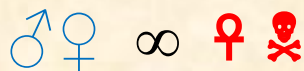


# TURNs!

## A GGDM 'transcension unity reality node' Game



***The most fundamental function of civilization  
is the creation and control of its own reality.  
Nothing is more important.***

**By Charles W. Phillips (*Nemo/Necuno*)  
A Tendentious Pedant**

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## Is It Wyrd?

TURNs! is a meta-game that combines CUBES! A GGDM ‘dream shadow’ Game and SPHERES! A GGDM ‘cosmic cultural crisis’ Game into a ‘transcensional unity.’ There may seem to be some discontinuity between the CUBES! universe in which all player civilizations seem to occupy Galactic Space at the same point in time, and SPHERES! where civilizations can exist in different places temporally and may also occupy widely separated Galactic Spaces. This is an illusion spun by our limited context – while either CUBES! or SPHERES! may be said to be representative of our universe, when combined, one of them represents a hyper-reality in which all civilizations exist in the same direction. That is, CUBES! suggests hyper-cubes and SPHERES! suggests in some senses, a hyper-sphere is involved – both being ‘hyper’ because they exist in a direction we cannot point to, in addition to the three directions we can point to; thus, if civilizations are widely separated by space and time in SPHERES! yet still somehow connected, CUBES! represents that universe in which they occupy the same Galactic Space and time period when viewed from the ‘other’ direction to which we cannot point. Is that weird?

- The ‘set-up’ for a game of TURNs! is to set up a game of CUBES! and a game of SPHERES! and find a group of willing players. Nothing extra is received, just need an extra piece of paper and a big stuffed-crust pizza with three toppings and Mt. Dew.

## Weaving the Tapestry of Life

The ‘shadow’ of a hypercube in our universe is a cube, Carl Sagan did a wonderful job explaining dimensionality in the ‘Flatlanders’ segment of the original Cosmos television series. In TURNs! on their turn, each player must begin by declaring whether they are taking a turn in CUBES! or a turn in SPHERES! The moving player’s actions (and other players’ responses) are then governed solely by the rules in the game which they have declared they are taking their turn, and the rules of the other game do not apply. This keeps it just slightly sane. Players however, must be thoroughly familiar and experienced with both games whose mechanics are divergent.

- *Sharing One Eye and Tooth:* It is mentally helpful to visualize a CUBES! turn as a sphere inside a cube, and a SPHERES! turn as a cube inside a sphere. The ‘other’ does not go away because a moving player has declared that they will take a turn in either. Rather, the choice is simply game mechanical. To keep it sane for us who cannot exist in the ‘other’ direction.

A touchpoint or commonality of CUBES! and SPHERES! is that in both, a player civilization takes three actions during their turn which are publically announced and that the same activations are available in both universes, just with different mechanics and effects. In TURNs! a player who declares they are taking a turn in SPHERES! must, during the turns of the other players, execute three actions in CUBES! as a ‘responding player.’ And vice versa. It is irrelevant what game the other moving player has chosen to play on their turn in TURNs, both universes must be (almost) equally real.

- There is no requirement that moving players in TURNs! alternate choosing CUBES! and SPHERES! as their game turn mechanic (however, see Wholism Meta-Aspect Truth). One could play an entire game in one universe as the moving player in one game while always being the responding player in the other universe<sup>1</sup>
- *Picking Your Fate:* The responding player actions are executed in the ‘other’ game immediately after the player whose turn it is (the moving player) executes the action in their chosen universe. For example, the moving player has chosen to take their turn in CUBES! and declares ‘Taxation’ as the first action. Immediately after the moving player finishes resolving Taxation in CUBES!, other ‘responding’ players may choose to take Taxation as an action *in the game they did not declare in their previous moving player turn* – even if they took their

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<sup>1</sup> Admittedly, this entire set up is complex and very experimental. Play of the game will bear out whether this is viable either as a game strategy or game mechanic. Players may also have a preference for one over the other.

last moving player turn in the same game as the current moving player (the two are not connected). So, if the player before the current moving player also took a turn in CUBES!, that player may declare that they are taking a Taxation action in SPHERES! and then resolve that action; if they moved in SPHERES! then they will respond by a Taxation attempt in CUBES!

- This necessarily means that the inter-turn, or ‘other’ actions taken by a responding player are entirely dependent upon the actions taken by moving players on their turn, whatever game they choose, and responding players may ‘wait it out’ to see if some moving player declares the action they most want to take next in the ‘other’ game.

Thus TURNS! is a very complex weave that requires players to pay attention and pick their spots.<sup>2</sup> If a player has not used their ‘other’ actions during other moving players’ turns, then when the game reaches the player immediately preceding them in order, they are fated to accept and follow the first three actions declared by the moving player just before their turn.

- Moving players who take their turn CUBES! and hence must take their responding player actions in SPHERES! have the option of taking a fourth or fifth action per the SPHERES! rules immediately before they become the moving player in their next turn if they qualify. It is important that players each keep accurate records.

## Mokita

The player civilizations in CUBES! and SPHERES! are connected: Existence, Technology, and First Contacts.<sup>3</sup> A player in TURNS! represents a player civilization that *exists simultaneously* in both CUBES! and SPHERES!, *it is exactly the same civilization viewed from two different narratives*. Therefore, the two games tell different parts of the same story. It follows then that when First Contact is made between player civilizations in one game, it is at that point, automatically so that First Contact is made in both games, no need for duplication.

Second, the core of science fiction settings is technology; this connects every science fiction setting from H.G. Wells to TRON to Dune to The Man in the High Castle. The Eras in both CUBES! and SPHERES! serve different game functions, but they are the same in number and effect. Thus, Era Progression can occur in either game by activation of Technology, and advancement of Technology Era in one game *applies immediately to both games* with different mechanics.

- *Spinning the Thread*: A player cannot avoid Crisis resolution in SPHERES! by always taking their turn in CUBES! If a player took their previous moving player turn in CUBES! and their required responding player actions in SPHERES!, then immediately before their next turn as the moving player, they must resolve all Crisis in SPHERES! as if they had just completed a turn in SPHERES! and follow the end-of-turn procedures (i.e. Aspects aging out). Likewise a player who took their previous moving turn in SPHERES!, must complete the CUBES! end-of-turn procedure (spending cubes from the Civilization Pool to satisfy consumption) prior to their next turn as the moving player in whichever game they choose.
- *Weaving a Tapestry*: Fuzzy Groups in SPHERES! can be used to affect the civilization in the CUBES! game, because ... they are the same! *Responding players* may attempt to activate a Fuzzy Group in lieu of one responding activation only if responding in SPHERES!
  - Moving players in SPHERES! may vote on Diplomatic Resolution of a CUBE crisis in CUBES! if they activate Diplomacy in SPHERES!; that is, a player is not forced to take a turn in CUBES! to vote on the Diplomatic Resolution of a CUBE crisis.
  - Players may always contribute a pre-combat statement in CUBES! regardless of which universe they chose for their previous moving player turn.

<sup>2</sup> I have played in a large, complex cross-over game made from two disparate, insular systems; I played in a full WWII scenario combining Red Storm Rising and Hunt for Red October over three Saturdays. There have been some other crossovers, I remember selling Cyclades-Kmet crossover kits a few years back. Never got to play them.

<sup>3</sup> In the Kavila language of Paupa New Guiana, “Mokita” means a truth that everyone knows but nobody talks about.

- Activation attempts lost due to combat elimination or actions blocked due to Kairoitic Moments in CUBES! apply to the next moving player turn *in either game*. Movement activation can only circumvent blocked actions if a CUBES! turn is taken.
  - Diplomacy activations by a moving player can be reciprocated by a Diplomacy activation of the target *as the moving or responding player in either game*; Diplomacy does not force a target player to choose the same game to reciprocate the activation.
- *Cutting the Thread*: It follows then that when a player civilization becomes extinct (in CUBES!) or collapses (in SPHERES!) and is ‘out’ of one game, they are out of both games and are out of TURNS! Additionally, when the victory condition of either game is fulfilled and that game concludes, that is the end of TURNS!

## The Nodes Must Roll

A ‘Node’ is an end-point in space where a technologically and culturally advanced sapient species has changed and arranged physical and inner reality to suit their needs, it is their optimal pocket of the universe. Nodes should not be confused with ‘megastructures’ such as Dyson Spheres, it is not a ‘structure’ but a superimposed or imposed reality. Nodes have been suggested as the reason for the Fermi Paradox – that we are not able to see or detect advanced civilizations because they have changed or left reality from our point of view.<sup>4</sup>

Nodes are the reason for CUBES and Crisis resolution in CUBES! and SPHERES!, and in TURNS! the two come together in the Node which makes the player’s civilization immeasurably powerful within its own closed reality. That is, via CUBES! and SPHERES! actions, player civilizations in TURNS! are building their Node which is the final victory endpoint of TURNS.

## There is a Season

A full turn of TURNS! (you know, because turns ... eternally turn!) occurs when a player takes a turn in CUBES! and a turn in SPHERES! as a moving player. This does not count any responsive player actions in the other game between turns, no actions as a non-moving or responding player count here; instead, completing a turn in TURNS! is a choice made by declaring in which game the moving player will take their turn.

- TURNS! is a game of cycles and cycling. The speed and manner of cycling through TURNS! is crucial to success not only in TURNS! but also in CUBES! and SPHERES! Conversely, it is at the same moment true that the game is governed by what happens in CUBES! and SPHERES!; it is only in those games that a player civilization can become extinct, it is those games whose ending conditions determine the end of TURNS! There are legitimate strategic reasons why some players may get off the merry-go-round at some point and watch the wheels go round and round, as John Lennon suggested.

A player is never required to complete a turn in TURNS!, it is never required that players alternate taking their moving turns in different games. A player could conceivably never take a turn in TURNS! yet be playing in the game and win one!

- There is a colorable argument that playing exclusively in one game will allow a player civilization to develop faster by ignoring the other and ignoring TURNS! With luck...

## A Turn of Mind

Upon completion of a TURNS! turn, a player civilization *must* first gain either a Supra-Legitimacy Truth (“SLT”) or Meta-Aspect Truth (“MAT”) (i.e. not optional). Supra-Legitimacy is the

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<sup>4</sup> This was suggested in “The transcension hypothesis: Sufficiently advanced civilizations invariably leave our universe, and implications for METI and SETI,” by John M. Smart, Acta Astronautica, Volume 78, September–October 2012, pp. 55-68 which was referenced in “What If Humanity Could Leave the Universe? | Transcension Hypothesis,” Unveiled YouTube Channel, January 11, 2021. I had not heard of the Transcension Hypothesis until I watched the video, but I suggested a similar in GGDM, published in 2020 (see Dreamspheres, 3 Commerce, pp. 1222-1223).



idea that beyond all political legitimacy, personal and national security are paramount, that failure of order or basic subsistence, foreign invasion, anarchy, or high levels of personal crime trump any arguments about political or religiously-backed legitimacy. Meta-Aspect is, on the other hand, the singular most compelling emotion, or driving obsession, that describes a species' "root condition" (e.g., the 'human condition') or "soul" or "primary psychology" to which purpose institutions and corporate units are created and bent to serve. In *Gestalt-Genesis/Day Million*, I identified the Meta-Aspect of the human condition as 'happiness.'<sup>5,6</sup> Moving on... All Truths awarded during the game of *TURNs!* should be recorded and accumulated.

➤ *Supra Legitimacy*: If a player in *TURNs!* chooses *Supra-Legitimacy* as a Truth, a *Supra-Legitimacy Truth (SLT)* will be received if **both** of the following are true at that moment:

- In *CUBES!* the player civilization is not the only one without two *CUBES*; and
- In *SPHERES!* the player's civilization has not currently failed two Crisis.

*Supra-Legitimacy* is the very low bar in *TURNs!* – just don't be on the brink of losing, or teetering on the edge of the abyss, and the universe is all good (setting aside Parfit's Repugnant Conclusion). In advanced technological setting such as this, one might assume that domestic subsistence is not an issue (unless poverty is systemically imposed) and most other sorts of problems can be handled by a *competent* central authority and systems. Failure to simply reach the low bar set here suggests... While *Supra-Legitimacy* is a low bar, if a player civilization becomes extinct in either game (meaning extinct in both games since they are but one civilization), all accumulated *Supra-Legitimacy Truths* are *immediately lost*. Extinction in *CUBES!* or collapse in *SPHERES!* is the ultimate failure of *Supra-Legitimacy*.<sup>7</sup>

- Losing the game in *CUBES!* or *SPHERES!* *does not* cause the loss of accumulated *Supra-Legitimacy Truths (SLTs)*, if the player civilization survived the game.

➤ *Meta-Aspects*: The first time that a player chooses a *Meta-Aspect* as a Truth (a *MAT*), one category must be selected from the *Obsession Table*, below. The selection is permanent and applies to both *CUBES!* and *SPHERES!* equally, and should be recorded for the player's civilization. A player **must** choose a new *Obsession* – in addition to the previous chosen *Obsession*, when a second *Meta-Aspect Truth* is received, and another when the next is received. Receiving a *Meta-Aspect Truth* requires no criteria other than having completed a *TURNs!* turn, however, multiple obsessions are difficult to manage, a great risk, as described below.

- Each *Obsession* may only be chosen once, no duplication allowed (that's cheating! ☹). It is highly unlikely that a player will have more than two *Obsessions*.

**Truth Check:** Both *Supra-Legitimacy (SLT)* and *Meta-Aspects (MAT)* have *Truth Checks* in their own ways. The *Truth Check* for *Supra-Legitimacy* is made when it is received, as described above, and the ultimate *Truth Check* for *Supra-Legitimacy* is extinction and collapse. ☑

- Two players may have the same *MAT* (yet are adversaries), *Obsession* is not exclusive!

<sup>5</sup> Professors Jonathan H. Turner and Seth Abrutyn wrote: "At the neurological level, negative emotions far outnumber the positive emotions that humans can use during interaction (indeed, four of at least the five primary emotions that have been elaborated by hominin neurology are negative [anger, fear, sadness, disgust] whereas one is positive [happiness])." (Returning the "Social" to Evolutionary Sociology: Reconsidering Spencer, Durkheim, and Marx's Models of "Natural" Selection, *Sociological Perspectives*, 2017, Vol. 60(3) 529–556). *Now you learned something!*

<sup>6</sup> *Transcension Hypothesis* is just a *logical end to the Anthropic Principle*, because that's what we would do, what would make humanity 'happy.' The game must assume that aliens, whatever their meta-aspect, reach the same end.

<sup>7</sup> From Wikipedia article, "Nuclear Holocaust": "In his book *Reasons and Persons*, philosopher Derek Parfit posed the following question: Compare three outcomes: (1) Peace. (2) A nuclear war that kills 99% of the world's existing population. (3) A nuclear war that kills 100%. (2) would be worse than (1), and (3) would be worse than (2). Which is the greater of these two differences? He continues that 'Most people believe that the greater difference is between (1) and (2). I believe that the difference between (2) and (3) is very much greater.' Thus, he argues, even if it would be bad if massive numbers of humans died, human extinction would itself be much worse because it prevents the existence of all future generations." *Now you learned something else new today!*

Meta-Aspects' Truth Check is contained on the Obsessions Table next to the Obsession chosen by the player. Thus, the required end-of-TURNS-turn Truth Checks are only made against Meta-Aspect Truths on the Obsession Table.

- **Time Check** ☑: Whenever a player completes a turn in TURNS!, *a Truth Check is performed*. If the player has not yet gained a Meta-Aspect Truth, the Truth Check consists of only gaining either a Supra-Legitimacy Truth (SLT) or a Meta-Aspect Truth (MAT). If the position has gained a Meta-Aspect Truth, a truth check is performed on the Obsession Table.
  - A player civilization is not barred from gaining Supra-Legitimacy Truths (SLTs) after gaining a Meta-Aspect Truth (MAT) – in fact, it's probably a good idea.

Choosing a new Truth occurs *before the Truth Check* and thus the new Truth, if a Meta-Aspect Truth (MAT) *is instantly subjected to a Truth Check* (and can be suspended instantly!). Choose carefully, pre-check your Truth, for there are many paths that lead to the dark side.☺
- **Reality Check** ☑: The Meta-Aspect Truth Check is performed by checking *each* Meta-Aspect Truth (MAT) against the requirements on the Obsession Table for that MAT. The Truth Check is 'true' (like Spandau Ballet) and passes if the conditions described are objectively true at the moment the check is made; a player civilization may have more than one Meta-Aspect Truth (MAT) and each must have a different Obsession. Each Meta-Aspect Truth must be checked separately, though conditions may overlap.
- **Checkmate** ☑: A Meta-Aspect Truth (MAT) that fails to meet the requirements of the Obsession Table is suspended. All MATs are checked each time a TURNS! turn is completed, including those that were previously suspended. If a suspended MAT fails a second time, it becomes false and is lost. Suspended MATs are inoperable and have no short-term effect on the game; no Obsessions Table benefit is received, nor do they serve as a multiplier, as describe below. Lost MATs cannot be regained later, they are permanently false.
  - As mentioned previously, Supra-Legitimacy Truths (SLTs) are checked the moment they are received, but ultimately fail if the player civilization goes extinct and cannot be lost otherwise. As such, they are never suspended during the game, but are generic, having no special value beyond multiplication.
- **Transcendent Truths**: The bottom concept of the Meta-Aspect Truth Check on the Obsessions Table is one of transcendent reality or 'going beyond reality.' Whatever that means. Transcendent reality can be discussed in literary (fantasy, transcendentalism), philosophical, religious (nirvana, afterlife), mathematical (hyper-cube, hyper-sphere) and scientific terms ('transcension hypothesis'), but here *must be expressible as and reducible to practical, useful operational effects within the game rules*. And thus, may seem rather mechanical, a shadow of the larger possible discussion. This is true of all simulation games, and is the central problem of Gestalt-Genesis/Day Million (GGDM) design, as I have discussed already in GGDM.

## Clothed With Immense Power

"I expect you to procure those votes!" – Abraham Lincoln. After all Meta-Aspect Truths have been checked, the Obsession Table Potency associated with each *non-suspended* MAT is available to the position to be used until the beginning of the next TURNS! turn when they must be checked again to see if the MAT meets the conditions of obsession. Obsessions that are available during TURNS! turns are applied to turns taken in CUBES! and SPHERES! by the *moving player* or *responding player*, enhancing performance in those games, until the Node Value (NV) is expended or the next TURNS! turn begins (all NV remainder is lost), whichever comes first.

- One major factor to consider is that a turn in TURNS! represents at least two turns taken in CUBES! and/or SPHERES! Cycling speed may be important, and this also limits the opportunities a player civilization has during the game to gain Truths; that is, if a player

civilization had 3 SLTs and 2 MATs and hadn't lost any MATs, that means that a minimum of 10 turns have been played as the moving player in CUBES! and/or SPHERES!

- *Destroying Enemies by Making Them Friends:* The process is completed by determining the current Nodes Value (NV) which is the number of Supra-Legitimacy Truths (SLTs) x the number of non-suspended Meta-Aspect Truths (MATs). This number should be recorded as it controls the number of times a Potency from the Obsession Table can be used, the abilities have different costs as *a necessary mechanical control*. Costs must be subtracted from the NV whenever a Potency is used. All remaining unused NV is lost the next time a Truth Check occurs; that is, does not carry over.
  - The strategy in most cases is to build a base of SLTs with one MAT, which will yield moderate results and manageable risk. The real jump occurs when a second and third MAT are added, because the easiest way to double anything is to multiply it by two! ☺ However, the requirements of keeping two or three MATs 'legitimate' as Truths is challenging. This returns again to the cycling speed discussion, above; how fast can you drive without crashing?
  - A player civilization can be stopped from gaining SLTs in TURNS! by denying CUBEs in CUBES! or forcing Crisis resolution failures on the position in SPHERES! A civilization can recover in CUBES! by building a CUBE, but being down two failed Crises in SPHERES! is (almost) impossible to overcome to gain more SLTs. Thus, the games are precariously intertwined.

## Inside a Dropping Sphere

*Time* for more cowbell and 'really explore the studio space this time!' I mean, really! Once per game, on any turn in which they are the *moving player*, a player may call for a Sphere Drop. A Sphere Drop involves two yes-or-no questions. The first is for each player to determine if the current number of Truths – *non-suspended* MATs + SLTs (not the Node Value) – "Truth Value" ('reality' TV?) of their civilization is a prime number? The second is to determine if the total "Truth Value" (TV) of all civilizations at that moment adds up to a prime number. This second requires all players to publically reveal their Truth Value and is free intelligence for everyone.

- Zero ("0") is not a prime number. Therefore, any player who has zero "Truth Value," automatically answers the first question "no" and it is also possible for the group to have zero total "Truth Value" and answer the second question "no" as well. Whether it is a good strategy at the beginning of the game to call a Sphere Drop is a question in play.
- *Groundhog Day:* If the answer to the first question is "yes," the next three actions taken by the player's civilization in either game may be simply discarded (so record them separately) at the end of the third action, and three more actions (a 'do-over'), either a repeat or different, may be taken. However, the three 'discarded' actions don't disappear, rather, they are the results of the next time each of those actions are attempted for the remainder of the game.

If the answer to the first question is "no," the next three die rolls by the player civilization are recorded and are repeated just one time, the next time that type of die (e.g., d6, d12, d4, etc.) is rolled in either game, anytime for the remainder of the TURNS! game.

  - The player calling the Sphere Drop will of course, know the answer to the first question as to their own player civilization. Sphere Drop likely will not be called if the known answer is "no." But who k"no"ws?
- *Recorded Eighteen Hours of Static:* If the answer to the second question is "yes," the player civilization calling the Sphere Drop may attempt one extra action each turn in either game in which they are the *moving player*, regardless of results of previous activation attempts on the same turn. One extra action is received for each civilization that answered "no" to the first question, above (*no actions are lost* due to answering "no" to the first question, however).



- If all player civilizations answered “yes” to the first question, above, the calling player gains nothing. If the calling player answered “no” to the first question, they get an extra action, and that may be the reason for calling a Sphere Drop?

If the answer to the second question is “no,” *all player civilizations*, including the one calling the Sphere Drop, may only attempt two actions of the first three in either game in which they are the moving player on their next turn in that game. If a player civilization affected by this takes a turn in SPHERES! and both action attempts are successful, a ‘fourth action’ may be attempted as normal.

- Calling the Sphere Drop is a heady choice, and the game can get a little crazy if everyone takes their shot, or they come too rapidly. It may be possible for clever players to ‘count cards’ on what others do. The actual effects of the Sphere Drop could be good or bad, each, depending on how they are used.

## Last Answer

- The objective of a game of CUBES! is to get three CUBES before anyone else without going extinct.
- The objective of a game of SPHERES! is to successfully resolve seven Crises before failing to resolve three Crises while reducing alterity with other player civilizations, before going extinct. Sort of, that is, because that only triggers game end, not victory.
- The objective of a game of TURNS! is to have the highest Node Value (NV) but mainly for the purpose of winning at CUBES! or SPHERES! or at least not going extinct.

When a player wins either CUBES! or SPHERES!, the players can look separately to see who won at TURNS! The winner of TURNS! is the player with the greatest current Node Value (NV), *not including currently suspended Meta-Aspect Truths (MATs)* – that is, it is calculated exactly as the NV would be for a turn of TURNS!

- It is not possible for a position that is extinct to win at TURNS! A position that becomes extinct immediately loses all Supra-Legitimacy Truths (SLTs) and thus would have only MATs, and any number times zero is zero. An extinct civilization’s Node becomes a zero-point in space-time in TURNS. ☺

The winner of either CUBES! or SPHERES! can be different than the winner of TURNS! This is especially true if the player who won played primarily in one game on their moving-player turns and thus did not cycle in TURNS!

- There is no mechanism for extinction in TURNS! other than going extinct in CUBES! or SPHERES! There is no means of ‘direct’ conflict in TURNS!
- *Victory TURNS!:* “For what could any Entity, conscious of eternal existence, want – but an end?” – Isaac Asimov. Does winning a game of TURNS! matter? Players will need to decide that for themselves. The most objective form of victory available is in CUBES! where one wins and all of the others lose (but are not extinct), on the moment that one player has three CUBES. SPHERES! is less stark, as all player civilizations who survive the game ‘win’ in a sense, but it is possible to rank them. Since the criteria of ending a game of TURNS! is ending/winning a game of CUBES! or SPHERES!, winning at TURNS! might seem ancillary, this whole discussion wishy-washy. Especially if you are already extinct.

Whether winning at TURNS! or not constitutes a ‘moral victory’ is then a subjective matter, and it is a group matter whether the winner of CUBES!/SPHERES! and the winner of TURNS! are ‘co-winners’ of the combined-game enterprise, or just winners of different but intertwined games. However, if one player civilization won both games – and the fates of the three games are tied in many ways – that might be considered a truly great civilization that laid the foundations for true interstellar culture or pan-galactic civilization (for example, Norman Spinrad’s Second Starfaring Age or the Vulcans before the Federation).

## Obsession Table

Has literature or religion ever produced a creature or species or race whose actions and role in the story cannot be described as seeking happiness, regardless of how misguided, adverse to us or morally wrong those actions seem? We have never truly imagined a frame beyond our own Meta-Aspect and/or Supra-Legitimacy, we have no cognitive scheme to define things without including relative states of happiness or unhappiness, good/bad, better/worse.

### **Happiness, Meta-Aspect Truth**

*“Utility is a subjective concept. It denotes ‘satisfaction’ (or ‘happiness’ or ‘contentment’). It rises if and when an individual increases his or her state of satisfaction. Conversely, if and when someone considers himself in a worse state of affairs, his utility decreases. What is more, utility is an ordinal concept, meaning that utility cannot be measured in terms of higher or lower utility from the viewpoint of an individual; and changes in utility among different people cannot be measured. All one can say is that utility is higher or lower from the viewpoint of an individual.”* – Thorsten Polleit, “What Can the Law of Diminishing Marginal Utility Teach Us?” Mises Institute, February 11, 2011.

**Truth Check:** Player civilization does not have less CUBES than any other in CUBES! and has not failed as many or more Crises in SPHERES! than it has successfully resolved, and since the last TURNS! turn, has not lost more combats than it won in either game (either attack or defense, or as moving or responding player).

*Utility however can be predicted on what commonly and probably will decrease happiness, for example, violent defeat and reduction to poverty; and by what would be extraordinary, for example, a wealthy person gaining utility by giving away all things and living in chaste poverty.*

**Potency:** Usage: 2 NV each. May immediately repeat one successful action attempt and perform the action a second time (even those in CUBES! that require 4<sup>th</sup> Era Technology). The second time counts as an action, and a successful attempt, but skips the attempt roll.

*The key is, of course, having a successful action attempt, even happiness cannot create something from nothing! In CUBES! this can be the same as having a 4<sup>th</sup> Era ability without expending the 4<sup>th</sup> Era ability. In SPHERES! there is no need to repeat a successful Taxation action, but repeating a successful action attempt at least insures a 4<sup>th</sup> action in the turn.*

### **Herd, Meta-Aspect Truth**

*“We move in space with minimum waste and maximum joy, City lights and business nights.... No need to ask, He’s a smooth operator, Smooth operator!”* – Sade, “Smooth Operator” (1984).

**Truth Check:** Every successful Diplomacy activation by the *moving player* civilization since the last TURNS! turn has been successfully reciprocated (in either game, the target player civilization can reciprocate in either game as either *moving or responding player*). At least **three** successful Diplomacy activations with three different target player civilizations are required!

*To some extent, every Meta-Aspect Truth may depend on what other players attempt and succeed at, but Herds is especially dependent. Cycling speed may be important in this one.*

**Potency:** Usage: 3 NV each. In CUBES! the player civilization’s vote in resolving a CUBE Crisis counts as three votes. In SPHERES! the player civilization may reduce the alterity number between civilizations by one with a player civilization that reciprocated successful Diplomacy activations twice between TURNS! turns.

*Just one use of either of these Potencies may be enough to end a CUBES! or SPHERES! game.*

### **Manifestation, Meta-Aspect Truth**

*“There were spaceships again in that century, and the ships were manned by fuzzy impossibilities that walked on two legs and sprouted tufts of hair in unlikely anatomical regions. ... It was inevitable, it was manifest destiny, they felt (and not for the first time) that such a race go forth to conquer stars. To conquer them several times, if need be, and certainly to make speeches about the conquest. But, too, it was inevitable that the race succumb again to the old maladies on new worlds, even as on Earth before, in the litany of life and in the special liturgy of Man...” – Walter M. Miller, Jr.*

**Truth Check:** Player civilization either successfully activated a Fuzzy Group in SPHERES! or won a combat in CUBES! on the previous *moving player* turn (responding player actions do not count for this purpose, even to activate a Fuzzy Group as a responding player).

*Manifestation requires some momentum... it is madly wishing on a star to manifest standing still or ghost dancing in circles around a campfire!*

**Potency:** Usage: 1 NV each. May contribute an additional pre-combat statement in CUBES!, even if you are a participant in the Combat (normally not permitted), or may designate one Proficiency or Aspect roll in a Fuzzy Group in SPHERES! as automatically successful.

*The low usage cost makes repetition of this Potency possible, it is possible to ‘flood’ the situation and force a success by use of multiple NVs. And this then rolls into insuring the next Truth Check of this Meta-Aspect Truth, but there is a bit of luck involved in getting it started.*

### **Prime Obsession, Meta-Aspect Truth**

*Why did the human cross the road? To get from 3 to 5!*

**Truth Check:** 1) The current number of Supra-Legitimacy Truths and Meta-Aspect Truths are both prime numbers and *add up to* a prime number, *and* 2) every die roll taken by the player’s civilization since the last turn has resulted in a prime number, *or* 3) the failures total are a prime number (e.g., 1 failure, 3 failures, 7 failures). This requires obsessive record-keeping; if records are not accurate or certain, assume this MAT is untrue and becomes suspended.

*777 is not a holy number, but it still has great fascination for your species! 7 pages of rules, 7 FNs, 7 Obsessions. Gaining a Truth is not optional; like aging, eventually one reaches four.*

**Potency:** Usage: 1 NV each. May re-roll once each die roll result that is not either a prime number or does not add up to a prime number. The second roll counts – because 2 is prime! ☺

*On a d20, there are eight chances to roll a prime number result, on a d 4, there are three of four possible prime number results, on a d6, four of six possible results are prime numbers. This is an interesting case for the use of the Order activation in CUBES!*

### **Risk Aversion, Meta-Aspect Truth**

*“The stakes were high, the pressure on Jellicoe immense, and his caution certainly understandable. His judgment might have been that even 90% odds in favour were not good enough to bet the British Empire. The former First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill said of the battle [of Jutland] that Jellicoe ‘was the only man on either side who could have lost the war in an afternoon.’” – from Wikipedia article, “Battle of Jutland” (1916), citing to Massie, Robert K., Castles of Steel: Britain, Germany, and the Winning of the Great War at Sea (2003).*

**Truth Check:** No Meta-Aspect Truths were suspended at the end of the last TURNS turn (excepting Risk Aversion Meta Aspect Truth) and no combats were lost in either game, as the moving or responding player, since the end of the last TURNS! turn.

*An insurance policy, costing 3 NV per turn and serving as a NV multiplier if not used. A player civilization that takes this will need to build CUBES instead of fighting. Playing only in SPHERES! renders this MAT useless, as a TURNS! turn is never completed.*

**Potency:** Usage: 3 NV cost (annual premium, no deductible ☺). May suspend Risk Aversion MAT instead of another MAT that would be suspended, the other then counts as a multiplier.

*For example, 3 SLTs and Risk Aversion and another MAT. The other fails, but Risk Aversion passes the Truth Check. Risk Aversion takes the suspension, costing 3 NV, but the other MAT becomes un-suspended and then generates 3 NV for other use. This may save a MAT loss too!*

#### **Uber All, Meta-Aspect Truth**

*“Any sufficiently advanced magic is indistinguishable from technology.”* – sometimes credited to Larry Niven, sometimes credited to Terry Pratchett (corollary to Clarke’s Third Law).

**Truth Check:** Successful activation of Technology in five consecutive moving player turns, regardless of which game the moving player chooses. Any failure to activate Technology, either by not attempting, failing the pre-requisite successful Taxation activation in SPHERES!, or failing all attempts, breaks the chain (no matter how long), and the count must restart.

*This Truth Check suggests both that a position must act a couple of turns in advance of taking this Obsession, and once the continuity is lost, it is difficult to regain.*

**Potency:** Usage: 2 NV cost. In any *adversarial situation* where Technology Era is a determining matter, this player civilization is considered to have 5<sup>th</sup> Era Technology and all logical consequences that follow from it (e.g., extra dice in combat in CUBES! or avoiding extra adverse results against a 4<sup>th</sup> Era opponent in SPHERES! Special Operations, etc.).

*One timely use of this Potency, and maybe some luck, can be game decisive in gaining a CUBE or pushing an opposing civilization toward extinction or avoiding too many Crises.*

#### **Wholism, Meta-Aspect Truth**

*“Hello me, meet the real me. ... Well me, it’s nice talking to myself, a credit to dementia!”* – Megadeth, “Sweating Bullets” (1992).

**Truth Check:** For the last five consecutive moving player turns, the player civilization has alternated turns between CUBES! and SPHERES! (doesn’t matter which comes first). Any failure to alternate correctly, breaks the chain (no matter how long), and the count must restart.

*This Truth Check suggests both that a position must act a couple of turns in advance of taking this Obsession, and once the continuity is lost, it is difficult to regain.*

**Potency:** Usage: 2 NV each. Immediately upon completing a successful activation in one game, the moving player may immediately do the same activation in the other game, *as if they were the moving player* in that game (the possible actions on both games are the same list, but different mechanical effects). This ‘other’ action counts against the three required to be made *as the responding player* in the other game between moving player turns. The successful activation counts also toward a 4<sup>th</sup> activation in SPHERES if moving in CUBES!

*Three activations of this Potency, costing 6 NV is the same as having two turns at once, but that is difficult level to reach. Use of this Potency might be a game saver, for example, if a player moving in SPHERES is on the brink of extinction in both games.*

#### **Potency Cost Analysis:**

- Potency costing 1 NV can be done with one Meta-Aspect Truth and one Supra-Legitimacy Truth (1x1=1), after the end of the second TURNS! turn (min. 2 turns each in CUBES! and SPHERES!).
- Potency costing 2 NV requires at least two of one kind (probably Supra-Legitimacy Truths) and one of the other – you know already (2x1=2), after the end of the third TURNS! turn (min. 3 turns each in CUBES! and SPHERES!).
- Potency costing 3 NV requires at least three of one kind and one of the other (3x1=3), after the end of the fourth TURNS! turn (min. 4 turns each in CUBES! and SPHERES!).