



time that has passed.

Star rating systems are of interest. They embody some kind of inflation. Surely there was a time when a single star denoted excellence. A Michelin star is hard fought for and to be awarded three stars comes with burdensome responsibility. But why then does a worker in a fast-food outlet need five stars? And why does an 'A' ranking, which one might presume to be the epitome of achievement, need the addition of a star to make it A\* ranking? It is as if the star adds purity or even divinity to the top of the scale. In this context, Maslow's ultimate level in his hierarchy of needs should be augmented by the addition of obtaining self-actualisation with 'star', a state of exquisite supremacy. Oh, and cats have an asterisk, just as a keyboard has one above the number 8. Think about it.

We can't dismiss the cosmos casually in this brief contemplation. Star worship is as visceral as the earliest star-like glyphs scratched onto rock walls. Occultations and other solar alignments of course provide scientific grounds for the phenomenology of Astrotheology, but the spiritual need is enduring. We inculcate the little star into our spreadsheets, calibrations, surveys, coding, and even our rating of each other. Right there, in the meta-language of the third technological revolution, is an acknowledgment of forces beyond the earthbound. Italo Calvino could have poetically proposed the existence of the asterisk at the beginning of the universe, perhaps even being the origin of the universe. In a nonsensical way, we could imagine the Big Bang beginning with an asterisk being typed into a piece of computer coding, initiating a sprawl of script and multitudinous outputs from 3D printers. It is the ON button and could be the OFF button.

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We should let Kurt Vonnegut have the last word.

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Thank you Kurt.

\* What are you doing here?

\*\* And again.

+ I win. Back you go.