to him,” *BBC.com*, February 7, 2019.

⁹ Commentary: A Fatwa is the very same instrument issued by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Supreme Leader of Iran, for the assassination of Salman Rushdie in 1989.

- ✓ If you were on Mars, which way is Mecca?

¹⁰ Commentary: Un-construction of Scientology: Scientology is a reconstructed late Greco-Roman ‘Mysteries’ cult/religion (probably largely Mitras), moved to a science-fantasy setting, and sprinkled liberally with new wave, neo-pagan, psychobabble, amateur psychotherapy, and a little Christianity. It is interesting what L. Ron Hubbard attempted, resurrecting an ancient Mysteries religion in a modern context. It just doesn’t work well, the results have been thus far unimpressive.

¹¹ Commentary: Sadly, it became apparent that Americans don't know the difference between Muslims and Sikhs.

¹² Commentary: If you want to tie a priest in knots for an hour, ask him if you can baptize yourself and keep pushing with questions. The ensuing hour-long dissertation goes to the heart of the priestly power in a given society.

¹³ Commentary & Citation: How long did it take God's perfect plan to fall apart?

- ✓ “First, regardless of what defenders of an ancient Earth may wish were true, the simple fact of the matter is that the Bible sets an outer limit on the amount of time that man could have lived in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 5:5 states clearly that ‘all the days that Adam lived were 930 years.’ We know, of course, that ‘days’ and ‘years’ already were being counted by the time of Adam’s creation because in Genesis 1:14 (day four of the Creation week) God mentioned both in His discussion of their relationship to the heavenly bodies. Therefore, however long Adam and Eve may have been in the garden, one thing is certain: they were not there for any time period that exceeded Adam’s life span of 930 years. But there is additional information that must be considered as well. Genesis 4:25 explains that Seth was born after Cain slew Abel. Since the biblical account makes it clear that Seth was born outside the garden, and since Genesis 5:3 informs us that Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born, it is obvious that Adam and Eve could not have been in the Garden of Eden any longer than 130 years! Second, surely it is not inconsequential that all the children of Adam and Eve mentioned in the Bible were born outside the Garden of Eden. Not one conception, or birth, is mentioned as having occurred while Adam and Eve lived in the garden (see Genesis 4:1 for the first mention of any conception or birth – only after the couple’s expulsion from Eden).” – Bert Thompson, Ph.D., “How Long Were Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden?” Apologetics Press, 2002 (bolds removed). **[This has been taken to suggest that the knowledge for which they were expelled was carnal]**

And who was Cain’s wife, if Eve is the mother of all? Oops. I think you have a few guesses already. More likely, the concept of Cain’s wife was added later to clean up the story to conform to the commandments, otherwise, not only was Cain committing incest, but also adultery if the mother of his children was not his wife.

But like any lie, it falls apart under any sort of inquiry, and the story became a vague, convoluted mess. But because it’s a Big Lie (see Adolf Hitler feature quote, 1 Diplomacy, p. 1106, *supra*), the bamboozle (Carl Sagan feature quote, *Id.* at p. 1107), it has been taken as literally true by believers, because they would not contemplate such a lie themselves, even as the absurdity becomes plain under any sort of questioning.

¹⁴ Commentary: Note to the Fifth Monarchists: It has been over 550 years since the English Civil War. Christ has not returned to Earth. Or if he did, he hasn’t told anyone, and there is no Kingdom. Many things have passed since and many candidates for the title of anti-Christ have arisen and died. Perhaps the universally accepted best candidate for the title committed suicide in April 1945. Most of the world now finds the idea of monarchy quaint in the least, and very objectionable in practice. Especially a Heavenly Kingdom based on someone else’s religion.

¹⁵ Commentary: Some argue that ‘free will’ is a concept that long predates Christianity or even Judaism. It would be hard to imagine – for example, given the long history of criminalization of certain behaviors – that ‘free will’ was not an issue from the very beginning of criminal law: To be criminalized, the act must imply free will; one cannot criminalize breathing. Origins questions aside, the quote does succinctly address the contradiction and zero-sum problem of Abrahamic religion.

¹⁶ Commentary: But not after we die, as the argument would imply all sorts of absurdities (more than the usual); similar to any argument about “deserving to be born,” see Planet Narn, 3 Taxation & Census, p. 316, *supra*.

¹⁷ Commentary: People might say that a cat or dog is ‘running for their life.’ That is not likely, it is more likely that the animal is running to avoid pain, from fear of bodily injury; it is unlikely they understand their imminent death.

¹⁸ Commentary: My 9th Grade English teacher introduced the class to the idea that everyone is dying slowly after 18 years old. If you are not growing, you are dying, thus, most of our lives are spent slowly dying (e.g., Hayflick limit), until we actually do. *This is the essence of literary*. I had some very cynical teachers in high school, the most cynical one was my American Culture teacher. At the beginning of the year, I thought he was cool, his class was fun, he was cynical in a funny way (i.e. satire). By the end of the year, his constant cynicism made me feel ill.

- ✓ “We live for just these twenty years, Do we have to die for the fifty more?” – David Bowie, “Young Americans (1975).

¹⁹ Commentary: Thomas Henry Huxley, aka “Darwin’s Bulldog,” is the ancestor of the Huxley family, grandfather of Aldous Huxley, author of Brave New World (1932). The family includes accomplished engineers and physicists.