

Cosmic Synchronicity



A Tabletop Adventure Game System of Connected Realities
Copyright 2001 By Joseph Teller & Kiralee McCauley

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About Our Cover:

The cover of *Cosmic Synchronicity* is an original painting by **Eriolwen Telquenariel**.

Telquenariel is a Designer, Artist, Bard, and Steward of Sulëdor. Her online portfolio can be seen at <http://pages.infinet.net/suledor/home.htm> and she can be contacted for commissions via email telquenariel@icqmail.com Or via ICQ : Telequenariel [93667494].

She explores her artistic interests in a variety of medium, including painting, ink, digital sketches, clay & plaster sculptures, clothing design, web design, a variety of other graphics arts and performance arts (including violin, guitar, piano and acting).

Guilty As Charged!

Joseph Teller and Kiralee McCauley admit their guilt, that they have knowingly and deliberately foisted another roleplaying game system upon the world (not having learned their lesson the first time, nor the second) and have sent it forth to cause havoc upon the minds of gamers everywhere.

They also admit the willful involvement in this foul deed of one Cynthia Shettle, who did act as a soundboard for ideas, play tester, devil's advocate, proofreader and number cruncher.

Accessories After the Fact include: Alexander Cherry (lxdr@home.net) and Michael Ball (tgta@symatico.ca) And the members of the Rpg-Create@onelist.com mailing list for feedback, suggestions and viewpoints along the way.

They list among their first and foremost victims to this creation's rampage the Western Ave. Irregulars, a group of friendly play testers that were lured into their home on Sunday Afternoons to suffer the torments of their beast : Ian Osmond, Ben Silver, Greg Downing, and Ted Wadsworth (along with another 3 or 4 folks who didn't leave their names as they fled in terror).



First Thing We Do - Kill All The Lawyers!

Cosmic Synchronicity is Copyright ©1999, 2001 By Joseph Teller & Kiralee McCauley. This means that if you are a major publishing house or corporation that you can't publish part or all of this game system and claim that you created it or own it. By the time you read this it will be too late, it will be in the hands of numerous people who will realize exactly where the blame lies in regards to this work and won't let you take credit for it.

Now, that aside, if you are a gamer, as in one who runs roleplaying games or who plays in roleplaying games for personal enjoyment, enlightenment or torture, and are not doing so for personal profit, you can use this game as you desire. You can read it, play it, share it with your friends, exchange copies (complete and intact without any of the content removed or altered, thank you very much), print out copies for yourself and up to 10 people, store it in original electronic form, use printed copies for wallpaper, personal bibliomancy, or a coaster, or even write an opera based on it (but please don't use it to be cruel to small animals like cats!). We retain commercial rights to the game, because we don't like letting corporations get richer at our expense, but we are fan friendly, since we are fans!

If you want to make a derivative work, and you aren't going to make money from it, then feel free to do so - just be sure to blame us with the original work. You can join in on getting the blame (the more people the legal system has to accuse the more fun as it runs in circles when the media tries to claim that someone committed a random shooting spree or got lost in a steam tunnel, or ate their pet hamster on television) but we want to make sure that we get first shot at making the entire event into a media extravaganza so we can develop a cult following and sell our life story on infomercials.

“Tis an Ill Wind That Blows No Minds”
- Malaclypse The Younger, *Principia Discordia*

Thinking About The Unthinkable:

There comes a time in every Game Master/Game Moderator's life when they discover that the mechanics they have been using are insufficient for their ideas to take full form. For many this begins a journey of exploration and experimentation, which eventually leads to satisfaction or perpetual annoyance with the game systems that are available but fail to meet their vision of perfection.

From the subconscious of those who remain unsatisfied eventually comes the answer that sends shivers of dread to their friends and family : I'll design my own game system to do what I want!

Cosmic Synchronicity, of course, rose from just such unthinkable thoughts. Worse, it rose from such thoughts after having actually gone the next step several times and designing different game systems with different design philosophies, playtesting them and even in some cases releasing them out into the world.

Is it a game for everyone? No, it's a game designed to fit the needs and imaginations of the designers, and hopefully their own gaming group (and if they are really lucky it will strike a chord with some complete strangers out there and actually help them find satisfaction so they don't have to sit at 4:30 in the morning on a Thursday trying to calculate the probabilities of a die mechanic, or looking up obscure books on applying Quantum Mechanics, Metaphysics, and Zen to theoretical psychology for a roleplaying theme, or pacing the floor on a Tuesday night looking for the right word in German to describe a journey of exploration of the self, or writing long run-on sentences to get across a humorous point).

The Golden Secret!

Inspiration for creating mechanics and settings for a new roleplaying system does not come simply from muses, divine edicts and shouting Eureka! while soaking in bath tubs. One must draw from a wide range of reading, movies, old radio shows, rare television shows without a laugh track, religious texts and of course, other roleplaying and board games (there are some who claim that roleplaying games may be religious texts, but since many of these folks also see comic books, rock and roll music, matchbook covers and tea leaves as the conversion material of a dubious religion, we will avoid dealing with this issue and let you make your own decisions).

The Quantum Inseparability Principle (QUIP) does indeed apply to roleplaying games. Every roleplaying game is in some way affected by every other roleplaying game. Nothing is totally original, and nothing is created without influence from other things (or non-things). That being said, neither is any roleplaying game exactly like any other roleplaying game.



The Inside Story!

When we sat down to work on this game, we had specific goals in mind. We wanted to make a more streamlined game than some of our others - that is one that was easier for someone new to roleplaying games to pick up and work with, and also easier for long time players to pick up, skim and get right into using.

We didn't want to lose any of the detail we appreciate in games, or the system's ability to allow (or create) the suspension of disbelief that a good roleplaying game needs. But we had to reduce the number of numeric values (attributes as they are commonly called) because it was a sticking point in the minds of many people who decided not to use our other games. Numbers scare some people. Lots of numbers, even if you just look at them or add them together on occasion, looks like work to some people. We didn't want to scare everyone (although scaring a few people is not a bad thing if its constructive in its results). We wanted to attract folks to using the game. Why? Because we don't want to be the only Game Managers using the game for a gaming group - we want to share the experience and, hopefully, get to occasionally play as well as GM!

We also needed to reduce the number of dice rolls used during combat. This is hard to do while maintaining realism, as combat is one of the most complex things a roleplaying game has to represent, and has the most variable factors when dealt with in reality.

We also wanted to expand the range of possible characters that players and GMs could make. At the same time we had to make sure that players would feel the mechanics were fair, and did not require them to rely on the whims of the Game Manager in all things. To do this we had to remove some design limits that were imposed in our own game (and those of others) and still find a way of creating a sense of balance within actual game play.

We wanted a system that was colorful, fun, able to be both realistic and occasionally surreal or downright silly. It had to be modular so that other Game Managers could add in features, ideas and details that they wanted for their specific game style, without destroying our vision on the game. For that matter, we wanted to be able to add in new features and specific mechanics to different settings, so we could explore different aspects of reality, from the burlesque to the sublime. Our system had to be Multi-genre, without being Generic and bland.

We also realized that our own games have a tenancy to interconnect in unusual ways, even when they used very different mechanics, genres, settings and characters. There was a synchronicity at work within our game cosmos. If we could devise a mechanic that would better deal with this connectedness, it would be easier for us to explore the possibilities that this presented.

Finally we wanted a game mechanic that emphasized cooperation between the players, not competition. And one that offered a balance between the power of the players, and their characters, to affect the game world, and that of the GM when presenting the game world, and the plots the characters encounter as they go thru the exploration called "Life."

The Hodge/Podge Transformer

One of the major design features that has been used in Cosmic Synchronicity, which may take some getting used to, is the concept of a truly modular system. This means that there is a “framework,” or game structure, with a number of conventions of scale and definition that are used to describe characters, world settings, and the interaction between the two for players and game masters. Beyond the basic framework is a collection of game mechanics that are considered to be the “standard set,” the default rules that apply when no exceptions are made. And then there is a wide collection of optional rules or rule packages that can be inserted into the framework to cover new concepts and ideas, or to replace the standard mechanics to better represent a particular genre, setting, or playing style that the game master or setting designer has in mind.

This means that the system can be molded or changed whenever a GM runs into something they need that isn’t covered in the basic rules; whenever the GM doesn’t like how something “feels” compared to their own take on reality; or whenever the rules aren’t “right” for their setting. Throughout the book, various optional rules are given as possible alterations, and more extensive variations are covered in the tinkering with reality section.

It also means the GM, or setting designer, has a lot more control over the mechanics than in other game systems. With a little effort you can develop your own “modules” to create the unique results you’re looking for or to emulate something specific.

However, as a result, many of the things gamers expect to be a solid part of the mechanics will change from game to game, and, in particular, from setting to setting. Take, for example, skill lists. Skills that are basic to one setting may not even exist in another. Or different games may treat certain skills differently. One with lots of car chases may distinguish between the different skills needed to drive different vehicles. A pulp game, circa 1930, probably only needs one driving skill. So, the skill list becomes a module, tailored to fit a particular setting, rather than an invariable part of the character generation mechanic.

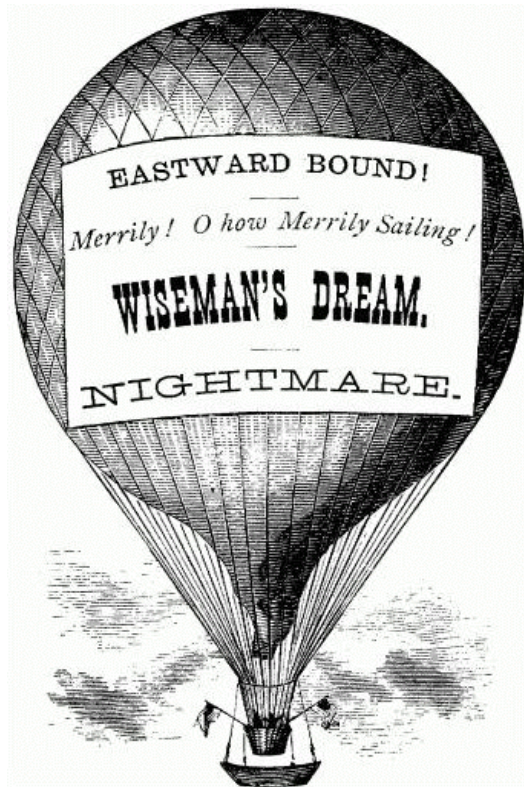
Each setting is its own module. The basic rules, whether you use the standard set or optional variations, cover fundamental conventions, task resolution, and combat. Setting information fills in the details, from available skills and traits to common character types and how magic or unusual abilities function. In this way each genre and setting has its own unique flavor, its own special restrictions, limits, and infinite possibilities.

So, what you won't find here in the basic book are the many things that are specific to the setting, including skill lists, most character traits, detailed equipment lists, the definition of what some attributes, like Wealth, really mean, Species/Racial information, detailed information on flora and fauna, vehicles, social structures, world history, technological wonders, or the meaning of Life, the Universe and Everything. These are what go into a setting book.

Yes, this means that the setting books often includes a chunk of things that might be considered mechanics in other games. Mostly you will reference this rule book for creating or translating a setting and its characters and concepts and helping players design their own characters. Except for the occasional reference to a table or chart, once play has begun it should be rare when you actually have to look anything up in this book.

It also means that someone wishing to design a new setting will have to put more work into it than if doing so for another game. But the extra flexibility to make everything fit your world exactly the way you want it should be worth the extra effort.

It also means that you can adapt things that you feel are "nifty" from other game systems, and add them in as a module into a specific Cosmic Synchronicity game that you are running. If you like how a particular game handles navigating Sailing Ships and Ship to Ship Combat, or how another game allows you to design mechanized future combat suits, or the magic system from a system that allows folks to cast improvised spells, feel free to take their concepts and make them into a module.



You can also use the modular nature of the system to design new modules to cover concepts and ideas not presented, and those modules included should act as examples on how to achieve this. Thus you can expand (or reduce) the level of detail you want your game to include, instead of being bound to a rigid set of complex mechanics that are too closely connected to prevent omissions.

Finally it means that you can more easily adapt settings originally published for other game systems to the Cosmic Synchronicity system, if you don't feel you have the time to create a new setting or simply want better and more flexible mechanics for a setting that you've been enjoying for years.

The Revelation

Paper and writing are the oldest known mass media with any permanency, having been developed during the time of the Ancient Greeks. Its had its ups and downs over the many centuries, but is still a popular means of providing entertainment, information, and propaganda. Its easily transported, doesn't need batteries, doesn't need a cable or a silicon chip, and doesn't get damaged too easily when dropped on concrete. You can use it in the bathtub without fear of electrocution and if it's really bad it can be used for other things (like doorstops).

Most roleplaying games these days are written these days on computers and then printed, or are intended to be printed, on paper. Cosmic Synchronicity is being written on a computer, but you don't have to print it on paper. I like to adapt "new" technologies, and the PDF format (the planned format for this game's final version and distribution) is just such a new technology (at least compared to paper its new!) It gives me the opportunity to include lots of bells, whistles, pop-up sticky notes, and other fun things. Don't let this throw you - if you choose to print out the rules they will still work perfectly, and hopefully be as useful to your gaming group. Its just that sometimes you want lots of fun bells, whistles, commentary and extra bits in what you do, and PDF allows me just that sort of opportunity. If you aren't reading this from a PDF then don't worry about it, all you're missing is some frosting.

Public Domain art sources have been used, as has material from the www.Artday.com website (to which we paid a healthy annual subscription fee for just this purpose), www.clipartcastle.com and a few pieces of our own original art and that of some friends who were willing to let us use their material. If a mistake has been made any place in regards to the usability of art, please let me know - we're not making any money off this and we don't want to get into any legal battles over such. Art is used to improve the presentation, act as an example, and in some places simply decorate the text in a fun way.

In my state of euphoria in writing the game I may have made a mistake or two, dangled an inconsistency, or failed to calculate out a random die probability to its fullest conclusion. Some of these may never even come up during our playtesting, and may not be discovered until long after the game has gone out to wander the Internet. Feel free to email me with any corrections (joeteller@mindspring.com) and I'll see if I think it needs fixing (Or maybe just a sticky note about it). Remember that all creators have a few flaws in their designs... Why else does Pickering's Moon go about in reverse orbit?



Strange Spheres

In order to create a random element most games use dice, cards, spinners, I-Ching coins or the random movements of a small furry animal on a marked grid. Cards cost money and require paper that can melt easily in spilled beverages. Not everyone has I-Ching Coins or a small furry animal handy when they want to roleplay, and spinners require assembly. Dice are easy, convenient and portable (and never need feeding!). So, Cosmic Synchronicity uses Dice.

We recommend a minimum of a pair of ten sided dice (numbered please, zen dice just don't have the same results) and a twenty sided die (numbered 1-20) for each player and for the GM.

(If you are using some of the optional rule modules mentioned here and there, you will want a d12 and a d30 as well.)

It might be good to have at least one spare set of dice, in case you have a cat that thinks they make great toys, or players that tend to lose things easily or forget to bring their own on a regular basis.

Those who adopt the Boy Scout motto to their lives will want to buy a number of extra sets, in various colors, and be sure to keep them in a variety of easily accessed places (between the sofa cushions does not count) and, of course, to keep some with each of their Swiss Army Knives wrapped in duct tape. Putting a set in your first aid kit can also be useful, as one can get very bored while waiting in the hospital. The important thing is not to put dice where they can be accessed by small children, since they aren't as smart as cats and may accidentally swallow them.

When a die roll is spoken of within the rules, unless otherwise stated, we are referring to a d100 roll. This means rolling two of the 10 sided dice, with one of the pair declared as a tens digit and the other as a ones digit (before rolling please). A result of '00' means 100, and in Cosmic Synchronicity this is a really really bad result. A result of '01' means '1' and is a really really good result.

Other times a single die is mentioned, such as a d20 (which means roll the twenty sided die) or d10 (which means roll the ten sided die). If you see a mention of 2d10 that means roll your two d10s, but NOT as percentile dice. Simply add the two dice values together as if they were both the ones digit. The same basically happens if we tell you to roll d20+d10 or 2d20. If a die roll is followed by a number, say d10+5, that means to roll the die and add the number to the result.

When rolling percentile you want to roll low (with one or two exceptions that we'll talk about later) and the lower the roll the better. When you are rolling a single die (d10, D20) or a combined die (2d10, 2d20, 1d10+1d20) you usually want to roll high.

Making A Modern Prometheus

*“Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
To mould me man, Did I solicit thee
From darkness to promote me?”*

– Milton : Paradise Lost, X, 743-745

It's presumed that you understand that a roleplaying game is one in which each player creates a character that they will be portraying within the setting and plots of the game, a character defined by information that is written on a character sheet.

It's also presumed that you can look at the end of this book and discover the blank character sheet that's included, and can print out a copy (If you can't you'll have to write the information listed on a piece of paper instead). If there is no character sheet, then you have a copy of the game that someone has shamelessly altered without permission and you should hunt them down for the evil creatures that they are.



And it's presumed that your GM has a particular game setting (generally, at least by us, called a 'World') in mind that the game is going to occur in and has a large stack of supplemental material for this world to help you understand and play within it. We're not responsible for that part, that's for your GM to provide (unless they are using a World that we have written, in which case feel free to blame us).

A character should begin with an idea. Why? Because this system does not use a pure random character generation system that forces you to play whatever character you happen to roll. That doesn't mean that you can't roll things randomly if you want, only that the game does not enforce such a concept, and that we tend to believe it's better to start with a character concept.

You should think about the sort of character that would fit into the game (playing an alien from Andromeda doesn't work well, for example, in a game set in Ancient China, and playing a superhero in the American Revolution could be disruptive).

Talk with the GM and the other players about their character ideas and try to come up with something that will work well with the other character ideas and not upset the GM (If your GM rolls their eyes, sighs a lot, fidgets in their chair, or seems to be stuck in a perpetual stutter you should assume your idea is upsetting them a bit. If they run from the room screaming like a Banshee, check to see if Cthuhlu has manifested or the smoke alarm is going off. If not assume that they were *very* upset with the idea).

When you make your character you should make it with care. You should make it someone whose life you would find interesting, and which you think the other players and your GM would find interesting. It should be one that you feel you could play for a long time, like you follow a continuing character in a series of novels or movies. It should be a character who you can really empathize with, and try to think like. This is difficult with characters that are too extreme. Also, playing an over the top character like a serial killer or a superman might be fun or provide shock value for a session or two, but they quickly grow boring and one dimensional, without room to grow.

Characters that do not grow and do not advance the plot aren't much fun to play and shouldn't be used within the game. It's not that they aren't encountered, but they are one of several sorts that should be handled by the GM. Growth does not, in this case have to mean improving their abilities or even their world knowledge. It could mean increasing their role in the game world, or their responsibilities, so that they face new challenges. It could mean learning more about themselves or resolving personal difficulties. Or it could mean changing their habits, personality or opinions in response to what they experience.

Player characters should never be perfect. Perfection is an abnormal state in reality. Luckily for you the game mechanics of Cosmic Synchronicity are designed to discourage absolute perfection and to provide challenging obstacles to be overcome for each character, just like in real life.

On the other hand, player characters should be a bit better than the average man on the street, even if its only a matter of attitude. They should take risks, aspire to greatness, seek to right wrongs, spit into the wind, hope for a better tomorrow, make bargains with aliens and demons, strive to be individuals, strive to belong to a group, explore new frontiers, attempt to preserve that which they value, dare to go where angels fear to tread, seek to fight the good fight against whatever they feel is wrong in their lives or society, expose the corruption inherent in the system, expose the corruption of authority, strive to floss daily, attempt to make the world a better place, save long haired cats from the merciless teasing of small children, save children from the merciless teasing of cats, push the envelope, act to improve their own lot in life, and generally won't spend their lives working boring 9-5 jobs and then coming home to sit glued to a television set (or whatever medium of entertainment without purpose, like the Roman Arenas, may exist in their particular time and place). They should not be among the spectators, sheep, huddled masses or downright boring people that are the major population of humanity and other species.

Got an idea? Then let's get to the next step.... putting things down on paper (feel free to use a pencil to start with).

Eeney, Meeney, Miney.... Moe?

Characters are defined by a combination of mechanical details and descriptive details. Most of what we deal with in these rules falls into the concepts of mechanical details. This will tell you things like how fast your character can run, or how much weight they can carry around without putting their back out, or how many times a nasty mugger can smack them with a baseball bat before they fall down. Descriptive detail is everything that isn't part of the mechanics, like what their mother's name was, what they like to eat for breakfast, or if they believe in the Bavarian Illuminati.

A really good character is a combination of both these things. If you do one without the other it will make your character difficult to play and hard to understand in the long term. The good news is you can take your time on the descriptive part (but you might not want to. It's a lot of fun, and a great way to generate ideas.) The bad news is you need to have the mechanical part done before you can actually begin play, or even get your GM to agree that the character fits into the group.

The Mechanical Details are divided into five parts:

Attributes:	Numeric values describing a character's Physical, Mental and Social talents
Aspects:	Personality descriptions affecting a character's skill selection and opportunities
Derived Facts:	Numeric values, based on Attributes and Aspects, used to portray physical limits
Skills:	Numeric values chosen to express a characters knowledge in different fields
Traits:	Special resources, abilities, contacts, limitations, or problems

Now, in Cosmic Synchronicity everything is designed with the assumption that you know what a human being is, how many arms they have, the general range of heights and weights they come in, the basic biology and anatomy associated with their bodies, etc. The system assumes they are the "normal" or average character. If you don't know these things, please get a good encyclopedia and work with it for a few hours. Then take a field trip to a local coffee shop or other place where you can sit down and observe people and ask weird questions of strangers. (Tell them you're taking a poll for a new tv show and that their answers will be part of general statistics used to test whether people regularly lie to pollsters.) On the other hand, if you are striving to play a character that isn't exactly human (presuming the GM has put together a Species Trait Package for what you want) then you should begin with the species trait involved as it may define the limits for the upper, or lower, end of your character's Attributes and Aspects.

Human range attributes and aspects are generally limited to scores between 1 and 20, with a 10 being average in many things (don't worry, we'll explain where this average doesn't apply when we get to the actual attributes). The point value of an attribute or aspect on this scale is usually referred to as its '*Rank*' value (or 'rank' for short). From the Rank values are calculated the Derived Facts about the character. The Rank value, multiplied by 4 gives you the Percentile Value of the Attribute or Aspect. The percentile value is used during actual play.

Whenever your GM declares that you need to make a roll against an attribute or aspect, they are referring to making a percentile roll and comparing it to the percentile value of the attribute or aspect. Generally, a roll that matches or is higher than your percentile roll is a failure. If it is below this value it may be (but isn't always) a success.

If the roll is what we call an opposed roll, where another person (or thing) is trying to prevent your character from succeeding, then they are also making a roll. If you fail (and they don't) then they succeed. If you both fail, then it's a stalemate and nothing happens (unless one of you rolls in your Cosmic Trigger range). If you both roll below your target percentile, then the lower roll succeeds. This applies to all rolls in the system.

Unlike many game systems, your attributes do not assist you in using skills in any direct way. This design decision came out of the problems that occurred in many games we played in where the barely trained youngster, with a high value in the attribute associated with a particular skill, would be equal to or better than a person who had been performing the same skill for a decade, but had only average attributes. Such things are pretty unrealistic 90% of the time. So we opted for a design that reflected reality as we saw it 90% of the time, instead of 10%.

In Just Seven Days I Can Make You a Man!

To make them easier to remember, attributes are broken down into three sets, Physical, Mental, and Social. Each set has 4 attributes. A player who wants to produce a scrappy Hand to Hand Combatant should concentrate on the physical attributes. Academics (and sometimes characters with lots of paranormal abilities) will concentrate on Mental Attributes. And the social butterflies use the Social Attributes. Remember also that some character concepts rely on skills more than innate talent. These characters put a lot of points into Aspects, which are covered a little later.

The basic attributes, by category, are :

Physical Attributes	Mental Attributes	Social Attributes
Body	Mind	Fame *
Coordination	Spirit	Symmetry
Health	Perception	Wealth *
Toughness *	Power *	Synchronicity*

* In these attributes, Human Average is NOT always 9-12!

What do the rank values mean for attributes? Well, in general (excepting the starred attributes) you can use the following adjectives to describe the numeric values of attributes:

1-2	Feeble	13-16	Notable, Remarkable
3-5	Unreliable, Undependable	17-18	Superb, Adept, Excellent
6-8	Challenged	19-20	Inspiring, Legendary, Peak
9-12	Reliable, Competent	21-24	Superhuman, Unearthly
		25	Perfection, Unbelievable, Divine

Body is the muscle power of the character. It is used to determine how much the character can lift and carry. It also affects their ability to leap and jump, and their general body mass. Most importantly, it affects the damage they can cause with muscle powered weapons and in unarmed combat.

A normal human sized character can carry 5 lbs for each point of Body on their back without major fatigue. This is their carrying capacity. A character carrying around more weight than their carrying capacity will be at a -1 to Coordination for each 10 lbs over their capacity they are attempting to carry, and cannot move if they reach Coordination 0. Their ability to temporarily lift heavy weights, as in weight lifting, is equal to 10 lbs per point of Body. This can be enhanced by having a Weight Lifting Skill (if available in the setting) giving a maximum lift equal to $(Body + Skill Ranks) * 15$ lbs. A number of traits may have the potential to alter the effects and limits of Body.

Coordination is the hand eye coordination of the character, as well as grace, quickness, and the speed of a character's reactions in combat. It also aids in running, dodging, jumping and leaping, and the effectiveness of ranged weapons used against a target in targeting for damage.

Health is the ability of the character to avoid disease and infections, and directly affects their ability to heal when injured. Health is also a measure of their ability to deal with fatigue, and thus affects how long they can perform physical activities. A drop of Health to a value of 0 results in death (unless circumstances are extremely bizarre or medical treatment available that can restore it in a moment or two).

Toughness is the character's thickness of hide, strength of bones, and tolerance for pain. It is primarily used to reduce the effects of damage inflicted on them directly. Toughness is also used to resist physical torture. Characters who are physically active all day (such as a farmer) use the regular scale, with an average Toughness of 9-12. More sedentary characters are a step down on the scale, so that, on average, they are 'competent' with a Toughness of 6-8. Normally each point of Toughness will absorb a point of weapon damage that is inflicted, then the remainder (if any) is applied against the mortality of the character. A GM may choose to declare the game setting to be "Realistic" or "Gritty" in which case personal Toughness is only half value against firearms and explosives.

Mind is not intelligence. Primarily it is the memory storage and retrieval ability of the character. Secondly, it is the character's ability visualize - to imagine what isn't there in physical form, or to perceive abstract ideas, such as an *infinite* line or a metaphor, in terms of physical reality. It affects the ability to learn skills, both at start and later and can quantify knowledge skill results.

Spirit is the strength of the character's will - both the enthusiasm with which they live their life and their ability to bounce back from traumatic events. It has some affect on their ability to recover from injuries, and is used directly to resist many mental and magical attacks (if such attacks can occur in the setting).

Perception is the ability to notice things with the senses. It determines the effective ranges for ranged weapons of all sorts, and for many spells and mental powers as well. It includes the senses of hearing, sight, taste, touch and smell, although it may be modified by traits when using a specific sense. It also includes the mental alertness to 'notice' something despite distractions and background noise, and to pick up on something when it is out of place.

Power is an attribute that has importance in games where there are mental powers, certain religious systems, super powers or magical abilities. The exact effects of this attribute vary, depending on the setting and the magical/mental system in use. Usually it affects the duration of spells or powers, the number of abilities a character can use simultaneously, and/or the impressiveness of the character's abilities. Although the mechanics require that all characters have at least 1 point of Power, it may have little or no effect in many settings or for specific characters that have no interest in such abilities or skills. Thus Power does not fit the usual averages. While, in most settings, the average power of a character is quite low, even in the 1-2 range, it may also exceed 25 points in some settings and situations. It does have one effect in games where there are no such abilities, it adds to a character's ability to *Allure* others. In a realistic game this is probably a matter of the ability of the character to project their personality and manipulate others (such a character might be a good evangelical preacher, cult leader, politician, or other celebrity).

Fame is a measure of how well known the character is in their native reality, though it may have some value in other places if their fame spreads. Player characters do not roll against the percentile value of their Fame. Rather, the other characters roll when first encountering the PC, either by name or face, to see if they recognize them in any way. Most characters have a fame of 1. The author of a book might have a fame from as little as 3 and as great as 13 (if they are a world known author, like Stephen King in our reality). A hometown mayor might have a fame of 3-5 (depending on the size of their city or town and how much press they get). A Governor or Senator might have a fame as high as 10. A movie actor could have a fame as high as a 17, while the President of the United States might have an 18. One or two famous people might achieve a fame as high as 20, such as Napoleon, Elvis or Hitler. Fame can increase during game play, or decrease if the character does nothing to maintain their fame.

Symmetry measures the harmony of the bodily proportions, thru which one might judge concepts of beauty and mathematical perfections without the interference of cultural stereotypes of beauty (like the proportion of certain body parts, or general height, weight, muscle tone, cosmetics, etc.) Symmetry affects the ability to be alluring and seductive, and is important if trying to get a job in acting, commercials or as a swimsuit model. Symmetry can be reduced by injury or disease.

Wealth is a measure of the financial resources available to the character. Depending on the setting it can determine whether they can buy the things they need, or to actually own them already. Some settings use it simply to calculate the amount of property they own at start, others use it as a measure of their income (from their occupation, etc.) and still others use for rolls when trying to acquire a particular resource. It depends on the setting, how closely the GM wants to track equipment, and the importance of such within the culture the character is in. In some settings it can exceed the standard scale. In others the average may be much lower than the usual range. Your GM's setting info can help clarify the specifics, but basically the more wealth you have the more you own, the more you earn, and the more you can spend. However, you should also remember that whether an item is available, or affordable, may be modified by the legality, rarity and the possible sources to purchase an item. For example, the average character with no criminal contacts would find it difficult to purchase an illegal weapon, while a character with a low wealth but lots of criminal contacts might be able to get one even if they often don't have the money to pay their rent.

Synchronicity is one of the really weird attributes, and for most characters it has a value of 1. For unimportant supporting characters it can even be a 0. (A player character that reaches 0 is immediately turned over to the GM to be a supporting character from that point on.) Synchronicity is weird because it's not a normal social attribute. Instead it's a measure of how important or useful the multi-verse itself thinks a character is. The higher a character's Synchronicity the more "coincidental" events occur in that character's life, the sort of coincidences that lead you into strange adventures, life threatening accidents, finding important clues that the entire police force has missed, and having serial killers decide that members of your family are perfect victims for their particular pattern of madness. Synchronicity can go up or down during the course of play. If a character completes a storyline in a successful manner the GM might award a point of Synchronicity to the character. Likewise if a character totally destroys a story line, or fails so miserably that in general they have made things worse than if they hadn't been involved, their Synchronicity could go down a point. Such changes in Synchronicity should happen at the end of a storyline, not in the middle of one. Having a high Synchronicity is not necessarily a good thing - it increases the ante and the risks in the character's life. Having a Synchronicity of 20 can make a character's life so complex and coincidental that they may lose their ability to have a 'normal' life of any type, or even to follow a line of investigation to its conclusion, being caught up in too many twisty sub-plots and coincidental distractions to ever have a moment's rest.

Synchronicity should not be mistaken for luck - if a player wants a character to be lucky they should save up Destiny points and use them to influence appropriate dice rolls instead.



Personality Is The Key To Success!

There are six Character Aspects in Cosmic Synchronicity, which are used to help define the Personality of your character. They don't cover everything by a long shot, only those parts of the personality that we feel are best associated with the learning process in the various skill fields. Thus, these personality aspects are important to define for every character. Aspects are also generally valued between 1 and 20, with 10 being average or 'null' (for example, a character with a 10 logic would be neither particularly logical nor illogical in their thought processes.) As with attributes, the value is multiplied by 4, providing a percentile value to roll against.

Aspect	Associated Skill Field
Logic	Academics/Science
Discipline	Athletics & Physical Action
Empathy	Social
Insight	Occult & Religion
Passion	Artistic
Adaptability	Technological

Logic is the character's ability to think in a rational, non-emotional manner, solving problems by the application of step by step procedures and deduction. Logical characters usually attempt to make objective observations when analyzing the world.

Discipline is a measure of the character's ability to perform tasks which are unpleasant, boring, repetitious, or painful, in order to achieve long term goals. It also affects how they organize their actions and thoughts, allowing them to stick to rules they have set for themselves, or that were set down by others. People with lots of discipline learn well in classroom situations.

Empathy is a measure of the character's ability to perceive another's emotions, point of view, or way of perceiving the world. By understanding the emotional reactions of others they can comfort, manipulate, scare, or hurt others with their words and actions more easily. Empathy can also help someone realize when they themselves are being manipulated in this way.

Insight is the ability to make leaps of reasoning or understanding about the universe without following a methodical step by step procedure to get there. It is sometimes referred to as intuition, and is often higher in characters with a low Logic rating. Insight is often highly subjective in its nature.

Passion is a measure of the character's ability to get excited about what they encounter in life. Low passion shows a tendency towards apathy, high passion a tendency towards fanaticism.

Adaptability is the measure of how well the character can benefit from direct experience, learning in a hands-on manner instead of a more disciplined, repetitive, manner. It also affects their ability to bounce back from adversity and to fit in when dealing with new situations.

“That Which Exists is Allowed.”
- John Lilly, *The Center of the Cyclone*

I Have Come To Tell You That You Are Free!

About this time it must be running thru nearly everyone's mind that I have failed to explain exactly how many points you can put into your attributes and your aspects. I've mentioned the standard value ranges, and explained what the terms we are using mean, and how they affect the character to some extent, but not how you get points in these items.

Its time to introduce to you the big secret : You can put in any number you want (within the range limits of your character's race). You can have as many high or low attributes as you wish, in any combination you wish. You can even choose to put a 1 in everything, or a 20 in everything. You are free to let your imagination and character concept decide what is appropriate for your character.

GM's who are reading this for the first time can now take a few moments to recover from falling on the floor, brush off their clothes, take a deep breathe and try to relax. Feel free to re-read this section in disbelief.

Okay? Now, let's get back to what we mean. Attributes and Aspects, except for the racial limits, are open to the players to fill in as they please. Some players may use this as a way to take advantage of the design system, believing that they can get something for nothing, and building world stomping monsters or indestructible super beings from other worlds in the process. Others will sit as confused as you are, opening and shutting their mouths saying “But... but, how do I know which numbers to use.” They will have to really think about this concept deeply, and what it means to their character idea.



Now does this mean that I've thrown game balance out the window? No. The system has a balancing tool in place (explained in the next section) that will ensure that anyone who horribly abuses the mechanic's open design concepts will get their just rewards. It just doesn't affect character construction. Instead it affects the character once it's in play.

So, let the player fill in any number within the acceptable ranges that they want on their character sheet, and which they feel is important to their concept. The system can and will deal with the problems that might occur. Note that, in my experience, 75% of players who are given a system like this will not really abuse it as badly as you might think. Many will not abuse it at all but feel a great burden lifted, since they won't have to sit around and do a whole lot of math to figure out how many points they have to spend in each attribute, or whether there are going to have enough points in an arbitrary point pool to build the character they imagine, or try to decide exactly where they will have to cheat their concept in order to follow the mathematics. Unless someone wants a character that can bench press tanks for the fun of it while reading the morning paper, the mechanics should not have any problems with the characters attributes and aspects.



Cosmic Trigger Explained:

The Cosmic Trigger is the name for the mechanic which balances the open nature of the Attribute and Aspects system. Its based on the concepts of Synchronicity (you knew we had to get around to that) and *The Quantum Inseparability Principle (QUIP)*.

Once a player has fully worked out their character's details you'll notice a space on the character sheet marked for their Cosmic Trigger. A number goes in here, which we determine in this manner:

- First: The player finds out the game's Quantum Factor, set by the GM and the excitement scale. This is between 140 and 240.
- Second: The Player adds together the numbers that they wrote down for ranks in their Attributes and Aspects. (Not the Percentile, the Ranks!)
- Third: If this total is Equal to or less than the Quantum Factor, then they enter a simple '00' on their character sheet under Cosmic Trigger (that's two Zeroes, as in the double zero rolled with percentile dice to mean 100). They are done.
- Fourth: If the total is greater than the Quantum Factor then the player subtracts the Factor from their total.
- Fifth: Take this revised amount and divide it by 5. Round Up to the Nearest Integer. That means if the total divided by 5 ends up with a remainder, like when dividing 12 by 5 (= 2.4) round it to a value of 3.
- Sixth: Subtract this from a value of 100, and enter the result into the character sheet's Cosmic Trigger value.
- Seventh: Take the character's positive and negative traits. Subtract the negative from the positive. If this value is 0 it has no effect. Otherwise divide this by 10 and apply it to the Cosmic Trigger. If it's positive, minus it from the Trigger value, if it's negative add it to the total, but not above a Cosmic Trigger of 100.

OPTIONAL RULE : Cherry Method #1

Alexander Cherry suggests a different formula to help out characters with low Attributes:

$$100 - ((\text{Attributes} + \text{Aspects}) - \text{QF}) / 5 - ((\text{Positive Traits} - \text{Negative Traits}) / 10).$$

If result is over 100 round down to 100.

Now, the Cosmic Trigger represents part of the balance in the system. Whenever a player makes a roll for their character and rolls the number of their Cosmic Trigger or higher on the percentile dice they will NOT succeed at what they are trying to do, AND will Critically Fail, meaning the GM can declare that something particularly nasty happens to their character. Critical failures are painful, embarrassing, inconvenient, expensive, damaging and sometimes even fatal.

If defending in combat it could mean that your opponent not only succeeded but does twice as much damage, or that no matter what the damage rolls says, it knocks the character unconscious. It might even be an instant kill, as the character's spine is shattered or some other ghastly, fatal, result. GMs should try to vary the effects. Its no fun if they're always the same. Remember, as the representative of the universe and its need to balance all the advantages a character has started with, the GM has complete fiat control over the results.

If attacking in combat, it's a miss that usually creates lasting problems. If using a gun, it could have jammed badly and need to be repaired by a gunsmith. If using a hand weapon, like a sword, perhaps you've hit something, like a brick wall, that has snapped the blade off. If you're fighting on a rooftop, you may have misjudged your footing and fallen over the edge! If you're using your hands in martial arts you may have punched a wall, and will have to roll damage against that hand as if you had punched yourself, possibly breaking your hand.

In a non-contested situation cosmic triggers are less devastating but still nasty. Perhaps the character hits a telephone pole while driving, or slips on a wet floor and sprains an ankle, or accidentally sets fire to their kitchen while making dinner for the boss, or breaks the leg of their dance partner in the middle of the big contest, or manages to do their job so badly that they're fired, etc.

Cosmic Trigger is why bad things happen to "Good" or "Great" People. People that were born rich, famous, extremely gifted, or talented beyond all other mortal men, and then get hit by a streetcar. To the characters, there is no visible cause and effect - it's a Meta-game activity caused by the player's design of their character.

Now, players should not be discouraged by this. Remember that you're taking a gamble even if your character is not exceptional. A result of '00' on the dice still means a cosmic trigger occurs no matter who rolls it. No one can escape the reality of Chaos Theory and Probability by playing it safe all the time, so don't build your character to avoid the trigger, just be willing to accept that with greater ability comes greater risks. And remember that there is no way in the game to ever improve your cosmic trigger value. You cannot change it once play begins, not thru experience, nor even if your attributes or aspects change. Technically your character doesn't even know they have it. Their luck just seems to go bad now and then, despite their advantages in life.

A Good GM does not call for dice rolls for everyday activities. Dice rolls should be used when there is a desired element of risk in the activity, or Triggers become abusive.

Ms should try to avoid killing characters for a single bad roll under the Cosmic Trigger rule. Dead characters can't do anything, and make for boring games. Its OK to do this once in a while, so players respect the cosmic trigger, but you shouldn't make it a regular event. Its more fun to use the cosmic trigger to create more problems for the characters, which the players have to figure out how to deal with.

GMs should also remember that Game Manager played characters also have a Cosmic Trigger, and sometimes this will be the reason why a master villain does something stupid (having failed a logic roll that triggered the result) or has a run of bad luck when they fight the heroes.

Cosmic Trigger should not be used to introduce long term plot complications, unless the character has a high Synchronicity to justify it..

Important Note: Players should understand that Character growth and improvement is primarily thru skill increases. Aspects should never be increased during the game, and Attributes can only be raised thru use of hard-won Destiny Points (with GM permission), extraordinary events, or if present by encounters with magic. They will be playing a full grown adult character in most cases at start and their attributes will remain stable for most of the game, unless they might go down because of injury.

I Get Excited! I Just Can't Hide It!

The excitement scale in Cosmic Synchronicity is used by the GM to set the Quantum Factor that all player characters use in the setting. After that they have to take negative traits to balance off positive trait points (in the case of traits) or live with an increased cosmic trigger (in the case of the attributes and aspects). Remember that players cannot change their attributes and aspects, or buy a positive trait, or gain points for a negative trait developed during play, after the game begins - this system is entirely for the character creation process. Changes that occur to characters during actual play (gained or lost attributes, traits, and aspects) do not affect the Cosmic Trigger. The scale basically runs as follows:

Excitement Scale	Quantum Factor
Nursery Tale	140
Soap Opera	160
Drama	180
High Adventure	200
Epic	220
Mythic	240

The GM, of course, has the right to assign some traits as "Free" in a particular setting, just like Free skills, and these traits are then valued at 0 and do not affect the Cosmic Trigger.

Extra Coconuts & Other Splendors:



Now that we've covered the Attribute, Aspect and Cosmic Trigger concepts, we head into the wilds of number crunching to produce some *Derived Facts*. These facts are derived from Aspects and Attributes, and remain true so long as Aspects and Attributes remain unchanged. If a permanent change occurs then they must be recalculated. Don't worry, there's no higher math here and you're allowed to use a calculator or a spreadsheet.

Allure: *Spirit + Passion + Symmetry + Fame + Power*. Total is viewed as a Percentage value.

Allure is the measurement of the character's ability to project sensuality and sex appeal to others, in short, to make themselves desirable. It comes across in a revealing pose, an enticing look, a sensual walk, or a subtle motion. Accompanied by persuasive conversation, and/or revealing clothing, this can, when successful, allow the character to persuade others to do favors for them, get physically involved with them, or spend time with them. Allure can be defended against (if such a defense is desired) by a roll against Spirit.

Fame should only be applied if the target has successfully recognized the character. It should not be applied at all if the alluring character is outside their normal area, and would not be recognized by anyone involved.

Allure is reduced by half when dealing with someone of the wrong sexual persuasion, and is impossible if they are violently of the wrong sexual persuasion (ex: a person that hates homosexuality being picked up by someone of the same sex). On the other hand, if the player presents a credible line of conversation and interplay with the other character they are using allure on, the GM can give them a bonus, reducing the defending character's Spirit by 5 ranks for the percentile roll (a -20%) or by changing the attribute multiplier by one rank (that is, multiplying the Spirit by 3 instead of 4 to produce the chance of success) whichever is the GMs preferred method.

Intimidate: *Body + Passion + Toughness + Spirit + Empathy*. Total is viewed as a Percentage.

This is the measurement of the character's ability to force others to comply with their desires, by convincing people that they can, or will, cause them harm. It can be used to get someone to back off in a potentially violent situation, or run away, or even to appease the intimidating character, as long as the appeasement does little harm (for example, handing over a wallet).

If the intimidating character has just performed a violent act, like breaking some furniture or inflicting harm on someone else, the GM may give them a bonus, reducing the defender's defense by 5 ranks (20%). Defense against this ability requires a Spirit roll. Note that traits that enhance defenses against fear effects apply against intimidation. Only one attempt to intimidate can be applied in a situation. If it fails it cannot be tried successfully again.

Initiative : *Coordination + Trait Modifiers*

This is added to a d20 roll to determine who goes first in combat. It normally is equal to the character's Coordination, but is listed separately because it can be modified by some traits. A number of Alternative Initiative Systems are included in the *Tinkering With Reality* section of the book to suit specific GM style, genre, and the level of complexity desired when portraying combat situations.

Healing Rate : *(Health + Spirit)/10* Rounded Up

This is how much your body will heal with rest and nourishment overnight. Losses to Health from Fatigue do not affect the value, but permanent attribute losses do. Injuries are expressed in Mortality points, and this rate is the number of Mortality points the character heals in a night. The player can apply them any way they wish to wounded areas.

Jumping: *(Coordination + Body + Health)/6* Round up to nearest integer.

This is the number of feet that the character can move in a broad jump or straight upwards.

Leaping: *(Coordination + Body)/2* Round up to the nearest integer.

This is the number of feet that a character can cover with a running leap, across or up.

Running: *(Coordination + Health)/2* Rounded up to nearest integer. Cannot be less than 1.

This measures how fast a character can Sprint on an unimpeded open flat terrain in good weather, unburdened, with no obstacles and minimal wind resistance in Miles Per Hour (MPH). If a character has skill in track and field, they can add 1 point for each 5 ranks. (Thus a maximum running speed of 24 MPH is possible under this scale).

Using Roller-skates and being skilled in the use of such should also add +2 MPH speed for every 5 ranks. Ice skates (on proper ice of course) adds +3 MPH speed for every 5 Ranks.

Optional Rule: Reality Tweak #1

Yes, we know that Olympic Runners do not manage 24 MPH speeds. It's just that the average MPH running speed becomes a problem under a 1-20 scale.

If you want a more realistic figure then use:

$(\text{Coordination} + \text{Health}) / 3$

But continue to give the extra MPH for being trained in Track and Field, etc.

When traveling downhill add +2 MPH to all characters, +4 MPH if they are using Roller-Skates (beyond the usual modifier for skates).

To reduce calculations the following table gives the distances that can be covered in a 6 second combat round, first, if the character is sprinting at or near full running speed in optimum conditions and, second, if the character is taking evasive actions, avoiding obstacles and potential attacks, under combat conditions.

MPH	Optimum Yards	Combat Yards
1	3	2
2	6	3
3	9	5
4	12	6
5	15	8
6	18	9
7	21	11
8	24	12
9	27	14
10	30	15
11	33	17
12	36	18
13	39	20
14	42	21
15	45	23
16	48	24
17	51	26
18	54	27
19	57	29
20	60	30



A character that is moving on stairs, going up hill, traveling across rough terrain, or is carrying at or above their maximum weight capacity can only move at ½ their maximum MPH speed.

If you are using the *Blood & Chocolate* Combat Initiative System in the optional modules section (Tinkering With Reality) and are running a combat, then you should be using the running table included with that system instead of the one above.



Yes, we know that the above system allows a “generic” or “average” character movement speeds that seem rather on the high end. Feel free to write up a “Murphy’s Rules” piece and submit it to Pyramid Magazine.

Not Go Gentle

*Do not go gentle into that good night:
Rage, rage against the dying light.
- Dylan Thomas*

Mortality is a calculated fact, rating of the life of the character in terms of injury and wounds. It is a game mechanic, and bears no equivalent measure in life as we know it, but it is vital in determining if a character is alive, dead or somewhere in-between, and, if they are in-between, their condition in various ways.

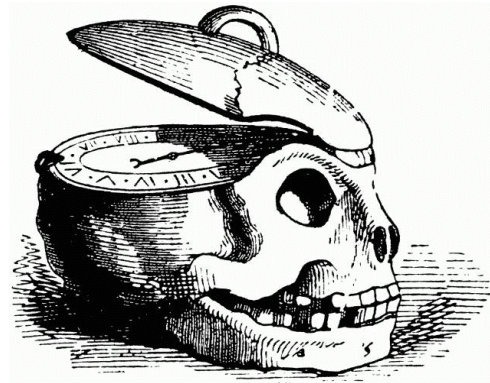
The formula for base Mortality is: $(Body + Health + Spirit) * 4$

This number is used to calculate the amount of damage each of the major body areas can survive (their individual mortality), as a percentage of the base number :

Each Limb	25%
Torso	50%
Head	25%

Since non-human characters are possible in some settings, the following extra body areas are also included:

Tail	10%
Wing	15%



When damage is inflicted the wounds are applied to a specific body location, not the overall Mortality Base (which is simply a calculation tool).

Any limb that receives half or more of its mortality score in damage is crippled until healed. If the wound is equal to all of that body area's mortality then it is destroyed (severed, crushed or otherwise beyond repair). Also if first aid or some other form of healing is not applied then they will continue to bleed from the wound, and will die after as many minutes pass as they have Health Points. A character with a severed limb must also make a *Spirit* roll at the start of each round afterwards or fall unconscious from the pain (unless they are taking some sort of pain killer or have a trait that deals with this in some way).

If the Head receives half of its mortality score in damage the character is unconscious. If they take wounds equal to or greater than the mortality value in their head, then they are dead, dead, Dead! Sadistic GMs may now do a victory jig, waving the character sheet above their heads like a deflated football.

If the Torso receives half of its mortality score, then the character is suffering from one or more broken ribs, etc., and will be at -5 ranks to their Attributes, Aspects and Skills for all percentage rolls until they are healed. Pain killing drugs can be applied, reducing this to a -3 Ranks while they are in effect. If the Torso receives all of its mortality score in damage they no longer have to worry about this, as they are now dead, dead, Dead!

Now, it is possible to further divide the body, or to divide it in a more “realistic” method. Its just that from experience with dozens of games over the years we discovered that extreme detail, for us, was unnecessary, but that a little detail (such as we use) was useful in getting a mental view of what is going on within the game when combat and other body damaging results occur.

Optional Rule : Simple Mortality

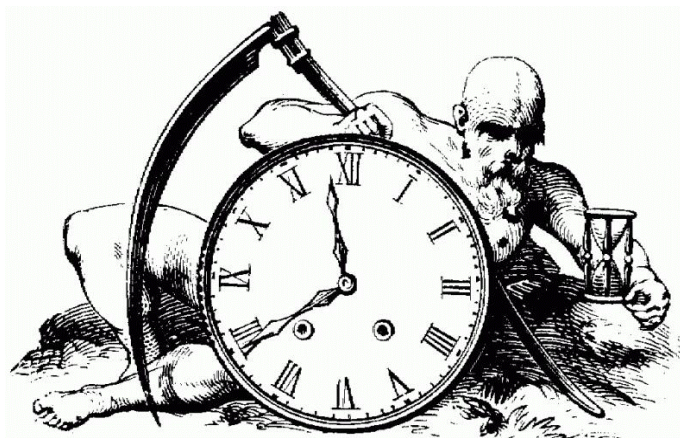
This replaces the usual method of dividing up the body into various locales for tracking damage, a throwback to the “old days” of gaming when folks had a single damage pool to track, and when you took enough damage to match it you were dead.

Simply apply damage to the Mortality total (after armor, toughness etc is subtracted from it). If the damage being inflicted is equal or greater than 10% of the character’s Mortality then the player must make a percentile roll vs their HEALTH * 5 or SPIRIT * 5 (which ever attribute has the LOWER ranking) or they are knocked unconscious.

Damage location rolls are not used (as they are in the normal combat system) and generally you shouldn’t use bleeding rolls or other systems that need extra tracking.

This takes some of the color and excitement out of combat and damage, leaving it a bit bland, but sometimes that is necessary to keep players from engaging in too much combat when you want to run a low combat game.

Its other advantage is that it produces less paperwork during a game session, for those who worry about such things.



The Dreaded Neurological Army

Next on our agenda, is dealing with the skills for your character. Skills are measured in Ranks, just like Attributes and Aspects. Just like Attributes and Aspects they have a maximum score of 20 ranks each. Characters are limited in how much they can know, for in an infinite universe there is an infinite number of things to know and to be skilled in; and in a cosmos of numerous universes your brain would melt if you tried to know everything, brains being finite, after all.

The actual skill lists that you have to choose from are usually set up by your GM, or found in the World Setting book they are using. Skills will always break skills down into 6 categories, which each draw from one of your Aspects.

Your GM also has to provide you with a Culture/Setting Complexity Value. Basically it's a number between 1 and 5 used to calculate the total number of skill ranks your character has in each category. The CV can vary based on the culture and the technology levels of the setting, and sometimes the Whim of the GM. Generally, the longer the skill lists, the higher the number. Exactly how it is calculated is dealt with in the GM's section. In our examples it's listed as *CV*.

For each category we use a simple Letter code (A thru F) and calculate as follows:

Letter	Skill Types	Formula
A	Academic & Scientific	Mind + (Logic * CV)
B	Athletics & Physical	Mind + (Discipline * CV)
C	Social	Mind + (Empathy * CV)
D	Occult & Religious	Mind + (Insight * CV)
E	Artistic	Mind + (Passion * CV)
F	Technological	Mind + (Adaptability * CV)

This represents the skills a character naturally picks up as they go through life, because of talent or natural interest. Beyond this you have 75 skill ranks to place into any one of these categories you want. This represents the focus of your character's training/education. There are some skills which just about everyone picks up, so all characters Get 5 Free Ranks in Unarmed Combat, Bludgeon Weapons, Thrown Weapons, Climbing, Area Familiarity (Applies to Where They Live), And 10 Free Ranks in Their Native Language and Culture.

Each point is used to buy one rank in a skill. If you want your character to have 20 ranks in chemistry, you have to spend 20 points for it. Skill ranks are used to produce a percentile success rate, by multiplying the skill's rank by a value of 5 (Not 4, like in Attributes and Aspects, but 5!) So a character with 1 rank in a skill has 5%, and a character with 20 ranks has 100%

Generally the meaning of skill ranks in verbal terms is as follows:

Ranks	Description
1-4	Beginner/Dabbler
5-8	Amateur/Student
9-12	Competent/Functional
13-16	Professional
17-18	Adept
19-20	Expert

A character must be at least competent for a skill to be a regular source of income, and they must be professional if that skill is their major source of income. The exception is if the character comes from a culture/world where the technology ranking limits the maximum, in which case and then the chart above does not apply.

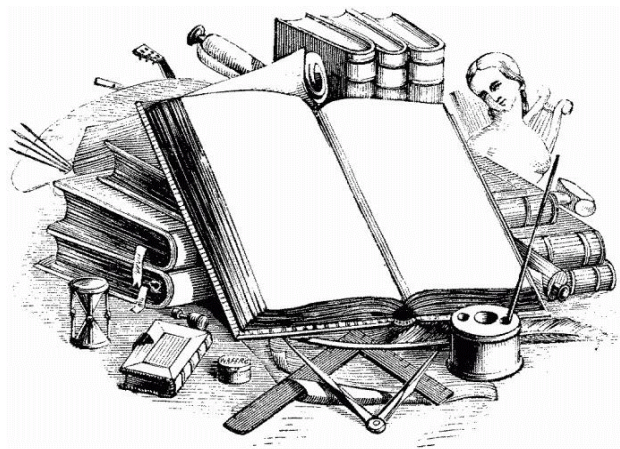
A character who desires to act as a teacher is required to have a Teaching skill, or to have the skill they plan on teaching to others at Professional Ranking. They can only teach up to Teaching Skill rank or that of the skill they are teaching but not beyond their own skill of what is being taught..

In some cases and World Settings, the GM may declare that certain skills can not be learned until you have mastered others (example: To get Brain Surgery you might need training in Physician, Surgery, Anatomy and First Aid).

Details on how to determine the CV of a setting can be found in the section of this book on game settings and their design.

Optional Rule : Cherry Method #2

Alexander Cherry uses a house rule to allow the moving of Skill Points from one category to another at a cost of 2:1 even from the 75 specialization points.



The Trick Top Hat

Traits are the positive and negative abilities that are not part of the basic attributes, aspects, skills or calculated facts about a character. Everyone has a few. Some have many. They help round out a character to make them more interesting.

A Positive trait is one that gives the character an advantage within the context of the game, whereas a Negative Trait is one that restricts their action or works against them in the game. Being Ambidextrous is generally considered a beneficial thing, whereas being blind is usually considered a detrimental or limiting thing.

The Trait system is used as a catch-all for all those things that aren't covered under the rest of the system, but which need to be included. Traits are another way that you can customize a world setting, since traits can include social, magical, physical, mental and even psychologically oriented limitations and advantages, which players can use to carve out their character ideas.



Traits are valued roughly from 1 to 25. A player chooses the positive and negative traits that fit their character concept and design. They should add up their positive traits into a total and subtract from this the negative traits. If resulting number is 0, then they are in perfect balance.

If the result is positive, that is they have more positive traits then negative, then they take the total, divide it by 10 (rounding up) and the resulting value is subtracted from their cosmic trigger. Thus a character with a +12 total would have a modifier of 2 to their cosmic trigger, which then lowers their Cosmic Trigger (say from 00 to 98) increasing their risk of triggering.

Rarely, and miraculously, the result may be negative, that is the character has more negative traits than positive ones. In this case, the character's Cosmic Trigger goes up in the same way (example a -1 thru -10 total would modify their trigger from 98 to 99). However, it can never go above 100.

Once the game starts, players can not use points to gain positive traits, or even get new positive traits if they acquire negative traits. New positive and negative traits are purely the results of play, rewards and problems created by the character's actions, and not part of Cosmic Trigger balance (unless the GM specifically designs something with a Cosmic Trigger Modifier, like a magical device).

A few standard traits (positive and negative) will also stand as a good example to you in regards to pricing traits and the sort of things that go into traits. These are a sample, the GM can and should create lots of additional traits that are specific to their game world. Additionally players can suggest traits that neither we nor the GM have thought of. If they are appropriate, the GM should figure a point value for them.

To determine a point value for a new trait, besides comparing it to other traits, take into consideration:

Does This Trait Help in Conflict Situations? Combat traits should usually be medium ranged in value, and you should make sure you're not just giving a different name to an existing trait.

Does This Trait Help in Social Situations? For most people life is a social activity, and things like contacts are what help us as we move thru life. So do things like social status, publicity, titles, labels and social perks. Sometimes its not what you know, but who you know, or who you get to know along the way. Just make sure that traits aren't duplicating the effects of the Fame or Wealth attributes directly. However, you might decide that a contact of a particular type is more valuable than an ordinary contact, and needs a separate trait (ex: Having a famous movie star as a friend from one's college days). Or a trait that costs more could give a Group of Contacts one can call on (ex: Member of a very Large Family). Social positive traits should range from about 1 to 10 points, with 10 being something like Diplomatic Immunity.

Does This Trait Restrict The Character's Actions? A trait that restricts is usually a negative trait. For example if the character has a code of honor that affects their decision making process (I must pay my debts) or their combat activity (I can't attack him from behind) then it would make a good solid negative trait.

Does This Trait Give New Possible Actions To The Character? The more options that a character gets from a trait the more valuable it should be.

Does This Trait Come Into Play Constantly, Daily, or Only in Special Cases? Having a trait that only comes up for use once in a blue moon (ex: I have an Uncle in San Francisco who would help me out if I went there for a visit. But if the game is set in Boston, and unlikely to involve regular trips to the west coast, then the Uncle won't come into play often. He would be a low cost contact, instead of say a 'Close Contact' who lets you stay with him and hide out all the time, and will lend you money if your car breaks down and you can't afford to repair it). The same would be true with a magic or physical trait - being able to Restore The Dead to Life could be a tremendously powerful ability if one could do it at will, and probably above the usual 25 point limit. But being able to raise the Dead to Life for an hour (so they can tie up loose ends they left behind) would be nowhere near as powerful, nor would being able to Raise The Dead to Life by performing a special complex ritual successfully only at their grave on the thirteenth full moon since their death.

Does This Trait Require the Taking of an Additional Skill to Make it Useful? If one or more skills are needed to make the trait useful, you should reduce the cost of the trait. Example: If in the world setting you decide that to become a wizard one needs a special trait like "Born the Seventh Son of a Seventh Son" but that to make use of this one must learn the occult magical skills of Summoning, Visualization, and Conjunction, then it should be a fairly inexpensive trait (3 to 5 points) since the player will need a high power attribute and insight aspect, and must either take lower skills and attributes elsewhere or increase their chance for a cosmic trigger.

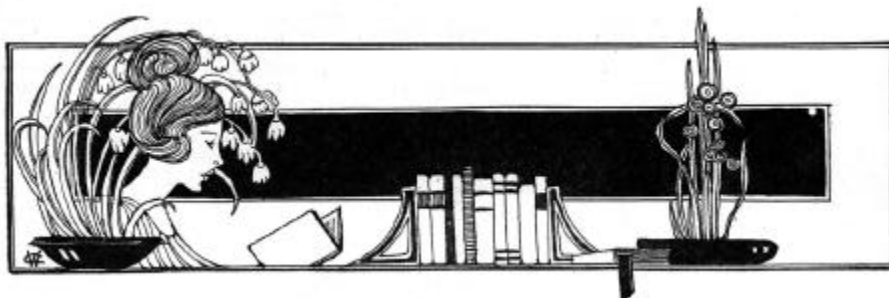
Does This Trait Actually Help You as GM in Setting Up a Plot? If a trait gives you as GM a way to tie in some specific plot ideas, or creates a new plot you can use to make things more interesting for the players, then it may be a low cost positive trait or a negative trait. After all, the additional plots will be ones the player can't avoid. An example would be: Searching For Biological Parent - the character was adopted and has a personal desire to know who their mother really was. They spend time researching and looking for her. They might encounter other plots along the way, or perhaps their birth mother had a secret, which she was hiding by giving away her child, and that will change the character's life when discovered ("You are actually the son of the King").

Is this Trait actually useful, or simply fun? Fun traits that have no practical use, or only limited uses, should be cheap and easy to get. An example would be the Telephone Precognition trait listed below.

Will The Trait unbalance the Campaign when compared to existing Characters and planned plots? If you are running a game setting where, for example, having access to millions of dollars at a moment's notice, or being able to fly like a bird, is something that no one (or only a handful of people) should be able to do, then you should make sure that such traits are difficult or impossible for characters to get. If you're running a game that's supposed to be a pure mystery plot, having characters that can read minds would be unbalancing, as they could find out who did what, and how, too quickly and easily.

Does This Trait Let a Character Avoid Getting A Worse Cosmic Trigger? These are the most unbalancing traits, and should be high priced or avoided in the system entirely. Remember that the cosmic trigger is the major balance tool that a GM/designer actually has in the mechanic. Take away its power and you can end up with a very lopsided game, where one player is a lonely janitor, and another is capable of flying faster than a speeding bullet and lifting ocean liners with their bare hands. Think of balance based on the group of players, not just the individual.

Does The Trait Actually Fit in the Setting? If you're running a 1920s historic campaign where the characters are Federal Agents trying to shut down Al Capone, it wouldn't make sense that one of them is an alien from mars who can teleport, or that one of them is a talking unicorn. Of course if you are running multiple worlds, it might be fun to have the players from the SF campaign accidentally end up in the 1920s, where they have to figure out how to repair their time machine/travel machine while adapting to the culture (and *Cosmic Synchronicity* is designed to deal with this perfectly in its flexible design). But you, as GM, should decide exactly what the setting is about and what kind of things are in it. Feel free to veto ideas that don't fit your vision.



Positive Trait Examples:

Ambidextrous [2] An Ambidextrous character can use either hand equally for all functions, and can use both hands at the same time. It gives the character a greater than human Coordination Range, giving them a +1 to their potential (or 21 total for a normal human). An Ambidextrous character gets an extra defensive action in combat situations where they can parry or block, but does not get an extra dodge.

Contact [1] A contact is a person the character knows, thru their professional, personal or family life, who can act as an occasional source of information, assistance or refuge. The nature of the relationship and some idea of the person must be described in the process of taking this trait. Player characters do not have to pay for other player characters as contacts (unless the characters are being played by the same player). More points may be charged for a contact that will appear more often within the game, or who can provide greater or more specialized assistance.

Disease Resistant [2] The character gets an extra +5 ranks to HEALTH for all rolls to avoid diseases when encountered.

Fast Metabolism [3] The character gets a +5 to their Initiative and +1 to their Running Speed. This cannot be take in conjunction with other traits that alter Initiative.

Fear Resistant [5] The Character gets +4 Ranks to their SPIRIT for rolls against fear, and fear associated effects.

Greater Than Normal Human Size [10] This is used to develop a person of gigantic proportions, or a non-human such as a centaur. Each rank of this doubles the character's mass (i.e. body weight), making them stronger and tougher, but easier to be hit with ranged weapon attacks. They may be taller, wider or both. It gives the character +2 lbs to the lift values for each point of BODY that they possess. So, for example, a character with a 10 BODY can easily lift 70lbs instead of only 50lbs. Also, they will not be knocked prone when they get a result of 'Stunned' in combat, and they get +20 to their Mortality Point base value. On the other hand, opponents using ranged attacks get +2 Perception ranks to target them, and +2 skill ranks on their chance to hit) Characters with this trait must eat larger meals, 1.5 times as much as a normal human. This trait can be taken multiple times, if the GM believes it fits the concept that is presented. When taken in multiples the numbers compound. Taken twice a character gets 4 times their normal mass, +40 Mortality, +4 lbs to the normal lift values of BODY, and gives +4 to ranged attackers Perception and skill ranks.

Hard Boiled [5] A character with this trait is conditioned to combat in some way, or has been genetically modified, or is of a race that is naturally tougher. A Hard Boiled Character can make their Toughness higher than 20 points, up to a limit of 25.

Hard To Kill [5] There is something about the character that helps prevent their death from physical wounds. Perhaps they have redundant body systems, or unusually thick bones. Or maybe their body muscle density is just a little thicker than your average person, or their vital organs are not quite in the right places. Perhaps they're not even human. However you define it, it means the character has more mortality points than the normal human calculations produce. For each time this trait is taken add 20 mortality points to their base Mortality.

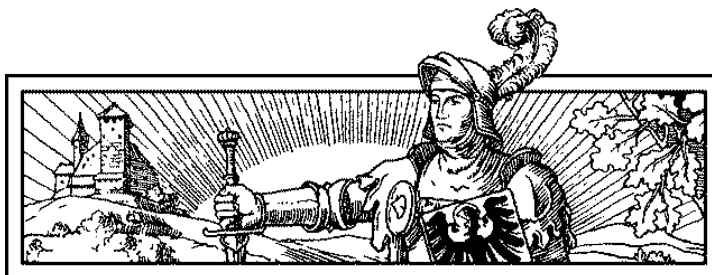
Impressive Weapon Techniques [10] This can only be taken by a character with at least 13 ranks in a hand weapon skill, like sword, or a muscle powered ranged weapon skill, like bow or sling. It only applies to that specific weapon. Instead of using a d10 for damage rolls with these weapons the character uses a d20. It does not work with guns, other weapons that do not depend on the character's muscles to inflict damaging force, or weapons which already use a d20.

Multi-Lingual Upbringing [3] You grew up in a household where your parents or guardians spoke more than one language frequently. As such you get to add +2 to the world CV applied to Empathy when generating your Social Skills Total. You must take at least one additional language beyond your native tongue.

Photographic Memory [10] You don't just absorb knowledge from the written word but memorize it almost as fast as you read it, permanently etching its contents within your brain. This gives you a +2 to the normal World CV for the skill pool calculations based on Logic, Insight and Adaptability to determine the number of skill ranks you have in each of these categories (Academic/Scientific, Occult, and Technological). It does not help with social or artistic skills directly. It also makes it easier to learn in classroom situations (reducing by 10 hours time needed to learn). In some settings this may require a special race, or another trait, to allow you to take this trait - check with your GM.

Telephone Precognition [1] A character with this trait will always know that the telephone is going to ring and who is on the other end about a minute before it happens. If the person calling is someone they don't know by name, they will have an identifier like a "Salesman" or "Bill Collector". It does not tell them where the person is calling from or why.

Unarmed Combat Enhancement [10] This can only be taken by a character that has at least 13 ranks in the Unarmed Combat Skill. Whenever they use their Unarmed Combat skill, instead of the using the usual d10 for a damage die, they use a d20. This represents a number of possible sources: Specialized Martial Arts Training, Enhanced Strike Strength, Artificially reinforced bones and muscles, etc.



Negative Trait Examples:

Bad Back [3] The character has received permanent injury, or has a genetically defective backbone structure, that reduces their ability to lift and carry. They minus 2 lbs from the normal multipliers to Body to determine their maximum lift and carrying capacity. It does not reduce the effectiveness of Body for inflicting damage, since that is not based on the same body muscles.

Deafness [10] A character with this trait cannot make any hearing Perception rolls successfully, and it costs twice as many skill ranks for them to learn all language skills (except Lip Reading or Sign Language). They cannot learn Ventriloquism, Animal Noises or Voice Mimicry.

Delusional [5] The character sees things that are not there, hallucinates regularly, or has a very strong, obviously false, belief that controls their actions regularly (“But I really am the King of the Dwarves... I’m Just a very Tall Dwarf!”). Too many delusional characters in a single party can be detrimental, so its best to only allow one or two.

Dyslexic [7] A character with this trait has difficulty learning thru written sources and gets a -1 to World CV for calculating skill ranks associated with Logic, Insight and Adaptability at start. They also are slower at learning in a classroom environment. *Cannot be taken with Photographic Memory.*

Easily Frightened [5] A character with this trait gets a -4 ranks to SPIRIT for all fear effects.

Minority Group Member [5] A character with this trait is a member of a minority population (religion, sex, race, political group, handicapped, species etc.) that is discriminated against in some way by the majority population (housing, jobs, within the courts, ostracized socially, segregated etc.)

Overdeveloped Sense of Vengeance [5] A character with this trait will either have, or quickly develop, a need to seek revenge against an enemy, scheming and planning to ruin or kill them in their spare time. Once offended they will not stop. Even Logic will fail if vengeance appears to be at hand. If they have a particular enemy at start, and that enemy is, or controls, an organization with a lot of social, political, or financial power, then this trait is worth 10 points, since it includes a complex plot.

Smaller Than Normal Human Size [10] This is used to properly create children, dwarves, and others that are of a greatly reduced height or mass, and can be taken multiple times. It reduces the character’s mass (body weight) by half, gives them a -1 lbs to their ability to Lift and carry with their BODY (but not below a value of 1), and causes all combat blows that do damage to the Torso or Head to stun them and knock them prone. They also get a -20 to their base Mortality value. On the other hand, attackers with ranged weapons receive a penalty of -2 ranks to their Perception and weapons skills (Small targets are harder to hit). They eat less at each meal (about half as much) but need 4 such meals a day to maintain their body’s normal metabolism and temperature. It can be argued that beings smaller than normal human size should have a lower attribute range, but that is a matter of character design choice and world setting considerations.

Dance of The Sugar Plum Neurons

One of the many things that folks like to do with their characters is watch them to get better at what they do (what we refer to at times as Growth). There are two ways for a character to learn things: Doing Them and Studying Them.

Whenever a character successfully uses a skill that is not yet at 20 ranks, their player should note this on a piece of scrap paper. At the end of the game session they get to make a roll against that skill, subtracting the character's Adaptability ranks from skill's percentile, but never dropping the chance of 'success' below 1%. If they roll Higher than their percentile (i.e. they 'fail' the roll) then they get to increase the skill by 1 rank for knowledge gained in use of the skill. For once, and this is the exception to the rule, the Cosmic Trigger is ignored.

Example: The Character has a driving skill of 14 ranks. They have an Adaptability of 10. $14 * 5 = 70\%$ chance of success normally. $70 - 10 = 60\%$ for this roll. They then roll percentile. The roll is 65, over 60% by five points, and their skill improves by 1 rank. That's Learning By Doing. (Adaption Growth).

Learning by Studying requires a teacher or a study program (such as a book), and lots of time. This can be boring within a game context, so we have streamlined it, making it something that a character would generally do in their spare time. The time values are not 100% real world accurate, they are simply what is considered reasonable within the context of a game. Basically you figure out the character's training calculation:

For Academic/Scientific, Occult, and Technological Skills:

$$100 \text{ Hours} - (\text{Discipline Rank} + \text{Mind Rank} + \text{Skill Rank})$$

For Athletics/Physical, Artistic and Social Skills:

$$75 \text{ Hours} - (\text{Discipline Rank} + \text{Mind Rank} + \text{Skill Rank})$$

This gives how many hours must be spent to gain 1 more rank in a skill.

Sugar Plum Method : If a player's character has unused skill points in a category, and you are not using the Cherry Method #1 for calculations then you might allow the player to use one unused point at the same time they make a successful Adaption Growth Roll or completion of a Studying Rank Gain, so instead of increasing one rank in the skill they increase two (if the Skill is of the correct category and so long as it does not increase the Rank to more than 20). This continues until they have spent all their unused skill points from character creation.

The Heresy Hunt Begins....

You only have to roll dice when your GM tells you it is necessary. Rolling them otherwise will do you no good and they will count towards nothing. Its also usually best to roll your dice in such a way as they may be observed by the GM or at least one of the other players. This reduces the probability that you might read them incorrectly and make a mistake. And when the cat steals them or shoves them under the couch you'll have a better chance guessing where they got to when you go looking (and possibly some help in the search).

Personally, I also believe it reduces the odd chance that someone in the game might actually misread their dice on purpose, to avoid a Cosmic Trigger or to make sure that when they hit the villain he gets maximum damage because he deserves it in their mind. You roll the dice, you take your chance, and you let whatever powers that be decide their fate.

The Gm should only make you take up your dice and roll when your character is under stress, when there is sufficient doubt to the outcome, or when you have a significant cosmic trigger, and the GM is in the mood to be a bit nasty or believes that an event is important to the storyline. Sorry but if you have a cosmic trigger value of 90 or less then you should be made to roll the dice at least a few times each game session, even if all your character is doing is reading books in the library. You owe the Cosmos a chance to keep your life from getting boring!

To use a skill or attribute without opposition you roll percentile dice against it. You want to roll under the percentile value. *If you match it, you fail.* If you use a skill successfully and its rank is less than 20 you should note this somewhere, because it gives you a chance to improve the skill when character adaption growth rolls are handled. (Attributes and Aspects do not improve in this manner.)

A Opposed roll requires both parties to make rolls. If one succeeds and the other fails then the successful roll wins the contest. If both fail (and remember if you roll your cosmic trigger or higher you not only fail but fail critically!) then they both fail, and nothing happens. If both beat their percentile, then the lower roll wins. If they tie, then both must roll again immediately. This applies in skill vs skill, Attribute vs Attribute and Attribute vs skill.

GMs should remember that it is always easier to make a successful skill roll than it is an attribute roll - this is done on purpose, to emphasize the importance of training over basic physical abilities.

GMs should also remember to make fair and visible rolls in front of players when the dice roll the GM is making is vital to the player character. The concept of GMs hiding behind screens or books so that players can't see what they roll is a bad leftover from the early days of roleplaying games, intended to intimidate players and to allow GMs to disregard the results from the roll of the dice. Supporting characters, villains and antagonists are not sacred, nor are they immune to the effects of Cosmic Triggers. Forget the idea the GM is God, the GM is a Manager of the Game World, and should apply the rules consistently - inconsistent application of rules is the #1 cause of conflicts that suspend disbelief, and thus can ruin the roleplaying experience.

“Death To All Fanatics!”
 –Malaclypse The Younger

Hai, Sensai!

Combat, when you get down to it, is a complex series of opposed actions that requires a slightly more aggressively designed mechanic. Partly this is because it's a matter of life and death, partly because it can include a large number of people, and partly because many players feel a lot of detail is needed to properly represent the true, gritty, reality.

When I refer to combat, I'm referring to fisticuffs, sword fights, shootouts, and similar physical actions. Psychic, Magical and electronic combat (such as might occur in a SF setting) needs to be defined in the specific world base, and may have very different rules to fit each setting. Remember that being modular is one of the great tools that is built into *Cosmic Synchronicity*!

One way combat is more complex is that it's more closely timed. Actions in combat time are divided into what we call rounds, six second segments during which each character can act approximately once. The origin of our particular choice for the length of a round is based on the time needed to accurately draw, aim and fire an arrow from a bow. We used it in several designs, and found that it worked well. Among other things, it has the advantage that you get ten of these neat little rounds into a minute, making it easy to associate things in one's mind.



Not all actions in a combat round need to be directly associated with the combat. For example, perhaps someone is trying to read an incantation from a magic book, or maybe someone is trying to pick a lock, or someone else is running to get to the combat before their friends are beaten to a pulp.

Each character gets a single offensive action within a round. To even the score we also give each character at least one defensive action (dodging, parrying, or blocking). The offensive action can be traded for a second defensive action, or it can be traded for a misc. non-combat action (like picking that darn lock). Defensive actions cannot be traded for an extra action of any other type. Also, defensive actions can only be used if someone attacks the defending character.

Each round of a combat all participants roll 1d20 and add their Initiative Score (This is their Coordination plus any Trait Modifier Adds to Initiative). The GM counts down (from the highest score) and as each score comes up the player(s) with that score state their character's actions. A player can choose to hold their character's offensive action and use it to respond based upon the results of the combat as it progresses. Action can be held from one round to the next, becoming high action of the next round. However, a character can still only act once within a round - they just get to act first in this case (and don't have to roll initiative).

If two characters have the same point of action then they both take action at the exact same time, and the results will take place at the same time, unless one character purposely holds their action as above.

Attacking characters roll percentile against one of their weapon skills, or unarmed combat. Defending characters make a Coordination percentile roll to defend (dodging). If they have skill with acrobatics (dodging), with a weapon that can be used to parry (parrying), or with unarmed combat (blocking), they may use that percentile instead if they wish. Of course, a defensive roll is unnecessary if the attacker fails to make their percentile roll.

You cannot block or parry a thrown weapon, missile weapon or gunfire. Such attacks require a dodge maneuver, either with Coordination or skill in Acrobatics. If you must dodge before it is your turn to act offensively (or take a non-combat action) within a round you will be at -2 ranks to your chance of success for that action. This is due to the unexpected changes in position produced by the dodge. However, the modifier does not apply when you block or parry a normal attack, only when you dodge.

If the attacker and the defender both make their percentile rolls (without setting off their Cosmic Triggers) then the lower die roll will win the combat action.

If the attacker won then the attacker rolls the die appropriate to their weapon (usually a d10 for fists, kicks, and most muscle powered weapons, or a d20 for guns, crossbows and other powered weapons) and a second d10 at the same time.

This d10 (or d12) acts as a simple random targeting system for the attack as follows:

Roll	Targeting Result
1	Head
2	Left Arm
3	Right Arm
4, 11	Torso
5	Left Leg
6	Right Leg
7	Armor or Toughness [Or Disarm if using a Whip/Flail!]
8	Knocked Prone and/or Stunned For 1 Round
9	Knocked Unconscious
10, 12	Disarmed or Shield Destroyed or GM Special Choice!

If the result on the locale die is 1-6 or 11, then the target character's armor for the locale (if any) and Toughness are subtracted from the damage total and the remainder is applied to that body locale as a wound.

If the result is 7, and the character is wearing armor of any type, then the player must choose a locale and the armor in that locale is reduced to 0 (if the character is wearing layered armor in that locale, then the outermost effective layer is reduced to 0). If the Character has no armor then their Toughness is reduced by 1 point until it can be healed. (1 point of Toughness can normally be healed with a night's rest). If Toughness is reduced to 0, and the character has no remaining armor, then they are knocked prone and stunned for 1 round.

A character that is stunned can take no actions of any kind on for the remainder of the round they were struck, and the round afterwards. If a character is knocked prone they must spend their next offensive/misc. action to get up before they can take another offensive action unless they have a prone combat fighting skill to use. However, a prone combatant does get +4 ranks to defensive skill and attribute rolls against thrown weapons and missile weapons (they present a smaller target.)

If a '10' or '12' locale is rolled the GM controls the result. Its suggested that this can result in the loss of a shield or weapon, but the GM can insert any result they feel is reasonable to the situation, the attitude of the combatants, the type of weapons, and the lethality rate they want in their game. Of course, it should be a result that is beneficial to the attacker. Colorful is better!

Alternative Combat Mechanics are presented in the *Tinkering With Reality* section of game modules that you might want to consider beyond the basic one.

Combat is exhausting if it involves physical actions. If a character is making a lot of hand powered attacks, parries, blocks or dodges, then for every 5 rounds of combat they will have a temporary Fatigue Drain of 1 point on their Health. Fatigue reduces a character's ability to act defensively and offensively, costing them a -1 Rank to all attribute and skill rolls for each point of fatigue they've sustained. If their Fatigue loss equals or exceeds their Health they are too tired to move and must rest to recover the Fatigue, at a rate of 1 point for every minute of inaction.

The GM can also choose whether to run a simple combat or a complex one. A simple combat uses the rules outlined above. In a complex battle one may also use special maneuvers, aimed locations, and combat modifiers for various conditions. These are OPTIONAL concepts, and its up to the GM how complex they want to make things, and what they want to be use in their game. (Yes, the GM gets to define a lot of things in the game, but with great power comes great responsibility. The GM must give players full details about what rules, options and so forth they are using in their world setting. It's not fair to spring rules or limitations on players in the middle of actual play. Lay down the guidelines long before they build their characters and everyone will be happier).

My Name is Inigo Montoya...

A wide range of combat maneuvers can be possible within a game setting, depending on weapon, situation, character style and concept. Some of these need a separate skill to perform, some just use the existing skills to produce unusual results. The following are some basic examples, and should be expanded on as the GM chooses.

Blind Fighting: This requires a separate physical skill which can be used instead of the character's actual skill in Unarmed Combat or with a muscle powered hand weapon. It cannot be used for projectile weapons and guns. Basically it represents the ability to fight without using normal sight as the main source of targeting information. Instead the character uses hearing, scent, etc to perceive their opponents. Thus it eliminates the usual situation modifiers that reduce combat effectiveness in poor light, darkness, or if the characters are blinded or dealing with an invisible opponent (though it will not help the character let others know where an invisible opponent is). It only works at close quarters, so it also does not help with opponents at range.

In order to use blind fighting, a character must also have skill in the weapon or form of combat they are trying to use with it. Once a character has blind fighting they may use it with any combat skill they have. A character's skill with blind fighting may achieve a higher rank than a particular weapon skill, but when this happens the unmodified ranks of the weapon skill are used instead of the total for Blind Fighting.

Leaping Kick: Used with a normal Unarmed Combat Skill roll, this offensive maneuver needs a bit of space between the character and their opponent, and some space above the characters (at least 10') to accommodate the upward motion. If the kick is successful the character will always knock their opponent prone, in addition to the regular damage indicated by the hit location die. If unsuccessful (without setting off a cosmic Trigger) this maneuver leaves the attacker at -4 ranks to all defensive skill and attribute rolls because they are off balance.

Martial Throws: This is a separate skill, used in some settings to help distinguish a martial artist from a brawler or boxer. If successful, no matter what the damage locale die shows, the opponent is always knocked prone. The martial throw does not specifically cause normal injury, unless the throw is into or onto a sharp object or over a raised area (such as throwing someone off a building). It can cause disarming, toughness/armor damage, unconsciousness or other special effects. Martial Throws are opposed by Unarmed Combat skill.

Pulled Punch: This can be applied to unarmed combat, the flat of a sword, a bludgeon, or other weapons that can be used non-lethally. The intent is to get your opponent out of commission without killing or even wounding them much. The player must announce they are pulling their punch or fighting non-lethally before rolling their attack. Rolls of 1-6 on the locale die are ignored, being a touch or hit with no damage capability behind it, and inflicting no damage. Only rolls of 7-0 are applied.

A character might chose to pull their punch because they want prisoners, or are simply sparring with a friend. A character using this maneuver can also use other means to overcome their opponent, such as talking to them, or demanding their surrender. If they are sparring, they may use 'extra' rules to govern the match - for example, that the match will end when one character is disarmed, or that if a limb is hit (touched), it is 'crippled'.



Whirlwind Combat: A separate unarmed combat skill, this can only be used when facing two or more opponents in close combat. It allows the character to get one attack roll against exactly two opponents at the same time, potentially harming both. This is done by attacking with both feet and an upward jump. The downside is that it uses both the character's offensive and defensive actions for the round, leaving them vulnerable to attack if it fails.

I'm Going To Kick You In The Head Now....

Terrain, Weather, Physical Condition, and where you think you're aiming, can all affect the potential success of an attack. Although a GM can decide to use their own modifiers for a specific in game situation, it's always good to have a few examples for reference.

In some situations a character may be required to make an aimed blow, because their opponent is under cover, and they cannot strike at all of their opponent's body areas. For example, a character hiding under a table wishes to strike out with a broken beer bottle at an enemy standing beside the table. The GM rules that they must make an aimed blow at one of their opponents legs, because they can not reach above their opponents waist from under the table.

Aimed blows require the player to chose a body location choice, from the basic 1-6 locations on the table, before they roll for their attack. This applies to all forms of attack, including ranged weapons. If they succeed, they do not roll a die for location, but apply the damage directly to the area they aim for. Of course, as the modifier table will show, it's harder to aim a shot for a specific locale, then to just generally attack an opponent.

Condition	Effect
Aim: Specific Leg	-5 Ranks from attacker to hit this locale
Aim: Specific Arm, or a Wing	-5 Ranks from attacker to hit this locale
Aim: Torso	-2 Ranks from attacker to hit this locale
Aim: Head or Tail	-10 Ranks from attacker to hit this locale
Attacking An Invisible Opponent or in Complete Darkness	-10 Ranks to Hit
Attacking While Invisible	+5 Ranks to Hit
Attacking Opponent That Has a Small Shield	-2 Ranks to Hit
Attacking Opponent That Has a Medium Shield	-4 Ranks to Hit
Attacking Opponent That Has a Large Shield	-6 Ranks to Hit
Attacking A Fleeing or Charging Opponent	-2 Ranks to Hit
Attacking With A Ranged Weapon In Smoke or Fog	-4 Ranks to Hit
Attacking or Defending While Intoxicated	-4 Ranks to Hit
Firing A Shotgun At Range of 3 yards or less	+6 Ranks To Hit
Firing A Gun or Crossbow At Range of 10 yards or less	+4 Ranks to Hit
Using One's "off" hand (ambidextrous don't have one)	-5 Ranks to Hit
Attacking With Range Weapon While Elevated Above Target	+2 Ranks to Hit
Defending While Sitting In A Chair	-5 Ranks to Defend

If all this looks too complex to you, don't be afraid, a simple system, *Boom-Sweet!* is available in the *Tinkering With Reality* section of the rules to replace this for those who prefer a less complex method of dealing with Task Complexity Modification.

Armor Is Your Friend!

“To be prepared for war is one of the most effective means of preserving peace.”

— George Washington , Jan. 8, 1790

The use of personal armor in combat situations in various time periods and settings can be approached from a number of viewpoints and methods. If you are using the standard body location method of mortality, then it is recommended that a system that approaches armor in regards to its ability to act as a buffer to absorb damage over particular body areas to be best, while if you use the *Simple Mortality* system then an equally simple armor system should be used. We do not generally believe in the philosophy, used in some game systems, of abstract armor that deflects damage (making a target harder to hit rather than reducing the damage from hits) as it seems to contradict the logic of the reality we live in.

Armor basically has a Toughness rating, which combines with a character's natural toughness, to absorb damage from attacks. Unless the damage done exceeds the total of armor plus toughness, no damage will get thru from an attack. This Toughness can be damaged or worn away from attacks as well (usually as a special entry on the damage location tables). When this occurs the armor itself has been damaged and loses effectiveness by a point (either overall, if you are using General Armor with the *Simple Mortality* system, or on one body area, if you are using the Hit Location tables. If an armor is reduced to 0 in all body areas covered then it cannot be repaired and had fallen apart entirely.

Usually armor is defined in the world setting book in detail, including form (such as Cap, Duster, Boots, Helmet, Vest, Jacket, etc) areas covered by the form (body locales, if not using the *Simple Mortality* system) and its Toughness. Armor may range from values of 1 to 25 toughness.

Light Leather is a soft flexible leather, thicker than ordinary clothes, but not so thick as combat leather or motorcycle riding leathers. It would have a Toughness 2 on each area. It is found in Boots (legs), Gloves (arms), Pants (legs), Jacket (Torso & Arms) and hat (Head). Cost is 3 times that of common clothes. (-1 to Coordination in water)

Heavy Leather is a heavier less flexible leather designed for combat or motorcycle riding. It would have a Toughness 6 on each area covered. It is found in Boots (legs), Jacket (Torso & Arms), Duster (Torso, Arms & Legs) and Cap (Head). Cost is 5 times more expensive than common clothes. (-1 Coordination while worn due to less flexibility & bulk, -4 to Coordination in water).

Armor that is also *Ballistic* in its description is designed to give added Toughness against Gunfire and Shrapnel from exploding devices. After the normal reduction for the normal toughness of the armor and the character, Ballistic armor reduces the received remainder by 50% (rounded up) when applied to the body locale, and makes the wound non-bleeding (but may include organ damage or broken bones). This extra ability **ONLY** applies to bullets and shrapnel!

There is a different way of handling armor, far more detailed and which deals with various types of damage that weapons do presented in the *Tinkering With Reality* section of the rules, for those who desire a stronger level of realism and who are worried that with a simple system Armor is made too powerful when compared to the damage inflicted by weapons.

The arms war between weapon and armor has been going on for many thousands of years. Sometimes armor is ahead, and sometimes weapons are ahead in regards to which can be superior. Our headlines in recent years have told of huge gunfights between Kevlar armored bank robbers and police where hundreds of rounds of gunfire were exchanged, only to have the fight finally end when shots managed to strike an unarmored body area. And of course history tells us of the battle of the famous battle between the French and English when longbows proved the end of armored knights on horseback when they overcame the best armor of the day. So whether one or the other is greater is pretty much a decision to be applied to your setting and its time period that you will be playing in. Note the “artificial toughness” of armor should not be compared to character toughness. Character toughness is more than simply a measure of the materials and thickness of the human body, they deal with complex things like resiliency, bone and organ placement, etc.

Armor Type	Toughness	Ballistic?	Warfare Rank	Coordination Modifier
Clothing	1	N	1	0
Heavy Winter Clothing or Furs	2	N	1	-1
Quilted or Padded Armor	4	N	2	-2
Light Leather	5	N	3	0
Heavy Leather (including boiled leather)	7	N	3	-1
Wood/Bamboo	4	N	3	-2
Leather with Bronze Scales	7	N	4	-3
Bronze Plate	8	N	4	-4
Leather, Steel Studded	8	N	5	-2
Leather, Steel Scaled	11	N	6	-3
Steel Plate (knights armor etc.)	15	N	6	-5
Ringmail	10	N	7	-3
Chainmail (with padding)	14	N	7	-3
Spider Silk	5	Y	4*	0
“Flack” Armor	12	Y	13	-3
Kevlar	10	Y	14	-2
Kevlar, Heavy with Titanium Plate	16	Y	14	-3

{Coordination modifier is only if the Torso is covered by the armor}

* The availability of Spider Silk may vary extremely, as may its use for making armor, in regards to technology ranking. This represents a bare minimum tech level, it could be as high as 15 before it could be introduced, if developed for armor at all.

Slings And Arrows Of Outrageous Fortune

All thrown weapons and projectile weapons have a maximum range and an effective range. When we talk about ranges in this game system we are generally talking about effective ranges. For the most part, maximum ranges have no importance except on a battlefield, where hundreds or thousands of combatants can lay down a wall of fire. *Cosmic Synchronicity* is not a war game, and cannot deal with combat situations on that scale. (Think how long it would take to make a thousand initiative rolls at the start of each combat round and you'll realize very quickly that it would take months to run such a combat by hand. Even a complex computer with sophisticated analysis software would probably take hours to a day to cover it all accurately.)

The effective range of a weapon depends, to some extent, on the user as well as the actual firepower of the weapon. So, we have a simple system for defining most weapons. The Weapon gets a Class (a numeric value, ranging from 1 to about 40) which is multiplied by the character's Perception attribute to determine the range (in feet) at which the character can effectively shoot their weapon.

CLASS	EXAMPLE WEAPONS
1	Blowgun*, Rock*, Pillow*, Stazer (maximum range)
2	Dart*, Dagger*, Knife*, Derringer#, Throwing Star*
3	Spear#, Flintlock Pistol#, Baseball#, Hand Grenade#
5	Sling, Light Crossbow#, Air Gun, Short bow#, Boomerang, Light Pistol, Musket, Shotgun#
10	Staff Sling, Medium Crossbow, Heavy Pistol, Tranq. Gun, Gatling Gun
20	Rifle, Carbine, Longbow, Sniper Crossbow, Rifle Grenade Launcher, Light Machine Gun
30	Sniper Rifle, Buffalo Gun, Elephant Gun, Heavy Machine Gun
40	Ballista, Bazooka, RPG, Mortar

* These cannot be used at range greater than Class 5 - you can only throw things so far!

These cannot be used at a range greater than Class 20

Note that the range of a weapon can be improved in most cases by adding a optical, laser or electronic scope. These will add, respectively 5, 10 and 20 to the range class of the weapon. These cannot be added to any weapon that is hand propelled (but can be added to Crossbows).

If a character is trying to use a weapon beyond their effective range, the GM should penalize the shot's accuracy. Apply a -2 skill ranks for each "slot" higher on the above chart progression to the character's skill (or other method the GM considers appropriate).

Remember this is a roleplaying game, not a war game. Weapons may have more effective ranges in the universe you live in, this system is ONLY an approximation and generalization.

I Can Shoot A Lot Faster Than One Bullet in 6 Seconds....

Yes, on a target range, in controlled conditions, a qualified marksman can shoot much more rapidly with most weapons than one shot in a 6 second round. Some can easily get off 6 shots in one round with a pistol. But, on a target range you are not dodging, taking cover, dealing with targets that can move erratically or trying to track where innocent bystanders or opponents might be, whether hiding or moving thru your field of fire (or sneaking up behind you).

So we restrict most non-automatic weapons to the same 1 shot per 6 seconds that we use for bows. Its highly recommended that GMs take this restriction to heart - otherwise guns will become far more valuable and powerful than you may want, unbalancing the game.

Double Barreled guns (such as some shotguns) that allow the firing of both barrels at the same time are handled differently. It must be announced before firing that both barrels are being discharged. Presuming the attack roll is successful, instead of the normal damage for the weapon an extra damage die is rolled and added to the total for the bullet from the extra barrel.

Automatic weapons fire a series of bullets one after another very very quickly, a system known as “cycling”. In gun catalogs they are usually noted with a maximum RPM (Rounds



Per Minute) firing rate, indicating how many bullets they could potentially launch with a large enough drum, clip or magazine, and someone simply holding down the trigger. Cycling usually starts slow and speeds up, though usually this is all at a speed that’s hard for the average person to detect.

However, absolutely 100% realistic gun combat, using these sorts of details, takes too much effort, more than most players and GMs desire. And I don’t have years to get all the nuances correct. So you won’t find it here. Additionally guns are nasty, dangerous and can throw off the balance of a game in many situations, even when your not dealing with automatic weapons, but especially when you are. So instead we’ll use a simple system that will be “close enough for government work” (as my father was apt to say).

If you’re firing at a single target then you announce how many shots you are firing (up to the maximum capacity of the weapon/drum/clip/magazine) before your attack roll. This gives you a +2 ranks to your skill.

If you don’t like the 6 second round system and want something more “realistic” for combat between more than 2 characters, then you might want to look at the *Blood & Chocolate* system in the *Tinkering With Reality* section of the rule book.

It may suit your ideas of combat better than the basic module for combat timing.

If you succeed then you make the usual damage roll and locale roll. If the locale result roll is 1-6 then you add +2 to the damage for every bullet fired after the first one. This presumes that some of your shots are missing because of weapon “climb” and recoil problems.

Strafing fire, also sometimes called suppression fire, results from spraying a wide area with bullets to try to force anyone in the area to dive for cover, and to do property damage. The gun must be on full auto, and will be emptied at the end of the round. The attacker makes a single attack roll. If it's successful then everyone in the area being strafed gets a defensive dodge (and do not compare it to the attacker's roll, just their own Coordination or other dodging method). Those that succeed have avoided getting hit, presumably having found cover. Those that fail will get a damage roll against them as if they had been struck by a single bullet (or perhaps hurt themselves getting out of the line of fire by banging their heads etc).

The property damage from strafing fire is generally left to the imagination of the GM, but if it is desired to determine what has been hit, then make a percentage roll for each “important” item in the general direction being fired at, if the result is higher than 50 then the item was missed, lower and it was hit (and if the item was larger than a person you can automatically assume that it was hit without such a roll). Glass and ceramics shatters, machines spark (and sometimes explode), wooden walls and doors splinter and are riddled with bullet holes, etc.

Is That A Gun In Your Pocket or Are You Just Happy To See Me?

A firearm at close range does extra damage just by its proximity to the target. At Point blank (30 feet or closer) a +5 is added to the damage roll for the weapon.

Point X is when a gun is within a foot of the target. If someone presses a gun against your head and pulls the trigger they get an aimed blow without the targeting modifiers that normally apply. You might be able to struggle out of the way before they pull the trigger, causing the shot to miss or to only get a flesh wound, but their ability to target is much improved.

A gun successfully fired at Point X range also gets an extra damage die added over and above the normal die roll. If it's a shotgun they also get the +5 for Point Blank, the only time these two modifiers are cumulative. Putting a gun to your head and pulling the trigger can be fatal, and it is not recommended by the Surgeon General as a way to stop smoking.

If you are using the “*Dancing With Dumas*” damage system from the *Tinkering With Reality* section of the rules, you should still add the extra damage to the end total. This means that very close up gunshots can manage to get some damage thru even the very best armor and personal toughness, which is why folks tend to surrender with a gun to their head (so they can be made prisoner, questioned and have a chance to escape later etc.).

Ouch! That's Got To Hurt!

Inevitably, what with all this talk about the various and sundry ways that characters can beat on each other, we thought it might be a good idea to include a few examples of the sort of damage that weapons should be doing. These are examples, and GMs should expect to expand on them, depending on the setting.

So without further ado.... here are the tools of mayhem, destruction, death and good old fashioned blood letting:

"Unarmed" Combat	Damage
Bare Fist (Punch)	1d10 + Body
Fist Wearing Studded Glove	1d10 + Body + 2
Bare or Soft Shod Foot (Kick)	1d10 + Body + 2
Boot Shod Foot (Kick)	1d10 + Body + 3

Bludgeon Weapons	Damage	Parry?
Baseball Bat (Wooden)	1d10 + Body + 4	N
Baseball Bat (Metal), Frying Pan (Cast Iron)	1d10 + Body + 5	N
Broomstick	1d10 + Body + 3	Y
Crowbar	1d10 + Body + 6	N
Shovel	1d10 + Body + 5	Y
Walking Stick / Cane	1d10 + Body + 3	N

Chopping Weapons	Damage
Axe (Tool)	1d10 + Body +6
Hatchet (Hand Axe)	1d10 + Body +5
Pick Axe	1d10 + Body +7

Daggers & Knives	Damage	Parry?
Bowie Knife or Bayonet (not attached to rifle)	1d10 + Body + 5	N
Pocket Knife	1d10 + Body + 2	N
Sai	1d10 + Body + 3	Y
Switchblade	1d10 + Body + 3	N

Heavy Swords*	Damage	Parry
Broadsword	1d10 + Body + 9	Y
Cavalry Sabre or Scimitar	1d20 + Body + 3	Y
Bastard Sword or Backsword	1d20 + Body + 5	N

*Heavy Swords are a -5 to Initiative (but never less than 1) due to their weight & balance.

Light Swords	Damage	Parry?
Fencing Foil	1d10 + Coord + 1	Y*
Katana	1d10 + Coord + 8	Y
Machete	1d10 + Coord + 5	N
Rapier	1d10 + Coord + 6	Y
Saber	1d10 + Coord + 7	Y
Sword Cane	1d10 + Coord + 4	Y

*Can only parry another Fencing Foil



Whips & Flails	Damage
Buggy Whip	1d10 + Coord + 2
Bull Whip	1d10 + Coord + 6
Camel Whip	1d10 + Coord + 3
Cat of Nine Tails	1d10 + Coord + 4
Horseman's Flail	1d10 + Body + 5
Long Metal Chain	1d10 + Body + 5
Nunchakus	1d10 + Coord + 4

Projectile Weapon	Damage	Effective Range
Sling ('David' Style)	1d10 + Coord + 5	10
Slingshot (Y Style)	1d10 + Coord + 4	5
Short Bow	1d20 + Coord + 1	10
Long Bow	1d20 + Coord + 5	20
Compound Bow	1d20 + Coord + 4	20
Crossbow, Single Handed	1d10 + Coord + 4	5
Crossbow, Light	1d20 + Coord + 1	5
Crossbow, Medium	1d20 + Coord + 3	10
Crossbow, Sniper	1d20 + Coord + 6	20

For those interested in a more cinematic system, you should take a look at the *Dancing With Dumas* damage system in the *Tinkering With Reality* section of the book. It produces less predictable weapon damage, but does require the use of more dice to achieve this.

A Few Things That Go ‘Bang!’ In The Night....

Hundreds, if not thousands of different makes, models, calibers, styles and mechanical designs have been developed for firearms over the centuries. Instead of trying to list each and every one or designing tables for the numerous guns appropriate to each and every setting, we’re just going to list a few ‘generic’ weapons. If a particular weapon is really necessary for a specific setting then it will be included in that setting. By using generic weapons it reduces the complexity of the game in an area where huge amounts of detail are not really vital (though some military experts, gun collectors and military enthusiasts may disagree).

Black Powder Pistol	Damage	Shots	Reload Rounds	Range
Derringer	1d20 + Coord + 1	2	2	3
Flintlock	1d20 + Coord + 4	1	2	5
Cap & Ball Revolver	1d20 + Coord + 5	6	6	10

Modern Pistols	Damage	Shots	Range
Light Revolver (Pistol)	1d20+ Coord + 4	6	5
Heavy Revolver (Pistol)	1d20 + Coord + 7	6	10
Light Semi-Automatic (Pistol)	1d20 + Coord + 6	8	5
Heavy Semi-Automatic (Pistol)	1d20 + Coord + 8	10	10

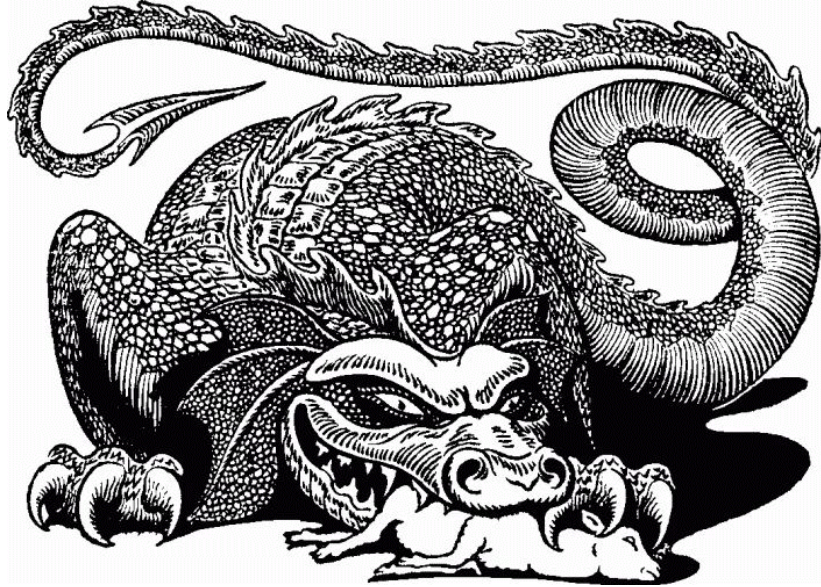
Rifles	Damage	Shots	Range
Bolt Action Rifle	1d20 + Coord + 8	1	20
Magazine (Clip) Loaded Rifle (Carbine etc.)	1d20 + Coord + 9	10	20
Nitro Cartridge Rifle (Body 15 needed to use)	2d20 + Coord + 2	2	30

Automatic Weapon	Damage	Shots	Range
Machine Pistol	1d20 + Coord + 8	20	10
Light Automatic Rifle	1d20 + Coord + 8	20	20
Drum Loaded Light Rifle (ex: Tommy Gun)	1d20 + Coord + 6	100	15
Heavy Automatic Rifle (Body 15 needed to use)	1d20 + Coord + 10	30	30

Thrown Grenades : Throw range = 5	Damage (If Fails to Dodge)	Radius Of Effect
Fragmentation	2d20+5	2 Yards
White Prosperous	2d20+7 (Fire)	3 Yards
Thermite	2d20+10 (heat)	1 Yards
Molotov Cocktail (Homemade)	1d20+5 (fire)	2 Yards
Concussion (Stuns those in area of effect 1 round)	1d20	5 Yards
Black Powder Fragmentation (Primitive)	1d20+5	1 Yard
Armor Killer (Warfare Tech 16 or greater)	3d20+5	2 Yards

That Slithering Blob is Coming Toward Us!

Fear is an enemy that has been part of human psyche since the beginning. Fear of the dark, fear of the night, fear of being alone, fear of not being alone, fear of the unknown, fear of knowing too much, fear of being afraid.



Spirit, in the end, is the only defense against fear (except perhaps in some cases involving magic). If a situation occurs where the GM must ask the players to resist the effects of fear, then they roll against their SPIRIT. Of course, some Traits and conditions may modify their percentile chance of success, as a modification to the character's Ranks in Spirit.

If they fail the SPIRIT roll (without setting off a cosmic trigger) than 1d10 (or 1d12 for more realistic results) is rolled to see what effect their fear has on them:

Roll	Fear Effect
1	Stunned : The character stands immobile until the next round
2	Nausea : -2 ranks to all Skill and Attribute rolls while in Perception of the cause of the Fear
3, 11	Panic : Runs away, dropping whatever is in their hands. If unable to run then is in hysterics until cause leaves or they are able to run away.
4	Severe Nausea : Vomits and cannot act while doing so. Makes Health roll each round afterwards to stop. Will be at -2 ranks for full minute after vomiting stops.
5	Paralyzed : Unable to move for 1d10 rounds (GM rolls and tells them when recovers)
6	Faint : Unconscious and prone. Lasts 1d10 minutes.
7	Shock : Collapses unconscious and prone 1d10 minutes. -1 Health Permanently.
8	Nasty Shock : Collapses unconscious and prone 1d20 minutes. -2 Health Permanently.
9	Heart Attack : Collapses unconscious and prone 1d20 minutes. -3 Health Permanently. -1 Body, Spirit, Toughness, & Coordination Permanently. Dies if health less than 1.
10, 12	GM's Choice, Combination of the above, or Alternative Effect

A GM's choice should be something interesting, like combining one or more effects, or totally irrational behavior (like trying to run thru a solid wall and knocking oneself unconscious, babbling like a small child, screaming uncontrollably but otherwise paralyzed etc).

Surprised? Why Should I Be Surprised?

One concept not covered in the original edition of Cosmic Synchronicity base rule book is the handling of surprise. This was, to some extent, an oversight performed on purpose because we didn't have a hard and fast rule in place during playtests to deal with the subject, and because it is often a subject of argument among players.

Surprise is the state of being caught unprepared for an event, especially the appearance of one or more beings or individuals, an unforeseen attack or a successful ambush from concealment or out of a hiding place in shadows (or from invisibility in settings where such may occur).

It does not occur simply because one has seen another person on the street, unless that person literally appears from nowhere! It also does not occur if it is highly probable that the action was expected (Ex: being shot at by a person that they could see with a gun in their hand is not surprising, having a previously unseen piano drop from the sky onto them is surprising.)

The GM decides when a character is automatically surprised and when they get a roll to avoid being surprised. Such a roll is called a Surprise check, and consists of a roll by the character against their Insight aspect or their Perception attribute (whichever is higher) at the usual *4 to produce a percentile value to roll against.

Surprise checks normally occur at the start of a round (and often at the start of the first round of combat) before Initiative rolls are made, unless the character that is doing the surprising does not appear until their initiative action occurs.

The character that is surprised cannot take an action in the round it occurs (but can make a defensive reaction if attacked).

A surprised character may be expected to make a fear roll if the surprise results in a Cosmic Trigger, or if the cause is something the GM declares sufficiently horrible (like an unexpected jogger having an undead zombie jump out in front of them from the hedges while jogging down a suburban street at twilight).

In all situations, surprise is only for the round/action it occurs in, and ceases to be an advantage on the next round.

GM's Rule of Thumb : If it was expected, it wasn't a surprise!

A Matter of Some Gravity

“Look! It’s the Famous Plummeting Ostriches!”

–Anonymous Pedestrian

Falling is another source of potential damage in the lives of characters, be it slipping in the bathtub, tripping down the stairs, diving thru a window, sailing off a rooftop, or plummeting from an airplane with a faulty parachute.

There is a huge variety in exactly what kind of fall will do what kind of damage to what kind of person. A fall in a bathtub can be fatal for one person, while another walks away from falling out of a plane. Some of this might be explained by cosmic synchronicity affecting peoples lives. Or it might just be a matter of what they land on, how high up they were, what they were wearing, and what they did on the way down.

Science can’t explain it (and neither can magic exactly). There are far too many variables. This means that anyone trying to design a game mechanic for falling damage is working without enough real data to draw from. But, we must have something, so the following quick system is in use (unless you can design a better one to plop in here instead, this being a modular game and all).



Slip & Fall: This covers people who fall on ice, slippery floors, in the bathtub, and similar circumstances with no major obstacles, terrain variances, or great distances. The character makes a percentile roll vs Toughness. If they set off their Cosmic Trigger, they may be dead (fatal hit on the head), seriously injured, unconscious, or whatever else the GM decides is right for the situation. If they fail the roll they temporarily lose a point of toughness. If they make the roll then they are simply prone, embarrassed, and a bit bruised, but have no real injuries.

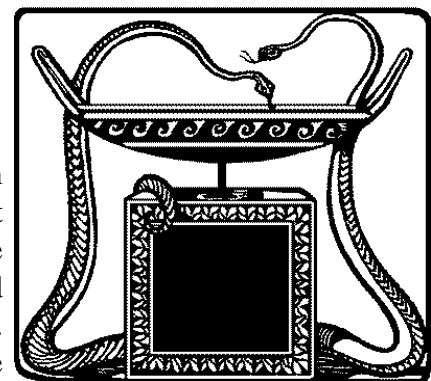
Trip & Fall: This covers the classic case of falling down the stairs, tripping over an obstacle when running hurdles, etc. The character rolls against their Coordination percentile. If they set off their Cosmic Trigger, something bad happens (GM decides how bad and what it is). If they simply fail then they roll 1d20 for each of their legs and apply it as damage without applying Toughness or Armor to reduce it. If they take half or more of their mortality points in either leg, then they have broken a bone, otherwise it's a sprain. If they make their roll they are simply prone, embarrassed and a bit bruised. (Is there an echo in here? Or am I having Deja Vu?)

Dive & Fall: This covers jumping out a window, purposely jumping off a rooftop, or out the door of a speeding car. Its rolled against the character's Diving, Tumbling or Acrobatics Skill (If they don't have any of these skills then it's a roll as if they had 1 rank). If they set off their cosmic trigger the GM gets to be as nasty as they want. If they merely fail, roll 1d20 and add 1 point for every 5 feet that they dove, fell, and/or for every 10 MPH they were going. Apply this to each of the 6 body locales. If they succeed, they are stunned and prone, but otherwise unhurt.

Plummeting Fall: If the character falls off a roof unintentionally, or from a height greater than 10 stories, or out of an airplane, off a cliff etc, then this mechanic is used. Make a percentile roll against either Diving Skill or Coordination, whichever is higher. If it sets off their cosmic trigger then they died. If they succeed then apply damage as if they had failed a Dive & Fall roll from a 25' height. If they merely fail, roll 3d10 to determine 3 locales on the combat locale table. Reroll any results of 'knocked Prone and / or stunned' since this side effect is automatic. If results of "knocked out" or "GM's Choice" come up, substitute a hit to the Torso. Duplicate results just mean that area will be hurt more. Shake firmly and Roll 2d20, and applying the damage, without modifications for armor or Toughness, against each of the three body areas affected. Feel sorry for the player if they come up two 20s.

Neither Wind, Nor Rain, Nor Pox, Nor Poisonous Snakes ...

There are lots of other ways to get hurt or die. Most of them aren't much fun in a roleplaying game, unless they are important to the plot. Exposure is important if you set a game near the arctic. Disease should be important if you are in a plague infested city. Poison can be important if you are facing assassins. Otherwise the GM should not spend much time on these and the mechanics should be simple.



Since none of these are fun, and making a true to life system would require a lot of complexities, let's go for something simple. If you encounter a situation where these things may occur, the GM will decide when and if you need to defend against them. If so, then you must make a Health percentile roll. Failing the roll will probably cost you a point of Health permanently. Cosmic Triggering on one of these will probably lead to death, or a near death experience. Success means not much happens at all.

Going without Sleep can also be a real pain. Characters temporarily lose 1 rank of Health for every 24 hours they stay awake, and -2 ranks to all their skill percentages at the same rate. These points can only be restored through sleep. If they go without sleep long enough to drop to 0 Health and collapse from fatigue, then they should lose 1 point from Health permanently.

GM's should know better than to over use these elements within the game setting. A Killer GM is a GM without players, and thus a bored GM. Make the game interesting and challenging, but always give the players a fair chance.

Call Me A Medic - I Seem To Have Shot Myself, Again....

*“He Used This Strange Tibetan First Aid On Me,
First He Turned My leg around backwards....”*

— Captain E. J. Lee

First Aid is necessary to set bones, stop bleeding and even apply CPR to someone having a heart attack (unless some sort of magical or mental/psionic healing abilities are available.) If a person performing First Aid on someone sets off their cosmic trigger then they have caused further injury to the subject instead of helping them, usually 1d10 damage without any reduction from armor or toughness to the area of the wound. If they simply fail then have done neither good nor harm. If they succeed they have stopped the bleeding and restored 1 point to the damaged area.

An untreated open wound will continue to bleed. A broken bone which is set improperly, or not set at all, may heal incorrectly, causing loss of motion or requiring the bone be broken again and reset.

Natural healing requires rest (as in “a good night's rest”) and nourishment. Characters under the care of a physician receive an extra +1 for every 5 ranks the physician has in their skill each night.

Except in very advanced settings with very advanced technology or magic, severed limbs can not be reattached.

Toughness and other temporary attribute losses recover at a rate of 1 rank per night's rest, except for fatigue losses.

When Things Go CRASH In The Night

Sometimes a character wants to break things. Sometimes they don't want to break things, but they do it anyway. Its an inevitable part of a roleplaying game, and of real life. No one really knows why, but it may have to do with the whole "creating Chaos from Order" thing that is hidden away as part of each sentient's psyche.

Generally objects should be defined as needed by the GM (unless they are part of a character's property) and need to be have 1) Toughness 2) Mortality and 3) Flammable. Things that are flammable do not get their Toughness against damage from fire. Some suggested values for the Toughness and Mortality of an object follows (add the Toughness & Mortality from each table):

Material	Toughness	Mortality
Paper, Cloth, Ordinary Glass, Light Plastic	0	2
Leather, Ordinary Ceramics, Plaster	3	10
Wood, Thick Ice, Ordinary Plastic	5	15
Heavy Plastic, Aluminum, Sheet Metal	7	20
Soft Metals (Lead, Nickel, Copper, Gold, Silver)	10	25
Bronze, Brass, Brick, Safety Glass	12	30
Steel, Iron, Marble, Granite, Bullet-Proof Glass	20	50
Thick Steel, Vehicle Armor Plating	30	100
Titanium Armor Plating	35	150

Object Size	Toughness	Mortality
Tiny: ring, bracelet, marble, sheet of paper, coin, etc.	1	1
Small: dagger, candle, figurine, goblet, scarf, book, etc	3	3
Medium: Shield, Cloak, light chair, window, suit, sword, Shield	5	5
Large: door, wall mirror, bed, couch, large chair, table, bicycle	7	10
Very Large: Motorcycle, interior wall, fire door, safe	9	20
Huge: Automobile, Exterior Wall, Sailboat, Small airplane	11	30
Massive: 18 Wheel truck, Freight car, subway car	13	50

Remember: These are *Suggestions* and your milage may vary.....

When The Flivver Fumbles....

Automobiles, Motorcycles and Trucks are both a blessing and a curse upon humanity, and when a player fails their driving roll and suffers an accident they have a nasty tendency to break, explode, burst into flames or dislodge the driver and passengers in a wide range of ways.

So, it was thought that a quick system for those wonderful simple times when a player fails their driving roll (while trying to do a fancy trick, or when simply hitting the brakes and swerving to avoid hitting a moose or mime in the road) there should be a quick method to deal with the problem.

A d12 roll is required to determine the result:

Roll	Results
1	Skid. Roll Driving Skill Again at ½ Normal to regain control. If fails roll again here, and re-roll if this result happens again.
2	Stalled Out. It'll take a couple of rounds to get it going again.
3	Damaged Brakes. Next time you won't be able to stop safely, but you're ok for now. If there are no brakes then this becomes the same as a 10 for results.
4	Spin out. Everyone in the vehicle make a roll vs Health against Nausea or loose their stomach contents. No other damage.
5	Fender Bender. The front end of the vehicle takes 5 points of Toughness damage. If Toughness drops to 0, the vehicle has additional damage and can't move under own power.
6	Broken Axel. There is a deafening Crunch and the vehicle will come to a halt (if a motorcycle, Character makes a Coordination roll or get thrown from the vehicle).
7	Severe Tire Damage (random wheel). It may be blow out, the tread torn up or the wheel may actually be no longer attached. No matter, it needs to be replaced entirely. Luckily you stopped in time, no harm to occupants.
8	Something is Leaking. You're still mobile, but something snagged somewhere vital. You're losing water, oil, or Fuel. You've got 1d10 minutes before it runs out and stops working (Possibly damaging the engine if it seizes).
9	Broken Headlight. You hit something lightly. If out of headlights/tail lights, this becomes a result equal to an 11 on the table.
10	Impact. Vehicle takes 1d20+10+ (MPH traveling speed/5) before Toughness. Driver & Passengers roll vs Coordination at ½ normal success, and if they fail then roll on normal combat damage table for occupants, and may take 1d20+10+(MPH/10) damage to locales that might be hit (Motorcycles always require the combat table).
11	Electrical System is Shorted out for some reason. Vehicle rolls to a stop.
12	Fiery Impact. Kiss the Vehicle good bye. Each player rolls vs synchronicity to be thrown free (Dive & Fall damage) or takes fire damage as the vehicle goes up as a 2d20+5 Fireball. If they get out the next round they survive... damage occurs for next 3 rounds as 2d20 to each occupant. (Charmed Life characters are always are thrown.)

Destiny Rides Again!

Destiny is a way for the GM to reward the players for their actual roleplaying, clever thinking, actions to improve group cohesion, movement towards character and group goals, or anything else the GM would like to encourage. It also gives player another chance to improve their own control over events, their character's lives, and their destiny within a game.

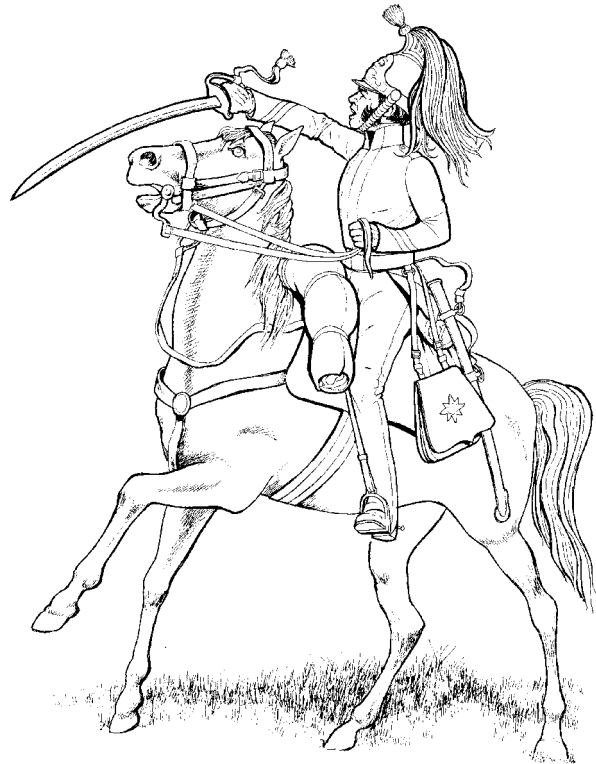
The points are rewarded to the player, not the character, and can be applied with any character that player runs within the games operated by that GM. This means that if a character has a really good heroic death, the GM can give them this small reward to carry over to their next character.

Most GMs award between 1 and 5 points for a session, but 5 should be given only for things like that really good heroic character death or saving the world single handedly in a spectacular and unexpected fashion.

A Destiny point can be used during a game to influence probability. It can be used to reduce 20% from any die roll the player is about to make (announced before the roll). It could also be used to add one damage die to a weapon attack being made.

Outside the game a player is allowed to spend Destiny points to help shape their character in different ways. They can, for instance, spend 3 destiny points to buy one point in an attribute, up to their racial maximum. Only 1 point of a particular attribute can be bought between each session. Additionally, they can spend 3 destiny points to buy the first rank in a new skill (presumably the character has some free time, or has been performing related reading/activities.) Again, only one skill can be gained this way at a time. (These limits, of course, are for characters in active play).

Destiny points in *Cosmic Synchronicity* should not be used to buy traits or increase aspects unless it is appropriate to the genre of the game setting (buying up a trait in such cases might be possible, for example in a Superhero campaign where characters might develop strange and unusual abilities over the course of months of actual play).



A Number of additional optional Destiny point options are presented in the *Tinkering With Reality* section of this book that may be of interest to GMs and players.

Zarathud's Other Enlightenment

The CV (Culture Value) for a game setting is important to players, and may either be determined off the cuff very quickly or carefully calculated in a way that gives the GM a much better idea about the world, culture and people of the setting. The CV helps determine the number of skill ranks that are available to characters in the setting.

The Simple way is to take an Earth History Comparison and use it thus:

Time Period	CV
Stone Age to Early Bronze Age	1
Bronze Age (Classical Greece/Rome)	2
Iron Age (Medieval/Renaissance/Age of Exploration)	3
Industrial Age thru Modern Era	4
The Future (Science Fiction)	5

However, if you are dealing with non-earth alternative realities and worlds, or settings where history has just gone in odd directions (or if you like to give your worlds a lot of detail) it's better to define the technology and the personality of the culture instead, and determine the settings CV from there. The tables that follow do just that. You just define where the culture is on each table in regards to technology.

Note that this system is NOT designed to handle the scaling of Magic and the Occult Skills. Magic in a setting should either simply use the standard CV (assuming that a sufficiently complex technological setting will have an equally complex magic system in regards to the number of skills involved to use it) or can be set to a value of 1 (to cover basic religious belief for a normal person) and have a series of enabling Traits that raise the CV for Occult skills. (These might be special background, social status, being part of a special race, or having a special talent that allows access to restricted occult knowledge to make such more expensive to fit a balance concept in the setting).

Communication

Rank	Meaning
1	Sign Language/Body Gestures
2	Verbal Language
3-4	Written Alphabet
5-7	Transmission of Coded messages (Semaphore, Telegraph, Early Radio)
8-9	Transmission of Verbal messages (Telephone, Radio etc)
10-13	Transmission of Verbal & Visual messages (Television, Videophone, Webcam, etc)
14	Transmission of Verbal, & 3D Visual messages
15-18	Transmission of messages through Verbal, 3D Visual, & Other Senses
19	Full Transmission of all senses, plus emotions
20	Full Transmission of all Senses, Emotions and Thoughts

Food Production

Rank	Meaning
1	Foraging & Gathering
2	Hunting & Gathering
3	Hunting, Fishing, Herding & Gathering
4	Limited Farming (self sustaining) w/Supplemental Hunting, Fishing, Herding
5	Limited Farming (self sustaining), Early Irrigation, Plowing, w/Herding & Fishing
6-7	Farming, Fishing & Herding w/limited Surplus, Plowing, Crop Rotation, Terraces
8-10	Surplus Farming w/Advancing Irrigation Techniques, Basic Land Reclamation
11-13	Development of Hybrids
14-15	Large Scale Surplus Farming w/Fertilizers, Nutrient Supplements
16	Hydroponics, Fish Farms, Large Scale Land Reclamation
17-18	Cloning & Genetic Manipulation of Crops, Fish & Livestock (Famine Eliminated)
19	Aeroponics, Reduced Space Needs for Food Production
20	Synthetic Food Production - End of Farming, Hunger Eliminated

Information Storage

Rank	Meaning
1	Memorization by the Individual
2	Advanced Memorization & Story Telling Techniques, Poetry, Oral Traditions
3	Clay/Stone Tablets and Carving using Symbols or Alphabet; Needs COMMUNICATION 3
4	Handwritten Letters, Scrolls, Books
5	Block Prints, Woodcarvings
6	Printing Press, Movable Type
7	Early Stenography Techniques (Punch card, paper tape)
8-10	Basic Visual Storage (Photograph, Motion Picture), Typewriter, Basic Verbal Storage (Phonograph, Wire Recorder)
11	Carbon Paper for Typewriter, Lithographic Press, Audio Tape
12-13	Offset Press, Basic Computer Technology, Microfilm, Video Tape
14-15	Advanced Computer Technology, Internet
16-17	Portable Computer Technology, CD-ROM
18-19	Worldwide Storage System, Personal Portable Information Technology
20	Interdimensional/Interstellar Storage & Access Systems



Living Environment

Rank	Meaning
1	Natural Structures Only (Tree or Cave, no construction). Animal Skins.
2	Lean To, Treehouse
3	Weaving. Tents, Basic Freestanding Wooden Structures; Needs MANUFACTURING 2
4-5	Adobe or Stone Structures, Multi-Floor Constructs, Plaster, Baking Ovens, Aqueducts
6-9	Food Storage via Natural Cooling (Root cellar/icebox), Indoor Baths, Concrete, Locks, Glass Windows; Needs MANUFACTURING 5 and COMMUNICATION 3
10-11	Steel Reinforcement, Central Heating, Air Circulation (fans), Sewers; Needs MANUFACTURING 8
12-14	Power (Steam, Electric, or other), Refrigeration, Central Cooling
15-17	Thermal Glass, Advanced Ceramics & Plastics; Potential for Spacecraft
18	Citywide Environmental Control; Potential for Dome Cities
19-20	Planetary Environmental Control; Weather Control; Potential for Terraforming

Manufacturing

Rank	Meaning
1	None
2-3	Individual Hand Tools of Wood, Bone & Stone
4-5	Hand tools of Copper, Bronze, Tin, Silver, Gold & other soft Metals
6-7	Hand Tools of Iron & Steel
8	Metal Molding Processes, Wire Drawing; Individual Automation Devices, Early Batteries
9	Early Factories, Basic Assembly Lines may be Introduced; Needs FOOD PRODUCTION 8
10-12	Advanced Factories, Widespread Electrical Power, Advanced Batteries, Solar Panels; Synthetic Polymers possible, Needs ENVIRONMENT 12
13-16	Advanced Assembly Line, Partial Automation. Needs COMMUNICATION 6 & INFORMATION 7
17-19	Full Automation Factories.
20	Nano-Technology and/or Synthetic Bio-Technology Grown Products.

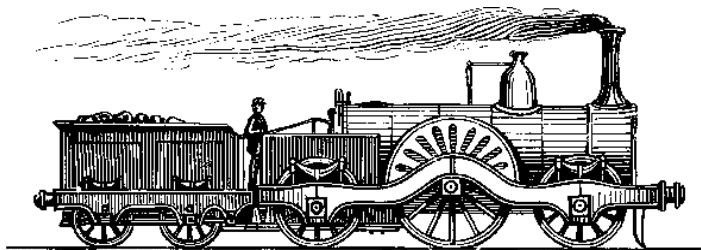
Medicine

Rank	Meaning
1	None
2	Basic First Aid
3	Midwifery & Herbiology , basic birth control (barrier prophylactics, rhythm method)
4	Anatomy , Physician
5-6	Basic Preventative Medicine, Rudimentary Tools; Cleaning Wounds, Amputations, Basic Medical Schools & Hospitals with ENVIRONMENT 5; Surgery. Needs COMMUNICATION 4, MANUFACTURING 4 & INFORMATION 4 from this point on
7-8	Sterilization of Medical Tools, Vaccinations, Pharmacology, Dentistry, Anesthesia, Psychology MIGHT be introduced. Needs MANUFACTURING 7.
9-10	Blood Typing, Corrective Surgery Techniques, Hereditary Effects Recognized, Early Forensics , Toxicology, Sterilization (Birth Control)
11-12	Advanced Techniques & Tools (Ex: X-rays), Antibiotics, Advanced Vaccinations, Advanced Birth Control (Oral, spermicide), Specializations MIGHT be introduced; Needs MANUFACTURING 8

13	Specializations,. Plastic Surgery, Transplants, Artificial Insemination; Needs ENVIRONMENT 12
14	Genetics Studied, Compound Antibiotics, Laser Tools, Advanced Monitoring Devices, Medical Sex Changes, “DNA” Discovered, Bone Marrow Transplants, Brain Surgery;
15	Artificial Heart, Advanced Care (Faster Recovery), Expanded Preventative Medicine, Non-Invasive Surgery, Rudimentary Life Extension, Animal Cloning, Implanted Birth Control, Gene Splicing for Medical Compounds (Ex: Insulin), Restore Permanently Lost Symmetry;
16	Advanced Artificial Limbs, Immune System Boosters, Genetic Maps, Artificial Endorphins, Non-Addictive Pain Suppressors, Life Extension
17	Bone Splicing, Gene Splicing for Hereditary Conditions, Genetic Manipulation, Cryonics. Human Cloning,
18-19	Nano-Machines for Non-Invasive Exploratory and Minor Surgery with MANUFACTURING 20, Speeded Healing Techniques, Restore Permanently Lost Perception & Body.
20	Disease Eradication, Cellular Regeneration, Restore Permanently Lost Health. Can Restore Crushed Limbs to Functionality.

Transportation

Rank	Meaning
1	Own Body Locomotion
2	Riding, Muscle Driven Boats (Rowboat, Canoe); Needs FOOD PRODUCTION 3
3	Wheeled, Animal Driven, Land Vehicles; Sail Driven Boats & possibly Balloons & Gliders with ENVIRONMENT 3; Bridge Building; Needs MANUFACTURING 4
4	Advanced Sail, Block & Tackle.
5	Geared Vehicles (Bicycle, Paddleboats); Needs MANUFACTURING 8 and COMMUNICATION 3
6-7	Powered (Steam) Vehicles on Land and Sea, Animal usage reduced, Underwater Vehicles with MEDICINE 5 and ENVIRONMENT 8
8	Mass Transit (Rail) may develop on Land; Higher Speed Sea Craft with larger capacity, Internal Combustion Engine; Needs MANUFACTURING 9
9-10	Powered Flight, Higher Speed Personal & Mass Transit Vehicles, Subways.
11	High Speed Flight, Advanced Underwater Vehicles with ENVIRONMENT 12 and Advanced Energy Storage
12	Sub-Orbital Vehicles.
13	Orbital Vehicles. Satellites with ENVIRONMENT 15
14-15	Short Range Spaceflight, Potential for Space Platforms or Space Stations.
16-17	Inter-System Spaceflight; Needs ENVIRONMENT 17
18	Inter-Stellar Spaceflight potential.
19	Trans-mat (Matter to Energy to Matter) Transmission Systems
20	Inter-Dimensional / Alternative Dimensional Travel



Warfare

Rank	Meaning
1	Feet, Fists, Rocks, Clubs, No Other Weapons, Hand To Hand Combat
2	Stone Axe, Flint Knife, Spear, Staff, Sling, Padded Armor (Skins/Furs) Needs MANUFACTURING 3
3	Copper Weapons, Short Bow, Fire hurlers, Staff Sling, Javelin, Leather Armor, Wooden Shields; Needs MANUFACTURING 4
4	Bronze Weapons & Armor, Early Swords, Chariot with TRANSPORTATION 3, Wood & Metal Shields. Catapults, Shield Walls, Siege Towers; Needs MANUFACTURING 5
5	Iron Weapons & Swords with MANUFACTURING 6, Maces, Studded Leather & Scale Armor, Longbow Possible, Light Calvary with Lances possible;.
6	Steel Weapons, Plate Armor, Armored Calvary (Knights) Possible with Stirrup; Needs MANUFACTURING 7
7	Ringmail, Chainmail, Lightweight Swords, Crossbows, Barb Wire; Needs MANUFACTURING 8
8	Explosives, Gunpowder, Arbalest, Bombard, Grenades, Primitive Bombs, Exploding Mines.
9	Cannon, Black Powder Firearms, Usage of Heavy Personal Armors Reduced, Dragoon & Musketeer style Combatants, Primitive Rocketry, Armored Wagons & Ships
10	Rifle, Cap & Ball Pistols, Revolver, Early Chemical Weapons.
11	Personal Repeating Firearms, Trench Warfare.
12	Early Powered War Machines (Tank) with ENVIRONMENT 12
13	Flak Jacket, Machine Gun, Fighter Aircraft with TRANSPORTATION 9, Effective Rocketry possible, Stazer possible with MANUFACTURING 10
14	Advanced Powered Armored Vehicles, Advanced Rocketry & Missiles, Radar/Sonar with COMMUNICATION 8. Bio Weaponry with MEDICINE 13
15	High Speed Powered Armored Vehicles, Long Range Missiles, Weapons of Mass destruction, Atomics, Heat Seeking weapons,
16	Laser Targeting & Weaponry, Drone Devices with ENVIRONMENT 9 and COMMUNICATION 10, Gyropistol.
17	Battlesuits, Orbital Lasers, Gauss Needlers, Advanced Chemical & Bioweapons. Microwave Projectors, Reliable Personal Flight Units.
18	Force Weapons, Force Field Generators, Personal Lasers, Combat Computers & Semi-Sentient Fighting Robots with INFORMATION 17.
19	Starfaring energy projecting weaponry, inter-planetary missiles; Needs TRANSPORTATION 17
20	Mass Drivers and other planet killer weapons



Cultural Personality

The personality of a culture, society or world population is defined by a separate set of aspects, reflecting concepts of how populations think as a group. The following aspects of a society are usually scaled from 1-20. They will give a GM a fuller understanding of the world, especially how the governments, press and people perceive themselves, and help better define setting's CV.

Aestheticism Aspect: This is the importance of beauty, art, and entertainment within the culture, both how frequently they are present and how much they are valued.

Aggression Aspect: This is how forcefully the culture goes about achieving its goals, ideals and interests. Very high aggression becomes fanaticism, while low aggression is a state of near apathy, stagnation, and an inability to think as a unified culture at all.

Bureaucracy Aspect: This is how complex the operation of the government or hierarchy of the culture operates. Complex bureaucracies tend to act slowly in reaction to emergencies, but are less likely to make hasty mistakes. Complex bureaucracies also tend to delegate authority and responsibility over a wider number of individuals, and thus survive the loss of one individual within their structure better than simple bureaucracies. A high bureaucracy score also reflects the importance placed on holding the most important positions within the government. High Bureaucracy ratings tend to keep Stability ratings artificially high, especially if Intellectualism is low and Discipline is high. A culture with a large Bureaucracy and low Stability is likely to be toppled by political change, since it cannot respond quickly to problems.

Commercialism Aspect: This is the importance the culture places upon the acquisition of wealth, the production and sale of goods, and the interests of those who are involved in commerce for a livelihood.

Discipline Aspect: This is the importance and value placed upon internal discipline and the maintenance of stability, largely by the culture's legal system, but also sometimes through social expectations. The higher the discipline, the stricter the culture is in regards to infractions of its laws and rules, and often the less personal freedom is available to individuals.

Idealism Aspect: This is the importance of abstract philosophy or religious values and goals within the culture. It also indicates the status of philosophers and/or clergy within the culture. Idealism is important to the spiritual health of a culture, but in excess it can reduce the material health of a culture.

Innovation Aspect: This is the measure of a culture's ability to conceive, develop and adapt new ideas and technologies. Innovation includes a certain level of risk, individualism and the ability of people with a culture to usefully exploit what they know. Rigid cultures usually have a low Innovation value, while more flexible cultures will have higher innovation values.

Intellectualism Aspect: This is the importance the culture places on teachers, education, and the search for knowledge. The higher the ranking of Intellectualism, the more likely a society is to be literate and possess institutions of higher learning. It also increases the social status of teachers, physicians, or other scholars. The lower the ranking, the lower the availability of information and literacy. Without a high Intellectualism a culture is unlikely to develop advanced rankings in Information Storage, Communication or Medical technologies. Of course, some say that an ignorant population is easier to control, more likely to be stable and unquestioning of its rulers.

Militantism Aspect: This is the importance within the culture of military skills, and members of the military. It also indicates the likelihood that a military solution will be found to diplomatic problems. Cultures with high Militantism and aggression are often devoted to conquest, while those with low aggression but high Militantism may be paranoid about their neighbors (keeping strong borders and allowing little interaction with foreigners) or the possibility of revolution (spending lots of resources looking for dissidents or political rivals to the current rulers).

Stability Aspect: This rates the likelihood of social or political change within the culture. If the culture has a low Stability it is more likely to change, either in its other aspects, or in its daily features such as dress, entertainments, fads, etc. A Low Stability with high aggression carries the potential for major political change. If the culture also has a high militantism rating, this may be violent change or revolution.

Tolerance Aspect: This is a rating of how much the society tolerates difference, and things outside the normal status quo, from individuals or organizations. A high tolerance means they are more accepting of the unusual. A low tolerance means they are less accepting and may speak or act against things they find unacceptable to their own values and beliefs. Extremely low tolerance means great social pressure to conform, and when combined with high aggression in some cases, can result in violent reaction to the outsider or internal 'dissident.' Low tolerance cultures tend to be more insular and less likely to interact with other cultures. High tolerance cultures risk becoming diluted, and have difficulty acting with unity as their goals become too diverse.

Using all the above, the extended CV calculation requires you to add together all the Technology scores for the culture, and the aspects of Innovation, Commercialism, Intellectualism, Tolerance.

Take this total and compare it on the following chart:

Total	CV
74 or Less	1
75 - 99	2
100-129	3
130-169	4
170+	5

On Designing Skill Lists....and Supporting Characters

“To be fond of learning is to be near to knowledge.”
– Tze-sze, The Doctrine of the Mean, 5th century BCE

Cosmic is designed to use a fairly lengthy and diverse skill system, not the sort of simple list of skills for each character that will fit on one side of an index card, like some game systems. This, to some GMs, seems complex or cumbersome, but it only actually adds complexity to the character creation process, and not to the actual playing of the game. If players organize their character sheets reasonably and if the setting the GM is using or designs is organized into the basic categories of skills (Academic/Science, Physical, Social, Occult, Artistic, Craft/Technological).

The advantage of the system is that it does not in any way have attributes reflected within the success of using skills (something that many systems use and which often ends up with the having of high attributes being more valuable than having invested in skill training for a character), so that an expert isn't going to be easily shown up by a student or an amateur in many situations.

Attributes can be used to enhance the effectiveness of the skill use : A character with a high Coordination and Passion may, for example, be perceived as being much more graceful in the performance of a dance than someone who is a technical expert in the moves but lacks in grace and passion for the performance (and may have judges ignore a minor misstep or two when rating it). Equally a high body fighter using a quarterstaff will deliver more damage than one that only has only average body, even if the average one has a better skill, if they can manage to get a strike against them successfully.

Generally basic skill list theory is that each skill fits into a category, and may have one or two prerequisite skills that they must have before they can learn it. To be skilled at Playwriting, for example, a character might be required to have Read/Write skill. To have Read/Write, one should be required to have a Language Skill. To have the skill of Architecture, one might be required to have Applied Mathematics (and probably at a rank of 9 or greater). Other skills might have no prerequisites, such as using Thrown Weapons or Swimming or Knitting as they are basically self contained skills needing no other knowledge.

Setting designers should be sure to describe any special skills within their lists that are special to the setting, so that players will understand them before they decide to take them for their characters.

Gms designing Supporting Characters will face the same challenges as players, and will face such many times over. If you plan to use a particular character type regularly (ex: mercenary soldiers) it's recommended that you build a basic "template" character of the type, including attributes and skills, and then customize as needed when encountered, so that there will be some differences between them that players will notice (Maybe this one is a bit tougher, maybe he has less Discipline, maybe he carries a rapier instead of a sabre, and maybe he is easily seduced or bribed and is left handed, etc.) It may take more time to build detailed customized support characters but it enhances the game.

Lions And Tigers And Bears, Oh My!

The encountering of wild and domesticated beasts within a world setting is one that should not be ignored, but it should be obvious that it is not as necessary to go into as much detail as is used in the creation of player characters that will be encountered or used by the characters.

Small game and creatures that are not going to be used as a predatory hazard, transportation, beast of burden or companion within the context of the game do not need to have detailed attributes. Just a few basic descriptive sentences for such encountered is all that is really necessary.

When creating animals it's important to remember that you do not use the construction point scale, nor do you need to calculate a Cosmic Trigger (All natural animals have a basic 100 Cosmic Trigger, unless they are the property of a character, in which case their trigger is equal to that of their owner for all actions and rolls.)

When you do create animals that will be encountered by the players, they should have the attributes of: Body, Coordination, Health, Toughness and Perception. These can follow the usual scale, but can reach a maximum of 25 (or higher for Body if dealing with tremendously larger than human sized creatures, such as Elephants or Dinosaurs). The Mortality of an Animal is $(\text{Body} + \text{Health}) * 5$, but for Avian creatures it should be $(\text{Body} + \text{Health}) * 4$.



Animal Healing is calculated as $\text{Health}/5$. The traits of *Greater Than Normal Human Size* and *Smaller Than Normal Human Size* are common ones to use for animal design, and used to help adjust the Mortality and carrying capacity of the creature.

Animals use their Coordination *4 as a percentile for all Attack and Defense rolls.

GMs can design special traits for animals, the same as for player characters, but point balance is not a concern as much in animal design. An animal that is to be a regular companion or possession of a player character should be considered a trained animal, and be considered a positive trait for the player character worth between 1 and 10 points, with a house cat being worth 1, an ordinary pack mule around 3, a riding horse or guard dog around 5, a warhorse around a value of 7, and a magical beast such as a griffon or unicorn somewhere around a 10 in a fantasy setting.

Player characters will generally also need some skill(s) associated with the animal, such as riding, teamster, animal handling, animal husbandry, animal training, pet care or a related trait such as Beast Friend, Animal Empathy etc. Generally the more dangerous or unusual an animal is, the more it should cost the character to possess, control and/or maintain.

Animal damage, from bites, claws, trampling or goring should be calculated based on which attribute (Coordination or Body) is larger and this is added to the damage of the attack.

Bite, Kick, Punch, Gore (horn/antler) and Claw attacks are of three types Simple, 1d10, Average 1d10 + 4, & Dangerous 1d20). Dangerous attacks are more rare and often more in the category of very nasty predators like Alligators and Sharks or fantastical beasts like Gryphons and Chimeras. Gore attacks require an animal to have some running distance available to build up speed.

Trampling by one or more animals can produce very odd effects in real life, making it difficult to emulate in a roleplaying game. Being run over by a hundred escaped lab mice is unlikely to cause any real physical harm, while a single elephant can produce serious and possibly fatal results. Generally a rule of thumb is that smaller than human animals do no trampling damage (but may knock a character prone if there are enough of them - a Coordination roll to avoid this effect is reasonable); approx. human sized animals will do 1d10 plus 1 points for each creature in the trampling attack (and of course including the base Body of the largest of the animals involved); and larger than human sized animals will do 1d10 plus 1 point for each level of the trait larger than human sized on the largest animal in the attack (and of course the base Body) plus 1 point for each animal in the attack. Thus getting run over by a single bull can be bad, but being run over by a stampede of hundreds of cattle will be fatal. Trampling attack damage should be divided by the number of body areas the character has and applied to all areas. Generally if you are trampled by human or larger than human animals successfully, then you will be knocked prone in the process.

Generally animals can only perform a single attack at a time, though some may grapple or constrict at the same time as they perform a claw or bite. The obvious exception are fantastical beasts with multiple heads (like a Hydra, Chimera or Cerebus) where each head may make an attack on the same or different targets.

If an Animal is intelligent, then it is not an animal, but a being and should be written up with a full character sheet, etc.



Sample Average Animals:

The following are approximations generated for game use, and may reflect personal beliefs or misinformation that the author has regarding the abilities of animals. Part of the problem is many of the experts disagree as to the top running speeds or abilities of various beasts, so consider these to be average amalgamations and subject to re-interpretation as desired. Additional animals, especially fantastical beasts, can be constructed for a particular setting as desired. Consider these samples as a guideline for such designs more than stringent absolutes.

These may also be useful in settings where characters might change their shape or form with magic or strange abilities (but if you have such it is highly recommended that you do NOT change the mortality of the character to avoid confusing problems and difficult information tracking).

Bear (Brown or Black)

B 20 C 15 H 12 P 10 T 15

Mortality 180 (H 45 L 45 To 90)

Larger Than Human Size (once, for 2 times the mass)

Natural Climbing Ability

Natural Fishing Ability

Natural Swimming Ability

Fur, +5 Toughness vs Cold (+5 dmg from fire based attacks)

Bite, Average (1d10 + 4 + B)

Claw, Average (1d10 + 4 + B)

Bear Hug (grapple) (1d10 + B) & can bite at same time

+2 to be hit by ranged attacks

Running 14 mph

Bear (Grizzly or Polar)

B 25 C 14 H 15 P 12 T 20

Mortality 240 (H 60 L 60 To 120)

Larger Than Human Size (Twice, for 4 times the mass)

Fur, +5 Toughness vs Cold (+5 Dmg from fire based attacks)

Polar bears get another +5 Toughness vs Cold from fat layers

Natural Fishing Ability

Natural Swimming Ability

Bite, Average (1d10 +4 + B)

Claw, Dangerous (1d20 + B)

Bear Hug (grapple) (1d10 + B) & can bite at same time

+4 to be hit by ranged attacks

Running 15 mph

Cheetah

B 15 C 20 H 12 P 15 T 10

Mortality 155 (H 39 L 39 To 78 TI 16)

Larger Than Human Size (once, for 2 times the mass)

Camouflage in Natural Environment (-5 to be Perceived when not moving)

Fast Metabolism, +5 to Initiative

Exceptional Running Speed

Natural Climbing Ability

Natural Night Sight

Can Grapple smaller than human creatures & Claw with rear legs

Bite, Average (1d10 + 4 + C)

Claw, Dangerous (1d20 + C)

+2 to be hit by ranged attacks

Jump 9'

Running 40 mph

Griffon (fantastical beast)

B 20 C 21 H 12 P 20 T 15

Mortality 168 (H 42 L 42 To 84 TI 17 W 26)

Larger Than Human Size (twice, for 3 times the mass)

Avian bone structure

Flies twice its running Speed, power dive at thrice Running Speed

Fast Metabolism, +5 Initiative

Exceptional Carrying Capacity (+2 lbs/Body)

Can grapple human or smaller sized creatures & Claw with rear legs

Bite, Average (1d10 + 4 + C)

Claw, Dangerous (1d20 + C)

+4 to be hit by ranged attacks

Running 17 mph

Can Carry 220 lbs

Guard Dog

B 10 C 12 H 10 P 15 T 10

Mortality 80 (H 20 L 20 To 40 TI 8)

Smaller Than Human Size (once, for ½ the mass of a human)

Fast Metabolism +5 to Initiative

Natural Swimming Ability

Bite, Average (1d10 + 4 + C)

Claw, Simple (1d10 + C)

Carry 40 lbs Drag 90 lbs

-2 to Be hit by Ranged Attacks

Jump 6'

Running 11 mph

Housecat

B 5 C 10-25* H 15 P15 T 5 Mortality 60 (H 15 L 15 To 30 TI 6)

Smaller Than Human Size (Thrice, for 1/8 the mass of a human)

Fast Metabolism +5 to Initiative

Double Normal Healing Rate

Natural Nightsight

Natural Climbing Ability

Hard To Kill (1 Level) +20 Mortality

Bite, simple (1d10 + C)

Claw, Average (1d10 + 4 + C)

Jump 6' - 9'

-6 to be hit by ranged attacks

Running 12 - 10 mph

* This actually varies wildly, some cats can be very graceful, others are very clumsy.

Riding Horse

B 20 C 12 H 12 P 12 T 5 Mortality 220 (H 55 L 55 To 110 TI 22)

Greater Than Human Size (thrice, for 6 times mass of a human)

Exceptional Carrying Capacity (+4 lbs/body)

Exceptional Stamina for maintained Running

Bite, Simple (1d10 + B)

Kick, Average (1d10 + 4 + B)

Carry 300 lbs Pull 500 lbs

Leaping 15'

+6 to Be hit by Ranged Attacks

Running 12 mph

Wolf

B 12 C 14 H 10 P 18 T 12 Mortality 90 (H 23 L 23 To 45 TI 9)

Smaller Than Human Size (once, for 1/2 the mass of a human)

Fast Metabolism +5 to Initiative

Natural Swimming Ability

Bite, Average (1d10 + 4 + C)

Claw, Simple (1d10 + C)

Carry 44 lbs Drag 120 lbs

Jump 7'

-2 to Be hit by Ranged Attacks

Running 12 mph

They Might Be Giants!

The basic Cosmic Synchronicity system allows some flexibility of scale in regards to the Attributes and Aspects of characters, using the Excitement scale. This does not help in design, though, when you are working with a setting where you want to encourage a lot of trait possibilities, especially if those traits are likely to have a hefty cost (such as in a four color superhero setting).

There are also times when a GM wants to ensure that players will have certain traits within their character design, but doesn't want to affect their Cosmic Trigger ratings by the presence of such requirements. To handle these needs, a GM needs to think outside of the basic limitations of the structure and be creative, and to reward creativity among their players. Some possible methods are:

1) Free Specific Traits: You can, for example, assign five free contacts for players to choose for their character, to help build a greater connectedness to their hometown, family, job, friends, etc. This is cheap, easy and can be very rewarding to a game oriented around a specific setting. The players choose the contacts and their relationship with them, but the GM, of course, does the actual work of creating these supporting characters. Just make sure that the players understand that these are five zero cost contacts, they cannot sell them off to get extra points. This could be applied in a number of ways with other traits (such as in a setting where you want all the player characters to be elves, you would give them the enabling racial package of Elf for free with its good and bad points).

2) Homework Rewards: This is a carrot and stick approach. Players must write an extensive personal background, or a short story about the character, to better exemplify their nature and expand the GMs understanding of them (or if they are artistic produce a drawing, painting or sculpture of their character as a visual aid). The GM can let them take a set number of positive traits (say 10 or 20 points normal value) and change their cost to 0 for the specific character. This works best if the traits involved are described in more detail within the background, story or are shown within the artwork effectively. Some players will find this fun and throw themselves into the task, others will fail to do anything with it, but those that do will enrich the gaming experience for everyone in the long term. Remember that the idea of the zeroing of the cost of the traits is to keep them from affecting the character's Cosmic Trigger.

3) Tweak Scale: Under this method you set a number of free traits just as you do the Quantum Factor under the Excitement scale. Generally the Tweak scale should be done in stages of 10 points, with a Tweak of 0 (Zero) being the "standard" Tweak for settings. Tweak is a scale of 0 thru 5, and each tweak is worth 10 points, so a Tweak of 5 is 50 unbalanced points (and should be extremely rare, for games where playing Demi-Gods is common) and a Tweak of 3 would be reasonable for a 4-color Superhero style game.

4) Redesign: Make your setting Trait Costs reflect how common you want traits to be. Be very careful with this, as you can easily make your setting unbalanced if you make something too cheap!

Roadwalkers, D-Hoppers, Gatemasters and Schrödinger's Cat :

“...there's a hell of a good universe next door; let's go”

– E.E. Cummings

One major design element in *Cosmic Synchronicity* is the idea of a series of connected dimensional worlds, with characters and concepts that might possibly interact. This is a concept that comes from a number of fictional works, based on some



complex (and somewhat obscure) laws of physics. You don't need to understand the physics involved to use the game concepts. Simply accept that there are hundreds (perhaps thousands, perhaps an infinity of) worlds similar yet different from the one where your characters live, and that there are four basic ways a character might transfer between them, interacting with or even living on one of the other worlds.

The fictional sources for this concept include: Robert Heinlein's books (where several different Earths exist and the characters can and do cross between them in some novels), Robert Anton Wilson's *Schrödinger's Cat Trilogy*, the television series *Sliders* and the movie *Stargate*. Also one might look up *Amber* series by Zelazny which explores an alternative basis for multiple dimensions and dimensional travel.

In *Cosmic Synchronicity* we consider the concepts, physics and knowledge of this alternative world theory to be a skill that characters may take, called *Multi-dimensional Cosmology*. A few characters in each world could develop it, or learn it from travelers from other worlds.

The flexibility of our game mechanic allows a wide range of character interaction from drastically different cultures and technology rankings while still maintaining reasonable game balance. It's even possible for a few worlds with similar technologies, but drastically different cultures, to have widespread knowledge of each other, and for transport and trade to occur between them on a (semi-) regular basis.

The existence of these connections between different worlds implies that there is some interconnectedness between the worlds themselves. As a result, most of the rules - the way things work - are the same from world to world, though there are some differences. For the most part, characters retain their abilities when traveling. Equipment and technologies continue to work, unless drained of power by the crossing, though the effects may be interpreted in unexpected ways by alien cultures. Magic exists in some form, and works to some extent in each world, though the natives may not know about it (or about a particular form of magic). Thus a character who uses spells can still cast, as long as they aren't dependent on an element that is absent. For example, if a character from a world which uses spirit magic travels to a world without spirits, they are limited to working with the spirits (if any) that they brought with them when they crossed over.

There are five categories of travelers (Roadwalkers, D-Hoppers, Gatemasters, Schrödinger's Cats and companions), their names drawn from various fictional sources. GMs should decide which might be found in each world as natives, but all should be able to enter from another world as they wish.

Roadwalkers know that there is a connectedness to all things that exist in all the realities. Not only where all the molecules and atoms of matter and energy in a single universe once connected, and thus are continually influencing each other, but also true those across all the universes. This means that there is a connection, a road, that lies between all the worlds, and walking it is simply a matter of will, imagination, visualization and understanding. It takes a while for a roadwalker to get to a specific destination - hours, days sometimes even months, may pass in the traveler's subjective experience. It requires a special skill, in addition to multi-dimensional cosmology to use this method, and of course a high POWER attribute.

D-Hoppers, on the other hand, use an advanced technology or magical device to go from one world to another. They may not always control where exactly they end up, or getting to a specific locale may require special training, but usually one does not need special knowledge, imagination, will or understanding to simply travel with such a device. An example of a fictional D-Hopper would be the device used in the tv show '*Sliders*'. Usually, D-hoppers are portable, carried with the travelers as they move from world to world. However, some D-hoppers require large amounts of energy, or other 'materials' to function.

Gatemasters find or create holes that tunnel between universes. Their gates often only go from a specific location in one universe to a specific location in a single other universe, but they are generally stable. A common example are the numerous gateways into faeryland, mentioned in many fantasy books and stories. A Gatemaster could also use a technological device, like in the movie *Stargate*. Gatemasters must know how to activate their gate, but don't always know a lot of details at start, especially about where the gate leads. In some worlds Gates may be tapped as a source of energy for tech or magic, making them very valuable. Gates sometimes have problems, such as producing a large electromagnetic field that can be detected, and that may disrupt or destroy unshielded electronic devices brought thru the gate.

"Schrödinger's Cats" is a nickname for a creature or being that can pass from one world to another at will, thru some innate natural talent. They don't even need to be intelligent. Unicorns do this in some stories, carrying their riders back to the realm of Faery. It's usually an instinctive ability and there may be limitations on where, or how, or when it can be used or what can be carried along. The name comes from the famous cat in

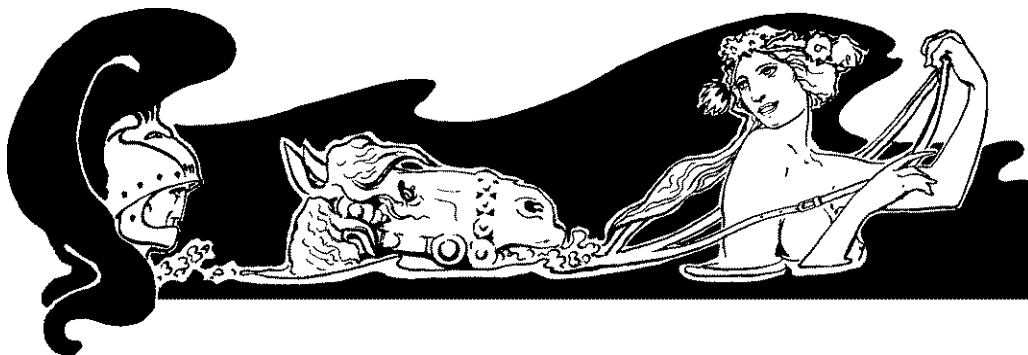


physics that was either alive, dead or not in the box. (It's more complicated than this but has only passing importance here.) There should be some drawbacks to this ability, like needing time between jumps or using a lot of personal energy so that one needs to eat or rest extensively after jumping.

A Companion is someone who has no ability or direct knowledge on how to travel between worlds, but has been brought along by someone else. They may get stranded easily if their transport leaves without them or is killed, and may also find themselves very unprepared for the worlds they travel to, since they have no control over them. This is one way to introduce a new character to a gaming group if they don't quite mesh with the game world - they were brought to the world and left behind, perhaps to wait for their transport's return, perhaps abandoned by their transport, or perhaps stranded when their transport died. In any case, they need to create a new life, and are drawn to the odd sorts of people that PCs often become.

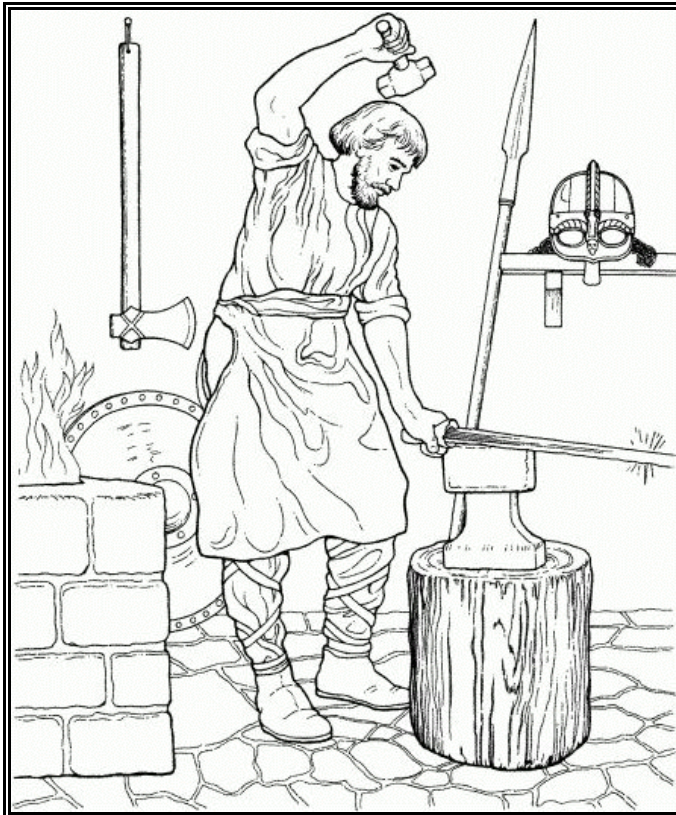
Remember that although dimensional travel may seem dangerous and unbalanced within a game, it can also be very rewarding, introducing new plots or allowing players to change genres without losing the favorite characters they really want to play. Or a short trip to an alternative present, alternative past or alternative future may give the players and characters new incentive to change plans or to take action in their own world to deal with threats they had been ignoring.

If you don't want player characters who have such powers, you can always introduce it via a GM Supporting Character, who can take them along as companions for an adventure or two and then drop them back home later. You could also then let a player who wants a change play a native of the world they travel to for one adventure. But don't use this to force the players to do something - the final choice should be theirs in regards to whether they go or not and which characters to play. Leave your players and their characters within the decision loop at all times, and you'll have a better level of fun, co-operation and trust all the way around.





Tinkering With Reality



Reality is not as fragile as some folks would have you believe. It can be shaped and molded, by those with the right tools, the right knowledge and the desire to redesign it to their own vision and dreams. Or, the wrong people can simply pick up a hammer and start swinging until it either looks something like a large ashtray or a giraffe swallowing a pretzel whole.

Cosmic Synchronicity is designed for the sorts of realities where hammers are best used for carpentry and dealing with door to door evangelists. It's a modular system that can be customized with new ideas to help create settings that fit your particular visions, dreams and desires.

This section of the book is a set of Alternative Rules, Alternative Mechanics and Supplemental materials that you can use in your own settings, or with settings that we have published. Nothing within this section, like much of the rest of

Cosmic (except the basic attributes and aspects, the scale they are based on, the Task Resolution System and the Cosmic Trigger mechanic) should be considered "Gospel" or mandatory.

Unfortunately, because of its general nature, and the fact that it is added to as needed, this section of the book is the least organized. It is asked that you accept the fact that we have done the best we can (and in the electronic edition we have linked what we can via hypertext links to help usage). If you have suggestions on additions to this section, or how to better organize it (or wish to volunteer your efforts at book layout and production) then please contact us (joeteller@mindspring.com).

Destiny Rides Yet Again!

The Destiny System in Cosmic Synchronicity currently allows a player to spend a point to modify a die roll by 20% before it is rolled; add one die of damage to a weapon attack being made; buy one rank of a new skill for a character between game sessions or, by spending 3 points, increase one attribute by 1 point (but not above racial maximums) between sessions.

Additional Destiny Use #1:

Allow, at Character Creation, a player to spend 5 Destiny Points they've collected from previous character portrayals and campaigns that you've run to get 1 Free Trait Point for their new Character. (This can be useful to encourage Heroic Deaths, rotating out characters that don't fit into groups, or retiring out characters that have reached significant change in their lives that they should no longer be involved with the ongoing events but might return at a later date or in a different story line).

Additional Destiny Use #2:

Spending one point to allow the re-rolling of one Initiative, Healing or Damage Die that the player is rolling after it has been rolled, and taking the higher roll, thus giving a chance to overcome a bad roll in a crucial situation. (If using Alternative Initiative methods 3 or 4, this should only apply to one physical die, no matter how many dice the character gets to roll for Initiative).

Additional Destiny Use #3:

This one is a bit tricky, but can be rewarding. This allows a player to spend 3 Destiny points to introduce a useful plot background element to their character during a session. It should be something that fits into genre, which the GM doesn't find disruptive to the game, and which isn't disruptive to the previously laid out character background or situational narrative.

For example, creating a New Contact in the form of an Old Army Buddy, an Old School Chum, an Ex-Roommate, an Old Boyfriend, a Distant Relative that can be of help in the current situation. ("You know, I have this old army buddy, Mitch Johnson who lives in Billings Montana who could put us up for a week while we investigate things." or "My Uncle Ernie lives in Pittsburgh and works in the DMV, I could ask him to check out this license plate for us with no one finding out.")

It might also be useful to introduce an obscure piece of knowledge the character has that could be useful in the situation that isn't represented by their skills or traits. ("Didn't I read someplace that you can get out of a straightjacket if you can manage to dislocate your shoulder?" or "I know of an old abandoned house north of town that we could hide out in" or "The brontosaurus is a vegetarian, I saw that on a PBS science program about dinosaurs in class last year.")

Manifest Destiny!

One of the more unusual ways of utilizing Destiny Points by players is that of **Manifest Destiny**, which I believe requires a more detailed description than has been applied to the other additional destiny uses.

The concept of Manifest Destiny is to apply literary, cinematic and heroic conventions into a game and allow an increased chance of survival of a character in situations of combat, accident or cataclysm. This is to better represent the concept that heroes (and anti-heroes and some memorable villains) will develop over time an inner strength and fortitude, and perhaps some sort of blessing from the Cosmos itself, to overcome obstacles that would destroy lesser beings or halt their striving against outrageous odds.

This is not an invulnerability, or necessarily a pure strengthening of the Spirit, but an enhancement of the bodies ability to survive shock, bleeding, bruising, and breakage. In mechanical terms the player spends five (5) Destiny points between game sessions to increase the Mortality score of the character by 10 points (and then recalculates the derived mortality of each body location in the usual manner using the new mortality total).

The limitations of the system is that the player cannot purchase a Manifest Destiny more than once between two sessions. Additionally they can only purchase for the character Manifest Destiny as many times as they have Synchronicity Ranks. (If they lose Synchronicity in game after having already bought additional Manifest Destiny they will not lose the extra mortality points. If they gain additional Synchronicity within game they can then increase Mortality by purchases of additional Manifest Destiny, up to their new Synchronicity score).

The GM may also, if allowing this optional rule for players, choose to assign to major antagonists Manifest Destiny in a like manner, based on the Synchronicity of the antagonist character. This will make such characters more difficult to face and provide a greater challenge for the players. This also keeps the use of Manifest Destiny by players from becoming an overwhelming force within the game over the long term.



Pushing The Envelope...

There are times when running a Heroic or higher rated setting that you want to let characters have a chance to exceed the limits normally imposed by their attributes. These are often desperate attempts to survive, race the clock or to make a last ditch effort or make a final attack on an enemy as one dies to bring them down with you. Generally we refer to this concept as “Pushing” the character to their limits and just beyond.



Pushing requires a situation that is appropriate, a need to exceed, and willingness to take the risk. To push one makes a Spirit roll at Spirit *2 (a range of 2% to 50%, depending on the character's attribute score), in most cases, and if successful, one will enhance their ability being pushed for the round that it's being pushed.

Success at a push produces a variety of results, depending on what is being rolled. If pushing to run, for instance, a successful push will add 5 mph speed for one round (or if using the *Blood & Chocolate* combat system, for one Combat Session or 30 seconds of non-combat activity).

If pushing for jumping or leaping it adds 5 feet to the distance they can achieve (but remember, to push and fail still commits the character to the jump/leap and failure if the distance is greater than their normal distance!)

You can't push Initiative, Allure, Intimidation, or Healing Rate with this system.

Pushing for things like Damage infliction (specifically to enhance Body damage) is only allowed under the basic skill system, not the *Tier Skill System*. A damage push requires the roll before the roll to hit the target, and gets a +5 to the damage if the attack actually hits and does damage to a body area.

Pushing for skill use of any kind will reduce the actual die rolled by a value of 5. This is also only allowed under the basic skill system.

After having attempted a push (either succeeded or failed) the next round of action the character will suffer the drain of the push on their body, taking 1 point of damage to each body area from strained muscles (this cannot be reduced by armor, Toughness or other means, it's self inflicted directly to the body and must heal in the normal manner). You cannot push if the push itself would be fatal with this result, but you can knock yourself unconscious or cripple a body area in the process. Push damage does not bleed. First Aid will not reduce damage from Pushing.

Skill Tier System:

The skill tier system is designed to as alternative system to replace the usual way that skill lists are handled in settings, though settings using the other lists and method can be reworked to work with the tier system with some effort as well. The system is designed to shorten the skill lists needed for a setting, allow players more flexibility in skill application, and to allow the designing of specializations within specific skills to better represent concepts in reality and fiction.

Under the system there are Primary Skills, and Secondary Skills. Secondary skills are specializations that enhance a primary skill in many cases, or may be a minor subset of a Primary skill that can be used stand alone or trained singularly for special usage. Secondary Skills are always within the same basic skill category as their Primary Skill.

Secondary Skills are generally categorized as :

- Accuracy
- Damage/Restoration
- Defense
- Durability
- Flair
- Offense
- Speed

A skill may have any number of secondaries possible, though not all are equally useful. Not all skills will make sense to have secondary skills in all categories. Points are assigned to Secondaries in the same manner as Primary skills at skill creation, so to gain a lot of secondary skills for a skill can be rather expensive in regards to skill points on a character.

Skill Examples:

Primary Skill	: Archery
Secondary Skills	: Instinctive Targeting (Accuracy : Doubles Effective Range)
	Quickdraw (Speed: Removes Initiative Loss to Reload)
	Zen Concentration (Damage: add this skill rank to damage)
	Blind Shot (Flair: Shooting While Blindfolded use, this skill)
Primary Skill	: Cooking
Secondary Skills	: Short Order Cook (Speed: Cuts Time needed by ½ normal)
	Italian Food (Flair: Specific recipes and style)
	French Pastry (Flair : Specific recipes and style)

Primary Skill	: Unarmed Combat
Secondary Skills	: Combat Reflexes (Speed; increases Initiative by 2) Limbs of Steel (Damage; increases damage by this skill rank) Graceful Swan (Defense; reduces Opponents Chance to hit by ½ the ranks of this skill) Snap Strike (Flair: Breaks Wood, Stone, Brick of 1"/Rank skill) Kung Fu (Flair: Style of Unarmed combat)

Using Skills:

When a primary skill is being used with one or more secondaries simultaneously it must be stated before any rolls are made by the player. A single roll is made, against the lowest chance of success of all the skill rolls involved. If it fails then all the skills, primary and secondary, involved have failed. This true of both unopposed and opposed rolls.

Example: A character using Archery wants to Zen Concentrate and fire. The Archery skill is rank 15, the Zen Concentrate rank 10. They are firing at an opponent. They roll a 55% and fail their Zen. They have been distracted and missed the target entirely. If they had rolled a 45 but the opponent rolled a 40 to dodge, then the arrow missed the target.

If they succeed, then all the specializations being used are applied to the situation.

If a flair is simply a matter of style (ex: Kung Fu in unarmed combat) its applied a bit differently. If attacking with a flair that an opponent has or has a specific countering flair for, then they make their defense roll using the skill rank of that flair. If the defender does not have the flair, but has the primary skill or is simply using Coordination to dodge out of the way, they only get ½ the rank of that attribute (rounded up) to use as a defense, since they are facing a more sophisticated offense than normal.

In defense this can work the same way. A defending character that has a flair that is not known by the attacker using the same primary skill can use that flair as if it were the primary or against the same flair or one that it is specifically designed to act as a counter defense to.

Flair advantages do not apply when not facing attacks oriented towards the same primary skill. Flair Kung Fu gives no help when facing a sword thrust. The exception is a flair specifically designed to deal with a different primary (ex: Hand Parrying Swords as an unarmed combat flair to use against swords).

A flair can be defined as being a special effect. An example would be an unarmed combat flair of "Fearful Scream" which requires an opponent to make a Spirit roll to avoid retreating the first time they hear it from the character.

When more than one skill is involved in the roll, the chance for skill advancement should be applied to the lowest skill being rolled against. In the event of two or more equally ranked skills being rolled upon in the same roll, then the advancement chance should be applied to the Primary Skill.

Some Secondary Skills might require to be rolled for separately from their primary skill. An example is a skill of Speed orientation to eliminate an initiative loss to reload or draw a weapon, or one that would give an initiative bonus at the start of a round of action (which would be rolled before the initiative roll is made). These are not applied to the primary skill, and would advance based upon when they are rolled for.

Additionally a few secondary skills would be rolled against instead of the primary, such as the example Flair of Blind Shot for the Archery skill.

In all cases where multiple skills are being used at once, only one secondary skill for each category can be used at once - you cannot combine two speed skills for example or use two speed skills in the same round (ex: a speed skill for reloading and a speed skill to increase Initiative cannot both be used, only one or the other can be used in the same round).

Using a secondary speed skill separately (such as the Initiative Addition) does not count as a separate action in the round, it is a null-time action and does not count as offensive or defensive in nature.

In most cases, it's expected that a character being constructed should have the Primary skill before they can take the secondary skill, but there can be exceptions to this, mostly in non-combat related skills. For example one might take the Flair : Bellydancing without taking the Primary Dancing. This means the character is not versatile in their training, they cannot dance in other styles, and would only be at ½ their rank in bellydancing when competing against someone in a general dance situation (and could not compete against someone using another flair style very well at all).

For a character to gain a new secondary skill in game (by personal effort and design, destiny point expenditure or thru a teacher) should be difficult and should require them to have achieved 15 ranks in the Primary skill first.

New secondary skills can be conceived and developed between player and GM to suit a specific setting and genre in this method, allowing greater customization of characters, and more variety in the game in general.



Boom-Sweet!

The use of skills, whether they be within the context of a non-contested function or that of a contested function (or even a combat function) can require the weighing of a wide range of variable factors for terrain, weather, personality, nervousness, equipment, etc. In the normal skill system application, this is represented by a series of modifiers that one applies to the chance of success, which can seem too extensive or require too much work on the part of the GM. The Boom-Sweet Module is meant to replace the use of such modifiers with a simple system that suits the playing style of some GMs better than the standard one.

It is not a system for everyone - if you want a higher level of realism, or your players want more mathematical predictability, then Boom-Sweet will probably be insufficient and you should stick to the standard system.

Basically the GM sets a difficulty modifier of 1 to 10, with 1 being hardest and 10 being easiest. This is multiplied by the character's Skill Rank get the percentage chance of success to roll against, and they must roll below this percentage value to be successful (and of course still not roll within their cosmic trigger range). *Aspects & Attributes can use the table, but for them 4 is "normal"*.

The basic reference for GMs to the success modifier is:

5	Normal	6	Routine
4	Challenging	7	Easy
3	Difficult	8	Very Easy
2	Daring	9	Trifling
1	Boom!	10	Sweet!

So a modifier of 5 is the same as the normal chance of success, 6 is slightly easier, 4 is slightly harder, etc. A 1 is for very difficult things (but not quite impossible) while Sweet is something so easy, it's likely that the only way to fail is to Cosmic Trigger.

Note that a GM who believes that Attributes or some Traits should affect skills might offer a bonus for exceptional attributes when using such skills (such as increasing the modifier by 1 if the character has a 20-25 Coordination when performing a Dance Maneuver). Overdoing this though could badly warp the concepts of the game mechanic and should be cautioned against.

Thus a character with 20 ranks in driving might think twice about driving at night in a heavy fog along a curvy cliff-hugging road above the speed limit (where the GM could justifiably claim a modifier to make it *Difficult* or even *Daring*) and a master surgeon's player (rank 15) may feel much better knowing that they are performing a *Trifling* action to properly put three stitches in a minor leg wound of a patient in the emergency room of the hospital.

Alternative Initiatives:

The stock initiative system in Cosmic Synchronicity has a few problems that may annoy, confound or irritate both players and GMs at various times. It has a tendency to overly favor High Coordination Characters and to encourage combat oriented characters to be developed with superhuman speeds when possible in order to always strike first, especially in modern and science fiction settings where he who shoots first often wins with their first shot. This problem exists in nearly all published roleplaying games that have an initiative system.

None of the following alternatives is perfect, or will fill the desires of all GMS and Players, but they do act as useful methods to improve the problems with the stock initiative system.

Alternative #1:

This one is actually really simple, and is designed to give thinking characters some balance against action characters. Instead of the base attribute for Initiative being Coordination, allow it to be either Coordination or Mind, depending on which attribute has a higher rank. Otherwise Initiative is handled in the regular way.

Alternative #2:

This method requires a bit more effort and a change in what die is rolled for Initiative. You take the character's Coordination Rank and roll a die based on this, then add to it any Initiative modifiers due to Traits.

<u>Coordination</u>	<u>Die Rolled</u>
1-10	D10
11-20	D20
21+	D30 (D20 + D10 if a D30 is unavailable)

This makes a higher speed character's ability to get first initiative every single round less likely. It can be combined with alternative #1.

Alternative #3:

This method requires multiple dice to achieve. You calculate the Initiative total in the usual way, including all trait additions etc., and for every 10 points of Initiative you get 1d10 to roll (1-10 = 1, 11-20 = 2, 21-30 = 3, 31-40 = 4, etc.) You then take the highest die value rolled. This squishes all action in the round into 10 phases in the count, which increases the probability of simultaneous actions occurring in the same phase of the round. It also makes it more likely for slower characters to be acting on the same phase as fast ones than in the stock method.

Alternative #4:

This is basically the same as #3, but you roll d20s instead of d10s. This spreads the action around and reduces the simultaneous actions, but still leaves the slower characters a chance to react as fast as the fast characters on some occasions (the odds are against it happening too often, but better than in the stock method).

Alternative #5:

Under this method you add the character's Coordination, Mind, and all the trait adds to initiative together to produce a Total Initiative Value. This is then used on a simple chart to determine what kind of die is rolled, based on the TIV, and the order of action is based on the die result for the round. It requires a different variety of dice for rolling:

<u>TIV</u>	<u>DIE</u>
2 -15	D6
16-30	D10
31-45	D12
46-55	D20
56+	D30

This removes some of the chance of being high Initiative to some of the really slow characters, evens the range for mid-range characters with above average but not super high values, but still gives the superior speed characters a chance to take first action in a wide range of rolls.

Alternative #6:

This method doesn't involve changing the dice system, it involves changing traits. In the basic book there are two example traits that are commonly used, Ambidextrous [2] and Fast Metabolism [3]. The first should remain untouched, but you could alter Fast Metabolism to a [2] and drop the Initiative add that it gives to a +1 (instead of +5) to balance it better against Ambidextrous. Or you could raise the trait cost of Fast Metabolism to [7] to make the advantage it gives a bit more costly.

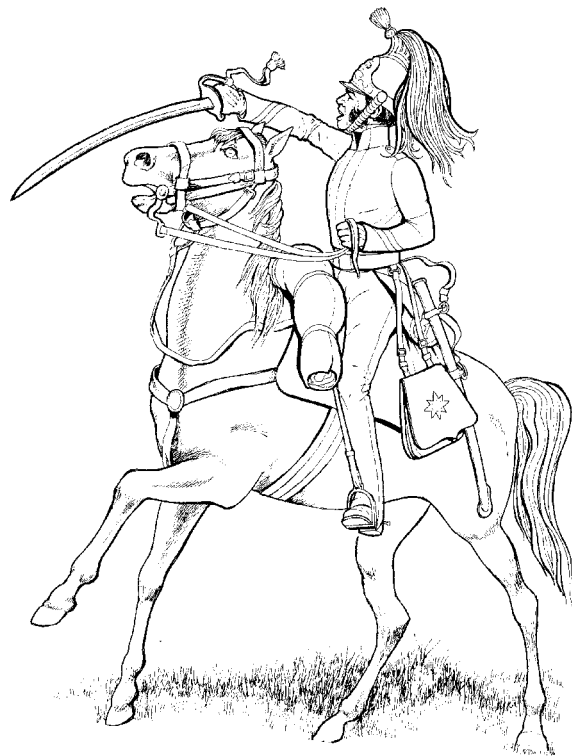
This can also be applied to setting specific traits. In *Earth Unmasked*, the trait Unearthly Speed [5] is fine for its first rank, but allows the purchase of additional ranks that give a +5 to Initiative each time as well as an increase to running speed. Here one can reduce the Initiative increase to a +1 per rank, but leave the running speed increase as is to balance the trait and prevent it from overwhelming most normal human characters. This could, of course, be combined with any of the other alternative methods to improve Initiative.

Blood & Chocolate!

Many of the optional system sections presented up to now are intended as simple modifications, additions or improvements on the system and don't drastically change the flow of the game system in an overly drastic way. The Blood & Chocolate Combat rules are intended as a replacement for several parts of the current *Cosmic Synchronicity* rules and are a major paradigm shift for many folks used to how combat is handled in many game systems. It is derived, in part, from a system used by Michael Ball in his *The Guide To Adventure RPG*, but modified and expanded to fit the rest of the *Cosmic Synchronicity* rules.

Blood & Chocolate can be used in concordance with the Skill Tier System, Destiny Point Rule Additions (Including Manifest Destiny!), the Surprise Rules, Splat! and the Pushing rules, but should not be used with any of the Alternative Initiative rules (since a large part of it includes an Initiative system overhaul).

The Blood & Chocolate system is intended to duplicate a specific kind of combat style, which will not be appropriate to all setting genres or GM/Player desires. It is a system that may appear counter intuitive to those who think of combat more as a chess match than the true chaotic turmoil filled with the fog of war. It removes some of the predictability, and adds some flair and spice to the events, while not increasing complexity. It does, in many situations, take longer than the basic *Cosmic Synchronicity* combat rules to handle combats, but works better for larger scale combats.



To begin with you need a set of cards (these may be created with index cards, blank playing cards, blank tarot cards, computer generated or made any other way that you desire). The Minimum suggested set is one of 60 cards. 55 of the cards consists of cards numbered from 1 to 10. There should be 1 card marked with a 1, 2 marked with a 2, 3 marked with a 3, and so forth, until you have 10 marked with a 10. The remaining five cards consist of two marked with an "R", two marked with a "D" and one marked with an "*" or some other Star-like symbol.

The cards replace the initiative system that is used in *Cosmic Synchronicity*. They are shuffled together with the five non-numbered cards (we'll get to those momentarily). This is the Action Deck.

Character Initiative Values are determined under this system in one of two ways:

Method A: Take Coordination, add any Trait Modifiers to Initiative to this. At the Start of a combat a d10 is rolled and added to this. The Total is divided by 5 and rounded up to a whole number (a 1.2 Becomes a 2 for example). This could be represented by a chart on the character's sheet to speed the result (Example, a character with Coordination 12 and not trait modifiers roll results):

Roll	Initiative
1	3
2	3
3	3
4	4
5	4
6	4
7	4
8	4
9	5
10	5

Method B: Is a variation of the same mechanic, but uses instead the Average of the character's Coordination and Mind attributes rounded up, then add trait modifications to initiative and the 1d10 die roll to get the initiative for the combat. The results should still be in the same 1-10 end value range. (If somehow the result is higher than 10, it should be handled purely as if it was 10).

The Six Second Round is not used in Blood & Chocolate, it's replaced by the Combat Session, which represents approx. 30 seconds of activity (60 seconds if you are dealing with a setting that has a general CV of 3 or less, if you want realistic archery).

Whenever "round" is normally referred to in the setting in regards to Magic, non-combat skills etc it is best to replace the term with "*Action*" for clarification. When in doubt, use the time factor (second or half second) to determine if something is possible within the allotted time.

Each session the GM shuffles the cards to begin and the players make their die rolls to determine their Initiative. Then the GM will flip over the top card of the deck and if it is a numeric value, all characters sharing that value as their Initiative will have simultaneous actions.

Defensive reactions are not limited in this system, whenever a character is attacked they will get a chance to dodge, block or parry (if they are not unconscious, bound, stunned or otherwise unable to react) instead of the "standard" combat mechanic's limit of one defensive action. This is to balance the possible multiple attacks that they may be subject to.

Under this method you cannot “Close and attack” with an opponent in the same action, the exception being a Tackle Maneuver. To reload a modern firearm takes a full action, to draw a new weapon from a sheath and ready it takes a full action (unless the weapon is special designed to allow instant draw), to reload a black powder firearm or a crossbow takes 2 actions.

Since the sequence of actions is random, its possible for a “slow” character to actually go first in a combat sequence, but the fast character will have more actions over the entire sequence since they have more action cards in the deck.

If a character enters the scene of a combat from outside, they must make an initiative roll as they enter and will then be within the sequence as if they had rolled that number at start. Any actions that have passed before they arrived are lost.

Action cards that come up that no character is acting on are simply flipped past. When all the cards have been emptied from the deck, or when all combat action has basically ended, then the cards are returned to the deck so it can be reshuffled when needed again. If the session left combat ongoing, then it’s immediately reshuffled when empty, new rolls are made, and the sequencing begins anew.

Actions can be “Held” from one card to another, but not in multiples. If you are holding action (for example to coordinate an effort with another character who acts on a different phase card cycle) then you will lose actions in between, you can’t pile up your actions to all be used at once. You cannot have more than one action in a single card Phase, unless its from a special skill maneuver that specifically states so.

The two “R” cards are for “*Recoveries*”. When an R card appears, everyone whose character is currently Stunned (from combat affects, magic or other sources) regains their senses and can again act. This is the only way they can recover in combat. If they are stunned and have not had a recovery, and their Action Number comes up, they simply lose that action. This means one never knows when they are going to recover from being stunned. Additionally it is used for characters knocked out via the instant knockout die result to get a chance to recover. Such a character will get a roll vs Health*4 on percentile to recover from unconsciousness at the Recovery. No other action takes place on a recovery, not even held actions.

The two “D” cards are for “*Destiny*”. At the start of a combat session, when the cards are being shuffled and before the first card is flipped over, a player may choose to spend a Destiny Point to enhance their Actions (this can be after they have made their Initiative Roll). When one of the Destiny Cards comes up in the session characters who have thus spent a Destiny point can take an action, even though it’s a letter card instead of their specific Action value. Thus those spending the point have a chance for two extra actions in a Combat Session, giving them some possible advantage in the circumstance and overcoming the limits of their dice roll and attribute limitations. (Their characters, of course, must actually be functional to take advantage of their Destiny action. If they are stunned when their Destiny comes up, they get a recovery instead of an extra action).

Finally the “*” card is the GM special Event Card (the *Chocolate* in the *Blood & Chocolate*). When this comes up the GM can introduce a special plot element, situational change or surprise the players in some way, if desired. It is also the Blood marker for characters that are suffering from bleeding wounds, where blood loss from the wounds increase the damage to the area (or in the case of severed limbs and body areas that have reached 0 from bleeding, the loss of a Health point or even death).

Blood & Chocolate works off the concept that combats should not be over in just a couple of actions. As such it should not be used with any of the “Experiments in Lethality”, as these are designed to speed combat even more so. It also works off the concept that having lots of actions can be more advantageous than just “going first”.

Running Distances in Combat (by yards) are covered in regards to the MPH of the character. The following chart works as a close approximation of the distance they can cover in combat, and compared to the ‘standard’ 6 second method from the basic rules..

MPH	½ Second Card	1 Second Card	6 Second Rnd
1	1	1	3
2	1	1	6
3	1	2	9
4	1	2	12
5	2	3	15
6	2	3	18
7	2	4	21
8	2	4	24
9	3	5	27
10	3	5	30
11	3	6	33
12	3	6	36
13	4	7	39
14	4	7	42
15	4	8	45
16	4	8	48
17	5	9	51
18	5	9	54
19	5	10	57
20	5	10	60
21	6	11	63
22	6	11	66
23	6	12	69
24	6	12	72
25	7	13	75
26	7	13	78
27	7	14	81
28	7	14	84
29	8	15	87
30	8	15	90
31	8	16	93
32	8	16	96
33	9	17	99

Pant! Wheeze! Whew!

One idea that many GMs often want installed into a game mechanic is a Fatigue system for combat. Pant! Wheeze! Whew! Is an optional Fatigue system for use with *Blood & Chocolate*. It's designed to deal with the major problem that occurs when adding Fatigue systems into games, that is it's designed to work without extra paper work.

Fatigue is represented in *Cosmic Synchronicity* as a concept drawn from the character's Health. In this application a Fatigue Roll is made at various times (roll vs Health *4 on percentile). This should be the modified version of Health, with losses from combat damage, spell effects and other reduction factors applied.

If a character fails a Fatigue roll they will lose their next action (not re-action, but action, so defense rolls are not affected directly by fatigue in regards to being able to take them, but Defense rolls are made at ½ their normal chance when suffering from fatigue).

In Blood and Chocolate the Fatigue system is, of course, tied to the Card Deck. One or more cards are marked for each Action Count with an "F" and when these come up, after the character has had their action and actually performed an action, a Fatigue Roll is made.

The First Session (passage thru the deck of cards) of a combat that a character is in, Fatigue marks are ignored (in both the 30 second and 1 minute versions). The Second Session, the rolls are made. If a roll is failed then a character will lose their next action when it comes up, as they are forced to by their body. Until this missed action card comes up in the deck, they are Fatigued and at ½ their normal Defense. After they have missed the action they return to full Defense. Note that in a long combat a character that joins the combat during the second pass thru for all the other characters will still be on their own first pass thru and have a slight advantage in regards to fatigue. (Fresh Reinforcements!) If a Recovery Card Comes up before an action to lose, then the Recovery counts as a replacement for the lost action.

A character that is holding action or is not taking anything but defensive actions during a session does not count the session - sessions only count if you are taking action. Drawing a weapon, although an action, is not counted as one in the fatigue system for determining if they have acted in the session for fatigue purposes. The Number of cards marked for Fatigue for each Action Number are:

Action Numbers	Number of Fatigue Checks
1-3	1
4-6	2
7-9	3
10	4

Critical Damage In Combat

The use of Critical Damage Systems is one that has been applied in many game systems over the years. There are many arguments around for and against such systems in a roleplaying game, and often times it comes down to a matter of Style, Genre, and personal experience that decides whether you like them or hate them.

The advantages of any critical damage system is that it makes combat a little less predictable, and certainly makes it easier to apply Literary and Cinematic concepts to a game so that you can duplicate results from books and film (ex: In J.R.R. Tolkein's *The Hobbit* the dragon is killed by an arrow that happens to hit the one small vulnerable spot in its otherwise impenetrable armor; In the movie, *Big Trouble In Little China*, the main villain is killed by a single knife throw).

The disadvantages are that it makes combat less predictable, and allows such results to be applied both for and against the protagonists. Some players will not like having their favorite character killed after numerous battles by an attack from some minor minion that turns lucky and ends up piercing their heart; and some GMs don't like to have their major villain defeated by sheer luck on the part of one player before they can bring all their complex plot development onto the stage to impress the players.

Whether or not to use a Critical Damage System is up to the GM at the start of their game, and they should be sure to (like all the rules in Cosmic Synchronicity) let the players know before implementing them, and then be sure to apply them consistently to both player characters and NPCs. An Inconsistent GM is an unfair GM, and an unfair GM will eventually lose their players.

Critical System #1: Under this system, whenever a character has damage dice rolled, if the roll is the maximum result for the die (ex: 10 on 1d10, 20 on 1d20) then add that to the damage total and then roll the die again and add it again, as long as they keep rolling the maximum damage total on the die. This should be applied to both aimed and unaimed attacks (but not to attacks that don't require a damage die roll), and can also be applied to magical damage.

Critical System #2: Almost the same as #1, this is the Discordian version, so instead of re-rolling the maximum damage rolls, you re-roll when the die comes up a '5'. Why? Fnord!

Critical System #3: The Close Shave method is a bit more complex. Whenever an attack is made successfully against a target and the attacker has rolled beneath the actual Rank of their skill used (ex: Skill Rank is 10, and thus a 50% chance of success, the attack roll to critical must be 1% to 9%) then they have critical results, they get to roll an extra damage die for the attack if a damage die is being rolled. This is not applied if it is not a major body area (head, torso, limb) that is being hit.

Critical System #4: The Dragonslayer method is designed for high lethality. You apply Critical System #3 and either #1 or #2 to all damage die rolls. Be careful about this one, it can be bloody!

Dangerous Experiments In Lethality

Cosmic Synchronicity is designed with the intent of having slightly less-than-realistic combat (what some folks call *Cinematic*, *Theatrical* or *Fiction-Friendly*), even when all the optional rules are used. This is because it's designed for use in long-term campaigns, where players get plenty of time to explore, develop and enjoy their character, rather than a slam-bang style that ends up with a lot of dead characters every evening.

Now, sometimes folks will complain about this style and want the system to be a bit more lethal. There are four ways this can be achieved, modifying damage rolls or modifying the location die on damage. We call these Lethality enhancement systems, and a GM can choose to do so if they want a more lethal game. (Please warn your players, and expect some of them to be unwilling to play, since their character's life expectancy drops considerably) You can use as many of the rules as you wish. These should NOT be used with the *Dancing With Dumas* Module.

Lethality Enhancement #1:

This is the simple one. Whenever a locale roll is made and comes up a 0, instead of being a GM call used to enhance the color and complication of a situation, it is always an instant kill, no matter what the damage die and armor factors say. This assumes that there is no such thing as a perfect defense. Failure can and does occur. This means whenever a character gets hit there is a 10% chance that they will be dead, period. If you use this rule, expect your players to want characters that are very fast so they always get the initiative.

Lethality Enhancement #2:

This is also a simple one. Just increase the damage total by 5 points on all damage rolls. This reduces the effectiveness of armor and toughness, so there is less chance of a blow's damage being entirely absorbed (unless characters are walking around in medieval plate mail).

Lethality Enhance #3:

The Eradicator. Under this rule, players should note the difference between their successful attack roll and the opponent's failed defense roll. This difference is added to the damage die roll when they make it. This means that if they succeed with a roll of 03 and their opponent tried to dodge and rolled a 53, they do a +50 to their damage roll. This adds up, very quickly, to corpses.

Lethality Enhance #4:

The Expert Enhancement. Under this rule the skill rank of the attacker (after any modifiers that are being applied for terrain etc) is added to the damage total as well as the usual attribute and weapon modifiers.

Lethality Enhancement #5:

Ben Silver's Variant Expert Enhancement. Under this rule, skill ranks above 10 possessed by the attacker are added to the damage total of the attack, along with the usual attribute and weapon modifiers. This produces a narrower range compared to Lethality #4, but since the modifiers for aiming, terrain etc are not applied, it is more consistent.

Lethality Enhancement #6:

Captain Lee's Miracle Maneuver Lethality Enhancement. Under this rule, when the character is attempting to perform a complex skill usage, maneuver or has modifiers to their chance of success to perform an attack and they succeed despite these difficulties, you add the ranks of modification that were applied to the damage. Thus an attack that would be a -10 to hit because they are swinging from a rope while firing a pistol at the arm of an opponent, if they hit, gets an extra 10 points of damage to the target. It basically rewards risk taking daring do over taking the careful, easy attacks, and thus is appropriate to a Pulp Adventure, Cinematic Action Hero, Tv Hero, Some forms of Noir or similar genres (but not appropriate for extremely realistic nitty gritty and angst ridden games).

Pain Hurts System: In this option whenever a character gets hit and actually wounded, they make a SPIRIT roll. If they fail then they make a noise (oof, moan, groan, Oww!, Argh! Or a scream). (As an added option they will be at -2 ranks to all skills & attributes thru the end of the round from the pain of the wound).

Swashbuckling Pain Hurts Variet : the first time the character is wounded they actually get a +2 ranks added to their next attack, from the classic "I needed that wound to remind me how evil you are!" comeback.

Gunshots Stun! Another pain variant, whenever a character is shot, even if they take no actual damage, they need to make a roll vs their Health *4 or be stunned for the rest of the round (or thru their next action or recovery in *Blood & Chocolate*).



The Policeman's Brawl.... or "Babes In Khaki!"

There are times and settings where the basic combat system of *Cosmic Synchronicity* seems counter to the idioms that is desired. There are also folks who feel that most game rules in general fail to really represent the results of the use of firearms as reported by such sources as the FBI and the New York City Police (both of whom report a much higher level of gunshots that fail to hit their target or hit the wrong target when they are in a prolonged firefight with multiple assailants and officers involved).



These become even more obvious when one looks at the real results of the American Wild West, where many a shootout took anywhere from 6 to 60 shots being fired between two gunslingers to actually take down one of the opponents. To help increase the inaccuracy of weapons (but not necessarily change the damage effectiveness of the weapons) we offer these *Policeman's Brawl* rules. These supplement the standard rules, and do NOT replace them in any way.

Things That Help Us Dodge!

These modifiers subtract from the actual die roll made by a character that is dodging gunfire, not their chance of success or the chance of success of the attacker using the gun. The total of these modifiers should be considered the character's "Brawl" modifier, which is applied to attempts to avoid gunfire, crossbow bolts, arrows, sling stones and thrown weapons like javelins and spears (but not small thrown weapons like knives, darts, throwing stars, hatchets, baseballs, etc.).

The Brawl modifier should *not* be applied if the character rolls in their Cosmic Trigger range - as that would defeat the major balance mechanic of the system. If the character's roll, after applying the modifier, has a result of 1 or less (and yes the result can be negative) then they will manage to avoid getting hit. These modifiers are combined together to get the character's Brawl modifier..

- 1 for each point of Insight above 10 that the Character Possesses
- 1 for each point of Perception above 10 that the Character Possesses
- 1 for each 5 points of Synchronicity that the Character Possesses
- 1 for each 5 points of Symmetry that the Character Possesses

Hiding Behind The Couch and Looking For Loose Change

Events and circumstances can improve the Brawl value of a character as well, just as they can affect normal combat modifiers in the basic combat rules.

The availability of places to dodge behind or otherwise put between oneself and an attacker should also help a character's ability to avoid getting hit by fired and thrown weapons. In an open space (like a football field) such protective obstacles just don't exist, but in a forest, inside an office building's cubical jungle, the floor of a department store or the many racks of a warehouse there is plenty of cover available. If there is plenty of obvious cover (as described by the GM) in the area, then the character should get another -5 to their Brawl value to improve dodging.



If the firefight is occurring in an area that contains a lot of people or large herd animals (like cattle) that are not participating in the fight, then characters get another -1 to their Brawl value to improve dodging for each person in the crowd greater than the number of participants. (But every shot that misses because of a cosmic trigger will hit an unintentional living target that is not part of the combat in the crowd, chosen by the GM). A crowd in this case, is having more non-participants than there are participants. Thus 6 people in the way is a crowd if 5 or less people are having a gunfight, giving a -1 to their Brawl (remember only standing targets count).

If a firefight involves more than 5 people shooting in total, then a -1 per person is applied to the Brawling value since all involved will be making snap decisions in regards to shooting while avoiding being shot - adrenaline causes many people to flinch when firing in such circumstances, adding to the probability that they will miss all these ducking, dodging and shooting targets.

If a character isn't wearing Armor that reduces their Coordination Rank in regards to rolls against that attribute or carrying heavy materials that would slow them down or make them awkward, then they should also get an additional -5 to their Brawl.

A character that has taken a crippling leg wound is slowed and gets a +5 to their Brawl (but this cannot raise the Brawl to a positive value, the worst one's Brawl modifier can be is 0)

And One Silly Brawling Bit:

If the setting is intended to be a bit silly, like in some movies and cartoons, then you can use the Protective Beauty Option to the Brawl Rules. This gives a -5 if the character is scantily clad (and has a Symmetry of at least 15), and another -5 if they are nearly naked or actually naked. This one also uses -1 for each point of Symmetry above 10, instead of the -1 for every 5 points rule.

Important Note In General for the Brawl rules:

Brawl rules, of course, are not applied in a situation where the attacker has surprise on the target. This is why assassinations can be carried out with a rifle of someone who is passing thru a crowd in an automobile. Additionally if an attacker is concealed or invisible and their locale is unknown after a round of combat (no perception rolls made successfully to spot them) they will continue to be outside the Brawl rules until they are spotted and folks can figure out where to duck.



The Brawl rules, of course, are also not intended to handle mass combat situations on a battlefield. Actually, in general, the Cosmic Synchronicity rule system was not designed to handle large scale military conflict, and certainly does not authenticate concepts of military tactics or operations. When they are used for a combat situation, they are intended for small scale, police action kind of activities, usually where the protagonists are not trying to tally up a large body count but are just trying to prevent harm to the general population at large.

Brawls & Boom!-Sweet!

The Policeman Brawl rules were originally written for *Cosmic Synchronicity v2* and are not designed to be compatible with the Boom!-Sweet! rules. I'm sure its possible you could make adaptations to use them with such, but so far no one has found it necessary to do so.

Necessity, Whim and Curiosity are generally the three driving forces behind most of the modular rule options created for Cosmic Synchronicity. Necessity comes into play when a specific need is not being filled in the rules, or where the rules appear to be running counter to a general opinion of a particular style in game mechanics or the needs of a genre. Curiosity comes when we see a nifty idea applied elsewhere that we think we could adapt or use to make the system better in some way, and of course Whims are inspired by one's muse, staying up really late at night while writing, or when Eris or some other divine being shows up and nudges our funny-bone.

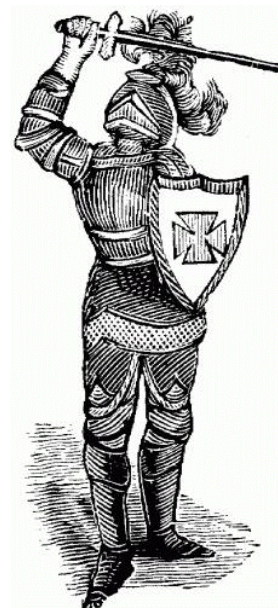
So, if you come up with something that adapts the Policeman Brawl rules better, or which can replace them, or something entirely different that you think is neat, then feel free to do so and to try them out. If they work, then please drop us an email with your ideas and info on how you think they can be implemented, and we'll consider including them in the next version of the game book and giving you an actual credit in the book to show your friends and relatives (and which you might use to start your own career as an underpaid overworked freelance game designer!)

Simultaneous Damage Locale System

This system is an alternative way to determine damage locales in combat. It's called the simultaneous system because no extra dice are used beyond those rolled at the time of the character attack/defense rolls that are made.

After it has been determined that an attack has actually struck a target (by the defender failing to roll below their defending attribute/skill or failing to roll below the attacker's successful attack roll) you add the two dice of the *defender* to produce a total, counting a 0 as being a zero and not ten. This gives you a total between 0 and 18 which is then compared to the following chart for locales and special effects. This system is built so that the better the attacker rolled and the worse the defender rolled the more critical the damage locale result occurs.

If you use this system it is suggested that this table be added to the character sheet for easy quick reference during play.

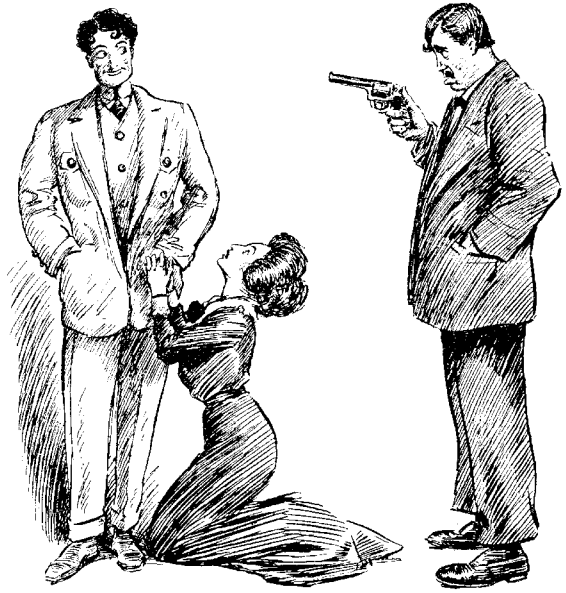


Die Total	Target Struck & Special Results
0	Torso Damage : Groin Hit, Knocked Prone, Stunned, Roll vs Spirit or Unconscious
1	Head Damage : Neck Hit, Cannot Speak for an hour.
2	Ear, Eye or Nose Harmed (-1 Perception)
3	Valuable Property Damaged/Broken/Lost or Pulled Tendon (-1 Coordination)
4	Either Tail or Wing or (if none) Torso (with Internal Injuries -1 Health)*
5	Disarmed or Shield Damaged (including Cloak) or GM Special
6	Knocked Unconscious (or Entangled with a Whip/Flail/Cloak)
7	Right Arm Damage
8	Right Leg Damage
9	Torso Damage
10	Armor Damaged or -1 Toughness (Or Disarm with Whip/Flail/Cloak)
11	Torso Damage (with Muscle Damage for -1 Body until healed)
12	Left Leg Damage
13	Left Arm Damage
14	Head Damage
15	Knocked Prone and/or Stunned for 1 Round/Action
16	Surface Wound that will scar badly (-1 Symmetry Permanently)
17	Torso Damage (with Internal Injuries -1 Health)*
18	Instant Kill or GM Special

* Internal Injuries mean internal Bleeding, and, if Health reaches 0, then the character dies.

Splat! Ouch! Oh the Pain!

The two basic wound locale result tables (D10 & D12) presented in the basic *Cosmic Synchronicity* rules are effective, but hardly as colorful as they could be and do not cover a wide range of possibilities. Effective combat is not always the goal in a roleplaying game, sometimes its more important to have a wider range of results and thus a bit more cinema or literature emulating appearance.



The Double Column Splat! Table gives back some of this color, without making too much complexity. The first column is identical to the d12 target table from the basic *Cosmic Synchronicity* Book, except that a 12 is not a GM choice, but instead requires a second D12 roll, which is then looked up in the second column (The “Specials” Column). Attribute wounds are handled like Toughness wounds, unless marked as Permanent. Damage roll is only made if it states damage is applied to a body locale.

If a locale roll makes no sense to the situation, the GM can always ask for a re-roll or make a GM Choice to override it with their own selection (but GMs should not do this if the result makes sense).

Double Column Splat! Table

Roll	Target Result	Special Results Column
1	Head	Eye, Ear or Nose Harmed (-1 Perception)
2	Left Arm	Muscle Damage in evading attack (-1 Body)
3	Right Arm	Pulled Tendon in evading (-1 Coordination)
4	Torso	Internal Injuries (-1 Health)
5	Left Leg	Groin Hit. Prone. Stunned. Damage Applied to Torso
6	Right Leg	Valuable Property Damaged, broken or lost.
7	Armor or Toughness [Or Disarm Using Whip/Flail]	Surface Wound That Will Scar badly (-1 Symmetry Permanently)
8	Knocked Prone and/or Stunned for 1 Round	Stunned and Concussion (-1 Mind with -1 All Skill Ranks until healed from memory loss)
9	Knocked Unconscious	Neck Hit, Cannot Speak for hour. Damage Applied to Head
10	Disarmed or Shield Destroyed or GM Special Choice!	Disarmed or Shield Destroyed or GM Choice!
11	Torso	Severe Internal Injuries (-1 Health Permanently)
12	Roll Again On Special Results	Apply Damage to Tail, Wing or if none, Torso.

Detailed Armor System

The armor system in basic Cosmic Synchronicity is very simple, as was the application of the system within the *Earth Unmasked* Setting Book. Basically armor in the basic system mimics the effects of Toughness on incoming damage.

Although the basic system is simple its not realistic on several levels, which several folks have commented on. So, the Detailed Armor system is designed to address several of those problems for those folks who wish a more realistic way of dealing with armor.

All damage from weapons can be broken down to four categories of effect: Bashing (such as from a Staff, Mace, Fist), Cutting (such as from a knife or axe), Impaling (from arrows, lances, and bullets), and pure Energy Attacks (such as from Fire and Lightning).

Different kinds of Armor deal with different kinds of damage at various levels of effectiveness. The following table gives the Toughness of various armors against the category of effect.

Armors marked with a '*' have special properties against bullets specifically, and are thus 'Ballistic' defending. After an Impaling bullet strikes them and the toughness is subtracted from the damage of the attack, it is cut in half before applying it to flesh under the armor. This is NOT applied when dealing with impaling damage from arrows, crossbows or other sources of impaling damage.

Armor Type	(B)lunt	(C)utting	(I)mpaling	(E)nergy
Clothing	1	1	1	1
Heavy Winter Clothing or Furs	2	2	1	1
Quilted or Padded	4	3	2	4
Light Leather	2	5	3	3
Heavy Leather (including boiled leather)	5	8	5	3
Wood/Bamboo	3	6	1	1
Leather with Bronze Scales	6	8	6	3
Bronze Plate	8	10	6	1
Leather, Steel Studded	6	8	5	3
Leather, Steel Scaled	10	12	8	3
Steel Plate (Knights Armor etc)	15	15	12	1
Ringmail	8	13	8	1
Chainmail (with padding)	12	15	10	4
Spider Silk *	1	6	6	1
Flack Armor *	10	12	12	3
Kevlar *	4	8	15	3
Kevlar, Heavy with Titanium Plate *	10	15	20	3

If a weapon is capable of either impaling or cutting damage, it should be assumed to do cutting against limbs and head, impaling against torso for locale.

Dancing With Dumas

The Standard Cosmic Synchronicity damage mechanic and its various options primarily presents a fairly “realistic” method, with a heavy usage of flat-rate numbers and only a limited amount of truly random infliction amounts. This is fine for some realistic settings or styles, but fails to capture the random nature of conflict that a truly Swashbuckling or Cinematic style/setting really calls for.

Heroes and Villains should be larger than life, and one way this is achieved in book, television and film is to not have them brought low too quickly or easily when struck in combat. This means that combat should rarely be a quick-kill process and that there should be a high level of risk to both sides in a combat every step of the way.

Additionally there are three major kinds of characters that must be, to some extent, balanced against each other

: The Skilled Veteran, The Promising Apprentice, and The Lucky Rogue. Much of the standard system concentrates on the Veteran and fails to really balance the Apprentice and the Rogue against them, thus violating the concepts of the Swashbuckling or Cinematic style.

The Dumas System is a different dice mechanic to determine damage than is used in the standard method, applied AFTER it has been settled whether there has been a hit and that hit should be doing damage to a body area of a character that was attacked (thru whichever method and options you are using for your game). It affects both attacker damage and defender ability to absorb (or “soak”) damage, reducing the damage maximums in the process.

To use the Dumas System you need several d6, d10, d20 and d30 dice. (No you cannot substitute 2d10 for a d20 or a d10 and a d20 for a d30 or other combinations, you need the actual dice.)

Nomenclature :

dp is abbreviation for “dice pool” and usually used to describe dice, such as 2dp10 (2 dice with 10 sides, choose the highest value of the two when rolled, don’t add the two dice together!).

& is used to designate combining dice of different types and choosing the highest, such as 1dp10 & 1dp20 (roll a d10 and a d20 and take the highest result).

Applying the System:



The attacker must choose either attribute (body or coordination associated with the weapon type) or skill used to determine their character base dice (usually whichever is higher) and look up the ranks of that on the *Dumas Rank Table* to see which dice are to be used. They get to roll the dice listed there, taking the highest result. They also get to roll the dice designated for their weapon on the *Dumas Weapon list*, and compare this to the Rank dice rolled, and keep whichever is the highest value (these can be all rolled together at the same time if you have enough dice).

If the Attacker spends (before the rolls) a point of Destiny on their attack damage, then they get to roll an extra die, based on their Synchronicity on the *Dumas Rank Table* and can ADD that die's result to their damage total. (This replaces the Destiny for Damage mechanic of the basic rules when using the Dumas system.)

The defender rolls Absorbing Dice (aka "Soak" dice) for their Toughness (using the Rank table) and their Armor (if any) for the kind of attack involved. If they have a "Charmed Life" Trait the character also gets dice for that, based on the *Dumas Rank Table* of their Synchronicity. All defensive soak dice are rolled, and the highest result is used.

The defender also has the option, before rolling their Soak dice, to spend a Destiny point to assist the soak result, getting an extra die based on their Synchronicity on the *Dumas Rank Table* that ADDs to their final Soak Die total.

If the Soak value is higher or equal to the Attacker's damage result, then no damage actually is inflicted, its cushioned/deflected/bruises or merely scratches them. Otherwise the difference between the Attacker's Damage and the Soak is applied to the body locale.

Dumas Rank Table

Rank	Dice	Rank	Dice
1-5	1dp6	16-20	1dp20
6-10	1dp10	21-24	2dp20
11-15	2dp10	25+	1dp30

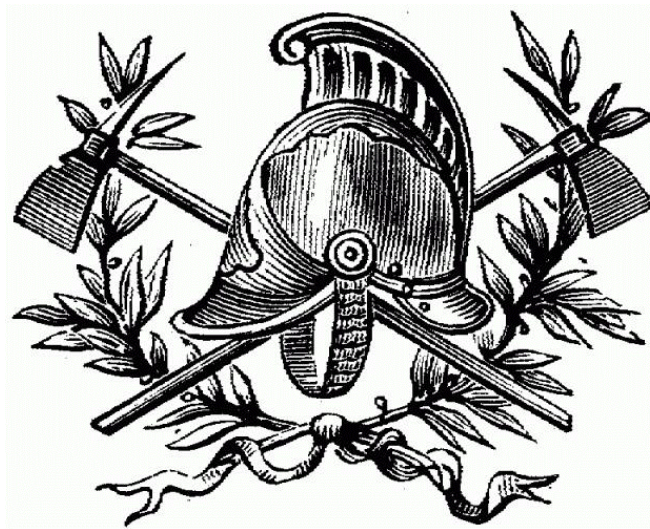
Note that the Armor table that follows does not completely duplicate the effects of the standard armor system or the detailed armor system. This is because the Dumas system does not use the

Cinematic Dumas Optional Rule : Player characters get BOTH the Attribute and the Skill die to roll in combination with the weapon die for the damage of their attack (taking the best result), but supporting characters do not. This is because cinema heroes have a high kill rate compared to their opponents. Female player characters also get a die based on their Symmetry score along with Toughness and armor rolls.

Ballistic rules used in the other systems. Instead the Impaling ability of the armor has been increased on the ballistic armors (which are going to primarily be used in very modern technology settings).

Additionally the Dumas system is a bit more coarse than the standard or detailed systems, since armor is not a singular value but a range of possible values of defense against the range of incoming damage.

Armor Type	(B)lunt	(C)utting	(I)mpaling	(E)nergy
Clothing	1dp6	1dp6	1dp6	1dp6
Heavy Winter Clothing or Furs	2dp6	2dp6	1dp6	1dp6
Quilted or Padded	1dp10	1dp10	2dp6	1dp10
Light Leather	2dp6	1dp10	1dp10	2dp6
Heavy Leather (including boiled leather)	1dp10	1dp10	1dp10	2dp6
Wood/Bamboo	1dp10	1dp10	1dp6	1dp6
Leather with Bronze Scales	1dp10	1dp10	1dp10	2dp6
Bronze Plate	1dp10	1dp20	1dp10	1dp6
Leather, Steel Studded	1dp10	1dp10	1dp10	2dp6
Leather, Steel Scaled	2dp10	1dp20	2dp10	1dp6
Steel Plate (Knights Armor etc)	2dp20	2dp20	2dp10	1dp6
Ringmail	1dp10	1dp20	1dp10	1dp6
Chainmail (with padding)	1dp20	2dp20	2dp10	2dp6
Spider Silk *	1dp6	1dp10	2dp10	1dp6
Flack Armor *	2dp10	2dp10	1dp20	2dp6
Kevlar *	1dp10	1dp10	2dp20	2dp6
Kevlar, Heavy with Titanium Plate *	1dp20	2dp20	1dp30	2dp6



Weapon	Dice	Type	Weapon	Dice	Type
Fist	1dp6	B	Bull Whip	1dp20	C
Fist With Studded Glove	2dp6	B	Horseman's Flail	2dp10	B
Foot (Bare or Soft Shod)	2dp6	B	Buggy Whip / Camel Whip	1dp10	C
Foot (Booted)	1dp10	B	Sling ('David' Style)	2dp10	B
Baseball Bat (wooden)	1dp10	B	Short Bow	2dp10+1	I
Baseball Bat (Metal)	2dp10	B	Long Bow	1dp20	I
Broomstick	1dp10	B	Compound Bow	1dp30	I
Crowbar	1dp20	B	Crossbow, Single Handed	1dp10	I
Shovel	1dp10	B	Crossbow, Light	2dp10	I
Mace	1dp20	B	Crossbow, Medium	1dp20	I
Tonfa	2dp10	B	Crossbow, Heavy	2dp20	I
Walking Stick or Cane	1dp10	B	Crossbow, Sniper	1dp30	I
Axe	2dp10	C	Derringer, BP	1dp10+1	I
Hatchet	2dp10	C	Flintlock Pistol, BP	2dp10	I
Pick Axe	1dp20	I	Flintlock Musket, BP	1dp20	I
Battle Axe	1dp20	C	Revolver, Cap & Ball	1dp20	I
Bowie Knife or Bayonet	2dp10	C/I	Pistol, Light Revolver	2dp20	I
Pocket Knife, Switchblade, Sai	1dp10	C	Pistol, Light Semi-Automatic	1dp30	I
Fencing Foil, Epee, Sword Cane	1dp10	I	Pistol, Heavy Semi-Automatic	1dp30+1	I
Machete	1dp20	C	Rifle, Bolt Action; Carbine	1dp30+2	I
Saber, Katana	1dp20	C	Machine Pistol, Tommy Gun *	1dp20	I
Broadsword, Claymore	1dp20	B/C	Light Automatic Rifle *	1dp20	I
Rapier	1dp20	C/I	Heavy Automatic Rifle, SMG *	2dp20	I
Nunchakus	2dp10	B	.50 Caliber Machine Gun *	1dp30+3	I
Throwing Star	2dp10	I	.50 Caliber Sniper Rifle	1dp30+3	I

If a +1 or other + notation is mentioned, its added to the final Damage total, not the die.

Automatic Weapons: (marked with a '*' on the weapons table) if fired in automatic mode ("cycling") in the fashion of the usual rules, you add a +1 to the final damage total for each bullet fired in the volley after the first one. (Many of these extra bullets are actually missing as the weapon 'climbs', thus they are simply added to the final pool total.)



Annotations, Definitions, Errata & What The Butler Saw:

Cinematic : A setting description that implies that many things “work like in the movies”, and that the player characters will have advantages over their adversaries in combat but not quite full immunity from getting killed off during the game. (Some heroes do die dramatically in movies). Cinematic is generally considered even less realistic than *Swashbuckling*.

Gritty : A game in the genre where life is even cheaper and easier to lose than in realistic. This can be appropriate for very dark settings and games where the GM wants to either play up the horrors of war and violence, or where a high player character casualty rate is desired.

Noir : A Realistic but dark setting, leaning towards Gritty but with a few odd cinematic concepts in regards to plot (but not in regards to combat, which should stay realistic). No one in Noir is innocent, everyone has a dark personal reason for what they do, and no one is really “nice”. A lot of 1940s and 1950s detective stories are Noir, looking at the baser instincts of mankind (greed, revenge, sex, hatred, etc.)

Pulp: A game based on the pulp adventure books of the 1920s thru 1950s. Pulp is less realistic than everyday in regards to fantastic technology and the expertise of scientists, but less flamboyant than a Swashbuckling setting.

Quantum Inseparability Principle (QUIP) : The principle in Quantum Mechanics that “every particle does affect every other particle, everywhere!” Which in layman’s terms means that on a sub-atomic level every single particle of energy or matter is connected in an unexplainable way to every other particle, and that they all influence each other at all times (Think of a gigantic pond, where every bit of wind, dropped stone or lilly pad in some way moves, displaces or causes ripples throughout the rest of the pond).

Realistic : A setting description where people and their normal abilities are close to that of the “real world”. Realistic is often used for historical settings (but can be used by GMs who prefer realistic combat etc. but otherwise want a fantastic setting).

Swashbuckling : A setting style in regards to combat where combat is more balanced between skill, luck and raw talent, that emphasizes taking risky actions to gain higher advantages over supporting characters. Swashbuckling should never be run at less than the *High Adventure* setting scale. Swashbuckling characters are in the style of the Three Musketeers.

Phobias: A Quick Reference

Phobias are an acceptable Negative Trait for characters to possess, and the following list covers common ones, and of course additional ones may be developed for specific settings. Remember that a phobia is not really worth trait points if the subject is unlikely to be encountered.

A GM may assign a higher value than is normal for a phobia, if it is likely to come into regular encounters within the planned scope of the game, or may severely restrict the character's involvement in events.

Phobias are fears, and fears can be overcome, usually by a SPIRIT roll. The GM may, in certain circumstances, require such a roll at only *2 instead of the normal *4 attribute value vs percentile if the situation is more likely to cause a fear reaction (Passing someone on the street with a small child when you have Pediphobia is less frightening than being thrust into a room full of children and having the door locked behind you).

A roll may not be required at all times. A GM may declare that something is simply making a character uneasy or nervous, but is not yet causing such a state of anxiety that a roll is needed to overcome their fear (but might be enough to affect skill or attribute rolls by 1-2 ranks). Example: A character with Ballistophobia will not necessarily need a roll if they walk into a bank where a bank guard has a holstered gun on their belt, but would need a roll to touch that weapon, or if that weapon was drawn for any reason around them.

Acrophobia : Heights (also called *Altophobia*)

Acousticophobia : Loud Noises

Aeroacrophobia : Open High Places (like rooftops!)

Agoraphobia : Open Spaces or of Leaving a Safe Place.

Agraphobia : Sexual abuse

Agrizoophobia : wild animals

Ailurophobia : Cats

Algophobia : Pain (also called *Agliophobia*)

Alliumphobia : Garlic

Androphobia : Males (men)

Aquaphobia : Bodies of water, especially of drowning

Arachnophobia : Spiders

Astrapobia : Thunder & Lightning

Astrophobia : Stars (in the sky, not celebrities!)

Aurophobia : Gold (the metal)

Aviophobia : Flying

Bacteriophobia : Bacteria (Inappropriate in settings with a Low Medical Technology)

Ballistophobia : Bullets (and firearms)

Belonephobia : Pins and Needles (also called *Aichmophobia*)

Bibliophobia : Books
Botanophobia : Plants (Living ones, not dead ones)
Bufonophobia : Toads and frogs
Catoptrophobia : Mirrors
Claustrophobia : Enclosed Places
Coimetrophobia : Cemeteries
Coitophobia : Fear of Sexual Activity (Coitus)
Coulrophobia : Clowns
Cyberphobia : Computers or working on computers
Cynophobia : Dogs and other canines
Dementophobia : insanity and going insane
Demonophobia : Demons, Devils & Evil Spirits
Demophobia : Crowds of People
Dendrophobia : Trees
Doraphobia : Fur & hair
Entomophobia : Insects
Eosophobia : Dawn and daylight
Equinophobia : Horses
Gephyrophobia : Crossing over bridges
Gynephobia : Females (women)
Hematophobia : Blood, Bleeding
Iatrophobia : Doctors & dentists
Ichthyophobia : Fish
Monophobia : Being alone
Necrophobia : Dead bodies
Noctophobia : Night and that which lurks in it
Nyctophobia : Darkness (also called *Achluophobia*)
Ondontophobia : Teeth, being bitten
Onomatophobia : Fear of a certain name being spoken
Ophidiophobia : Snakes
Ornithophobia : Birds
Pediphobia : Children
Pyrophobia : Fire, being burned
Scoleciophobia : Worms
Spectrophobia : Ghosts
Taphephobia : Being buried alive
Thalassophobia : Sea, ocean
Tomophobia : Surgery
Vestiophobia : Clothing
Xenophobia : Foreigners
Zoophobia : Animals (living)

A Few Words on Game Philosophy

*“All systems are true in some sense,
false in some sense,
meaningless in some sense,
true and false in some sense,
true and meaningless in some sense,
false and meaningless in some sense,
and true and false and meaningless in some sense.”*

– Sri Syadasti



By now you've read, or at least skimmed, the basic rules for *Cosmic Synchronicity*. Some of you may be disappointed, others elated, still others satisfied, Some of you are unsure, waiting until you have a chance to play, and mess around with the rules. A few are just sitting there saying "So What?"

A game system cannot be all things to all people. Cosmic Synchronicity was created as a reaction to three things: The needs of my roleplaying group (including myself) for a system that could handle concepts not included in my previously published games. A series of personal revelations since January 1999 that the world was in a state of change and should have a game system that could celebrate the changes, and, to some extent, change with them. And a desire to celebrate my own personal connections to synchronicity, synthesis, chaos, and *Eris* as I perceive her.

It took me a long time to recover from my past, and I won't drag you thru all the details. Let us simply say that its been a long strange trip. Other Neo-Pagans may understand me, agnostics and atheists may scoff at me. Christians and others who follow a monotheistic beliefs may flee from what I have created simply because of my beliefs. I don't want to get all religious here, or preachy. Neither really belongs in a tabletop roleplaying game system such as this. But I did not want to deceive people about the source of my inspiration either.

I ask that you not hold my beliefs against the system, but accept it for what it is on its own terms, or understand it as a personal pathworking in the name of one of the many divinities I believe is interconnected with my life and serve. If you don't believe in what I believe in, that's fine. I just hope you find it a useful and fun game system.

Now, aside from that, I have a reputation in some gaming circles for being a fanatic in some ways, not because of my religious beliefs, but because of my design concepts and rules about being a "Good" Game Manager. Some people may now be a bit agape that I have designed a system with so many free-form design concepts (if not exactly minimalist in regards to numbers) and which allows a larger amount of GM FIAT to apply within the game.

In actuality, it's not what it seems. It trades one element of the game for another, and if a player doesn't want to face large amounts of GM input, but prefers to depend on the random effects of dice, the system can do that. Or, they can trade away a bit of that control, gaining more options in character design, but relinquishing some control to the GM, as the dice come up in the cosmic trigger range more often. But, they also don't have to. The system allows the production of "average" range (mundane world range?) characters without expanding their cosmic trigger. Basically the Fantastic, the Unusual, the Strange, the Mystical, the Exciting and the Spectacular come with a price: the Universe, in the guise of the GM, will interfere with their game lives and interject danger, risk and perhaps even death. But the choice is in the player's hands, and thus it is not truly by fiat.

The price is not that unusual. It's the price that every magician, superstar, celebrity, fame seeker, power seeker, spiritual seeker, and neo-pagan faces in their lives. Even if you don't believe in the real world supernatural, it's obvious that celebrity has its price - look at the lives of any rock star, movie star, popular politician, athlete etc. They all get their greatness at the cost of always being on-stage; of having a public that will follow every detail of their lives; of facing temptations that many "mundane" people never face; of getting to choose more of their destiny, but also risking some nasty endings (plane wrecks, motorcycle accidents, drug overdoses, stalkers, paternity suits, severe health problems, being mobbed by photographers, being arrested for not paying enough taxes, etc.)

So players can produce mundane characters, or they can produce characters who excel, and pay the price when the dice and the GM interfere. "With great power comes great responsibility" is alive and well in the mechanics and universes of *Cosmic Synchronicity*. Not everyone will like this premise. Those that don't can either limit the type of characters they build, or choose a different game system (GURPS, Shadow Bindings, Witchcraft, Call of Cthulhu, Mystic Earth, Fantasy Realms RPG, or whatever else might interest) as this is one of the few elements of the game that is not modular.

That brings us to the next point. If you want to change, add, replace, or devise a new mechanic to make the system work better for your style, gaming group, genre or setting (or to make it easier for you to translate from another mechanic) then do so. If you come up with something that works well when you use it, feel free to pass it along so we can share it with folks.



Additional support material for *Cosmic Synchronicity* will eventually be placed on our website. We'd love to have your own submissions, or links to other sites of folks who use the system so that everyone can benefit. If your innovation is sufficiently useful we might even want to include it in a future edition of the game. *Cosmic Synchronicity* is designed to be modular, expansive and to encourage a certain amount of tinkering to fit your needs, and we'll update the basic book as needed.

Want to help support the game, but don't have anything to share? Well, we could use your financial support to help *Cosmic Synchronicity* continue. It costs money to distribute copies, advertise, and maintain our website and our domain name. You could drop a check to us via surface mail, or send along an electronic payment to us for what you think our game is worth to you via Paypal.com (send the payment to kiralee@mindspring.com to Kiralee McCauley, as she's handling the financial side of the game project. Checks can also go to her at: Kiralee McCauley, 266 Western Ave #1, Cambridge MA 02139. Suggested is a payment of \$5 to \$10, but we'll accept whatever you choose to give us. With funding Cosmic can receive more visibility and a wider distribution to everyone interested. Remember that its taken thousands of hours to design, write, layout, distribute, promote and play test this system. We're not asking for the moon, or that we get paid what the professional commercial game companies get paid - we simply ask for a fair remittance to cover our costs.

Come Back With All The Positive Energy You Have!

This is the third edition of *Cosmic Synchronicity*, and some of you may have never read the first two releases, and others have probably read all that has gone before. Its not easy getting folks to accept a new system, or to understand the design philosophy that is associated with one, and the path to get Cosmic recognized has been a long and difficult one.

Distributing Cosmic in the methods we have chosen makes it unusual in the eyes of the gaming industry, and has raised some eyebrows among those who produce games professionally since we depend mostly upon honesty and the good will of gamers to produce a cash flow for the game instead of selling it in stores and having the middlemen of distribution make all the profits. Only time will tell if our method works or not.

I've merged the *Tinkering With Reality* companion book into the main book, because too many folks complained about having to download the separate volume and remarked on the organization of that volume in comparison with the original.

Writing in a mostly linear fashion has been a huge challenge for me, as I am more used to writing in a Hypertext form that bounces around as the ideas flow from my brain instead of trying to catalog and structure every last word. Forgive me if some of this work still has the feel of non-linear thinking, I have done the best I can, and most game authors seem to have this problem.





Quick Reference Handouts

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Roll	Targeting Result
1	Head
2	Left Arm
3	Right Arm
4, 11	Torso
5	Left Leg
6	Right Leg
7	Armor or Toughness [Or Disarm if using a Whip/Flail!]
8	Knocked Prone and/or Stunned For 1 Round
9	Knocked Unconscious
10, 12	Disarmed or Shield Destroyed or GM Special Choice!

Ranks	Description
1-4	Beginner/Dabbler
5-8	Amateur/Student
9-12	Competent/Functional
13-16	Professional
17-18	Adept
19-20	Expert

Condition	Effect
Aim: Specific Leg	-5 Ranks from attacker to hit this locale
Aim: Specific Arm, or a Wing	-5 Ranks from attacker to hit this locale
Aim: Torso	-2 Ranks from attacker to hit this locale
Aim: Head or Tail	-10 Ranks from attacker to hit this locale
Attacking An Invisible Opponent or in Complete Darkness	-10 Ranks to Hit
Attacking While Invisible	+5 Ranks to Hit
Attacking Opponent That Has a Small Shield	-2 Ranks to Hit
Attacking Opponent That Has a Medium Shield	-4 Ranks to Hit
Attacking Opponent That Has a Large Shield	-6 Ranks to Hit
Attacking A Fleeing or Charging Opponent	-2 Ranks to Hit
Attacking With A Ranged Weapon In Smoke or Fog	-4 Ranks to Hit
Attacking or Defending While Intoxicated	-4 Ranks to Hit
Firing A Shotgun At Range of 3 yards or less	+6 Ranks To Hit
Firing A Gun or Crossbow At Range of 10 yards or less	+4 Ranks to Hit
Using One's "off" hand (ambidextrous don't have one)	-5 Ranks to Hit
Attacking With Range Weapon While Elevated Above Target	+2 Ranks to Hit
Defending While Sitting In A Chair	-5 Ranks to Defend

RANGE CLASS	EXAMPLE WEAPONS
1	Blowgun*, Rock*, Pillow*, Stazer (maximum range)
2	Dart*, Dagger*, Knife*, Derringer#, Throwing Star*
3	Spear#, Flintlock Pistol#, Baseball#, Hand Grenade#
5	Sling, Light Crossbow#, Air Gun, Short bow#, Boomerang, Light Pistol, Musket, Shotgun#
10	Staff Sling, Medium Crossbow, Heavy Pistol, Tranq. Gun, Gatling Gun
20	Rifle, Carbine, Longbow, Sniper Crossbow, Rifle Grenade Launcher, Light Machine Gun
30	Sniper Rifle, Buffalo Gun, Elephant Gun, Heavy Machine Gun
40	Ballista, Bazooka, RPG, Mortar

Roll	Resulting Fear Effect
1	Stunned : The character stands immobile until the next round
2	Nausea : -2 ranks to all Skill and Attribute rolls while in Perception of the cause of the Fear
3, 11	Panic : Runs away, dropping whatever is in their hands. If unable to run then is in hysterics until cause leaves or they are able to run away.
4	Severe Nausea : Vomits and cannot act while doing so. Makes Health roll each round afterwards to stop. Will be at -2 ranks for full minute after vomiting stops.
5	Paralyzed : Unable to move for 1d10 rounds (GM rolls and tells them when recovers)
6	Faint : Unconscious and prone. Lasts 1d10 minutes.
7	Shock : Collapses unconscious and prone 1d10 minutes. -1 Health Permanently.
8	Nasty Shock : Collapses unconscious and prone 1d20 minutes. -2 Health Permanently.
9	Heart Attack : Collapses unconscious and prone 1d20 minutes. -3 Health Permanently. -1 Body, Spirit, Toughness, & Coordination Permanently. Dies if health less than 1.
10, 12	GM's Choice, Combination of the above, or Alternative Effect

Boom-Sweet Difficulty Table

5	Normal	6	Routine
4	Challenging	7	Easy
3	Difficult	8	Very Easy
2	Daring	9	Trifling
1	Boom!	10	Sweet!

Double Column Splat Table

Roll	Target Result	Special Results Column
1	Head	Eye, Ear or Nose Harmed (-1 Perception)
2	Left Arm	Muscle Damage in evading attack (-1 Body)
3	Right Arm	Pulled Tendon in evading (-1 Coordination)
4	Torso	Internal Injuries (-1 Health)
5	Left Leg	Groin Hit. Prone. Stunned. Damage Applied to Torso
6	Right Leg	Valuable Property Damaged, broken or lost.
7	Armor or Toughness Or Disarm Using Whip/Flail]	Surface Wound That Will Scar badly (-1 Symmetry Permanently)
8	Knocked Prone and/or Stunned for 1 Round	Stunned and Concussion (-1 Mind with -1 All Skill Ranks until healed from memory loss)
9	Knocked Unconscious	Neck Hit, Cannot Speak for hour. Damage Applied to Head
10	Disarmed or Shield Destroyed or GM Special Choice!	Disarmed or Shield Destroyed or GM Choice!
11	Torso	Severe Internal Injuries (-1 Health Permanently)
12	Roll Again On Special Results	Apply Damage to Tail, Wing or if none, Torso.

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Character Name: _____
Player Name: _____ Quantum Factor: _____
Original World Setting: _____ World's CV: _____

Physical	Rank	*4%	Mental	Rank	*4%	Social	Rank	*4%
Body			Mind			Fame		
Coordination			Spirit			Symmetry		
Health			Perception			Wealth		
Toughness			Power			Synchronicity		

Aspect	Rank	*4%		*CV	+Mind	Total Skill Ranks
Logic			Science Skills {A}			
Discipline			Physical Skills {B}			
Empathy			Social Skills {C}			
Insight			Occult Skills {D}			
Passion			Artistic Skills {E}			
Adaptability			Technical Skills {F}			

Character's 75 Focus Points are in Skill Category (A-F) : _____

Cosmic Trigger	☹ (Roll this or Greater on 1d100 at Any Time)
Species/Race:	
Quick Concept:	
Gender & Sex Identity:	
Handedness:	
Height, Weight, Build:	
Hair Color/Length:	
Age (Looks / Actual)	
Unusual Features:	
Birthplace:	
Residence:	
Prize Possession:	
Identifying Quote:	

Personality Supplemental Info:

What does this Character CARE about more than anything else in their life? Why?

What adjectives come to mine when you think about this character?

What does the character remember most vividly about their childhood?

Who are the character's heroes in life?

What Specific physical mannerism do you see connected with the character's behavior?

Does the character have any distinctive verbal traits or mannerisms?

Who is the most important person in the character's life? Why?

What is the character's ideal concept of happiness (heaven/paradise)?

What is this character's ideal concept of misery (hell/torment)?

What hobbies and pastimes does this character have?

What does this character read and enjoy (if they can read)?

What are the favorite foods of this character?

What is the favorite scent of the character?

What is this character's family like in their opinion?

What does this character fear, despise, hate or find intolerable?

What Are Folks Saying About The New Cosmic Synchronicity?

“It's a fools prerogative to utter truths that no one else will speak.”
- Neil Gaiman

“All great truths begin as blasphemies.”
- George Bernard Shaw

“Don't Fool Around with the masks of reality,
until you can handle the reality of masks.”
- Robert Anton Wilson

“No idea approaches it.”
- Pascal, 1670

“My mind is going. I Can Feel it, Dave.”
- HAL : 2001 A Space Odyssey

“Fnord Indeed?”
- Robert Anton Wilson

“I hold that a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing”
- Thomas Jefferson

“This is a delightful surprise”
- Ex-Secretary of State James Baker

“Publish and be damned.”
- Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington

“The Future's right in front of us.”
- Senator Bob Dole

"True, it is nonsense, But it is important nonsense."
-Philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein