



GESTALT

THE HERO WITHIN



SUPERHUMAN ROLE-PLAYING IN A WORLD OF HEROES,
ARCHETYPES AND MODERN MYTHS

BY SCOTT BENNIE

PLAYER'S GUIDE

GESTALT: THE HERO WITHIN

Superpowered role-playing in a world of Archetypes (and other excuses to beat people up)

A PLAYER's GUIDE to an original superhero RPG campaign setting

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INTRODUCTION

Gestalt's genesis came in 1989, when, as part of a DC Heroes Play-by-Mail, I devised a heroine named Crucible who was the embodiment of Canada's collective unconscious, a nation's hope for a superhuman protector come to life. This seemed like a really neat idea for a campaign —what if every superhuman in a campaign world was an archetype?

In 1993, I created a Champions campaign with that very premise. I called it Gestalt, because powers were derived from "the gestalt" of humanity's collective unconscious, a psionic pool generated by human thought and imagination.

Early in its history, I posted write-ups on the Red October bulletin board and people liked them. Encouraged, I began to pursue the idea of making a full, "proper" RPG supplement detailing the world.

Fourteen years later, it's finally here. The Gestalt book is, however, 400 pages, a mere iceberg compared to my notes, but still overwhelming. It was clear that we needed a condensed version to introduce people to the basics of the setting. This PDF is that introduction. It contains a systemless introduction to the major elements of the setting and suggestions for devising characters.

Because this document is systemless, the Gestalt book for Superlink or HERO will be required for play, but this should get players into the campaign.

It may occur to those GMs who feel big sourcebooks are too much of a straightjacket that this document might make a good springboard for a campaign without *Gestalt: The Hero Within*; the GM can run this book as the sole canon in the setting, and ignore the references in the big book that aren't in this document (although character write-ups and some of the background may still be useful). For clutter-phobic GMs, this is (hopefully) a perfect solution.

Have fun!

Scott Bennie

"The world of Gestalt is the anti-Seinfeld. You know how the pundits say that Seinfeld's 'the show about nothing'? Well, Gestalt's the show where nothing becomes everything. In today's world of gestalts, nothing is insignificant."

— The Philosopher

I: THE CAMPAIGN BASICS

Comic books are the worlds of Archetypes. Our favorite superheroes include the avenging vigilante who drives the cool car, the wisecracking teenager who shoots webs at people, and the farm boy with the power of a god. On the surface they're fictional characters but they're also symbols of a larger world.

These characters personify our hatred of injustice, our affection for tricksters, and our admiration for immigrants who build a new life and rise to greatness in modern society.

Other comic book characters are symbols too. They represent concepts like Heroism, Strength, Speed, Cruelty, or Ambition. They're also imbued with mythology, representing those things that mankind once worshipped: the Sun, the Moon, the Seasons, the Elements, Angels, or Demons. (Which, as anthropologists will tell you, are also symbols.)

All fiction deals in archetypes, but comic books apply these symbols more consciously than other fictional forms. However, the Gestalt campaign takes the idea of "character as symbol" one step further. On Gestalt-Earth, the characters aren't just symbolic, they are the symbols.

What happens to your life when you become the living embodiment of a symbol, drawing from the tarot of the unconscious, and the world turns into a place that's torn out of the pages of a comic book? The answers to those question (and others) will be determined by the events of your campaign.

BASIC CONCEPTS

Some basic information about Gestalts are understood by most people. They include:

WHAT'S A GESTALT?

"Gestalt" is a German word that roughly means "a combination of individual pieces that form something larger". In this campaign setting, "Gestalt" also means "superpowered being".

The vast majority of superhumans are Gestalts.

All Gestalts have an invisible link with the collective unconscious of humanity, which exists in a realm called the Gestalt Dimension. The collective minds of humanity generate incredible amounts of psychic power, which is stored in this dimension. Gestalts draw their power from this source. This energy source is powerful enough to warp the laws of physics and make miracles happen on a regular basis.

Gestalt researchers divide gestalts into three categories: Pure Gestalts, Bonded Gestalts, and Chain Gestalts.

PURE GESTALTS

Pure gestalts do not exist prior to gaining gestalt abilities, but are formed out of raw psionic energy to become the literal embodiment of an idea. The superhuman who appears out of nowhere and never existed prior to gaining his powers? That's a pure gestalt.

Pure gestalts usually take the form of human beings, often beginning as a blank slate with no memories.

A pure gestalt can be extremely single-minded, especially in the first few months after his creation. The longer that the pure gestalt interacts with people, the more human he becomes, although even after many years, many pures do not have refined social skills.

Some people believe pure gestalts are more powerful than bonded gestalt. Many pure gestalts have the Gestalt Immortality power (see New Powers) that allows them to come back from death unless they are killed in a particular way. This makes them extremely hard to kill, but it shouldn't come as too much of a surprise. A pure gestalt isn't just a person; he can be an idea, a fancy, a behavior, a profession, or a dream.

It's very hard to kill a dream.

BONDED GESTALTS

What happens when a person wakes up in the morning and discovers he has superpowers? He's become a *Bonded gestalt*!

Whereas pures are created out of whole cloth, the bonded gestalt process might be described as superpowers that choose a superhuman to carry out its mission.

If this makes it sound like possession, it isn't. The human maintains his personality and has complete free will. The powers never choose to go away, the bond is permanent. However, the powers will always try to select a host whose drives facilitate the gestalt's mission. A Gestalt of Strength? It'll choose the wrestler, not the librarian (unless the librarian likes to work out with weights, of course). A Gestalt of Speed? It'll choose the race car driver, or the cripple who dreams of running again, not the couch potato who'll never use their powers except to get beer from the fridge. A Gestalt of the Sun? It'll find someone who works on their tan and loves hot summer days.

Bonded gestalts are champions of their particular archetype. Naturally, they have powers that match their "cause" or sphere.

This matching isn't perfect; it's possible to be a gestalt and feel only a mild inclination towards one's purposes. Not every gestalt has a "grand obsession". Every gestalt does, however, feel a "pull" to the archetype. The strength of this pull is up to the player.

CHAIN GESTALTS

When you meet the mysterious old man or encounter a weird force and you suddenly discover yourself with powers, you've become a *Chain Gestalt*. Unlike pures and bondeds, you don't have an archetype. You've been given powers by someone or something that's outside the normal gestalt process.

Chain gestalts are often accompanied by a physical transformation. Often it's a horrific one — the vampire who makes you his minion, the Blood Red King turning you into a monster. Sometimes it's more beneficial.

Often, a person experiences a behavioral change as well as gaining superpowers: the Boy Scout turning you into a "good citizen" for twenty-four hours. All too commonly, you become the servant of the person who gave you powers. (This is what inspired people to call it a *chain* gestalt in the first place.)

THE GESTALT WAVE

The unleashing of Gestalt effects into the world is called a Gestalt wave. All gestalts begin as proteogestalts, sentient energy that tries to enter the human dimension. When a Gestalt wave occurs, this energy breaks free and shapes itself into individuals who represent the archetype's interests, or bonds with human beings who have a compatible interest. Bonded gestalts do not always appear at the exact moment of a Gestalt wave; occasionally, though it requires a traumatic incident to "unleash" or "awaken" the Gestalt. However most people are transformed into superhumans on the spot.

There have been five gestalt waves since 1989. All pures and bonded superhumans have been born

on one of these five dates.

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GESTALT "FAMILIES" AND "TWINS"

Sometimes two gestalts will have archetypes that are similar (Strength Gestalts and Toughness Gestalts) or related (Thunder Gestalts and Weather Gestalts). These are referred to as belonging to the same gestalt "family".

At a GM's option, people who are part of the same gestalt family can automatically sense each other and wage a Power vs. Power battle to gain additional advantages in combat. They can also boost their defenses against a related gestalt, or stun them.

People with the same archetype are called gestalt twins. Gestalt twins often experience eerie bonding moments. They're also (often) vulnerable to each other's powers, and can share each other's power (or transfer them away, also via Power vs. Power combat).

GESTALT PHENOMENA

Gestalt-Earth can be a place of unsurpassed strangeness, especially when the forces of the Gestalt seem to spill randomly into our universe. Some places experience "weird gestalt phenomena"; cities that are dressed in the architecture and fashions of centuries past, the temporary disappearance of all of a town's women, mysterious floating palaces appearing in the sky, or clocks and watches freezing.

No one knows why this occurs, but villains love to take advantage of these events.

RARE SUPERHUMAN ORIGINS

It's recommended that players take in a Gestalt in their first game to get acquainted with the central conflict of the campaign. Other origins are available.

1. *Training to Superhuman Levels*: Extremely talented people are capable of reaching superhuman levels with intense training. However, many people who think they're super-trained normals are actually bonded or chain gestalts in denial.

2. *Aliens*: There are Extraterrestrials in the Gestalt campaign setting, and some of them have superhuman powers. See Chapter Six – Extraterrestrials, p. 160 for details of these cultures. Superhuman aliens are probably descended from Ar stock, from those who were custom-engineered centuries ago to work as laborers and soldiers.

3. *Rogue Leviathans*. Leviathans are a superhuman race from the Gestalt Dimension who oppose humanity's use of Gestalt energy to create superhumans. They're a rigidly hierarchical race that seeks dominance over the earth and the destruction of all Gestalts. Most Leviathans are fanatically devoted to their cause, but a few Rogue Leviathans exist.

4. *Technologically Augmented Human*: Personal battlesuits are extremely limited on Gestalt-Earth. Typically they're either "weird tech only the inventor knows" or technology that's slightly advanced over real world technology.

5. *Weird Gestalt Bonds*: Occasionally, the Gestalt makes a mistake, and bonds with something really odd: a work of art that a creator really cares about, a historical artifact (often implements such as a sword, gun, or pen), a vehicle (from cars to ships), or an animal and brings them to life. Some of the oddest Gestalts happen this way.

6. *Changelings*. Sometimes a Gestalt Wave will sweep people into the Gestalt Dimension, where they come out... changed. Changelings are the noble savages of Gestalt-Earth.

ORIGINS NOT PRESENT ON GESTALT-EARTH (and how to get around them)

1. *Magic*. There is *no* magic on Gestalt-Earth. You can't pick up a book of spells and study it to conjure fire, commune with spirits, produce hoary hands (or any other effect associated with comic book sorcery). Arcane rituals don't work.

However, myth and magic are powerful archetypes; because of this, there are Gestalts who do take on the form of magical creatures. There are Gestalt effects that closely resemble magic to the extent where people believe they are magical (therefore, the Gestalts of Wizards, Dragons, and other magical archetypes do exist).

However, unless a "magical" chain gestalt is at work (or the GM chooses to make exceptions), ordinary people cannot become masters of the occult.

2. *Mutational/Generational*. Benign superhuman mutation doesn't exist in Gestalt-Earth. There is no genetic component to receiving or passing down superpowers. There are no "filthy muties", let alone people hunting them down.

However, Gestalt bonded powers can be passed down from generation to generation only when it's appropriate to the archetype (a monstrous Gestalt of "generational curse", the Gestalt of Human Evolution or a Gestalt of "The Heroic Family"), which may then pass powers to their offspring as a type of chain Gestalt.

Likewise Generational supers aren't part of the setting; the first superhuman was in 1989. However, for people who want them in their campaigns, it's not hard to add the concept of historical "probability freaks", Gestalts who appeared at very rare intervals throughout human history.

3. *Extra-Dimensional Creature*: There is only one extra-dimension, the Gestalt dimension of the mind, where all Gestalts ultimately originate. There are no parallel worlds, no nether kingdoms, no astral planes, no imitations of Dante or anything inspired by other games' upper and lower dimensions.

However, there are sub-dimensions in the Gestalt Dimension called Fantasyscapes. The Gestalt Dimension stores replicas of everything created by human imagination. If you want to play a Norse god, you can specify

that you came from an Asgard-Fantasyscape. You're still a Gestalt, even though you're convinced that you're actually something quite different.

4. *Radiation Accidents/Weird Mutagens*. Radiation does not trigger spontaneous benign mutation in this setting. Sorry, no radioactive spiders, no space flights into cosmic ray fields, and wonderfully benign mutations.

However, if you really want, you might make one exception to this rule: exposure to dangerous levels of radiation might trigger a previously unknown Gestalt bond, but this doesn't happen very often, and only to Gestalts that are "comic book" in nature.

tone and comic book "ages"

You can play Gestalt in whatever tone that you and your player groups agrees. However, in the "official" campaign, Gestalt is a serious campaign world with many really dark places, some really light moments, and a lot of genuine weirdness. As one of my players once called it, it's "smudged four-color". Gestalt-Earth doesn't try to fit into any of the "age" schemes of comics (Golden, Silver, Bronze, Iron, etc.) but combines many of the elements of all periods of comic books to exist as its own world.

goals

When you play a character, it's sometimes hard to get direction. In Gestalt, the character's archetype defines much of his life's purpose, but even that doesn't always give the player and the GM enough tools to craft personal scenarios.

By choosing a Goal at the start of the game, you send a signal to your GM regarding the way you want to develop your PC. What kind of things are goals? They're an ultimate event that your character is working toward that will radically change his life (or perhaps even result in his death). They're the one thing that the PC wants to achieve more than anything else in the world. When working with the player to define his character's Goal, keep the following in mind:

Goals that a player character might adopt include: *Cleaning Up The City/Neighborhood* (for Defender Gestalts in crime ridden areas), *Finding Your Way Home* (for Gestalts who are lost, such as Changelings or Gestalts from Fantasyscapes, or aliens), *Magnum Opus* (for artists or engineers), *My Championship Season* (for those involved in competitions), *The Passion Play* (for those building up to a heroic death), *Reverse An Injustice, Romance!* (This is the quintessential comic book sub-plot), and *Tabula Rasa* (for people who need to discover their past or their purpose in life), and *Vengeance*.

gestalt and the two-way street

Being a champion of an archetype means more than just having powers. You represent a thing, be it a quality (such as Strength), an abstract idea (such as Knowledge), or a people (which could be a neighborhood, a city, an ethnic group, devotees of a religion, or even a country). Not only do you have powers relating to the archetype, you are its promoter, its champion, and its defender.

When you lose, that which you champion, will suffer. If you're a Strongman gestalt, maybe the local gym closes, maybe a powerful athlete suffers a bad injury, or someone who needed an adrenaline rush of strength to save someone he or she loves, doesn't get it.

When you triumph, they prosper. If you're a Defender, someone from your area or group achieves a high honor, or a conflict involving local gangs in your neighborhood is peacefully resolved.

This is handled by the GM in your game.

A FEW KEY DATES

Players don't need to know everything in the history of Gestalt-Earth, but the following dates (and the events they reference) should be known to all players:

First Gestalt Wave: September 22, 1989

CounterMeasures Disbanded: May 24, 1991

Red Plague: Summer 1993

Second Gestalt Wave: February 23, 1994

"Red August" (The Fall of the Mundane Alliance): August 30, 1995

First Copenhagen Tournament: September 22-29, 1997

Third Gestalt Wave: November 8, 1997

First Contact With Ar'Turodain: June 24, 1999

First Contact With Ar'Kayadin: December 6, 1999

Fourth Gestalt Wave (Leviathan Wave): May 4, 2001

The Atlanta Disaster: January 24, 2006

Encounter With The First Eiko Probe: January 11, 2007

Fifth Gestalt Wave: A few weeks ago...

II: HISTORY

HISTORY

Players shouldn't feel obligated to memorize every piece of background in the campaign setting, but there are key events they should know. These events are:

FIRST WAVE

On September 22, 1989, the living embodiment of America was created in the first Gestalt wave. As it came into being, it attempted to understand the world and its purpose in it, and decided that a comic book character was the ideal paradigm by which to help the world accept superhumans. Thus America Man, "that flag-wearing patriot Joe and perfect specimen of the American ideal" was born.

America Man offered "to give a strong, friendly hand to any good-hearted American who needed help". He was born in Boston, but was instinctively drawn to Washington, where on the White House lawn, the newborn gestalt publicly demonstrated his superhuman abilities to a disbelieving press and a panicked Secret Service. President Bush, impressed by what he was witnessing, decided to take a chance on the newcomer. He greeted America Man and shook his hand on live national television even as the United States' intelligence agencies tried to figure out just what the heck was going on.

On the next day, when a superhuman dubbed "El Milagro" demonstrated similar abilities in Mexico City, it became frighteningly clear that America Man

was not alone.

On September 24th, however, a new and disturbing phenomenon appeared: supervillains. The man with the dubious distinction of becoming the world's first costumed malefactor was "Golden Gladiator"; a former US Army corporal who held a grudge over his dishonorable discharge, so he put on a costume, broke into a heavily guarded military installation, stole what he thought was a nuclear device, and threatened to detonate it on Good Morning America. A SWAT team attempted to liberate the bomb (the army refused to acknowledge that anything had been stolen, and left the situation to the local authorities). Golden Gladiator withstood their assault and seriously injured three of the SWAT members and a cameraman.

But America Man disrupted the standoff, and challenged Gladiator to single combat for the bomb. Since he was starting to get bored by the situation, Golden Gladiator happily accepted his challenge, and the two men proceeded to wreck the studio. In the end, America Man quipped: "America doesn't need gladiators, Golden Gladiator, it needs heroes!" and knocked the villain unconscious with a series of left hooks and right crosses, while the nation watched in disbelief.

This was the beginning of the age. Many other superhumans who chose to expose themselves to the public followed America Man and Golden Gladiator's example, and donned spandex and masks. Within months, the world took on comic book overtones - much to its bewilderment. But comic books were an easily understood paradigm for the western media, and many Gestalts discovered that using the superhero motif was an ideal way

to express their powers without freaking out the general public.

The press went into a feeding frenzy, but the United States Congress and its network of security agencies were extremely not amused. Congress set up the United States Security Council on Superhuman Activities, an organization that would oversee a covert anti-superhuman security team called Project Countermeasures.

COUNTERMEASURES DISBANDS!

For the most part, the press loved superheroes. So did most branches of government, except for the judiciary and the intelligence community. The latter formed Project; CounterMeasures. One of the most successful early Gestalt programs was the USMC Vanguard program, which developed a rapidly deployment force of superhuman marines. CounterMeasures decided to discredit the Vanguard program. They managed to administer a hallucinogen to USMC Vanguard leader Captain Jonathan Clark and made him go berserk. Several marines were killed before Private Randy Adams, a superstrong marine who had previously chosen to hide his powers, subdued the Captain.

Clark was not shot dead (as CounterMeasures had hoped) and he and Adams soon became good friends and comrades. Clark also recruited Phil Torrance and Manny O'Connor into the Vanguard program, and the four superhumans became the most versatile weapon in America's arsenal. Clark testified at a dramatic congressional hearing that led to the disgrace and dismantling of the CounterMeasures program. Many in the intelligence services believe this was a mistake, and there are rumors that it has been quietly replaced in recent years (or never really disbanded at all).

THE RED PLAGUE

While Gestalts were embraced as heroes in the West, the rest of the world were far less certain about them. In 1993, the worst fears of the developing world came true when a Plague Gestalt named Dr. Typhus unleashed the Red Plague on parts of India, China, Pakistan, and Southeast Asia. Over a hundred million people died (including Typhus), seventy-five percent of them in India. Calcutta was particularly hard hit, and became the center of heart-wrenching scenes of devastation, the likes of which had never been seen in the modern age.

After the pandemic subsided, the word "gestalt" became a curse throughout much of Asia and parts of Africa. This stigma holds to the present day in many places, and goes a long way in explaining the United Nations' hostility toward Gestaltkind, especially in the developing world.

RED AUGUST

In the summer of 1995, an anti-Gestalt movement known as the Mundane Alliance came out of nowhere and swept across North America in a pandemic of hate and violence. By July, they had over a million members;

and by mid-August, civil order broke down when humanity became filled with one all-consuming purpose: hunt down every Gestalt in existence and kill them like beasts.

The Mundane Alliance was led by Golden Gladiator, who had publicly disavowed his Gestalt heritage. However, because Gladiator had never been a public speaker or a leader, it soon became obvious that he was merely the figurehead for a more diabolical mastermind.

Many people suspected the telepathic villain Influence was behind the Alliance, an accusation that annoyed the mastermind. He turned to America Man and Kinestar for help, and the three gestalts infiltrated the Mundane Alliance's headquarters to confront the true villain – the Blood Red King, who was using a pair of psychic twins, Auric and Argenta, (who were comparable in psychic power to Influence himself) to do his dirty work.

In the confrontation that followed, the twins used their powers to sap America Man of his faith in his country, which nearly destroyed him. Golden Gladiator, however, had a great respect for his adversary. With Influence's help, the world's first supervillain broke free of the twins' control and snapped their necks.

The Blood Red King, angry that America Man had escaped from the one situation that could permanently kill his enemy, promptly drained Golden Gladiator's body of its blood. Gladiator died in America Man's arms; his last words were: "yeah, I guess America does need heroes after all..."

America Man attended Golden Gladiator's funeral, and offered a eulogy and a goodbye message. The hero literally vanished into the sunset, and has not been seen since.

FIGHT! FIGHT!

In August 1997, on the second anniversary of Golden Gladiator's death, silver envelopes appeared in the homes of Gestalts around the world, as well as whatever they needed to safely travel to a castle located on the outskirts of Copenhagen, Denmark.

The invitation was to the world's first Gestalt fighting tournament. The tournament host, Victor Eismann, announces that the site was neutral ground; people could interact, but could only fight in the competition.

Many prominent Gestalts decided to compete at Copenhagen. After a week of fighting, the Titan defeated Lao-Shi Khan and won the tournament. If this triumph enhanced Trevor's already formidable reputation, it also brought him a world of trouble. The opponent he defeated in the semi-finals, an Assassination Gestalt named Cygnus, had sworn an oath that no man would defeat him. His vendetta against the Titan that would have unexpected consequences.

Eismann told the gathering that they had to prepare for "new arrivals", a prediction which came true little more than month later, on November 8, 1997,

when the third Gestalt wave occurred.

FIRST CONTACT

On May 1998, Cygnus devised a scheme to finish off the Titan once and for all. During the Titan's mission to launch the Hephaestus I Platform, Cygnus trapped them both in a small container in orbit and attempted to hurtle both of them into the sun. A panicked Titan discovered his ability to travel at faster than light speed the hard way – he accidentally created a warp that hurtled them both hundreds of parsecs from Earth.

Several months later, a race of near-human aliens, the Ar'Turodain, detected this odd craft in their space. They rescued the humans and brought them to their administrative world. A misunderstanding briefly made the Titan a wanted fugitive; fortunately, after Titan exposed a spy in the highest levels of the government, the Ar'Turodain pardoned him and treated him with honor. First Contact between Terrans and the Ar could be considered a modest success.

Trevor persuaded the Ar to return him to Earth. On June 24, 1999, the Ar'Turodain landed at the door of the United Nations. The entire world came to a dead stop for about a week, then continued business as usual.

After receiving numerous invitations, on August 11, 1999, the Ar'Turodain formal representative Iskari Ingago agreed to address the United Nations General Assembly. The warm welcome he received cooled after he called Earth "primitive but promising" and offered to trade advanced technology with Earth - provided they agreed to curb all A. I. research, destroy 95% of the world's nuclear arsenal and consolidate the rest under an independent authority. On August 20, the United Nations Security Council meets to discuss the Ar'Turodain's demands. China and France vetoed the agreement, while the United States and Russia abstained.

Shortly afterwards, Earth was surprised by the arrival of a second alien race: the Ar'Kayadin, an enemy offshoot of the Ar'Turodain, made first contact with Earth. The Ar'Turodain warned earth's governments that they were not to be trusted, and as a result, the "space Nazis" (as the Ar'Turodain labelled them) enjoyed a very cool reception.

Eventually the Ar'Kayadin were reduced to making private contacts with some of Earth's smaller governments in a bid to gain influence over this newfound world. Some factions of the Ar'Kayadin, humiliated by this treatment at the hands of a "primitive" culture, advocated a more aggressive strategy.

LEVIATHANS

During the fourth Gestalt wave, seventy new "pures" were born. They bore no obvious archetype, but

were a race of three-eyed giants, indistinguishable from each other.

These giants despised Gestalt-kind and hunted them with the single minded obsession of a medieval Inquisition. These called themselves "the Leviathans".

ATLANTA

In the early 2000s, the world's most dangerous team of supervillains, the Tyranny League, declared an offensive to eliminate anti-Gestalt technology, which they believed was the greatest threat to their plans. This put them on a collision course with the government, the scientific community, and practically every superhero.

In January 2006, with the US military's battlesuit program, Project Capricorn on the verge of completion, the League felt it had no choice but launch a first strike on its base facility. Using mercenary villains to distract the major heroes, the League, fielding a giant gravitic fortress for the first time, firebombed one of the research firms that was subcontracting for Project Capricorn. A thirty block radius on the outskirts of Atlanta was incinerated, with additional devastation spread over a ten kilometer radius. Once the League finished its first strike, they flew into the ruined complex and killed anything that moved. One casualty was Atlanta's favorite superhero, the Clipper.

People were not happy. Columbia, America's finest hero team, vowed to avenge him. The failure of superheroes to prevent the disaster shook public confidence in them (especially in America). A schism developed between the federal government and Columbia, who had previously enjoyed a close and mutually beneficial relationship.

AN IMMINENT THREAT

As great as the Tyranny League threat may be, an even greater one is coming from beyond the confines of the Gestalt, from outer space. In September 2003, the Canadian supervillainess Dr. Power announced that she had detected a non-Ar spaceship on an approach vector to Earth. They were Eiko, an ancient enemy of the Ar.

Eiko ships are relatively slow. On January 11, 2007, that Eiko scout ship finally reached the solar system. Several heroes, including the Titan attempted to contact it. The ship responded by attacking, and was destroyed — barely.

"You ain't nobody special. I ain't nobody special. Let's show the world what two people who are nobody special like look when they're beating each other's ^%\$&! brains out."*

— Chris "Action" Turgeon

III: WHO'S WHO

VILLAINS

Archvillains are the most important "movers and shakers" in the campaign. These villains have the potential to devastate or conquer the world; every major Gestalt, government, and security agency on Earth views their actions with intense scrutiny.

ARMAGEDDO

Of all the supervillains on Gestalt-Earth, *Armageddo* is the looniest, a crazed energy projector who acts like an exaggerated stereotype comic book supervillain. Armageddo spends most of his time in asylums or prisons, but has extraordinary luck escaping.

Armageddo's schemes involve going to a public place, issuing ridiculous demands to politicians, businessmen, or the general public, and then getting stomped by superheroes. Armageddo has kidnapped presidential pets and demanded that congress pass an entitlement bill for supervillains. He also founded the Armageddo School for Supervillains, located next door to Columbia HQ in downtown Washington DC. Armageddo sees himself as earth's preeminent bad guy, and goes to ridiculous lengths to prove it.

Armageddo occasionally takes on other names and identities, most of them as ridiculous as Armageddo.

Armageddo is considered to be a nuisance by most superheroes and supervillains, but it's also a mistake to view him as trivial; people have died when Armageddo has been treated like a joke. Armageddo emits low level radiation that is carcinogenic on long term exposure, and his energy blast is very powerful. Some heroes worry that one day, Armageddo may come to his senses, and become a truly lethal menace.

THE BLOOD RED KING

Of all the beings on Gestalt-Earth, the *Blood Red King* is the most hated and feared. He is the Gestalt of Pain and Suffering. The King is actively trying to make misery "the dominant emotion on the planet". His transformation powers have enabled him to create numerous monstrous offspring. The King has engaged

in numerous killing sprees (and worse) over the years; sometimes, heroes have killed him, but his Gestalt Immortality has always brought him back, deadlier than before.

The King has grand ambitions, but enjoys playing in the mundane world. His imperious presence delights in the creation of new monstrosities, and he takes a detached delight in ironic bits of sick humor and horror.

His powers reflect his name: in addition to creating monsters, he causes wounds to open spontaneously that will not easily heal, and he appears and disappears at will, leaving a trail of blood, or a train of bloody footprints where he walked.

The King's ultimate goal is not world conquest. It is to find a way into Hell (he is certain it must exist), and usurp control of it. He will stop at nothing to find an individual who can open the gateway for him, and send him to his ultimate destiny.

BOMBAST

One of the newest mercenary supervillains to hit the scene is *Bombast*, a physical powerhouse who appears to choose operations so long as he gets a chance to fight and humiliate the world's most popular superheroes. His motivation is unknown, but he's prone to putting his opponents in humiliating pose after he defeats them, including stripping them and hanging their costumes from flagpoles to signify his victory.

THE DEREGULATORS

A group of superhuman anarchists who believe that the United States government was created illegally, and the Constitution is invalid. The Deregulators is hell-bent on destroying the infrastructure of regulatory agencies, and to bring down the federal system and return control of all American institutions to state governments or private control.

The Deregulators are a young supervillain group, and not as tough as most established superheroes. They are, however, a very clever group, especially at using distraction and infiltration. They have ties to many militia groups, and to militia sympathizers in the

US army.

The Deregulators' modus operandi involves disruption through destruction of public records or public buildings. They also employ assassination and blackmail to further their ends.

The members of the Deregulators are:

Freedom Smith, Marksman Gestalt, former political science student and Gulf War veteran,

Adrenaline is a Thrillseeker Gestalt. A former truck driver and white-water river rafting pilot. Adrenaline is a brick whose body creates chemicals in times of stress that allow him to boost his abilities.

The Juror is the Gestalt of Mob Justice, who believes that the government and all who obey it are criminals. He's able to transform himself into twelve angry men, each armed and dangerous.

Resistor is a Murder Gestalt, a former member of the Scarpachi mob family who was ostracized for his public boorishness and disrespect for the family patriarch. Nearly anything becomes a deadly weapon when Resistor throws it.

The Terror is a fear Gestalt who joined the Deregulators because they're the enemies of authority (although he's not sure he can trust them either). Terror's powers involve the telepathic extraction of someone's greatest fear, and using it against them as a mind blast or a mental illusion.

DOCTOR POWER

Of all the arch-villains, *Dr. Theresa Power* is almost certainly the most dangerous, although she's not as active as the Tyranny League or the Blood Red King. Dr. Power has no superhuman abilities except for her intelligence; she's a master of Gestalt science, genetic engineering, and artificial intelligence. She's successfully cloned human beings from small strands of DNA. She's built nearly a dozen artificially intelligent computers. She has deep space probes placed in the Oort cloud with much better scanning technology than the Ar. She had a Gestalt detector and a Gestalt powers neutralizer.

Dr. Power is one of the world's few second-generation supers; she's the daughter of the original Dr. Power, Mathias Power. Her father, an abusive megalomaniac, was killed in a fight in Toronto with the Canadian superheroine Crucible in 1993. Dr. Power, has vowed to avenge his death.

She has three known goals: the destruction of Crucible, the destruction of Columbia (one of her father's hated foes), and the conquest of the world, which she intends to turn into a memorial to daddy. Power is cold and analytical, except when her father's memory is insulted, when she can become very angry and irrational.

Under some circumstances, Power can be a valuable ally. She's provided superheroes with valuable data on Eiko fleet movements and strength. Power does not make alliances with other villains; she distrusts the Tyranny League (she and Imperator have had an unpleasant history), and views the Blood Red

King with loathing.

Power's recent activities center on kidnapping people. No one's sure why. She treats her minions with the disturbing sentimentality that a carpenter feels about their favorite tool. Her other tools are the Power Orbs, tiny floating gravitic globes which produce force fields and tiny tractor beams. Controlled by Theresa's incredibly efficient brain, the Orbs serve as a hundred extra hands when she needs them. While Theresa shuns combat, these globes make her frighteningly effective in combat, as Columbia and Crucible can attest.

HEL

The Mythological Gestalt is a prominent one; Hel, Norse goddess of Death, is one of the most feared of all reincarnated gods. She is the Norse goddess of death, half-beauty, half-corpse. Her powers are simple; when she touches someone, they die. She is obsessed with collecting the fingernails of the dead so she can build the ship that will sail at Ragnarok, and periodically launches mass murder schemes to facilitate her long term goal.

Hel's sidekick (and executioner) is The Living Gun, a flying Colt pistol that talks in an awful Mexican accent.

INFLUENCE

Few members of the general public have heard of George Anderson, and that's the way he likes it. With the possible exception of China's T'ien Ming, Anderson is the most powerful psionic on Earth. Other psionics know Anderson as *Influence*, the black clad leader of the Council of the Mind, a body of psionics that meets every six months at a location of Influence's choice.

The Council of the Mind is an unofficial governing body of the world's telepaths. All telepaths are considered members of the Council—even Columbia's Labyrinth attends its meetings. The Council meets to set guidelines for telepaths, to prevent actions that would result in government persecution of telepaths, such as being too open with one's powers against the wrong target (openly using psionics against the President of the United States would not bolster the cause of "the psionically endowed").

Subtlety is Influence's game, and it's a game he plays very well. Influence wants nothing more than domination of the world, and control over the direction of human development. He and Labyrinth are implacable foes, though neither has openly attacked the other; he has used surrogates to attack her, while she has manipulated Columbia to secretly disrupt his operations.

Influence is also the only known Gestalt who is able to move freely between the human dimension and the Gestalt dimension. He has been manipulating unformed Gestalts, trying to figure out how to make them obey him once they get released. This alone makes him an extremely dangerous threat.

LEVIATHANS

Leviathans are giants with telepathic and telekinetic powers. They are not gestalts. It's arguable that they could be called "cousins" of gestalts (a related "race"). They are the *yang* to gestalts' *ying*, living to slay all gestalts and dominate humanity.

Leviathan names are strange and often long; the longer the name, the higher the position the Leviathan has attained in their hierarchy. Leviathan names have been described as sounding like a hybrid of Latin and Sumerian. Wolniwolnos. Arimathius. Torhane. Utiaveri. Hasinhirius. Ominos.

The Leviathan hierarchy is (in order of rank, from highest to lowest): King, Prince, Duke, Knight, Chancellor, and Caitiff. Knight and Duke are the two most commonly encountered castes. Dukes are leaders, Knights are soldiers, Chancellors are advisors, scientists and interrogators, and Caitiffs are spies. In addition, they are known to have an Oracle who provides them with insight about the future. Ominos, the renegade leader of the Psionic Seven, is the only known female.

MALIGNO

The Gestalt of Petty Malice, *Maligno* is an imp gestalt. He spends most of his time invisible, using his mind control on individuals to set up "interesting" situations, and then tittering gleefully at the results. Where he really shines, however, is in his dealings with supervillains. Maligno likes to do people... favors. His favorite favor is to take a relatively weak or discredited villain, such as the Osprey, and give their powers an unexpected boost so they're one of the most powerful villains on Earth. Maligno's favors always have a price, usually something that will embarrass or humiliate the person receiving the favor, or create a great deal of chaos.

Maligno the Magnificent hates physical confrontations, so he does his best to make sure someone else is around to do his dirty work for him.

THE PSIONIC SEVEN

If the Tyranny League is the undisputed holder of the heavyweight supervillain team title, the Psionic Seven is the number one contender. The Seven was founded in 2001 by a female Leviathan named Ominos. All members of the Seven must be psionic in some way).

The Psionic Seven are mercenaries. They charge extraordinarily large sums to perform kidnapping, theft, or rescue operations. The members are:

Ominos is a renegade Leviathan female (in fact, the only known Leviathan female). Ominos's powers most closely resemble those of a Leviathan Duke; she's a very talented shapeshifter and telepath. Ominos is considered one of the best masters of superhuman tactics.

Psycho-American is an Insanity Gestalt, though one would never know it from a casual meeting with this quiet, philosophical young man – who fights

against emotional instability by passing it onto others.

Dominator is a Gestalt of Command, and the only member of the team who gained Gestalt abilities during the first Gestalt wave; she quietly used her powers to accumulate a fortune from "donors", millionaires under her mind control. Sent to prison by Kinestar, when the Seven was being formed, Ominos made her liberation one of her first priorities.

Psilence, Gestalt of Evasion, is an undetectable speedster and the dirty trick that makes the Psionic Seven such a devastating team in an ambush.

Slab is a (male) Beauty Gestalt who's also the most egocentric (and vain) member of the Psionic Seven, a powerhouse who feeds on the admiration of others (those his machismo is often punctured by the team's female members).

Star Shield is a Bodyguard gestalt with force field powers.

Evo, *The Post-Human* is an amoral biologist, a chronic overachiever who views humanity as a herd of dull, barely evolved apes. He's an Evolution Gestalt who can cloud the minds of those who are less intellectual than him.

THE QUESTIONER

Life is a series of questions without answers. The Questioner has a burning need to discover the answer to anything that bothers him. The Questioner is not a telepath (or an interrogation gestalt); that would make his job too easy.

The Questioner is part Diogenes, part schizophrenic. He wanders the earth seeking truth, issuing a continuous stream-of-consciousness monologue, asking any question that comes to mind, and only questions. Being with the Questioner is like being in the company of an inquisitive five-year-old and George Carlin on amphetamines, except neither of those try to kill you when you give a wrong answer.

RICK THUNDER

Rick Callaghan is a wild teenager, originally from San Antonio, who gained gestalt powers, had a long series of arguments with his parents, and became a supervillain because he thought it would embarrass them. Incarceration only hardened his criminal tendencies, and Rick's becoming more vicious every time he puts on the costume.

THE TYRANNY LRAQUE

There is no question that the Tyranny League is the most powerful supervillain group on Earth, and the most deadly. The supervillain Imperator formed the League in 1994. It began as a typical villain team, killing heroes, performing robberies, and desecrat-



ing landmarks. Its initial goal was to overthrow the government of the United States and set up a tyrannical dictatorship led by Emperor and enforced by an army of superhumans. They never seemed to make much progress toward the goal.

Lately, the United States government has attempted to develop human augmentation technology that could allow soldiers to compete with Gestalts in terms of mobility and fast assaults. The League announced its opposition to the program, and has struck against these centers with frightening effectiveness.

The League has cultivated a feud with Columbia, the preeminent superhero team on Earth. Their battles rank among the most brutal in superhero history, with members killed on both sides. The League has poor relations with other arch-villains (there's major bad blood between Emperor and Dr. Power, the Blood Red King's nihilist streak is an anathema to them, and Influence is far too self-centered to be a reliable ally). However, the League is highly respected and admired by novice villains, and the League has been patronizing some journeyman villains and forming alliances.

Its known members are:

Imperator, the team leader.. A would-be emperor of the United States who wields a powerful energy scepter.

Computer is Imperator's lieutenant. He's a machine empath of extraordinary ability.

Daimyo is a jonin, a master ninja.

The Hand of Chaos is the most mysterious member of the League. He wraps himself in a probability-warping field that he can twist to perform nearly any effect he wants.

Jericho Bronze is the team's field commander. Bronze is one of the most unusual Gestalts in the group, a statue of the Greek god Mercury that came to life.

Berserker is one of the first known members; he's a bruiser with incredible strength; only a handful of gestalts are more physically powerful.

Despot is a Hate Gestalt who's mind control powers affect anyone who experiences negative emotions.

Aside from Daimyo, the deadliest member of the League is *The Scarlet Knight*, the League's executioner.

Poltergeist, Gestalt of Ghosts, is the newest League member..

There are rumored to be other members of the Tyranny League. The League is known to possess a teleporting, T-shaped flying fortress that they refer to as "the Hall of Tyranny". Its origins are unknown.

HEROES

COLUMBIA

When people think about superhero teams, they think about Columbia. With the exception of India's Garuda and the USMC Vanguard, no superhero team has lasted as long as the "eagle clad protectors of liberty" have. Columbia was formed in late 1990 by Liberator, Reactor, and Thrillseeker to fight the major

Gestalt menaces of their day. Since then, Columbia has ridden a roller coaster of triumph, scandal, and tragedy. Up and coming superheroes try to emulate Columbia. Up and coming supervillains want to kill them – a good fight against Columbia can legitimize a villain team (although it usually leads to incarceration).

Columbia is based in Washington DC, but receives corporate, not government sponsorship, and derives most of its funding from merchandising and other marketing schemes.

The current membership of the team is:

Liberator. The Gestalt of the American Way (or at least its status quo). Liberator is known for his courage, dedication, and ability. He is also known for his manipulations, his callous attitudes, and his ruthlessness. Liberator will do anything to protect the American status quo, regardless of legal or ethical issues. Liberator runs Columbia as its own little potentate when he thinks it's needed.

Carnival. This exuberant young woman is a street kid who turned her life around; she's now a flamboyant energy projector, a Light Gestalt who is also a well-known supermodel.

Edge. Edge is the anti-Liberator; he's personable and laid back. Edge is also notorious for his practical jokes and for trying to unsettle his opponents with verbal barbs. Edge is a Gestalt of Determination; if he fails in an attack, he digs down deeper and become tougher and more skilled until he succeeds. Edge has superhuman strength, which he uses with masterful precision.

Kid Mercury. An abrasive physician with superhuman speed, Kid Mercury is the oldest person in Columbia (in spite of the "kid" moniker) and the least mature. Kid Mercury joined Columbia in 1995, but quit the team less than a year later. While away from the team he developed a drinking problem, which Liberator used to blackmail him into rejoining in 1998.

Labyrinth. The Gestalt of Secrets, widely considered the most powerful psionic in the world, and certainly the most famous. Labyrinth lives to discover (and protect) people's secrets. Most people are very uncomfortable around her. She's also the implacable enemy of Influence and anyone else who abuses psionic abilities for personal gain.

Starbird. The most contentious of all the members of Columbia, Starbird is an exceptional flyer and a powerful and versatile energy controller. She's also the sister of the deceased activist Gestalt Freebird, who died when he was used as a human shield during the Gulf War. Starbird harbors very strong political beliefs, and has never been afraid to speak them, much to Liberator's annoyance.

KINESTAR

The leading crimefighter in New York City is *Kinestar*, a product of the first Gestalt wave. Kinestar is a woman with telekinetic powers who wears an armored suit with gadgets, who's also a trained detective. Kinestar is very respected by local citizens and by the NYPD

(with whom she frequently collaborates).

MAJOR KORGUN

Ambassador of the Ar'Turodain to Earth. He's a figurehead (the real diplomacy is conducted by an expert diplomatic staff). Korgun is a throwback to the Ar supersoldiers of ten centuries ago, and his powers are matched only by his conceited nature. He'd like to be an earth superhero, but his diplomatic duties get in the way almost as much as his own ego. He sometimes comes across as a buffoon, but when the situation calls for it, he's usually capable of elevating his game.

POWERJACK

In 1989, billionaire Jack Lombard developed incredible superhuman strength. He became San Francisco's foremost superhero. He journeyed to Los Angeles, had a "misunderstanding" with Gary Corbin (the early Los Angeles superhero known as "The Physique"), and proved his superior strength in public. Powerjack made appearances in New York, Washington, and Los Angeles, always giving interviews to the press, always trying to create as big a spectacle as possible. But nobody liked him much.

When the second Gestalt wave hit, a new strongman emerged – Trevor Griffin, AKA the Titan. Lombard paid his people to lure the NASA superhero up to San Francisco so they could have another "misunderstanding". But this time, everything went horribly wrong. The Titan was much stronger than Powerjack, and Powerjack's treachery made Trevor as angry as anyone has ever seen him. Powerjack received the beating of his life. He retired soon afterward.

Lombard's media empire has often railed against gestalts who become too popular, especially the Titan. Nonetheless, he's not lost any of his powers, and has vowed to help when people need him. Despite his long inactivity and obvious bitterness, most people lump him in with the good guys. They may be mistaken.

SOULKEEPER

The most famous African Gestalt is Uganda's *Soulkeeper*, a psionic with healing powers and precognitive abilities. She is the head of the Utopia 2100 organization, an organization that's trying to eliminate war and poverty by the year 2100. She's a tireless worker who promotes peace, tolerance, and unity. As she says: "Tolerance is Africa's only hope. Peace is mankind's only hope. Unity is man's greatest destiny."

Soulkeeper is sometimes helped by Zambia's *Umsipha*, who's reputedly as strong and tough as the Titan.

TECHNARCH

The Bay City's most famous superhero is *Technarch*, a machine telepath who can link with and con-

trol machines. Technarch is really one step removed from being a master villain. He would like to accelerate Earth's development into a technological paradise. Technarch works with the authorities to help eliminate anti-social elements, but he's not above doing some dirty work to get his hands on a technological innovation. Technarch has a mechanical dragon HQ that flies over San Francisco.

THE TITAN

These days, when people think about superheroes, they inevitably think of Trevor Griffin, aka The Titan. There are many obvious reasons: he's tall, handsome, the strongest person on the planet, flies faster than a rocket, and has an exceptional media presence.

Trevor, however, doesn't have much in the way of an active superhero career, except to help out in emergencies. He doesn't wear a costume, just blue jeans and a T-shirt. He doesn't start fights against villains — fights tend to come to the Titan.

Primarily, Trevor works for NASA as a delivery system, and interacts with some of the alien cultures that have recently contacted Earth. If a villain really annoys him, he'll actively track him down, but (at best) Titan is a part-time superhero. He'd rather fly around, help people in need, and enjoy life than fight. He also has a very strong urge to leave Earth and just go out and explore space, but his friends and responsibilities usually keep him planet-bound. At the United Nations' request, Trevor is also a goodwill ambassador to the Ar'Turodain.

THE USMC VANGUARD

The world's premier squad of military heroes; the United States Marine Corps Vanguard is an elite unit of Gestalts who serve as the United States' most active military force. They're very controversial, since they were the first Gestalts used in military operations and many blame them for the widespread practice of using Gestalts in military Special Forces worldwide.

Colonel Robert Wallace formed the Vanguard in 1989; his Rogers Project sought experimental training methods to improve the physical performance of soldiers. When one of his subjects, Corporal Jonathan Clark, acquired superhuman abilities in the first Gestalt wave, he was ecstatic. Clark was sent to Panama to abduct Manuel Noriega, but it was the Gulf War that brought the Vanguard into the public eye. Since then, the membership has grown and they have been involved in every major American military engagement.

The Vanguard do not see themselves as heroes but as soldiers, and have no compunction about using lethal force – lethal force is their life. The current Vanguard membership is:

Captain Jonathan Clark (code-name Desert Storm): The perfect soldier, unflappable, inspiring, with an exceptional tactical mind. Captain Clark combines extraordinary speed and commando training.

Staff Sgt. Randolph Adams (code-name Mine-

sweeper). The USMC Vanguard's brick was their second member, a Toughness Gestalt who can project walls of protective force and toughen his teammates' bodies against attack. Adams (known to his friends as "Sarge") is probably the most likable member of the team. He's also the first famous African-American Gestalt,

Sgt. Thomas Powell (code-name Sawbones) Powell is a combat medic with force field projection abilities. In his early years, Powell was a rebellious recruit with - attitude, but has mellowed considerably.

Sgt. Christopher Bowman (code-name Superbat). If anyone in the Vanguard is more intense than Jonathan Clark, it's Christopher (never call him Chris) Bowman. Despite being born blind, Christopher was a champion athlete in high school. When the second Gestalt wave hit, Bowman's attempts to compensate for his blindness led to the development of superhuman abilities. Among his many other talents, Christopher is a third degree black belt in karate.

Cpl. Rukvinder (Rick) Singh (code-name Snafu). Rick has the blood of Sikh warriors in his veins, and he's proud of it. . He is a Mechanics Gestalt who can sense and neutralize machinery.

Cpl. Bryon Williams (code-name Yankee). Yankee is a young man who loves to explore new lands and learn about other cultures. Williams is a Language Gestalt and a decent amateur psychologist even without his powers.

L/C. Donnie Picardo (code-name Gambler). Donnie is one of the team's most recent arrivals. Donnie is a young Texas Latino who mixes bluster with naiveté, and

is treated like the team mascot (which fits in with his Luck Gestalt).

Pvt. Simon Morgan (code-name Dirt, or more commonly Dirty Bastard), Simon is a Stealth Gestalt, and the Vanguard's most recent recruit.

ALIENS

Unlike other settings, little is known about the vastness of space. All known races, except the mysterious Probability Lords, live within a 700 parsecs of Earth. Nothing is known about the vastness of this galaxy, let alone others. Only a handful of alien species have ever been encountered by humans or humanity's Ar offshoot.

THE AR

Natives of the planet Turoda, these aliens were transplanted from earth by a race of mysterious aliens who are known only as the Probability Lords. Most Ar are near-human (with genetic engineering that improves their senses and increases their longevity), however there are mutants who were bred millennia ago to work in hostile environments. The Ar Empire broke into three sub-empires 800 years ago: the stodgy, traditionalist Ar'Turodain (based on the planet Turoda) is the largest block, the more malevolent and militaristic Ar'Kayadin (based on Aggadi) is another block, while the decadent A'Sarashar (based on Serash) is the third block. Superhumans are rare, but form the ruling faction of the Ar'Kayadin.

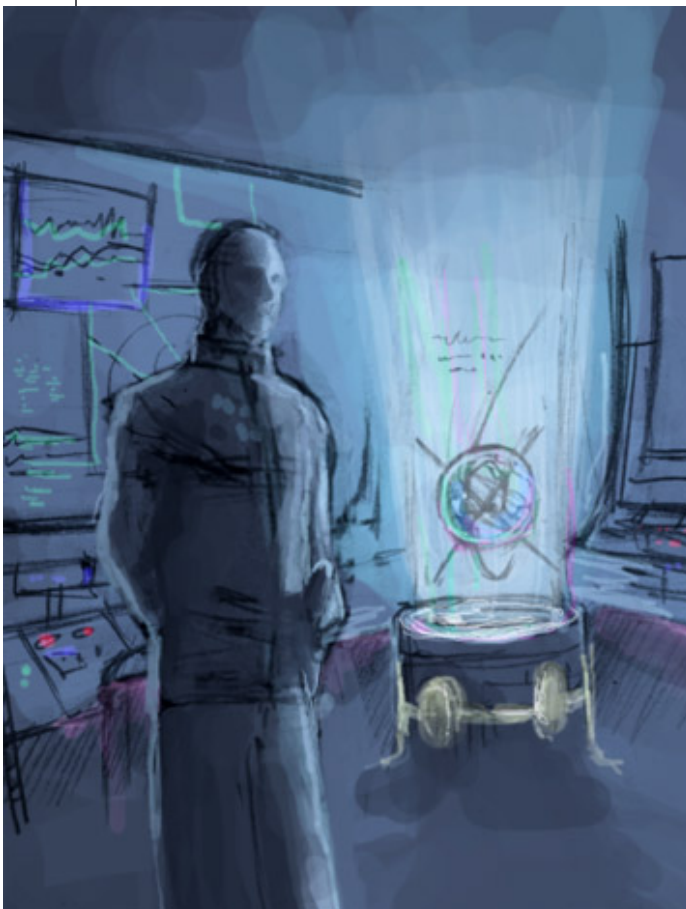
THE EIKO

The Eiko are a race of inhuman sentient beings who have been at war with the Ar for sporadic periods since 500 AD. The Eiko are considered xenophobic and hostile. They possess at least two dozen colony worlds; though no Ar is exactly certain as to the composition of Eiko civilization.

The Eiko are a composite creature, its main body is a hard spine-like creature (4-8' length) called the bracket. Jellyfish-like sacs (2'-5' diameter) called drums are attached to the bracket. The Brackets take care of basic needs; circulation of necessary biochemicals and nutrients, breeding, perception and motor control, Drums give the Eiko their cognitive and telepathic talents.

Eiko pass memory membranes, special drums containing race memory, down from generation to generation. The oldest memory membranes remember the Probability Lords, and the Eiko cherish those memories by worshipping them as gods. They rabidly guard their space, then periodically swarm and attack nearby systems in a fit of paranoia.

All Eiko wars are fought for religious reasons. Eiko worship the harmony of a probability field that only their senses can detect. Other intelligent lifeforms, particularly chaotic unpredictable Ar (and humans), register to their senses as distortions of this probability field, so



as far as they're concerned, humans are walking blasphemies. The presence of a human being is an unending scream of profanity that their senses cannot shut out. As a result, humanoid life is to be exterminated wherever it is encountered. The idea of negotiation or peaceful coexistence has never entered their minds once during their 1600-year conflict with the Ar, and Earth is not likely to be treated any differently.

The Eiko wage war by sending down telekinetic constructs to devastate major populated areas of a planet, supporting them with pyrokinetic volleys and mind control of key planetary leaders. When the majority of the planet's population centers have been stricken and the populace's will to resist has been broken, the Eiko will then exterminate all life on the planet, making it "pure" for the eventual return of their masters.

THE PROBABILITY LORDS

No eye has seen them, nor has humanity fallen under their gaze in 8000 years. Legends speak of great, wise, and terrible powers. They are responsible for the transport of the Ar humans to Turoda, and were somehow involved in the creation of the Gestalt dimension.

In the Gestalt Age, some of their earthly artifacts have been uncovered. These places, known as Probability Tunnels, can be extremely dangerous to human and gestalt alike.

THE GESTALT DIMENSION

The Gestalt Dimension is sometimes called the "happening place". It's a dimension where energy from the human subconscious is stored; the collective angst, joy, triumph, and tragedies welling up to

become the power source for superhumans.

There are two distinct regions within the Gestalt Dimension. *The Void* is a vast featureless country inhabited by odd creatures that feed off the psychic energy, a few changelings, and protogestalts. When a gestalt wave occurs, protogestalts are transported to our world and (usually) take on human shape to become pure gestalts, or they locate a host that's compatible with their archetypes and (when the gestalt wave hits), jump from the Gestalt dimension to earth, complete the bond, and turn the "host" into a bonded gestalt.

Also native to the Gestalt Dimension are its guardians, a mysterious race called metagestalts.

The Void is an area of mental force. The physical laws are different there; one moves by an exertion of will and likewise, one's ability to attack and defend is also dependent on the strength of one's mind. Naturally, telepaths love it here.

Beyond the Void are contained alternate dimensions called Fantasyscapes. Whatever a human being has ever imagined, it has its own self-contained universe in this dimension. Few people have ever studied them in much detail; as one researcher has speculated, most are probably extremely boring. Nonetheless, amidst the dross of the human imagination are gems beyond imagining, from worlds based on classic movies, to vast epic dimensions of mythology, to the fever dreams of the most insane artist.

"Now only if they had an index," one observer said, having visited a dimension called "the crossroads of all slash fiction" (which was initially confused with Hell, except that it was even less erotic.)

"Does Liberator pay taxes?"

— Anonymous Citizen

IV: EVERYDAY LIFE

ATTITUDES TOWARD SUPERBEINGS

WHAT THE PUBLIC THINKS

The general public's reaction to Gestalts can be summarized as a mixture of fear and curiosity. The general public likes certain superhumans on an individual basis, but for the most part, considers them to be violent and unbalanced. The general public tries to get out of the way of superbeings, but loves to watch them at what they think is a safe distance.

In contrast, there is also a loony extreme, which worships some Gestalts as gods. Some Gestalts have portrayed themselves as ancient deities who have returned (or are linked with public admiration and fascination with mythology and actually believe that they are ancient gods reborn), but these cults are not particularly influential (yet).

WHAT THE MEDIA THINKS

For the American media, superheroes are as important to their sales as the British Royal Family is to an English tabloid; they're Bread and Butter. Superhumans who play along with the media have become major celebrities. Even certain villains, such as the Psionic Seven, have achieved celebrity status.

The tabloid press (and its broadcast equivalent, talk radio hosts) make outrageous claims about Gestalts, most of which are untrue, but many of which are widely believed. It's very easy to smear a Gestalt. The history of Gestalt teams is riddled with scandal, and internal dissension within a team rarely goes unreported.

Gestalts are often the subject of heavy press coverage, but ironically, only a small percentage of fights (less than 5%) are actually captured on film. The competition to get superhuman combat on film (and show it) is really fierce. In particular, the Copenhagen tournament tends to produce a media feeding frenzy.

GESTALTS AND THE (U.S.) GOVERNMENT

The United States government, and indeed most national governments, treats Gestalts with a mix of fear and misgiving. The government's initial instinct was to control superhumans through restrictive legislation (which was ignored by the superhu-

mans) and covert operations such as Project CounterMeasures (which was not ignored). Both efforts failed miserably, and some powerful early Gestalts (especially Labyrinth of Columbia) still retain a cool attitude to the government because of the early skirmishes. Most government agencies are trying to retreat from this position — most, but not all of them. Local government agencies are more eager to promote good relations with heroes.

Many people worry about a shapechanger replacing a head of state and secretly taking over a nation or a psionic mind controller taking over behind the scenes. Because of this, anti-psionic technology is a research priority for many governments, including the United States.

With the variety of Gestalt abilities out there, the possibility exists that one day a Gestalt of Electability will emerge, a Gestalt with the superhuman ability to be so attractive to the electorate that it will be impossible for him to lose an election. There is a call for Gestalts to be barred from political office, but an Oregon referendum on the issue was defeated by the voters in 1994 and no other proposals have come close enough to be tested for constitutionality by American courts.

Most governments want to take greater steps to control Gestalts, but in a manner where they don't offend Gestalts to the point where they lose superhero support, or alienate the electorate (it doesn't help that voters don't like their government to be seen as weak and indecisive). It's a balancing act, but the pendulum has swung in recent years towards anti-Gestalt sentiment, and the number of confrontations between Gestalts and the government is definitely on the rise.

GESTALTS AND FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS

Most western governments (Canada, Great Britain, Australia, Germany) have similar relationships with their gestalts as the United States. They may not completely trust them, but they'll enter into partnerships with those who want to protect the State. In South America, the actions of Los Protectores, a Panamanian superhero group, has gone a long ways to making gestalts palatable, if not universally liked.

In other parts of the world, gestalts have received a different reception. India remembers the Red Plague, an event that's colored much of the

world's perception of Gestalts. Russia and China have tried to control them; China has been successful, while Russia's relationship has been a bloody one. In Africa, gestalts such as Soulkeeper are angels, but most are demons, superhuman mercenaries like the infamous Askari who have strewn a path of unmarked mass graves across the continent. The Blood Red King has also wandered the globe, and where he's travelled, few have any good things to say about gestalts.

Because America Man was the first gestalt, the gestalt phenomena has been linked to the United States, with all the good and bad that implies.

THE UNITED NATIONS

The role of Gestalts in the United Nations is highly debated. At present, no United Nations agency officially uses Gestalts, and Gestalts are officially barred from peacekeeping duties, although this has not prevented the United States from sending the Vanguard into Somalia, Bosnia, or Liberia; Canada's Pax Warrior was also active in Canadian peacekeeping actions. United Nations rescue agencies and medical agencies have quietly employed Gestalts since the early 1990s.

When the Ar'Turodain arrived, there was a general call for the United Nations to represent humanity and present a united front to the aliens. The Ar quickly came to the conclusion that the United Nations was only a minor power broker, and that the nations of Earth were the true political powers, and after the 1999 UN Disarmament Vote was defeated in the Security Council, the Ar'Turodain ceased to deal with them and went directly to the United States and other prominent nations. This has badly shaken the credibility of the United Nations. The Ar'Kayadin occasionally courts the United Nations (if only because the Ar'Turodain don't, and the Ar'Kayadin feel it gives them a certain status), but they don't take it particularly seriously. The alien presence has generally heightened the need for international cooperation, and the United Nations, the United States, and the world's other major political powers are a lot closer in Gestalt than they are in the real world.

A number of heroes, especially those who feel that the world needs to present a more united front, are pressing for a greater Gestalt presence in the United Nations. Soulkeeper is the self-appointed leader of this "world gestalt movement", joined by respected gestalts from across the globe.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS

When Gestalts appeared in 1989, they threw the legal system for a loop. The following legal precedents have been set for the use of Gestalt abilities in the United States.

1) Attacking someone with a Gestalt ability is assault and battery; attacking someone with the

intent to kill is attempted murder. There are mitigating circumstances (see Point 3, below).

2) The existence of psionics has been established in a court of law beyond a reasonable doubt. The use of psionics to read memories has not been decided by the court, and is not yet allowable as evidence; psionic lie detectors are not (yet) permitted. (This is generally true world-wide; in emergencies, some countries with less than complete respect for civil liberties allow government telepaths to telepathically gather evidence; this practice is extremely controversial; the use of a Philippine government telepath on an American citizen in 1998 caused a major incident.)

3) The Supreme Court has recognized that super-powered vigilantes may perform law enforcement duties in a costumed identity and maintain the identity if they are vouched for by law enforcement agencies and if they use reasonable force. Penalties for costumed vigilantes who violate this are often quite severe (Chris Turgeon vs. The State of New York, 1991).

4) Masked vigilantes who are associated with law enforcement identities may be allowed to maintain privacy in their costumed identity if they are vouched for by law enforcement agencies, even when charged (but not if convicted) (Kinestar vs. The State of New York, 1992).

5) In the United States (and most Western countries), Pure Gestalts are considered citizens of the country in which they first appeared, and are subject to the laws of that country. If the court can show they have the emotions and cognizance of an adult, they're tried as an adult. The archetypal nature of a Gestalt is not a valid defense against committing crimes (i.e. the Blood Red King is still guilty even though it's an invariable part of his nature that he promotes misery and suffering).

6. Evidence gathered through the use of a precognitive or retrocognitive is invalid (this was established in a rather spectacular fashion during the O.J.. Simpson trial).

These rulings are *highly* controversial, and some feel that they were established under secret psionic duress. Nevertheless, they have survived many challenges. In addition:

The technology to effectively contain supers is only a recent accomplishment, and may affect future laws regarding Gestalts.

Killing someone whom fits classical patterns of monsters and undead is still technically murder. (Pastor Brown vs. State of California, 2002)

Law enforcement authorities may use super-prison technology if they view a suspect as "a probable escape risk" and get a judge's consent. "Extreme probable escape risks" are sent to the Orbital Containment Facility, which also requires a judge's consent. "Probable escape risks" may attend trials remotely (watch and testify on closed circuit television), but this requires the courtroom to be heav-

ily monitored, and two lawyers (one sitting at the accuser's side, the second in the courtroom) must be present. Three times, the United States Supreme Court has refused to hear challenges to circuit court rulings on this matter. It is possible to get a court order to overturn "probable escape risk" rulings.

The death penalty does apply to Gestalts. Six Gestalts has been executed to date in the United States (and many more worldwide); Blackmark, a Texas bank robber and killer, was executed in 1992, but returned to life in 1995 and killed the judge and jury who convicted him.

Many Gestalts find it difficult to defend themselves in a court of law. Gerald Curry of Columbia has set up the Gestalt Defense Fund to ensure that Gestalts know their rights and obtain proper legal protection, though there's been some controversy over those in Columbia's bad books being denied access to the foundation's resources.

TECHNOLOGY

MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY

Nowhere are new developments in technology more noticeable than they are in the field of medicine, and the advances in medicine on Gestalt-Earth have been spectacular.

Artificial prosthetics to counter loss of limbs, sensory organs, bad hearts, and spinal damage is available, but they're very expensive. The occurrence of rejection is much lower with this new technology. "Bionic" technology is inferior to possessing an actual organ; cybernetic superhumans are not feasible with commonly available technology.

Progress has been made in the field of organ budding, regrowing organs such as bladders and hearts (and nerve cells) from a host's cells; this is one field where rapid improvement can be expected.

Some progress has been made in fighting cancer and AIDS, with new drugs that strengthen the immune system (and combat allergies). The treatment for diabetes is greatly improved on Gestalt-Earth, and there's even some hope in treating Alzheimer's disease.

Late-term cancer is still nearly impossible to treat, even by Gestalt healers. This has not prevented them from plying their trade; superheroes with healing abilities sometimes volunteer to help people in clinics. In America (and around the world) the Healing Gestalt is a common one.

The AMA frowns on this practice as unfair competition for available medical professionals. The medical profession privately refer to Gestalt healing as "quackery with a better track record". They however, insist on medical certification and training for full-time Gestalt healers. The medical profession doesn't hesitate to broadcast horror stories of phony Gestalt healers, and has tried to make it illegal for anyone to use healing powers unless they're a trained and

licensed medical practitioner. (The general public doesn't appreciate these efforts, however fraud cases and the power of the medical lobby continues to make this an ongoing concern).

Another factor that discourages Gestalt medical practitioners is the 1994 case of Dr. Shannon Ford, a British Medical Doctor Gestalt, who was kidnapped by the *Red Chain*, a Slavery Gestalt. The Red Chain had learned about her powers, grabbed her from a hospital in Bristol while she was in the middle of performing surgery and then offered to give her services to anyone who would meet his price of \$1 million. When it became obvious that he was going to be captured by British authorities, he killed her out of sheer spite. After this incident, many Gestalt healers went underground.

Perhaps the greatest medical advance has been the development of the wonder drug Regeneran, which greatly bolsters people's healing capabilities. There have been, however, serious concerns over its side effects.

INDUSTRIAL TECHNOLOGY

The last ten years have seen a quantum leap in the development of industrial technology, and some have labeled this "The New Industrial Revolution". The key revolutions include:

The foundation of the New Revolution was the Astra-Volt, a battery invented by Dr. Emilio Astrada (better known as "Dr. Astra") in 1991 that has twenty times the energy storage of a "normal" battery at room temperature. Once this was developed, many other technical innovations became possible.

In 1992, the first New Electric engine was developed that used the Astra-Volt technology. When Detroit initially refused to back the car, Dr. Astra found his own financial backers and founded his own company, Aztech. By 2004, the Big Three had switched most of their production facilities to Electrics, with diesel trucks being the sole area of automotive engineering unaffected by Electrics.

Attempts have been made to develop a New Electric Jet engine, but so far, no practical working models have made it to prototype.

New Plastics: First developed by a Gestalt researcher at Dow in 1992, this material is slightly harder and more durable than steel but is much lighter, cheaper, and easier to recycle than metal, and is rapidly replacing wood and even steel in construction. This has seriously affected the steel industry, and hurt the timber industry. On the other hand, the prices of homes, cars, and consumer goods are down; it has had a mixed effect on the American economy. It has also, however, reduced the price for repairs of damage caused by superbeings, and kept insurance rates from going through the roof.

Bullet Trains: Large sections of the U.S. Eastern seaboard are being linked by a new generation of bullet trains that use a New Electric engine and New Plastic construction. These trains are not quite as fast

as air travel, but much less expensive. The United States West Coast, however, is resisting this new form of transport in favor of automobiles.

An exception to this is the recently opened (July 2002) Los Angeles–New York train. An average bullet train reaches 320 km/hour (200 mph) and is usually underground with a lot of security devices to prevent tampering. The bullet trains have pretty much filled the niche of buses and passenger trains, and are starting to be used to haul freight. They have about twice the travel time of an average airline flight, and fares cost about 60% of an average airfare.

Fusion Energy: The commercial development of fusion plants to provide a limitless source of energy is expected in the next two years. Cornwallis Fusion plant, outside Washington DC, was the first operational fusion plant in the world; El Viejo Grande in Mexico has just come on-line (and is selling cheap electricity to California), while eight others near completion.

Computers: Personal computers are faster, more powerful, less expensive, and easier to use. Voice recognition systems are now commonplace.

The introduction of Quadrant computer chip in 1992 (a “quantum chip” developed by Dr. Richard Greer and integrated into general PC architecture in 1993) was responsible for much of the current generation of computing machines. Most modern machines are based on evolutions of the Quadrant.

Most devices are getting computerized; computer home managers (systems designed to turn homes into “smart homes”) can now be purchased at an affordable price.

Ever since the 1930s, people have dreamed of the ultimate computer: the home robot. There have been incremental improvements in robot technology; for a few hundred dollars, very life-like cat and dog robots are available, and remote control vacuum cleaners can separate most valuable objects (coins, rings) from dirt. However, the home robot servant or companion still has a long ways to go.

Automation: Perhaps the most revolutionary changes in society are going to be in the area of automation. Advances in computing and robotics are allowing various tasks to be completed much more quickly and efficiently. This potentially puts many people out of work (or force many people to shift careers). There is heated public resistance to new automation technologies, but it’s likely to be widely accepted in all areas within the next ten years.

Weapons Technology: Despite the best efforts of the Tyranny League, the new technologies are working their way down to weapons and military specifications. New plastics are making it possible to build tanks that are far lighter and more maneuverable than real world tanks. Drone technology continues to advance. Energy weapons, developed in the 1990s, are starting to become commonplace.

THE REFRIGERATOR

The only known technology that can effectively

contain supervillains is “The Refrigerator”, which was invented in 1998 by Dr. Roland Adams under Columbia’s sponsorship. Dr. Adams was a “eccentric inventor” Gestalt, and the Refrigerator is true Gestalt technology; according to all conventional analysis, there is no way on Earth it should work, and people can barely reproduce it, let alone understand it.

There are eight permanent Refrigerator strongholds in the world. They are located in Olan-cha, California USA, Blood Mountain, Georgia USA, Troy, Illinois, USA, Orkney Island, United Kingdom, Sholapur, India, Haikou, China, and the Orbital Unit (which circumnavigates the equator over the Pacific Ocean south of Hawaii).

It requires a court order to have a Gestalt imprisoned in the Icebox, and the order must be reviewed and confirmed by a federal circuit court judge. Felons can be placed in the Icebox only if it is proven beyond a reasonable doubt that no terrestrial facility can safely prevent them from using their powers in a hostile manner. No one has ever broken out of the Icebox.

THE ORBITAL CONTAINMENT FACILITY

The largest and most important Refrigerator is the Orbital Containment Facility (code-named the Icebox). It was launched in 2001, and is currently in geostationary orbit around the equator over the Pacific Ocean south of Hawaii.

There are sixteen containment modules on the Orbital, plus a command module in the central core. Each module is an independent unit, and can break away from the central core in the event of an escape. This is meant to discourage anyone who’s trying to escape from getting access to the other inmates.

SPACE

One major difference between Gestalt-Earth and our world is that the space program is much more advanced. The Titan is a NASA employee and serves as a delivery system for the US space program. Between the Titan, the space research of Dr. Astra, and exposure to extraterrestrial cultures, there is far more incentive for government and taxpayers to fund space development.

There are six fixed near-space habitats; each of which is capable of housing over fifty inhabitants. One of them is the Icebox, the orbital penal facility for the world’s most dangerous Gestalts. The farthest near-space facility is the Tombaugh Space Telescope (a larger version of the Hubble) which was launched in 2006, and is now in stable orbit around the moon.

The first manned (non-Gestalt) mission to Mars is scheduled in late 2008, probably with a Gestalt escort. Work on a Martian colony is scheduled to begin on January 1, 2010, with Gestalt assistance, pending the outcome of the survey missions.

ORBIT CITY

The largest human off-planet habitation is Orbit City. This station, twenty modules connected in space, was designed by Dr. Astra, the most renowned Gestalt scientist in human history. The first module was launched in 2000; it is currently 22 modules (including 10 habitation domes capable of comfortably housing 144 families each, in a space equal to a spacious terrestrial apartment). The city rotates at a spin that provides it with gravity equivalent to earth gravity. Orbit City is officially a United States colony in orbit. It has a population of 868; in 2006 a girl named Heather Chesterton was born aboard the station, the first human born in space. Orbit City has an elected government, and its citizens vote in federal and Florida (its launchpoint) state elections. It's a thriving little town in orbit with a tourist port and a lot of merchandising on Earth, which helps pay the bills. The individuals who live in Orbit City are a mix of space researchers, chemical engineers and biotech researchers who perform experiments for major corporations, and mavericks who want to become colonists. Orbit City is not expected to become self-sufficient until well into the century. Its town motto is "Who Needs Gravity?" (a carryover from the early days, when the station was zero-G).

Orbit City is run from a partnership between the government and several private foundations.

ENTERTAINMENT

COMIC BOOKS

Unlike the real world, comic book sales are not in decline, though it's still viewed as a pulp medium. Many long-time comic book creators are a little amused at the world taking on comic book overtones – when they aren't frightened by it.

Most adaptations of Gestalt superhero adventures are highly inaccurate; generally, the writers and artists create their own villains (some of which are close analogs to the real thing); the one attempt to use the Blood Red King as a Columbia antagonist was stopped when the heroes warned the publisher that a comic book with a Blood Red King portrayal might literally eat the child who was reading it.

MOVIES

Movies on Gestalt-Earth are much the same as those in the real world. There are many action-adventure movies that feature a human good guy vs. a nasty Gestalt villain.

There have been over a dozen attempts to make serious dramatic movies involving Gestalts. Last May, HBO aired *Give Me Liberty*, a four-hour documentary-drama on the life of Liberator that raised a major controversy and spurred several lawsuits.

The most controversial Gestalt movie was 2003's *The Real Life of Jesus Christ*, which was filmed

by someone who claimed to be a Time Travel Gestalt. The film was later exposed as a fraud.

TELEVISION

Television on Gestalt-Earth is quite similar to television on our own world. There are Gestalt characters on soap operas, comedies, and some dramas. Columbia has guest starred on a number of programs, including the Simpsons. *It's Gestalt Stupid* was an ABC sitcom satire of a superhero team that lasted for four seasons between 1994–1999 (like other "TGIF Friday" shows, it was a bomb with critics). *Dimension*, a 2003 FOX drama about a teenage gestalt, lasted six episodes before cancellation, and the 2004 UPN drama *G-Cop* lasted fourteen episodes. *Boston Gestalt* is a low-rated show that debuted on ABC in 2005, and still airs sporadically.

There is also (in the United States), GTV, the Gestalt Channel, which (since 1992) runs news, fight footage, and endless reruns of *It's Gestalt Stupid*. Many consider it a nuisance and an embarrassment, though *Today in the Gestalt Dimension*, GTV's prime time news, is a must-see by most Gestalts.

The most anticipated television event for the coming year is *Ar'Amaga* ("The Song of Man"), an eight hour documentary on the history of the Ar that's being produced by HBO for next February's sweeps, and will be Earth's first major glimpse into Ar history and culture. It will also be the first time that most humans will hear about the Eiko.

MUSIC

The music world remained much the same as it is in the real world; rock, country, hip-hop, and rhythm and blues remain America's most popular musical forms, and are imported to the rest of the planet.

After the Ar'Turodain landed, there was a major surge of interest in alien culture, mostly in music, fashion, and literature. Several collections of Ar'Turodain military music have been released commercially, and have been wildly successful.

There has been some cultural cross-pollination between the Ar and humans: poetry and opera are big fads in Ar space. Perhaps appropriately; heavy metal (especially speed metal) has caught on with the younger Ar'Kayadin. Beethoven is also popular – after a careful examination of human culture, the Ar'Turodain officially recognizes "Ode to Joy" as the de facto Earth anthem.

MULTIMEDIA

Computer entertainment is similar to the real world. Multimedia is one of the highest money earners in the entertainment industry, but due mostly to public perception of its market and its content, it doesn't receive much critical respect.

Some Gestalt powers have useful applications on the Net. There are a number of Gestalts with cyberkinesis (machine control ability) who are able to maintain

an Internet presence. One unusual Gestalt has a web page where he says that people can log on and experience mind control; he's able to send a mind control command via his web page that forces people to send him \$10 every time they access it. The author of the web page openly advertises that people who view this page will lose money, and requires people to click on a disclaimer before they view the page. Government and major ad agencies are very interested in this service...

There are (of course), plenty of web pages and web sites devoted to all manners of Gestalt. The Armageddo Home Page, where Armageddo describes many of his master plans (before he commits them), is quite entertaining. There are plenty of Titan and Cygnus and Columbia pages.

The Black Orion home page (no one's quite sure of Black Orion's actual identity) is a great place to go to get the latest data on supervillains (Black Orion is sketchier on the good guys). Cape Gossip is the best place on the web to go to find the inside dirt on Gestalt teams and their problems.

PRINT MEDIA

Few avenues of popular media have opened up to Gestalts as much as magazines. *G-World* is the most popular Gestalt rag; it focuses on Gestalt gossip and can be found in the checkout of every supermarket in Canada and the United States. *Fighting Gestalt Journal* is an Atlanta based magazine that focuses on Gestalt battles and Gestalt combat abilities; its analysis of Gestalt battles can be downright unnerving. *Gestalt Combat* is a martial arts magazine focusing on martial arts styles and their Gestalt practitioners. For more serious types, *The New England Journal of Gestalt Studies* and *The New England Journal on Gestalt Psychology* are required reading.

ATHLETICS

Athletic events have been wildly affected by Gestalts. Body contact sports were the most badly affected: Gestalts not only dominated their sports, they frequently inflicted permanent injury to their competition.

Gestalts were officially banned in most sports in 1990, but the ban has proven unenforceable until recently. The blacklist has not gone over well with everyone, especially with Athletic Gestalts who thrive on competition. Some Gestalts have earned money and fame by competing in exhibitions, and there is talk about "Open Games" in 2007, an Olympics-style competition that will be open to anyone.

But for the most part, being a Gestalt athlete is an exercise in frustration. Gestalt athletes cannot earn the money or prestige that "normal" athletes make, and Gestalt exhibitions are "freak shows".

There is, however, one athletic event that is essential to Gestalt-Earth...

THE ANNUAL COPENHAGEN TOURNAMENT

The highlight of many Gestalts' calendar is the Copenhagen superhuman martial arts tournament, held every two years from September 22 to September 29 at Castle Eismann outside the Danish capital. Eismann himself is a man of mystery, virtually omnipotent within his castle

Copenhagen is Neutral Ground; heroes and villains are free to meet and socialize, threaten or goad each other, party, discuss master plans, and recruit new members.

It's considered a huge honor to be invited, and doing well in the tournament really enhances a Gestalt's reputation. The highlight of Copenhagen is the hand-to-hand combat competition; where acknowledged hand-to-hand fighters compete for the title of the world's greatest fighter.

RELIGION

Opinions about Gestalts by religions vary widely. A few cults believe that Gestalts are a type of divine being, because they are clearly greater than human. Some religions view Gestalts as separate but equal to humanity. Most mainstream western religions officially view Gestalts as "gifted humans". In 1991, Pope John Paul II spoke out and declared that Gestalts were human and had "human souls" (even pure Gestalts and monsters like the Blood Red King). Other Christian, Judaic, Hindu, Buddhist, Shinto, and Islamic religious leaders largely followed suit.

It's been (perhaps ironically) the non-mainstream theologians who have been the most vocal challengers to the Declaration of Souls, claiming that pure Gestalts were too different from humanity to qualify as human. The debate continues with great intensity in religious circles.

A few Christian fundamentalists and evangelicals are also vocal opponents of the Declaration; they concede that a bonded Gestalt probably has a human conscience, but that's far from certain about pure or chain Gestalts (at least those who take on an inhuman or demon appearance). Some believe that the coming of Gestalts is a sign of the end times – clearly they are capable of the miracles that Christians have said always existed, and some resent that non-Christians who scoffed at their belief in the supernatural for so long refuse to admit they were wrong.

APPENDIX A: BUILDING YOUR GESTALT

Gestalt Creation Check List

1. Decide on the Campaign's Power Level, Setting, and Tone.
2. Choose Your Character Type.
3. Answer The Questions on the Character Type Sub-List.
4. Determine Your Character's Skills and Abilities.
5. Represent Your Character In Game Mechanics.
6. Determine Your Character's Goal.
7. Create a Connection to At Least One of the Other PCs.

SO YOU WANT TO BE A GESTALT?

Inventing a character for a Gestalt game is even more involved than in many superhero games, because of the unique nature of the campaign world. A player can still create a character and see how he flies: Gestalt campaigns have done this in the past and been successful. However, a more systematic approach may benefit some players, especially newcomers.

The check list is a tool to help guide those who need help in the character creation process. It is not meant, and should not be used as, a straightjacket to constrain a player's choices. **If you don't think this will be helpful to you, don't use it.**

STEP 1: DECIDE ON THE GAME'S POWER LEVEL, SETTING, AND TONE

The power level of a game should either be decided by the GM ahead of time with the players' consent, or as a consensus between the players and the GM. *Gestalt: the Hero Within* contains power level guidelines for the chosen system. They range from low-powered novice heroes, to world-beating international team heroes.

The setting is also best decided by the GM with player input, or a player/GM collaboration. This is more than just your hero's home city, it's whether the game will

be local, regional, globe-trotting, interstellar or expand in scope from local to global as your character and his friends gain more experience.

The setting is also related to tonem which range from dark, street-level crime-fighters, to situation-comedy to silly parody of genre conventions, to epic glove-trotting adventure.

It's okay to run a character who rubs against the grain of a campaign (such as a hardened mercenary coping in a team of idealists, a street-level cop with minor superpowers teaming with god-like heroes). Just make sure that you produce interesting conflicts, not stifling bottlenecks that wreck people's fun. Understand the tone of the game and work with it.

STEP 2: DECIDE ON YOUR CHARACTER TYPE

You need to decide on your character's origin: usually this means deciding whether you're a Gestalt or a non-Gestalt, and if you're a Gestalt, which of the three types you are. See pages 3-5 of this document.

STEP 3: ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON THE CHARACTER TYPE SUB-LIST

Each origin type has a character type sub-list. If you like to develop the details of your hero over time, you may want to keep some of the details on this list unanswered for now, and come back when

you're comfortable. Otherwise, this is a useful way of getting a handle on how your hero might fit into the setting.

If your reaction to these questions is: "Ack! This is too much like work!", just skip them.

Bonded Gestalt:

- What's your archetype? (Note: See Appendix II for a large list of archetype ideas).
- In which wave were you created?
- How long did it take you to realize you had superpowers?
- Where were you when you realized you had superpowers and what were you doing?
- How are you handling being a Gestalt? Do you view your powers as a curse, a blessing, or just something that happened to you?

Pure Gestalt:

- What's your archetype? (Note: See Appendix II for a large list of archetype ideas).
- In which wave were you created?
- Do you realize you're a gestalt, or do you think you're something else?
- How socialized are you? Can you pass for a normal human under most circumstances, or do you stick out like a sore thumb? If you do stick out, are you conscious about it and trying to adjust, or are you comfortable existing as an archetype?
- Do you have gestalt immortality?

Chain Gestalt:

- Who transformed you? Under what circumstances? When did you realize that you were changed?
- What is your relationship to whoever transformed you?
- Were you given powers for a reason? If so, why? Do you realize your creator's purpose? Are you down with the program?
- Are you comfortable in your transformed state, or do you wish to return to normal? If the latter, how far would you go to achieve this?
- What are your powers?

Well Trained Normal:

- How did you receive that training?
- Are you trying to compete with gestalts in the superhuman arena (i.e. do you get into fights with supers)? If not, are there enough non-combat roles in the campaign to allow you to remain a viable character, or will you get bored? If so, how do you expect to survive?
- What drives you to compete against superhumans?
- What's your attitude toward Gestalts, and what role will you try to adopt towards them?

Alien:

- From which culture do you originate?
- Are you an exile on earth, or do you still main-

tain cordial relations with your homeworld? If you're an exile, how far would you be willing to compromise your morals to return?

- How do you get along with other aliens on Earth? Do you have contacts at the various alien embassies? Enemies?
- Do you possess alien technology and if so, what measures do you take to protect it?
- Are you trying to compete in the superhuman arena; if not, does the campaign make allowances for your chosen role (Note: If the answer to this question is "no", make a new character), and if so, how do you expect to survive?
- Why are you on earth? Are you happy to be here?
- What is your opinion of the human race and their various sub-groups? Do you admire the Terran spirit, or do you think they're backward primitives, or is your attitude a mix of both?
- What drives you to compete in the superhuman world of Terrans, rather than leaving them to their own petty dramas?

Rogue Leviathan:

- In which Gestalt wave were you born?
- Why did you choose to rebel against the Leviathan order?
- How do you get along with gestalts?
- How will you react the next time you meet a non-rogue Leviathan?
- Do you have safeguards against Leviathan reprisals, and if so, what are they?

Technologically Augmented Human:

- Is your technology internal (cyborging), worn (battlesuit) or carried (weapon)?
- Who created the technology? Is it replicable, or is it weird gestalt technology that only works for you?
- How did you come to possess the technology?
- How do you plan to deal with people who want to take away the technology? Will you hide the fact that you're not a gestalt?
- What's your relationship with gestalts?

Weird Gestalt Bonds:

- In what wave was the odd gestalt created?
- Was there a special reason the object attracted a gestalt?
- How do you handle being an inhuman in a human world?
- Why do you choose to involve yourself in the superhuman arena?

Dimensional Changeling:

- When were you swept into the gestalt dimension?
- How did you get back from the gestalt dimension?
- How long were you away? If you were away for a long time, how did you handle being the culture shock of your return?

TWO METARULES

Rule One

Gestalt is a conventional superhero game. Unless your Gamemaster tells you that he's running a non-traditional game, you must build your character so he/she/it has a reason to operate in a traditional superhero environment. No matter how weird your chosen archetype or non-standard your origin, your character must be able to handle typical comic book situations (combat) and survive.

Rule Two

There's a fine line between a character who has a chip on his shoulder and a sociopathic jerk who can't get along with others. You don't always have to make it easy, be make sure that your character can get along with others in a team environment.

- Do you miss the gestalt dimension?
- Did you ever encounter Leviathans or other gestalts during your time there?
- Did you have a patron who helped you survive?
- Why did you choose to involve yourself in the superhuman arena?

STEP 4: DETERMINE YOUR CHARACTER'S SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Once you've got your character type figured out and you know where you come from, the next step is to figure out what you're able to do.

When you create your hero, consider the following questions:

Do you have enough offensive power to contribute to the team in combat?

Do you have enough defensive capability that you won't die against an average opponent?

Do you have enough mobility that you aren't trailing behind the rest of the group?

Do you have useful non-combat skills?

Does your character have an interesting personality that will generate plot hooks, maintain your interest, and be fun for the other player characters to interact with?

It's okay not to be the perfect team player. It's okay if your character butts heads with your teammates in a dramatic situation. On the other hand, if every character you play is a self-centered jerk and your campaigns never last very long because they always fall part due to controversy surrounding your character, you may want to try playing someone who's more likable and altruistic.

(And if this isn't the way you're normally wired... that's why they call it *role-playing* and not *you-playing*. Similarly, if you're always playing the person who holds the team together and you're never selfish and you find yourself getting too frustrated by your chosen nice guy niche, try playing the jerk once in awhile.)

Look for a good mix of team roles. Not a mix of power types (though that's

important too), but the way your personality fits into the dynamics of your team. There are three groups of player types:

Group A - Popular Team Roles: The Leader, The Den Mother/Rock of Support/Diplomat, The Jokester/Swashbuckler, the Ethnic Minority Who's A Great Team Player, The Grim Warrior Who Broods A Lot (But Still Likes His Team). The New Kid With A Lot to Prove, The Rebel/Egomaniac Who's Still Part of the Team, The Barely-Controllable Berserker/Bad Cop, The Aging Warhorse Training the Next Generation.

Group B - Team Roles That Work When A Player Uses Them as A Starting Point: The Guy Who's Out For Revenge, the Arrogant Know-It-All, The Ignorant Fumbling Everyman, the Angry Person Who's Recovering From A Tragedy, The Person Who Takes Nothing Seriously, The Person With A Torn Allegiance, The Wacky Eccentric.

Group C - Roles That Rarely (If Ever) Work in a Heroic Team Game: The Moody Loner, the Sadist/Psychopath, the Raging Egomaniac Who's A Borderline Sociopath, the Passive-Aggressive Sulker.

Group A usually works well in a heroic team game. Group B can generate good, interesting conflicts, but usually have to resolve their issues or moderate their behavior to be effective over the long term. Group C, depending on their severity of their behavior, produces destructive conflict that can destroy a game or even real-life friendships.

Many groups live by the rule "no inter-party conflict allowed". This is a mistake. Conflict is wonderful. It's the essence of fiction, it's what keeps things interesting. The third group, however, often produces not conflict, but a repeating cycle of behavior where campaigns quickly lose their heroic flavor, cease to have any thematic resemblance to the source material, abuse player characters and players who are striving to be heroic or genre-emulating, and ultimately fall apart. These characterizations are better suited to short-term games in non-heroic genres.

It's important to have a good mix of

character roles on a team. Too many rebels, and the team lacks a center. Too many wacky eccentrics, and the campaign may degenerate into bad parody. Too many Den mothers, and the game may lack interesting conflict. It's the players' responsibility to see to the mix, because it's this chemistry between characters that's vital to a successful, long-term game.

In all likelihood, you'll be running a gestalt. If so, consider the following:

Archetype: What does your character embody? For a list of archetypes, see Appendix B.

Powers: What can your archetype do? Unless the Gamemaster says that the campaign will not be combat oriented, keep an

eye on making sure you have sufficient offensive and defensive powers and mobility.

Disadvantages/Complications: Whatever your game system calls them, you need to take into account at least two things: how obsessed are you about your archetype, and how vulnerable are you to opposing (or alike) archetypes?

Non-Gestalt Background: Not all gestalts appear out of thin air. If you're a bonded gestalt, you had a life before you were a gestalt. What was it? And what skills did you possess? What have you learned since you bonded with your gestalt?

Code-Name: If you don't make up one, the press will. *People have tried to get around that. It doesn't work.*

SAMPLE GESTALT #1: GESTALT OF BADGES

This is not necessarily a serious gestalt, however it's presented as an example of how even a bizarre concept might be turned into a playable PC. *If you're the* gestalt of badges is obsessed with achievement and awards. You believe in the beauty of bureaucracy and the importance of awarding meritorious service. That's why you wear more badges than a NASCAR driver has sponsors.

Gestalt Type and Goals (Options)

Pure: The character was born with a fervent belief that the world is disorderly and needs to be divided into perfect bureaucratic order, as exemplified by the badge.

Chain: The character had a mysterious job with a secretive organization. One day he was given a mysterious badge indicating he was a field agent. The character's goal is to figure out what it's all about.

Powers

Shape Change: Only to give himself any badge he chooses.

Super-Sense: Determine if someone is carrying a badge, what the badge says, and whether the badge is genuine.

Mind Control: Make anyone believe the authenticity of any badge he presents **OR** Make anyone who's carrying a badge believe he's a superior member of the organization and fit to give orders.

Machine Control: Make any machine believe that the badge he presents is authentic.

Damage: Transmit an energy form (or raw pain) to someone who's carrying a badge.

Teleport: Use badges as conduit for teleportation **OR** teleport a badge out of someone's possession into his hand.

Defense: For some reason, bullets always seem to hit his badge and bounce off it without hurting him.

Throw Badge: Hurl badges like shurikan with deadly accuracy!

Complications

Vulnerable to attacks from Anarchy or Modesty gestalts

Possible Code-Names

Black Badge, Red Badge, Medallion, Merit, the Inspector-General.

STEP 5: REPRESENT YOUR CHARACTER IN GAME MECHANICS

Once you know what your character is all about and what you should be able to do, it's time for a formal write-up.

The Gestalt: The Hero Within book contains guidelines for your system of choice. If you have additional problems with translating characters to your system, talk to the GM and/or consult knowledgeable players.

And remember, characters can grow during a game, you don't need to be a juggernaut at the start.

STEP 6: DETERMINE YOUR GOAL

Goals are included in Gestalt as a way to encourage personal subplots and generate story hooks. Examples of Goals are listed earlier on Page 5.

STEP 7: LINK YOUR HERO'S BACKGROUND TO AT LEAST ONE OTHER HERO

Okay, this is a little forced at times, and players often dislike convenient coincidences. Nonetheless, giving your PC a connection to other PC heroes makes it easier to get into the game while reducing paranoia and anti-social behavior to a level that makes for good drama. You can establish their PC as an old colleague, a family member, an old school friend (or rival), just give your PC someone to talk with in the first few sessions.

THE REST OF THE PROCESS

Character creation does not end when you hand the GM a finished character sheet for approval. It often takes several sessions to get a characterization down, and the GM

SAMPLE GESTALT #2: GESTALT OF METEORS

A sub-class of the Astronomy Gestalt; you represent the force that fears and wonders about shooting stars when they fall from the heavens. You have traditional powers associated with ancient meteor superstitions, and the ability to summon and recall meteor particles from the ground and manipulate them.

Gestalt Type and Goals (Options)

Pure: The character is, like classic meteors, an omen. His very appearance is a precursor of a catastrophe to come. His goal is to prepare humanity for what lies ahead.

Powers

Tunnel: Remove meteor rock and dirt from the earth, and open a pathway. Requires earth/rock, of course.

Meteor Shield: Rip the remnant of ancient meteors from the ground below your feet

Summon Meteor From The Sky: Hit someone with a meteor that falls from the sky. More powerful during meteor showers.

Pet Meteor: To be effective indoors, you always carries a small meteor chunk with you that you telekinetically manipulate.

Analyze Meteor Rock: Determine the origin, meteor content and radioactivity of any meteor. Also allows you to gauge the boundaries, date, and explosive force of a meteor crater.

Meteor Omen: Precognitive Abilities when you see a natural meteor in the sky.

Plague Star: Extract an interstellar disease from a nearby meteor and infect someone with a plague!

Complications

Vulnerable to attacks from other meteor gestalts

Possible Code-Names

Meteor, Perseid, Falling Star.

should be open to some changes to facilitate that. The character may also be missing powers or skills that are an obvious part of his background.

The GM should resist the impulse to “punish” the player for not being 100% perfect with his simulation by making him look inept, particularly in non-combat situations or places where a skill use would be trivial. Grandfather missing skills and powers.

Players should view character development as a collaboration. Be pro-active, resist the urge to “turtle” and allow the GM and even other players to help develop your subplots. Let them know which parts of your background are “untouchable” (things that are the core of his character, and which areas are open to “something the character has always believed about himself is untrue” soap opera style plot twists.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The BlackWyrms Games site will have some additional resources for Gestalt. This will include a Gestalt Resource package for each supported system that includes a character sheet, a quick reference sheet for adventuring in the Gestalt Dimension, a Power Level reference sheet, and other goodies. On the BlackWyrms Games forums, there will also be periodic contributions by the author of additional archetypes and characters (and hopefully others will critique and contribute their own ideas).

GMs should look at picking up Gestalt: The Hero Within, as a sourcebook, as it contains additional details on pretty much everything in the setting.

SAMPLE GESTALT #3: GESTALT OF WOLVES

You are the great predator of the North American continent. Sub-class of the Animal Gestalt; within your blood burns the heart of the pack. You long to run and hunt beside your brothers; having no pack of wolves at your disposal, you choose the next best thing —superheroes—your brothers in the hunt for criminal prey.

Gestalt Type and Goals (Options)

Chain: A variant on the werewolf legend comes to mind. There are other legends of creatures who are less monstrous (except when provoked); races who transform themselves into wolves. The gestalt might bring this race to life, who pass on their “gift” to those they deem worthy.

Powers

Wolfen Fear: By howling, you can chill the blood of those around you.

Terror of the Hunt: What’s it like to be hunted by a pack of wolves? You can put this impression into the mind of your prey.

Wolf Form: You can transform yourself into a wolf.

Wolf Senses

Wolf Communication: You don’t just dance with wolves, you talk to them too! And as an alpha male, they’ll obey you.

Heal Wolf: You can heal your fellow wolves.

Complications

Protective of Wolves, Hatred of Hunters

Possible Code-Names

Wolfer, Wolfen, Packlord, Lupus Alpha.

"How does becoming the champion of an idea lead someone toward becoming a superhero? In an age where just getting out of bed often seems like a heroic act, any passion that encourages people toward acts of self-sacrifice becomes a primer for superheroism."

— Ray Riordan

APPENDIX B: AN INCOMPLETE LIST OF GESTALTS

There are many possible Gestalts. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but should give the player who wants to figure what Gestalt to play.

Some of these may be silly and many of these are non-heroic roles that are not suited to a superhero game, however good players can find inspiration in even dumb ideas.

Acrobats
Alchemy
Allergies
Anarchy/Chaos
Animals
 Apes
 Baboons
 Gorillas
 Monkeys
 Badgers
 Bears
 Birds
 Ducks
 Eagles
 Falcons
 Geese
 Gulls
 Hummingbirds
 Hawks
 Ostriches
 Peacocks
 Penguins
 Poultry
 Vultures
 Cattle
 Buffalo/Bison
 Bulls
 Ox
 Cats
 Big Cats
 Cheetahs
 Cougars
 Jaguars
 Leopards
 Lions

Tigers
Deer
 Elk
 Moose
Dinosaurs
Dogs
 Coyotes
 Foxes
 Hyenas
 Jackals
 Wolves
Fish
 Piranha
 Salmon
 Sharks
Horses
Insects/Arachnids
 Bees
 Beetles
 Flies
 Mosquitoes
 Spiders
 Wasps
Goats
Marine Mammals
 Dolphins
 Orcas
 Whales
Octopi/Squid
Otters
Rabbits
 Hares
Rodents
 Beavers
 Mice
 Rats
 Squirrels
Scorpions
Sheep
Snakes
Turtles/Reptiles
Astronomical Phenomena
 Comets
 Eclipses
 Meteors

Moon
Stars
Sun
Athletics
 Auto Racing (paragon)
 Baseball (paragon)
 Basketball (paragon)
 Bodybuilding (paragon)
 Bowling (paragon)
 Boxing (paragon)
 Bullfighting (paragon)
 Cricket (paragon)
 Curling (paragon)
 Figure Skating (paragon)
 Fitness (paragon)
 Football (paragon)
 Golf (paragon)
 Gymnastics (paragon)
 Hockey (paragon)
 Horse Racing (paragon)
 Jumping (paragon)
 Lacrosse (paragon)
 Racquetball/Squash (paragon)
 Running (paragon)
 Skiing (paragon)
 Speed Skating (paragon)
 Tennis (paragon)
 Throwing (paragon)
 Weightlifting (paragon)
 Wrestling (paragon)
Badges
Balance (physical)
Beauty
Blessing
Blindness
Books
 Authors
 Comic Books
 Horror
 Libraries
 Mysteries
 Romance Novels
 Western
 Scrolls
Boxes

Coffins	Doors	Heart
Jars	Dreams	Mouths
Urns	Electricity	Muscle
Buildings/Structure	Element	Human Nature/Emotion
Castles	Air	Ambition
Houses	Earth	Anger/Temper/Rage/Berserks
Monuments	Fire	Betrayal
Towers	Water	Bitterness/Disillusionment
Walls	Wood	Calm/Gentleness
Wells	Void	Charity
Bully	Periodic Table Element	Comfort/Compassion/Kindness
Bureaucracy/Order	Entertainers	Competitiveness
Candles	Clowns/Mimes/Court Jesters	Contentment
Chairs	Comedians	Courage
Clothing	Contortionist	Cruelty/Sadism
Colors	Fire-eater	Curiosity
Commerce	Jugglers	The Need to Explore
Crime (Paragon)	Escape Artist	Desire
Arson	Espionage	Disgust
Bank Robber	Cinema Spy	Diligence/Industriousness/Work
Bootlegger/Moonshiner	Data Analysis	Ethic
Burglars	Security Systems	Escapism
Car Thieves	Evolution	Fascination
Counterfeiters	Exile	Faith
Mastermind	Fainting	Fear
Murder	Family	Friendship
Narcotics	Dysfunctional Family (paragon)	Reconciliation
Pickpocket	The Heroic Family	Gossip
Prostitution	Brothers/Sisters	Good Samaritan/Helping
Rape	Fathers/Mothers	Grace/Dignity
Smugglers	Sons/Daughters	Grief
Train Robbers	Grandfather/Grandmothers	Guilt/Conscience
Vandal	Flying	Happiness/Joy
Criminals (protector)	Food	Hate
Cups	Feasts	Bigotry
Curses	Gluttony	Hope
Cursing/Cussing	Freedom	Humiliation
Dance	Fungi	Humility
Jig	Games	Ignorance
Tango	Dice Games	Inspiration
Tap	Gambling/Card Games	Greek Muses
Waltz	Role-Playing Games	Jealousy
Darkness	Videogames	Laziness/Apathy
Daydreaming	Gasses	Love
Death	Exhaust	Loyalty
Debate	Steam	Luck
Delirium	Geographical Phenomena	Martyrdom/Masochism
Destiny	Canals	Mercy/Forgiveness
Destruction	Islands	Miserliness
Determination/Perseverance	Lakes	Optimism
Disease	Mountains	Pacifism
Cancer	Rivers	Perceptiveness
Common Cold	Healing	Pride/Boasting/Bragging
Flu	Resurrection	Selfishness
Leprosy	Human Anatomy	Sharing
Neuro-Muscular Degeneration	Blood	Stubbornness/Single-Mindedness
Plague	Bone	Surprise
Pneumonia	Brain	Tantrums
Disguise	Breath/Lungs	Thrillseeker
Divorce	Eyes	Tolerance

Holidays/Festivities	Plastics	Directors (paragon)
Birthdays	Ribbons	Directing
Christmas	Rubber	Theaters (protector)
Easter	Skin	Mythology
Funerals	Soil/Sand	Deities (incarnated)
Halloween	Stone	Heroes (incarnated)
National Anniversary	Wac	Monsters (incarnated)
Weddings	Mental Disorders	Warrior Types (incarnated)
Wedding Anniversary	Depression	Names
Improvisation/Ingenuity	Multiple Personality Disorder	Natural Disaster
Interrogation/Torture	Psychosis	Avalanches/Landslides
Justice	Schizophrenia	Earthquakes
Judgment/Doom	Sociopathy	Firestorms
Keys	Mirages/Optical Illusions	Icestorms
Kicking	Mirrors	Tsunamis
Knowledge	Monarchy	Navigation
Lamps	Music	Compasses
Language	Blues	Noise
Lies/Deception	Classical	Buzzing
Light	Baroque	Footsteps
Life	Classical	Heartbeats
Literature	Gregorian	Howling
Plays	Hymns	Laughter
Poetry	Opera	Sobbing
Liquids	Romantic	Screeching
Acids	Instruments	Whistles
Poison	Brass	Oaths/Pacts/Concords
Water	Percussion	Oratory
Wine/Vinegar	Strings	Organization
Luck	Woodwinds	Pain
Luddites/Anti-Technology	Jazz	Peacemaking
Luxury/"The High Life"	Ragtime	Persuasion
Machines	Rap/Hip-Hop	Petroleum
Computers	Rock N'Roll	Philosophy
Engines	Heavy Metal	Physical Excellence (paragon)
Factories	Prog Rock	Endurance
Magic	Punk	Speed
Stage Magicians	Soul	Strength
Voodoo	Disco	Circus Strongman
Witches	Torch Songs	Weightlifter
Wizards	World	Toughness
Martial Arts	Dissonance	Plants
Barroom Brawling	Harmony	Flowers
Capoeira	Monster Hunter	Orchids
Judo	Monsters	Roses
Jiu-jitsu	Demons	Fruits
Karate	Dragons	Reeds/Grasses
Kendo	Ghosts	Trees
Krav Maga	Local Legends	Vines
Kung-Fu	Vampires	Pleasure
Muay Thai	Werewolves	Profession (paragon)
Pankration	Movies/Television	Architect
Savate	Fantasy/Science Fiction	Archeology
Sumo	Horror	Astronaut
Materials	Murder/Thriller	Blacksmith/Steelworker
Canvass	Situation/Romantic Comedy	Butler/Maid/Chauffeur
Gelatin	Silent Picture	Carpenter
:Leather	Soap Opera	Computer Programmer
Metals	Actors (reincarnated)	Doctor
Paper	Characters (incarnated)	Civil Engineer

Cowboy	Judaism	Day
Detective	Shamanism	Dusk
Diplomats	Shintoism	Night
Electrician	Cults	Noon
Farmer	Religious Figures (incarnated and reincarnated)	Timepieces
Fireman	Riddles	Toys
Fisherman	Roads	Balls
Journalist	Sarcasm	Dolls
Lawyer	Science	Jack in the Box
Lumberjack	Astronomy	Puppets
Mason	Biology	Jacks
Messengers	Genetics	Kites
Miners	Mad!	Rocking Horses
Nurse	Mathematics	Toy Soldiers
Pilot	Probability	Tragedy
Plumber	Statistics	Travel
Policeman	Pharmacology	Truth
Politician	Physics	Secrets
Public Relations	Psychology	Trickster
Plumber	Sociology	Vehicles
Rancher	The Scientific Method/Reason	Automobiles
Seamstress	Season	Bicycles
Stuntman	Spring	Boats
Teacher	Vernal Equinox	Locomotive/Railroad
Practical Jokes	Summer	Motorcycles
Protector	Summer Solstice	Pogo Sticks
Bodyguard	Autumn	Rockets
Culture	Autumnal Equinox	Tanks
Demographic/Age/Gender/ Wealth	Winter	Trucks
Lost Causes	Winter Solstice	Vengeance/Revenge
Political System/The Status Quo	Senses	Victory
Rescues	Hearing	War
Region	Sight	Weapons
Neighborhood	Smell	Cannons
City	Taste	Crossbows
Province/State	Bitter Taste	Dynamite
Country	Sour Taste	Guns
Landmarks/Monuments	Sweet Taste	Grenades
Cemeteries/The Dead	Serenity/Tranquility	Knives
Religion	Sex (technique)	Razors
Protest	Flirting	Maces
Recreation/Pastimes	Seduction	Nuclear Explosives
Acting	Sexuality (paragon)	Spears
Art	Shadow	Swords
Painting	Signs	Historical Weapon Masters (reincarnated)
Sculpting	Silence	Weapon Masters/Marksman
Athletics (see Athletics)	Slavery	Weather
Hunting	Sleep	Hail
Fishing	Stealth/Sneakiness	Lightning
Surfing	Swashbuckler	Rain
Religion	Temperature	Snow
Buddhism	Cold	Thunder
Christianity	Heat	Tornados
Catholicism	Time	Wind
Eastern Orthodox	History	Meteorologist/Weatherman
Protestantism	Futurism/Prophecy	Weirdness Magnet
Sects/Denominations	Punctuality	Windows
Hinduism	Time of Day	Work/Physical Labor/Self-Discipline
Islam	Dawn	

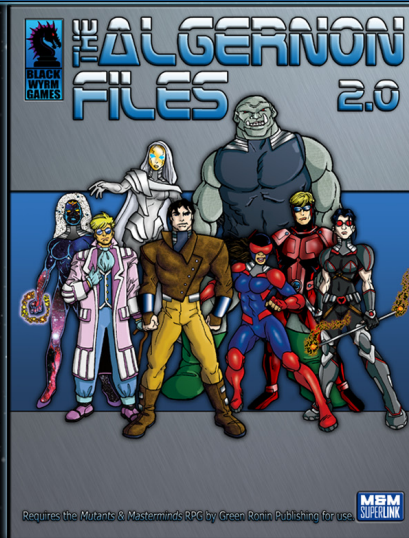


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