GURPS

SPIRITS

by Stephen Kenson

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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DENIZENS OF THE OTHERWORLD

By Stephen Kenson

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INTRODUCTION

GURPS Spirits is the continuation of work begun in a number of excellent *GURPS* books, particularly *GURPS Voodoo* and *GURPS Undead*, both of which presented information on spirits and the spirit world for *GURPS*. But the scope of both books prevented them from being guides to spirits and spiritual phenomena in general: *Voodoo* focuses on the particular campaign setting of the Shadow War, while *Undead*, not surprisingly, focuses solely on spirits like ghosts and specters. *Spirits* is a generic guide for including spirits of all kinds in your *GURPS* games – ghosts, angels, demons, elementals, faeries, and many other incorporeal beings. This book also includes an expansion of the popular ritual magic rules introduced in *GURPS Voodoo*, breaking them away from the Shadow War setting and broadening them to include spirit magic throughout history and diverse human cultures, making the system truly generic and applicable to any campaign.

Spirits contains guidelines for adding a spiritual dimension to any setting, from traditional and urban fantasy to horror and even futuristic science fiction. The spirit templates in this book can be used for NPC spirits or as player characters in a spirit-based campaign. There are also templates for mortal characters who deal with spirits, from magicians to spirit hunters and more – everything needed to make spirits a part of your *GURPS* campaigns.

Using this Book

To skip right to the rules part of the book, go to Chapter 3 for information on the abilities of spirits and how they're represented in *GURPS*. Chapter 4 has racial templates for many different kinds of spirits, allowing you to put them to use quickly. Chapter 5 has templates for mortal and spirit characters, along with new advantages, disadvantages, and skills for mortal characters. Chapter 6 has a complete system of magic for *GURPS*, ritual magic, harnessing the forces of the spirit world. To use *Spirits* as a source book, check out the information in Chapters 1 and 2 for discussions about spirits and the spirit worlds, then see Chapter 7 for how to include spirits in your campaign and some of the issues to consider regarding them. Then look over the other chapters for the rules on spirits and characters involved with them.

About the Author

Steve Kenson has been a freelance RPG writer since 1994 and has contributed to numerous game lines including FASA's *Shadowrun* and *Earthdawn*, Last Unicorn Games' *Star Trek*, White Wolf's *Aberrant* and now *GURPS*. He has also contributed many articles to *Pyramid*. *GURPS Spirits* is his first *GURPS* book. Steve has been an avid gamer since 1981. His other interests include comic books and working with a local youth group. Steve lives in Merrimack, New Hampshire with his partner, Christopher Penczak.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

And God said, "Let there be light: and there was light."
– Genesis 1:1

The term "spirit" refers to an entity that is incorporeal, not a being of matter, although many spirits are tied to the material world or are capable of assuming material form. Some spirits interact with the physical world, while others are far removed from it, appearing only to those who leave the physical world behind.

Spirits come in many different types, and every human culture has some beliefs about them. They point toward realms beyond the physical and to the possibility of a much larger universe.

The Roles of Spirits

Although spirits in RPGs are generally associated with magic, spirit is an intensely religious concept. The terms "religion" and "spirituality" are often used interchangeably today. Modern psychological models of spirits acknowledge their religious roots. In a campaign, it is important to know the different roles spirits play.

Animating Force

In most belief systems throughout history there is an extra "something," an integral component of living things, that is the difference between living and nonliving matter. It is an intangible force that gives life to all things. Early scientific efforts to prove the existence of a "life force" studied the difference in weight between a living creature and a dead one, in the belief that something departed from a living being when it died.

In an *animistic* belief system, spirits are present everywhere, even in inanimate matter such as rocks or buildings. Items are imbued with spiritual or living properties. It is possible to contact, and even communicate with, the spirits of animals, places, and items. In other belief systems, the presence of spirit is limited to only living things, only animals but not plants, or only certain types of living things (e.g., humans). Spirits can sometimes be directed to enter into normally lifeless matter in order to animate it or to bring a dead creature back to life (or animate it as undead).

> *Unless defenses exist against them, spirits are nearly perfect spies, able to go anywhere and observe or influence events without being seen.*
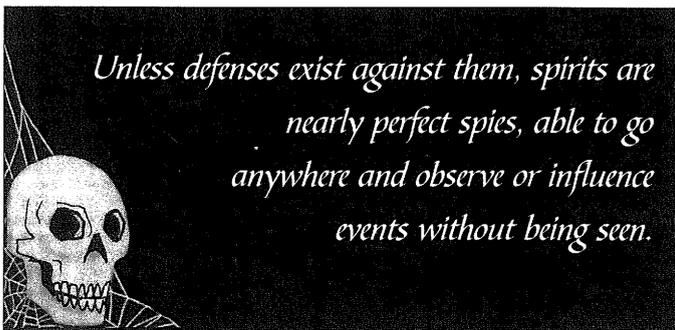
Guiding Force

In addition to its role as animating force, spirit is often seen as a *guiding* force, directing people, creatures, and events toward a particular purpose. Many beliefs claim spirits direct everything: the development of life, the destiny of humanity, and natural phenomena like the weather and the movement of the sun and the moon. In other beliefs they are limited to affecting only certain things. Spirits may also be part of the "divine plan" of an even greater spirit or spirits, in which case they are guided as much as anyone else.

One example of spirits as a guiding force is the veneration of the spirits of one's ancestors. Many cultures believe ancestor spirits (both human and nonhuman) watch over their descendants. They have an interest in protecting and aiding their descendants, although they can also become angry and vengeful as a result of past or present slights. People turn to the spirits for advice, aid, and guidance in times of need.

Spirits are also viewed as guardians of morality, particularly when they are agents of a higher power. The faithful petition these spirits for aid and guidance to follow their moral examples and to protect them against temptation – or the lure of evil spirits.

Higher Power

Raised above material concerns, spirits may have great power. In many belief systems, the dividing line between a "spirit" and a "god" is blurred. All noncorporeal beings are spirits, even the most omnipotent of gods. Such powerful spirits may be anthropomorphic, animistic, or not personified at all.

In general, *GURPS Spirits* deals with spirits that can be quantified in game terms.

Spirits often serve a "higher power." This includes the vast hierarchies of angels and demons found in Christian mythology, Odin's Valkyries, and the innumerable spirit courtiers of the Celestial Bureaucracy in Chinese myth. There may be many different levels of spirits, ranging from the most powerful and exalted to the weakest and most "earthly." Mortal servants of a higher power may receive aid from these spirits, or be granted the ability to summon or command them.

Archetype

Spirits can also be seen as archetypes. Plato's philosophy included a realm of Ideals, which contained the perfect archetype of everything in the physical world. Psychologist Carl Jung described spirits as archetypes from the universal unconscious. Likewise, a spirit may embody a particular idea, concept, or thing – "jealousy," "America." Often this is just a metaphor, but spirits are associated with different archetypes.

A spirit that embodies an archetype often has great power within its particular field but serious limitations outside it. The spirit may also be tied to the strength of its archetype; its power increases or decreases as belief in the concept waxes or wanes.

Servant

Spirits are often shown as servants, particularly in fantasy literature, where powerful wizards command legions of elementals, demons, or similar creatures. Spirits may be servants of higher powers or they may be summoned (or even created) by mortals to serve them.

Dealing with spirits (particularly demons) is a dangerous business, as evidenced by Mephistophilis in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. The djinn of Arabian myth were often bound to grant their summoner wishes or other services but, like demons, could be treacherous servants.

Unless defenses exist against them, spirits are nearly perfect spies, able to go anywhere and observe or influence events without being seen.

Spirit Seers

The ability to see, hear, and interact with spirits has long been considered a special gift (or curse). Spirits are normally invisible and intangible to the material world. The ability to see them is relatively rare and usually indicates a person with the potential to become a magician of some sort. Advantages that allow characters to see and interact with spirits are described in Chapter 5. Spirit magic is discussed in Chapter 6.

The Benandanti

A group of spirit seers existed in medieval Italy. Clergymen there stumbled upon a folk tradition of people called the *Benandanti* (meaning "good walkers" or "doers of good"). Each of these people was born "under the caul," that is to say, with an intact amniotic sac covering his face or head. This indicated they were Benandanti, and most of them kept part of their caul as a talisman. From the ages of 20 to 40, the Benandanti were sometimes summoned in their sleep to travel in spirit form to a distant place.

They fought enemies called the *Malandanti* ("evil walkers"), including witches, werewolves, and other creatures of the night. The spiritual Benandanti wielded fennel stalks as weapons. Their battles helped drive away evil influences and ensured the harvest would be a good one. When the Benandanti lost a battle, misfortune occurred, usually in the form of blight and plague. Although the church condemned them, the Benandanti maintained they were not evil and that they were doing God's work against the forces of evil. Only under torture did any of the Benandanti confess to being in league with the Devil.

The Benandanti may have had the Astral Projection or Spirit Projection abilities (see Chapter 5), allowing their spirits to roam far from their sleeping forms. A fantasy campaign can be based on a group of Benandanti (who might live some distance from each other in the physical world). They work together on certain nights of the month to protect their unsuspecting neighbors from the hazards lurking in the spirit world, while avoiding the notice of the church, which would surely condemn them for heresy.

Animals and Spirits

Animals are often accorded the ability to sense spirits, domestic animals in particular: dogs begin barking, cats hiss and arch their backs, and so forth. This is usually the case with "unnatural" spirits like ghosts (p. 59), but it may extend to other types of spirits as well. This ability may result from spirits with the disadvantage Frightens Animals (p. CI97) or certain animals having advantages like Awareness (p. CI33), but the ability of animals to detect them may simply be considered a Feature for some spirits (see p. 45).

Advisor

As beings beyond the physical, spirits may have great wisdom or insight. Mortals call on spirits to ask their advice, such as shamans seeking spirits while in trance.

Spirits are also known to visit mortals and impart important information, such as messages from God. Such messages are not always clear, often being couched in riddles or cryptic metaphors. Spiritual messages may also be contradictory, at least on the surface. Evil and mischievous spirits have been known to trick the unsuspecting into believing lies (or jokes). Even in a world where spirits exist, people can also have delusions or visions, *believing* they are in contact with spiritual messengers when they are not.

Guardian

A spirit may be assigned to protect a particular person, place, thing, or even concept. Spirits may protect the priests or faithful of a religion, watch over an important family, guard a sacred religious site, or protect an ideal in the physical world. Spirit guardians of lost temples and other sites are common in fantasy literature and mythology. Ancestor and totem spirits often guide and protect particular families or tribes.

Many people believe they have a "guardian angel" or similar spirit that watches over them, and the ancient Romans believed in the concept of the *genius* or personal guardian spirit.

Psychopomp

A "psychopomp" is a guide and guardian of the spirits of the dead. Able to bridge the gap between the physical and spirit worlds, spirits often guide the souls of the dead to the afterlife. The Norse Valkyries took the spirits of brave warriors to Odin's hall of Valhalla, angels guided souls to heaven while demons dragged sinners down to hell, and the spectral boatman Charon rowed the spirits of the dead across the River Styx in Greek mythology. Shamans (living and dead) also serve as psychopomps.

Those able to travel into the spirit worlds may be able to speak with the spirits of the departed and possibly even bring them back into the world of the living (if not back to life).

Monster

In some stories, particularly in fantasy literature, spirits are simply terrible monsters for heroes to overcome, from ghosts and specters to demons and elementals. These spirits exist primarily as obstacles for the heroes of the story. The Ring-Wraiths from Tolkien's *The Lord of the Ring* are an example of such monstrous spirits, as is Sauron, their demigod master.

Types of Spirits

Spirits can be classified according to place of origin and then further by purpose and abilities. *Nature spirits* are tied to the Earth and natural phenomena. *Celestial spirits* come from a realm outside of Earth (heaven, hell, Asgard, etc.), often seen as "above" or "below" the physical world. *Human spirits* are the spirits of human beings (and, perhaps, of other intelligent creatures).

Nature Spirits

A nature spirit is one that springs from the natural or physical world, or that dwells primarily in the physical world. Nature spirits are the most common spirits found in myth and legend. They are especially common in animistic belief systems, which invest every part of the world with some kind of spirit. Nature spirits are often seen as willful and flighty.

Animal and Plant Spirits

Since they are already alive, it is a small step to invest animals and plants with spirit. Many cultures believe all living things possess a spirit, and that animals and plants are no different from humans in this respect. Some beliefs draw a distinction between animals and plants, or between animals and humans, but belief in animal and plant spirits is common.

Animal and plant spirits are often called on to provide food and other necessities. People honor the spirits when hunting and harvesting, and shamans speak with the spirits to ensure the survival of the tribe. Animal and plant spirits are often portrayed as anthropomorphic, having near-human (or better) intelligence, a humanlike form, or both. Powerful animal and plant spirits may be totems in a culture (see *Totemism*, right).

Elementals

Elementals embody the essence of the primal elements of nature. In Western mythology, the major elements are earth, air, fire, and water. In Eastern thought they are fire, water, earth, metal, and wood. An elemental may embody a specific subset of an element, such as storms, lightning, rivers, streams, etc. Elementals typically have personality traits associated with their element – fire elementals are passionate and literally hot-tempered, while earth elementals are slow and ponderous but patient and nurturing. Elementals are associated with primal nature spirits like dryads, sylphs, and similar beings. Modern literature and RPGs have considered the existence of elementals of technological things like concrete, steel, glass, and electricity.

Faeries

"Faerie" is a broad term for a wide variety of anthropomorphic nature spirits. It usually refers to nature spirits from Indo-European cultures, particularly the Celts, but its use in this book covers similar spirits from cultures all over the world.

Faeries are generally humanlike in appearance, although they may be much larger or smaller. They often have animal or elemental traits, such as fur, horns, leaves instead of hair, or

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oddly colored skin. Faeries are strongly associated with the natural world and with humans and human habitations (e.g., brownies and other spirits that dwell with people). Most cultures consider faeries proud and capricious. They must be treated with proper respect and ritual or they can become angry and vengeful. Faeries are known for playing elaborate pranks, as well as for abducting mortals into their realm, which usually lies hidden inside a natural formation like a tree, hill, or lake.

Personifications

Animistic cultures sometimes attribute human qualities to natural forces, personifying them in the form of spirits. Elementals (above) can be considered a kind of personification, anthropomorphizing the elements. Personifications can embody nearly anything, from natural features to abstract ideas or emotions. They are seen as humanlike in thought and emotion and often in appearance as well. They exist primarily to support and further whatever they embody, so disease spirits spread illness, spirits of desire inflame mortal hearts, etc. Powerful personifications may be considered deities (see *Celestial Spirits*).

Spirits of Place

Places are often described as having "spirits." In many myths, spirits embody the qualities of places and serve as their guardians. Examples include the *kami* of Japanese mythology, and nature spirits like dryads (which embody specific trees) or naiads (which embody specific bodies of water). Spirits of place are often tied to the places where they dwell and may draw strength from the existence of their homes or the people living there. Damage to their homes may harm them also, so spirits of place guard their areas carefully.

Celestial Spirits

Celestial spirits come from a realm outside the physical world altogether. Although the term "celestial" implies the sky or the heavens, celestial spirits may also come from below the Earth ("infernal" spirits) or from places that cannot even be described in three-dimensional terms. Some modern believers in spirits equate these spirits with extraterrestrials, which is certainly true in the sense that celestial spirits are not from Earth.

Angels and Demons

The terms "angel" and "demon" are catch-all terms for celestial spirits that embody moral concepts of "good" and "evil," respectively. They include the angels and demons of Christian mythology, devas and rakshasa from Hindu myth, and Odin's Valkyries.

Angels and demons exist to advance their particular moral causes on Earth. Sometimes they operate entirely through visions and similar forms of inspiration, advising and assisting, or tempting mortals into evil. In other cases they involve themselves more openly in mortal affairs, either through possession or direct manifestation. Sometimes one side operates more openly than the other does. Demons are often said to work more freely, while their moral code or the will of a higher power restricts angels.

Angels and demons are most often servants of a greater spiritual power, such as God and Satan in Christianity. These powers control and direct their servants toward particular ends, although many stories have shown beings like God and Lucifer as absentee rulers of their domains, leaving their servants to their own devices.

Deities

The most powerful celestial spirits are gods or deities, often responsible for embodying or controlling major portions of the universe. Monotheistic systems believe in a supreme deity or "great spirit" responsible for all things, although some belief systems suggest that the great spirit is not as involved in the affairs of the physical world as it once was.

The power of a deity can range from that of an "ordinary" spirit to true omnipotence. *GURPS Spirits* addresses three major functions of deities: their role as patrons and superiors of lesser spirits; their ability to manifest through their mortal worshippers, usually through channeling or possession; and their ability to grant miraculous powers to their followers.

Animism

Animism is the belief that everything in the material world has a guiding spirit. It often serves as a substitute for science in primitive cultures. Science looks for explanations for the things that happen in the universe; animism explains everything as the workings of various spirits. Earthquakes happen because the earth spirits are angered. Storms are the work of sky spirits, with lightning as their weapon. Fertility spirits affect the growth of crops. Malevolent spirits cause disease and misfortune, and so forth. Those able to communicate with and command these spirits have control over the physical world, making shamans and magicians powerful figures.

An animistic belief system could be true in a fantasy campaign setting. Perhaps thunder really *is* the clashing of sky spirits and disease really is caused by evil spirits rather than tiny, invisible things called "germs." In a campaign where animism is the prevailing belief system it will at least *seem* that this is the case, whether it actually is or not.

Ultraterrestrials

"Ultraterrestrial" is a modern term coined by John Keel in his book *UFOs: Operation Trojan Horse*. It refers to beings from outside the normal physical world as we know it. In *GURPS Spirits*, ultraterrestrial is a general term for spirits that originate from outside the physical world but are not angels, demons, or deities.

Ultraterrestrials are often extremely "alien" beings, coming from a reality outside human understanding or existing on a different dimensional level. Many of the entities from H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu stories can be considered ultraterrestrials, as can most beings described in "alien abduction" scenarios. Some theorists believe that *all* spirits are actually ultraterrestrials, originating in other dimensions. They point to the similarities between alien abduction stories and faerie abductions in ancient mythology.

While some believe ultraterrestrials are helpful and benevolent, many stories suggest a more malevolent nature or motivations beyond human understanding. Ultraterrestrials often behave in bizarre and confusing ways, with no apparent reason for their actions. This makes them particularly suited to *Illuminati* or horror settings.
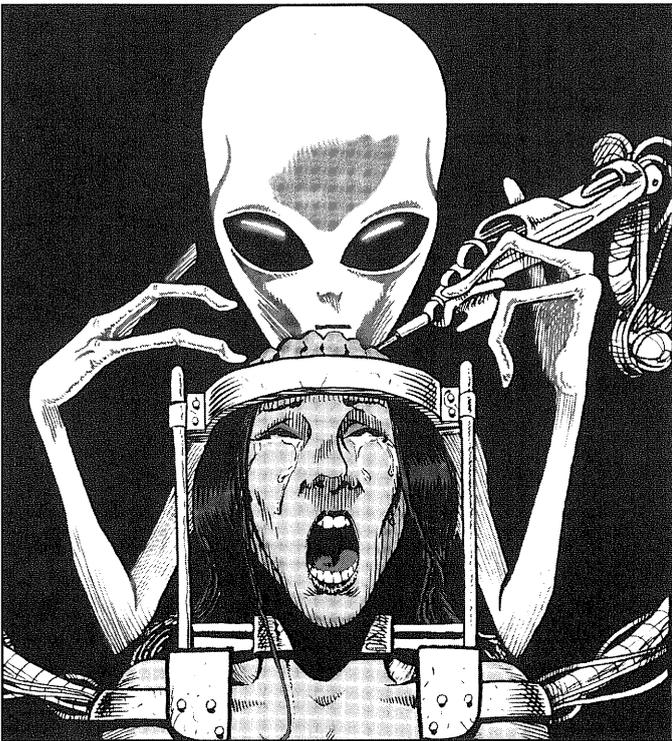
Human Spirits

In many belief systems, humans are the only beings with spirits and are the ultimate source of all other spirits. In others, humans are merely a part of a vast array of different spirits.

Souls

A soul is an embodied spirit living in the physical world. It is usually associated with life force, breath, intelligence, emotion, and willpower. In this book, the human spirit is referred to as the "soul."

Alien Spirits

Some belief systems suggest that spirits are *extraterrestrials* rather than ultraterrestrials, literal visitors from other planets or stars. Spirits were often associated with heavenly bodies in ancient thought, particularly the motion of the planets and certain constellations. They lived in the upper reaches of the air or among the crystal spheres that held the planets and stars. Later beliefs involved spirit visitors from places like Venus or Sirius coming to Earth, either to aid humanity in evolving or for reasons of their own.

This view of spirits best suits an *Illuminati* campaign, or a space campaign where "spirits" are actual highly evolved immaterial aliens who may have influenced or created human belief in spirits in the past.

Some believe the soul is what makes humans individuals, gives us our personalities, or makes us intelligent. In many cosmologies the spirits of human beings are accorded special status. In some belief systems humans are the only creatures that have spirits at all! Many belief systems subdivide the soul into different parts, each with a different function (see below). In campaign settings with other intelligent races, the GM will have to decide whether or not they also have souls (which may also be a matter of considerable religious debate!).

Believers in the soul's existence usually claim it is what makes individuals unique and provides the qualities that make us human. Some believe the soul has untapped powers and is the source of many supernatural or psychic abilities.

It is a common belief that the soul survives the death of the body, either passing on to an afterlife or reincarnating into a new body in the physical world. The disposition of the soul after death is a major concern of most religions.

Parts of the Soul

Many cultures subdivide the soul into distinct parts, each with its own particular function.

Aztec

The Aztecs believed the soul had three parts. The *tonalli* resided in the head and related to the life force and magical power, associated with the power of the sun. The *teyolia*, contained in the heart, was the person's individuality and the part that went to the afterlife. The *ihilia*, in the liver, was the dark, animal part of the soul responsible for emotions like hate, anger, and jealousy. The *naualli* was a type of totem associated with sorcerers. See *GURPS Aztecs*.

Chinese

Chinese belief divided the soul into two parts based on the principles of *yin* and *yang*. The *k'uei* was the yin part of the soul, connected with the feminine principle. It was known as the *p'oh* in life and inhabited the grave site of the deceased after death. The *shen* was associated with the *yang* or masculine principle. It was known as the *khi* in life and passed on to the afterlife. The balance of yin and yang in body and soul was important in Chinese medicine and mysticism. See *GURPS China*.

Afterlife and Reincarnation

One of the implications of souls is the existence of some form of afterlife (see p. 29). It is possible to say that the afterlife remains as mysterious in the campaign world as it does in the real world. After all, very few people return to tell about it. Those who do may be deluded or mistaken regarding its true nature, or offer conflicting accounts. The GM can decide which sort of afterlife (if any) is real in the campaign.

It's also possible there are multiple afterlives. A devout Christian might end up in heaven (or hell), while a Hindu or a pagan is reincarnated and an atheist simply dissolves into nothingness. A person's beliefs and actions may determine the afterlife he ends up in. In settings with sentient races other than humans, they may have their own afterlives (humans go on to heaven, elves reincarnate, etc.). Or all souls may be fundamentally the same and go on to the same afterlife, which has spiritual and social implications.

The existence of reincarnation offers the possibility of characters returning to life over and over and recalling past-life memories (see the *Reawakened* advantage, p. CI43). This may or may not affect the ability to return characters from the dead (see *Souls and Resurrection*, below). GMs can run lengthy campaigns where deceased characters return in new incarnations, similar to Michael Moorcock's Eternal Champion books.

Egyptian

The ancient Egyptians divided the soul into many parts, some of which included the physical body (or the soul's vehicle in this world). The major divisions included the *ka*, the vital force of the body, which often remained with it after death; the *ba*, which passed on to the afterlife; the *khu*, representing spiritual connection; the *ab* or heart, the seat of the mind and emotions; the *ren* or true name; the *khat* or physical body (which was mummified); and the *khaibit* or "shadow," which determined influence in the world and was the seat of the darker emotions. See *GURPS Egypt*.

Norse

Ancient Teutonic cosmology divided the soul into several parts. The *ond* was the animating principle, the "breath of life." The *hug* and *mun* were "mind" and "memory," related to Odin's ravens, Hugin and Munin, representing the cognitive and intuitive faculties. The *odhr* was the essence of enthusiasm, from poetic inspiration to berserk rage. The *følje* or "fetch" was a complex part, often related to a totem, guardian spirit, or magical power. The *hamingja* was the individual's "luck" and represented protection from malign magic and similar forces. See *GURPS Vikings*.

Voodoo

The Voodoo religion of Haiti divides the soul into two main parts: the *gros bon ange* ("big good angel") or the general life force, which is recycled upon death and not unique to each person, and the *ti bon ange* ("little good angel"), the personal essence that passes on to the afterlife (and can be communicated with by priests). Voodoo also recognizes the importance of the body or *corps cadavre* and elements relating to the *loa* or spirits of Voodoo. See *GURPS Voodoo*.

Undead

Occasionally, a disembodied soul does not "move on" from the physical world but remains behind, either as a disembodied spirit or by reanimating its former flesh (or some other material). Cultures around the world have legends and myths of various types of undead. The undead are also a common staple of fantasy and horror literature. *GURPS Spirits* touches on the existence of ghosts and other noncorporeal undead. For more detail, see *GURPS Undead*.

Ascended Spirits

An ascended spirit (often known as an "ascended master") is a once-mortal spirit that has "ascended" to a higher plane of existence but is still in contact with the physical world. An ascended spirit offers guidance, advice, and aid to certain people, usually followers of a particular faith. Saints, Buddhas, *bodhisattvas*, and many types of ancestral spirits fall into this category. The prophets and teachers of many faiths are considered ascended spirits, as are many mythic heroes and famous practitioners of the occult arts, such as St. Germaine, Merlin, or the "Secret Masters" of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

For the most part, ascended spirits are believed to have left the physical world behind, so they rarely intervene directly. They operate through visions, communication with the living, and possession or channeling.

Souls and Resurrection

If the soul does go on to an afterlife, it may be reluctant to return from there to take up material life again (or the spirits that control the afterlife may be unwilling to let it go and may need to be persuaded to do so). If souls reincarnate, they return to life of their own accord and it may be impossible (or at least very difficult) to force a soul to return to the body it once inhabited. Even attempting to do so may kill or seriously harm the spirit's current incarnation.

In this case, necromancers summoning up the spirits of the dead (either to speak with them or to force them to reanimate their corpses) may do grave harm to the living. Imagine if a person has his soul abducted in order to reanimate the body of a previous incarnation that's been dead for a hundred years!

The GM should consider the ultimate disposition of souls in the campaign and how it influences the use of various effects that summon or control spirits.

Apotheosis

Sometimes in mythology and literature a mortal achieves so much that he transcends physical existence and becomes a spirit or divine figure (a process called apotheosis). This happens to only the greatest heroes and spiritual leaders. In many cases, apotheosis doesn't occur until after the mortal's death, so there's no way for anyone to know for certain that he has a place among the gods. It might be something a player character could achieve, but only after a lifetime (or several lifetimes) of great deeds in service to a higher ideal.

Mortals who achieve apotheosis generally become ascended spirits (see above), although the power of a newly ascended spirit can vary greatly depending on the nature of the person and the spirit(s) that help him achieve this exalted state. In many cases apotheosis signals the end of involvement with the material world, but other ascended spirits continue to interact with the physical world. These ascended spirits make excellent player characters, since they have an intimate understanding of life as an incarnate soul in addition to the various abilities granted by their new spiritual existence.

Sustaining Spirits

Many cultures believed the inhabitants of the spirit world relied as much on mortals as humanity relied on them. It was part of mankind's duty to help sustain the spirits and allow them to carry out their important work in the universe. This support usually took the form of worship through various rituals and sacrifices. This provided the spirits with the energy they needed to continue their duties. As a general rule, spirits are reliant on the physical world to provide them with a continuing reason for being. Those spirits that lose this support tend to fade away until they are gone altogether (see *Spirit Weaknesses*, p. 35).

This theme can appear in a campaign in a number of different ways. Player characters may be involved in the rituals needed to help sustain the spirits. Many cultures believed the sun literally would not rise or winter would not end without the guidance of the spirits. In a fantasy campaign this might really be the case, with the PCs as the heroes charged with finding what is needed for the sacred rites.

This system also encourages proactive spirits and clergy, since spirits need worship in order to survive and prosper. Conflicts between different groups of spirits are likely, and holy wars take on an added dimension when the survival of a pantheon is at stake. Modern settings may feature spirits that were once powerful deities but that have weakened over the years as belief in them has waned, reducing them in power (and perhaps making them suitable as player characters).

Thought Forms

Modern occult practitioners describe a "thought form" as a kind of "artificial spirit" created by the power of the human mind and/or spirit, e.g., the *tulpa* of Tibetan belief. A thought form can range in complexity from a simple emotional impression to a fully sentient and aware being, and in power from a minor servitor spirit to a deity. Some beliefs say all spirits are thought forms, created and sustained by human belief. This certainly fits with spirits drawing strength from mortal worship and veneration.

Thought forms fit in well with a modern "psychological" or "psychic" approach to spirits and are more common in modern fantasy and occult literature. Of course, there's nothing to prevent a GM from deciding that the spirits in a fantasy world are actually thought forms, even if the general populace believes otherwise!

Spirit and Symbolism

The concept of spirit is tied strongly to religious and mythological symbolism. Certain symbols are associated with specific types of spirits. This is a short guide to some major symbols associated with spirits.

Blood

The sacred fluid of life, blood was often believed to be one of the primary carriers of spiritual energy or life force. Blood (animal or human) was sacrificed to spirits to nourish and sustain them. In Greek myth, shades in the underworld could become more substantial and communicate with the living after drinking the blood of a sacrificial black goat.

Breath

Spirits are often associated with the element of air. In many cultures, the term for "spirit" or "life force" is similar to the term for "breath," e.g., Latin *spiritus* or Sanskrit *prana*. Mythic figures often breathe into nonliving matter to give it life. In Asian spiritual lore, special breathing techniques and exercises stimulate inner spiritual powers.

Fire

Spirits are often seen as fiery beings, made up of energy rather than matter. Djinn are called "creatures of smokeless fire" in Arabian mythology, and spirits may manifest as flickering lights like candles or torches. Sacred fires served to keep darkness at bay and represented the renewing and cleansing power of spirit.

Light and Darkness

Good spirits are described as "beings of light," and light is often used as a metaphor for the substance of the spirit world (called the "astral light" in the 19th century). Light surrounds many spirits and spiritual people in glowing auras or halos. Similarly, evil spirits tend to be associated with darkness: unknown, frightening, and cold. Many spirits appear only at night, faintly glowing shapes seen in the dark.

Lightning

Lightning and electricity have long been associated with spiritual power. Lightning comes from the sky in a brilliant flash of energy, making it a suitable weapon for sky spirits and gods. Later theories about spirits suggested they might be electromagnetic in nature, created or sustained in some way by the body's electromagnetic field.

Mirrors

Mirrors are seen as gateways to the spirit world in many cultures. Voodoo calls the world where the loa dwell the "Mirror World," and many ritual magicians use mirrors for scrying and visions. Mirrors are believed to reflect truth. Some spirits are visible only in mirrors or, conversely, cast no reflection at all, because they are not part of the physical world. Mirrors were often said to reflect the soul, so beings with no soul or spirit (like vampires) had no reflection.

Shadows

Like reflections, shadows are associated with the spirit or soul of the individual. Sometimes the shadow or reflection is considered part of the soul. Magicians can steal a person's shadow and thereby control his soul, and beings with no souls also have no shadows. Spirits are often described as "shadows" or "shades." The spirit world is sometimes known as a "shadow world," a reflection of the physical world without substance.

Shamanism

Shamanism is a broad term for a set of techniques for interacting with spirits and the spirit world, found in differing degrees in cultures around the world. The term is believed to come from the Siberian *saman*, a type of medicine man, but has come into common use among anthropologists and others to mean any practitioner of these techniques anywhere in the world.

Apart from a fundamental belief in spirits and a measure of animism, shamanism does not imply any particular religious beliefs. It is a technique rather than a religion, although a shaman is often a priest of his religion as well. A shaman's fundamental skill is the ability to enter a trance or altered state of consciousness (sometimes called a "shamanic state of consciousness"). In this trance state, the shaman can interact with the spirit world for the benefit of his community.

Shamanic Initiation

A shaman is often "called" to his vocation by a traumatic experience, indicating the favor of the spirits. The most common is some sort of near-death experience or "shamanic illness"; the proto-shaman falls into a trance due to an injury or illness, often accompanied by a high fever. In this trance, the shaman's spirit is transported to the spirit world, where he encounters other spirits and learns from them. Usually the spirits tear apart the shaman's spirit body. Sometimes the body parts are scattered, eaten, or even cooked in a giant pot. The parts of the body are then reassembled. The spirits may add a special magical bone or stone to the shaman's reassembled body to represent a gift of spiritual power. Upon awakening from this trance, the person has the potential to become a shaman.

In game terms this represents the acquisition of World Sight (see p. 75), a level or more of Magery (p. B21), Power Investiture (p. CI42), or some related ability. While shamans commonly undergo this initiation process spontaneously, specific rituals (often accompanied by the use of psychedelic drugs) can also induce it. Such is often the case when a new shaman must be trained and no "spontaneous" candidates are available.

Shamanic Duties

A shaman's duties include being an intermediary with the spirit world, healing illness, and acting as a psychopomp.

In their role as intermediaries, shamans contact the spirit world to speak with spirits and propitiate them for the good of their peoples. Shamans can intercede with spirits to help ensure good weather, fruitful crops, plentiful hunting, and good fortune in general. Shamans can also appease angered spirits and help lift curses. Shamans often struggle against each other to further the causes of their respective communities or as shows of personal power.

Shamans are relied upon in primitive cultures to treat illness, which they believe to be spiritually caused, either by the loss of personal power or the influence of a malevolent spirit. The shaman goes into a trance and recovers the lost soul of the patient or casts out the malevolent influences to ensure recovery. Shamans create charms that protect against disease and the influence of evil spirits. In some settings the benefits of visiting a shaman may be nothing more than primitive psychotherapy and country medicine, while in others shamans may have true mystical power.

Finally, shamans often attend the dying and perform rituals to ensure that the spirits of the dead do not trouble the living but move on to their appointed place of rest. This makes shamans natural enemies of undead entities like ghosts (see p. 59), although shamans may also call up the spirits of the dead to speak with them, just as they do with other spirits.

For information on shamanism as a form of ritual magic, see Chapter 6.

Shamanic Trance

Shamans use various techniques to achieve trance states. The Autotrance advantage (p. CI20) is obviously quite useful to them. The most common techniques include rhythmic drumming, chanting, and dancing. A regular rhythmic beat creates a kind of autohypnotic effect (see *Autohypnosis*, pp. 78 and CI137). At least part of the performance is for the benefit of the shaman's audience or client, since it helps to place them in a similar state of mind and enhances belief in the shaman's abilities. Shamans also use meditative techniques to help achieve a trance state (see *Meditation*, pp. 142 and CI142).

Another resource for achieving trance is hallucinogens, usually derived from sacred plants ranging from hemlock to peyote. These drugs place the shaman in an altered state of consciousness. In cultures where magic is only a myth, the use of such drugs may simply result in hallucinations that reinforce the shaman's beliefs. In worlds where magic is a reality, hallucinogens may "open the gates" to the spirit world for *anyone* who uses them carelessly, resulting in spontaneous shamanic initiation, possession, or worse!

Sigils

Many abstract symbols or sigils are associated with spirits, from the Christian cross to the Hebrew Star of David to the pentagram used in witchcraft and ritual magic. Some symbols contain or ward off spirits, like Solomon's Seal or the "magic circles" used by medieval sorcerers. Others empower or represent spirits, drawing in spiritual energy for blessings.

Sun and Stars

The sun and stars, as sources of light in the sky, have long been associated with spirits. The name for the astral plane comes from the Greek *astra*, meaning "star." Stars are associated with spirits in many cultures, as either symbols of spirits or as the spirits themselves. The heavens are seen as an abode of spirits from which they can look down upon the Earth.

History of Spirits

The earliest human cultures believed in spirits, and that belief has lasted into the present. GMs planning on using spirits and spiritual powers in a campaign may wish to understand the roots of these beliefs.

Earliest Beliefs

The first human cultures were animistic, seeing the power of spirit in everything around them. Invisible spirits were the cause of every mysterious phenomenon, from diseases and misfortune to the continuation of the natural cycles of the world, the movements of celestial bodies, the flow of rivers, the weather, and the migration of game animals.

Shamans and other primitive spiritualists performed rituals designed to give them the power to speak with spirits and seek their aid. Many anthropologists describe this as the origin of both magic and religion, as primitive humans tried to influence the world around them. Some shamanic practices survive to this day (see Chapter 6).

Western Beliefs

The spiritual beliefs of the Western world, particularly those of the Egyptians, Greeks, and Jews, form the basis for Western traditions of ritual magic.

Egypt

Ancient Egyptian civilization had a complex cosmology filled with gods. The Egyptians subdivided the soul into many different parts and performed burial and funerary rites intended to send the spirits of the dead to the afterlife. They embalmed and mummified their most honored dead and placed them into tombs along with grave goods and even servants to care for them in the afterlife. Most Egyptian spirits were associated with either the celestial or the human realm – either powerful gods or human souls (both embodied and existing in the

afterlife). There was little belief in inter-
mediate spirits in Egyptian cosmology.
See *GURPS Egypt*.

Greece

Ancient Greek civilization con-
tributed much of the foundation of West-
ern spiritual belief. In addition to their
extensive pantheon of anthropomorphic
deities, the Greeks believed in many
nature spirits. Many of these nature spirits
were portrayed as feminine and highly
desirable – dryads (spirits of trees), naiads
(spirits of streams and lakes), and nereids
(spirits of the ocean). Zeus had affairs
with lovely nymphs and dryads, leading
the jealous Hera to punish the unfortunate
spirits rather than her husband.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle
divided the material world into four ele-
ments: earth, air, fire, and water. This
system of elements can be found in clas-
sical myth and magic up to the present
day and is a strong influence on modern
concept of elemental spirits.

Greek afterlife might occasionally release the spirits of
the dead to return to the world of the living. It also connected
the realm of the dead with the underworld and underground
places like caves. See *GURPS Greece*.

Rome

Much of Roman spiritual belief was heavily influenced by
that of the Greeks, including their pantheon and a belief in an
underworld where the spirits of the dead dwell. The Romans
introduced the concept of the *genius* or "guardian spirit," a
spirit associated with a particular family or individual that pro-
vided guidance and assistance in exchange for veneration. The
concept of a "guardian spirit" or "angel" has become common
in many belief systems. See *GURPS Imperial Rome*.

Jews

The ancient Hebrews clearly believed in the existence of
many different types of spirits, as their God told them, "Thou

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Gnosticism

Gnostic Christians in the first century A.D. embraced a different cosmology
from what has become Christian canon. The Gnostics believed the material
world was an evil place, a prison for the human spirit. Humanity's fall from grace
was a fall from a higher, spiritual existence into the world of matter. The "jailer"
of this prison was the Demiurge, a powerful and jealous spirit associated with the
God of the Old Testament, whom the Gnostics believed was a false god.

By denying the body and by practicing rituals of fasting, meditation, and
prayer, the Gnostics sought to transcend the physical world and achieve spiritu-
al union with the true source of all things. Gnostics were often attributed vari-
ous mystical powers, which they believed were available only to the spiritually
enlightened.

The Gnostics developed a complex pantheon of spirits, demiurges, Aeons,
and other such beings. Many of the spirits of Gnostic belief became associated
with the occult and magic in later years.

The various sects of Gnosticism were branded as heresies by the early
Catholic Church. Gnosticism was driven underground and nearly wiped out.
Many modern Western mystical traditions trace some of their beliefs back to
the Gnostics.

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shalt have no other gods before me." Hosts of angels
described as "near infinite" served God and were agents and
messengers of His will on Earth.

Hebrew belief, as given in the Old Testament, described
humans as made from dust (an earthy, physical material),
given life (spirit) by the breath of God. This is one of many
associations between spirit and breath. It also creates a clear
division between the soul and the material body ("Dust thou
art, and unto dust shalt thou return.").

Early Christians

Early Christianity took its cue from Jewish beliefs
regarding angels, heaven, and hell. Christianity expanded on
the role of hell in its cosmology and placed Satan, "the
Adversary," in charge of the underworld where sinners suf-
fered in eternal torment. This created two clearly divided
camps of celestial spirits: angels on one side, demons (fallen
angels) on the other. Christianity also embraced the idea of
God incarnated as Jesus the Messiah, allowing God to
become mortal and to die for humanity's sins.

Eastern Beliefs

The civilizations of Asia have a rich spiritual culture and believe in a diverse range of spirits.

China

China's pagan religion is strongly animistic and devoted to understanding, communicating with, and pleasing a wide range of spirits, from powerful gods dwelling in heaven to spirits of the elements to beings like dragons, ghosts, and demons. Shamans known as *wu* act as intermediaries between spirits and humanity. They offer sacrifices to propitiate the spirits and read omens to understand the spirits' intentions.

Chinese cosmology has a number of spirit worlds and different types of spirits. The realm of nature has dragons, river kings, and faerielike little people. The realms of the dead exist underground, where ghosts dwell, while the gods dwell in T'ai Chi and Shang-ch'ing, the realms of the Celestial Bureaucracy. See *GURPS China*.

Japan

Shinto, the native Japanese religion, recognizes many different types of spirits, known as *kami* (Shinto means "way of the spirits"). Kami range in power from gods to minor spirits that oversee certain aspects of the material world, particularly natural formations. In between are *kami nushi* (masters) that oversee regions. Japanese mythology also recognizes the existence of ghosts and other sorts of spirits, particularly demons like the fierce *oni* and ghosts like the *gaki* and *shi-ryo*. See *GURPS Japan*.

India

The rich spiritual culture of India describes many kinds of spirits, from the Hindu gods to the reincarnation of the soul in Buddhism. Indian mythology includes ghosts, nature spirits, and demonic spirits like the *rakshasa*. Hindus believe in reincarnation, the perfection of the soul through a cycle of many different lives. Hindu tradition also describes *avatars*, manifestations of divine spirits in the physical world (see box).

Australia

Australian aboriginal tradition begins with the Dreamtime, the mythic time when heroes and spirits performed deeds of legend and the order of the world was laid down. The stories of the Dreamtime were passed down orally from one generation to another and describe the relationship of the tribe to the spirits. Nature spirits are responsible for everything that happened in the world. The "First Cause" or *Baiame*, more akin to an omnipotent creator-god, had little or nothing to do with the world once it was made.

Birth is seen as the incarnation of a Dreamtime spirit into the world, and that spirit is the person's totem throughout his life. Aboriginal shamans, known as *karadji* or *mekigar*, speak with the spirits to gain their aid for the tribe.

Africa

African spiritual beliefs are diverse but have some common themes. Like the Australian Koori, Africans often believe in a supreme creator-god that remains uninvolved in the affairs of the material world. Lesser spirits and gods carry out the high god's will. People pray to them for aid, and

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Avatars

An avatar is a physical manifestation or incarnation of a powerful spirit as a living being, either a person or an animal. An avatar may be wholly divine, but generally avatars are mortal and have only a fraction of the great power of a deity, although they may be *very* powerful mortals. Avatars generally come into being so a spirit can more easily interact with the physical world. Usually an avatar has some specific goal to achieve in the physical world before its mortal existence ends, reuniting its essence with the spirit. An avatar generally knows its true nature and may or may not have memories and intelligence equal to the spirit that created it.

Avatars can help to bridge the gap between spirits and mortals. They often possess spirit-related powers and advantages, including the ability to work magic or miracles. Avatars can be used as PCs, although they're best suited to cinematic and superhuman-level games where they can exercise their powers freely.

shamans speak to them in trances. These spirits control the material world and are the cause of sickness and madness, but also of good fortune. They control the weather and the bounty of nature.

Mortals can communicate with the spirits through trance, and the spirits often communicate through possession, speaking through a mortal host. This tradition of spiritual possession is particularly strong in Voodoo and other spiritual traditions that arose among African slaves in the New World.

The Americas

The native cultures of the Americas believed in a large number of spirits and deities, and many practiced some form of shamanism.

North America

American Indian religious and spiritual beliefs vary from tribe to tribe, but there are some common elements. Nature spirits are the most common, particularly spirits of natural phenomena, animals, and totems. Many tribes believe that ancestral heroes return to aid their people in times of need.

The spiritual world is often divided into three: an upper or sky world, a lower or underground world, and a middle world where humanity lives. A sacred tree, mountain, or pillar unites these three worlds. Shamans travel up and down this cosmic axis to reach the spirit worlds and speak with the spirits living there (see *The Shamanic Worlds*, p. 23, for more information). See *GURPS Old West*.

Central and South America

The civilizations of Central and South America, like the Aztecs, Toltecs, and Mayans, believed in pantheons of gods and spirits. They saw the influence of the gods everywhere, particularly in the natural world. The gods communicated with people through omens and visions, and through their priests. It was the priests' duty to help sustain and appease the gods with worship and sacrifice.

In Aztec mythology the human soul had several parts (see above), and each person had a special link to an animal, similar to a totem. See *GURPS Aztecs*.

The Middle Ages

The Middle Ages saw the rise of Christianity and Islam as well as the survival of some pagan beliefs about spirits.

Celts and Germans

The Germano-Celtic peoples of Europe have a rich tradition of spirits, primarily nature spirits and deified human spirits, such as the Tuatha De Dannan of Celtic myth, who may have been based on stories of actual people.

The Celts are largely responsible for modern legends of faeries and related nature spirits. Originally, "faeries" referred to nature spirits and the Sidhe (pronounced "shee"), figures somewhere between nature spirits and gods. They lived in a magical "otherworld" but could move and act in the physical world at will. As time passed and Celtic Christianity spread

across the British Isles, the Sidhe and faeries became smaller and more mischievous, leading to legends of leprechauns, brownies, and similar beings. See *GURPS Celtic Myth*.

The Germanic peoples of Europe also believed in various kinds of spirits, including the *liosalfar* ("light elves") and the *svartalfar* ("dark elves" or dwarves). Most of the spirits of the dead dwelled in Niflheim, but the spirits of honored warriors went to Odin's hall of Valhalla in Asgard. They were brought there by Odin's shield-maidens, the Valkyries, who rode flying horses over the battlefield. Nature spirits also lived in forests, rivers, and glens, sometimes trapping unwary passers-by.

Hierarchies of Spirits

Medieval Europe, dominated by the beliefs of the Catholic Church, developed a complex hierarchy of spirits (mainly demons) recorded in grimoires like the *Key of Solomon*. Some of these works acknowledged the existence (or at least the possibility) of "lesser" spirits like nature spirits and elementals, considered primitive beings inferior to the human soul and far below angels on the great ladder of being. Cultures often developed hierarchies of different spirits, ranging from those closest to the divine down to humanity and other material beings. Some spirits were considered "lower" than humans, particularly primitive nature spirits and evil spirits consigned to hell.

Medieval Christians

When Christianity spread across Europe, many of the pagan spirits of the local people were demonized; priests described them as devils and evil spirits that tried to tempt people away from the One True God. A few local spirits and religious figures were incorporated into the Christian faith as saints, and new churches were often built on the sites of pagan religious rites.

Medieval theologians tried to further define the nature of spirit. The concept of the "great chain of being" originated in this period. It defined a continuum of existence, ranging from the most base and material up to the most elevated and spiritual, the closest to God. Humans lay somewhere in the middle of this chain or ladder, above all other animals but below such purely spiritual beings as angels. This concept placed a strong emphasis on the idea of spirit as "higher" and "purer" than the physical world.

Islam

The early Muslims recognized many spirits, particularly angels serving Allah (God) and the *djinn*, "creatures of smokeless fire" created by Allah with the rest of the world. The djinn formed their own spiritual hierarchy, ranging from the weakest to the most powerful of sultans. Some djinn became devout Muslims, but most were dangerous creatures. Muslims also acknowledged the existence of Shaitan (the Devil) and various demons in his service.

The Modern World

In the modern world, the realm of spirit is primarily religious. This has not reduced belief in spirits significantly, however. Vast numbers of Americans still believe in guardian angels and alien visitations from ultraterrestrials. There seems to be something about the human psyche that needs to believe in spirits and spiritual things.

The investigation of the psyche also plays a role in modern beliefs about spirits. Spiritual voices and visions may be the result of mental illness or an altered state of mind. Many "New Age" and neo-Pagan religions teach that "thought forms" are created by people's beliefs.

Modern science also brought investigation into the paranormal, originally spurred by a desire to understand spirit in scientific terms. This led to the development of parapsychology by pioneers such as J.B. Rhine, who attempted to explain "miracles" and "spirits" as abilities of the human mind. Spiritual visions were "ESP" and "remote viewing," while the physical actions of poltergeists and other spirits became "recurrent spontaneous psychokinesis" (RSPK).

Muslim magicians believed spirits could be bound and commanded, particularly using the power of Solomon's Seal. The Seal could also trap djinn inside bottles or similar containers. Many Arabian legends are based around spirits (usually djinn) bound to obey anyone releasing them from their imprisonment, or holding a certain magical item. See *GURPS Arabian Nights*. For more on the djinn, see pp. 54-55.

The Age of Reason

In the Age of Reason scholars questioned the existence of spirits. Use of the scientific method began to replace reliance on spirits.

The Age of Industry

The Industrial Revolution in Europe led to the rapid development of new scientific ideas and the secularization of religious beliefs. Scientists sought to quantify and isolate the essence of spirit, performing tests on living and dead animals to determine if a "vital essence" left the body upon death. The discovery of phenomena like electricity and magnetism drew scientists like Anton Mesmer to speculate that the spirit might be electromagnetic in nature and that "magnetic fluids" were involved in the transmission of spiritual energy.

The Spiritualist movement generated interest in spirits and established the modern séance ritual in popular culture. Mediums conducted rituals to contact the spirit world in parlors and drawing rooms across Europe. While some scientists attempted to study the spiritualist movement, most considered it mere fakery and superstition.

Mystical sects and lodges experienced a boom in the 19th century with groups like the Hermetic Order of the

Today's Spirits

In modern culture, spiritual ideas are found in religion, science, and fiction.

Religious Spirits

Nearly every religion involves spirits of some kind. People around the world believe in them: angels, demons, devas, saints, benevolent ancestors, and many more. Religious debate about the nature of spirit, the human soul, and the afterlife is ongoing.

Magical Spirits

Spirit is one of the areas where magic and religion overlap. Modern magicians, New Agers, and neo-Pagans talk about many different kinds of spirits. There are traditional elementals and demons dating back to medieval texts, along with angelic beings, alien spirit guides, and ascended masters. Experimental magicians even talk about "artificial" spirits created by their summoners.

Psychological Spirits

Modern psychology has its own ways of talking about spiritual phenomena. Some psychologists believe in reincarnation and past lives that can be retrieved using hypnosis. Others point out that multiple personality disorder may explain so-called "demonic possession" and that other mental illnesses may explain spiritual "visions" and "voices."

Literary Spirits

Modern literature has spawned many ideas about spirit and spiritual beings, particularly in the horror, science fiction, and fantasy genres. The horror genre has modern tales of ghosts, demons, poltergeists, and other spirits. It also contains such strange spirits as H.P. Lovecraft's Great Old Ones, many of which have no material form, or at least appear less dependent on matter than mere mortals. Horror writers also put new spins on old myths and legends about spirits like angels and demons. Many fantasy authors include spirits as part of their worlds, ranging from powerful gods and demigods to servitor spirits, elementals, and undead like ghosts and wraiths.

Technological Spirits

Developments in computer technology have led many scientists and artists to wonder, "How long before we create a machine that can think, and will that machine have a soul?" Artificial intelligence takes the spirits of myth and places them in a new context. The Net is the new spirit world, a place of pure mind, free from the limitations of flesh, home to "the ghost in the machine." William Gibson combined the modern myth of the Net with the ancient spirits of Voodoo in his Sprawl Trilogy. Many other science fiction writers have posited the existence of "spirits" born of technology. Some of these new entities, like spirits of old, are dangerous and willful servants.

RPG Spirits

Spirits are a common element in roleplaying games, especially those that include some form of magic or psionics. Traditionally, spirits have been relegated to the roles of servants and monsters in RPGs, although some games allow spirits as allies or even player characters. RPG spirits often combine different aspects of spirits from mythology, modern belief, and fantasy fiction.

Campaign Seed:
Once We Were Gods

The PCs are powerful spirits, formerly gods of a now unseated pantheon (a conquered nation's old gods or the losers in a cosmic struggle for ascendancy). Now merely spirits, they must fight to regain their godhood, but are regarded as demons by the worshippers of their successors. This struggle can involve terrorizing worshippers of the new religion, cooperating with the new regime in the hopes of becoming part of the pantheon (perhaps as saints or demigods), gathering new worshippers, or working to confront and overthrow the current gods. Not all of the gods will have similar views on the solution, and some will be actively opposed even in defeat. This is a high-powered *Spirits* campaign; point values can range from a few hundred points to a thousand or more.

Recommended Reading: Petty Pewter Gods by Glen Cook, *Small Gods* by Terry Pratchett, and *Lord of Light* by Roger Zelazny.

Pseudoscientific Spirits

Although modern science does not acknowledge the existence of spirits, a number of pseudoscientific theories may explain certain spiritual phenomena, useful for GMs looking for a "rubber science" explanation for spirits in a modern or science fiction setting.

Parapsychology or psionics may explain a number of spiritual manifestations with ESP and telepathy. Apparitions and visions are merely the result of human psionic abilities, allowing the agent either to perceive things from a great distance, see visions of the future, or project images into the minds of others, resulting in "sightings" of spirits. The ability to perceive the past or the future may cause people to see hallucinations of events overlaying the present moment, things that look like ghosts or spirits. Some speculate that the "faerie stories" of the British Isles might be psychic perceptions of past battles and groups of people in old period clothing that seem luminous and translucent, making them "faeries." For more on the occult as psi phenomena, see *GURPS Psionics*, pp. P45-55.

Morphogenesis

The concept of morphogenesis and morphic fields may also serve as a pseudoscience explanation of spirits. This theory holds that there is an invisible "morphic field" that carries and transmits particular kinds of information. This informational component of the universe determines why certain things happen the way that they do. For example, the morphic field transmits information relating to the behaviors of different animal species. When one member of a species learns a behavior, it is passed on through the morphic field of that species to others. When enough members of a species learn a particular behavior or trick, all members of the species become better at it (the so-called "Hundredth Monkey" theory).

There is also speculation that the morphic field (or something like it) stores memories, explaining how different parts of the brain can "take over" for damaged areas in some cases. The field may store memories of people after death as well, a kind of "living library" of information, like the Akashic Records of Hindu tradition, or spirit worlds where shamans travel to recover lost knowledge. Such lingering information may also explain apparitions and ghost images, as sensitive people pick up impressions from the surrounding morphic field.

WORLDS OF SPIRIT

> *With gentle hand*
> *Touch – for there is a spirit in the woods.*
> *— Elizabeth Wordsworth, "Nutting"*

Beyond the physical world lies the realm of spirit. People throughout history have speculated on the nature of the spirit world and existence beyond the physical. This chapter examines those beliefs and the realms that spirits call home.

The Nature of Spirit Worlds

A "spirit world" is a parallel universe or reality that is nonphysical in nature (although it may seem quite physical to its inhabitants). Because of their immaterial natures, spirit worlds may have nearly any features imaginable and are often quite fantastic, without regard for the laws of physics. However, spirit worlds often have their own laws, imposed by nature or by the beings that rule or inhabit them.

When creating a spirit world or worlds for a campaign, there are several things a GM should take into account: the size and structure of the spirit world, its particular laws, how to get there (and back), and what visitors might encounter or do while they are there.

One Realm or Many?

The first question the GM has to answer with regard to the spirit world (after deciding whether or not it exists) is if there is only one spirit world or many – and if there are many, how they are related. Both approaches have their strengths and weaknesses, and the mythology and fiction of spirits supports both.

A single spirit world is the simplest approach. Such a world is typically an immaterial realm parallel to the physical world, often with a level that mirrors the physical and one (or more) levels or layers unrelated to the physical world (see *Outer and Inner Spirit Worlds*, below). In this case, all methods of reaching the spirit world reach the same world, although they may access different regions or levels. This means all types of spirits interact on a fundamental level, and one spirit in the spirit world can affect any other spirit in the spirit world. The different spirit worlds described here may simply be different facets of the single, greater, spiritual existence.

Other source material calls for multiple spirit worlds, although these worlds are often related to each other and may operate under similar rules. The Catholic concept of a separate heaven, hell, and purgatory is one example, as are the spirit worlds of many fantasy novels and roleplaying games, with their diverse planes of existence. This may be similar to a single spirit world, divided into different "layers," each accessible from the other, or different spirit worlds may be contained by a larger spirit world that touches all of them, like the astral plane (see below).

Multiple spirit worlds might also be accessible only from the material world, each by its own methods. For example, someone with the Astral Projection psionic power (p. P10) travels to the astral plane, while those using rituals from the Path of Dreams (p. 94) travel to the dream world. The two spirit worlds are completely unrelated, and what is done in one has no effect on the other.

The default assumption of *GURPS Spirits* is that there are multiple spirit worlds, each accessible in its own way, although not all spirit worlds are accessible from all physical universes (campaign settings).

You Can't Get There From Here

Most of the issues in this chapter are relevant only if the spirit worlds are places PCs can visit. The details of the spirit worlds are less important if only spirits can travel there and return, even less so if no one can go there and return to tell about it. While cultures and religions in a nonmagical, nonspiritual campaign may have a lot of ideas about how spirits and the spirit worlds work, any of them (or none of them) may be *the* truth. The GM doesn't have to decide who's right if there's no way of finding out!

Mutable or Fixed?

Made up of the stuff of spirit rather than matter, spirit worlds may be highly changeable, influenced by the thoughts or emotions of their inhabitants, or they may seem as fixed and difficult to alter as the physical world.

Mutable spirit worlds are the most common in modern occult literature and fiction. The spirit world is often described as responding to the wills of visitors and inhabitants, reshaping itself to meet their desires.

Some spirit worlds are described as formless voids of energy; whatever form they possess is given to them by the beings that exist there. This is a single spirit world serving multiple roles, since the spirit world is whatever inhabitants perceive or imagine it to be. In this world one truly makes his own "heaven" and "hell" (or Nirvana, Tartarus, or Happy Hunting Ground). This kind of mutability is a common feature of the dream world (see below).

In other spirit worlds mutability is limited to certain features of the world. H.P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands have a fairly fixed "geography" and certain common features, but skilled dreamers can make changes. People in the spirit world have extraordinary powers, allowing them to do things they cannot do in the material world. The telepaths in the movie *Dreamscape* are similar – they cannot change the "landscape" of the dream but can change themselves to suit it, changing shape and appearance and making objects appear out of nowhere. In the spirit worlds, most of these changes are merely "special effects," reflecting a Contest of Wills or similar abilities like the Lucid Dreaming skill or use of rituals from the Path of Dreams (see Chapter 6). If everyone in a spirit world has the ability to manipulate it, the ability to do so costs no points; it's a natural feature of that setting.

However, the ability to control conditions in a spirit world may not be available to everyone. A spirit world's appearance might be mutable, but set by the subconscious desires or memories of the people visiting it, entirely outside their control, or with conscious control limited only to those with special training or abilities. In the latter case, the ability to make changes in the spirit world should require a special advantage (e.g., Magery or Psionic Power), an Unusual Background, or a special skill (e.g., Lucid Dreaming).

Finally, a spirit world may be fixed in nature, as solid and unchangeable to its inhabitants as the physical world is to us. In this case, it can be treated as simply an unusual setting for the campaign, although abilities might still differ there. Such spirit worlds offer the opportunity to "visit" other settings. Modern folk traveling to the spirit world might find a fantasy setting complete with alternate versions of themselves wearing ancient armor and weapons. Cyberpunks might experience a virtual reality where they are four-color superheroes. Someone in the dream world or an astral plane might experience virtually any kind of setting. Fixed spirit worlds can be considered parallel worlds, and GMs may wish to consult *GURPS Time Travel* for more information on the subject.

Entering and Leaving Spirit Worlds

Generally speaking, entering a spirit world is not a simple matter. It usually requires special training or abilities, often available only to priests, shamans, psychics, or magicians, or perhaps only to spirits. Travelers can enter a spirit world in two ways: a physical transference (actually moving from one realm to the other) or projection, where the spirit separates from the physical body to travel in a spirit world.

Physical transference is the rarer of the two methods. The physical body is transformed into ectoplasm (or whatever spirits are made of) and moves from the physical world to the spirit world. This is the case for travelers with the Spirit-Jumper advantage (p. 76) or under the effects of spells like Ethereal Body, and may also be the case for some with the Insubstantiality advantage (see p. CI59). Physically transferred individuals have their normal abilities, subject to the rules and restrictions of the spirit world they are visiting. They lack the drawback of a vulnerable body left behind in the physical world, but also lack any sort of "anchor" to help them return when their visit is over. Physical transference is most common in high-powered genres like supers and high fantasy.

Projection is more common in other genres, like modern occultism and fantasy. The spirit or soul leaves the body (which sinks into a comalike state) and enters the spirit world. This is effected by abilities like the Astral Projection psionic power and the Spirit Projection advantage (see p. 76). The traveling spirit is usually free of physical concerns. But the traveler must watch out for his body while he's "away," since the death of the physical body usually leads to the spirit becoming trapped in the spirit world forever, possibly even the destruction of the spirit as well.

Some spirit worlds can be visited by both methods, while other spirit worlds are accessible by only one method, or even none. In the last case, it may be impossible for physical beings to reach certain spirit worlds by any method; beings from those worlds may be able to visit this world, but mortals can't go and visit them, or at least not return to tell about it. This keeps certain aspects about those worlds, and their inhabitants, a mystery.

The GM should also consider how spirits visit the physical world. The default assumption is that spirits with the Spirit Form advantage can perceive the physical world from the spirit world and use their powers to affect it to some degree. To enter the physical world they must materialize (p. 34), assuming a solid form. Materialization is normally quite fatiguing, but spirits with the Physical Form enhancement on Spirit Form (p. 35) materialize fairly easily. This option is built in to the Spirit Form advantage. Similarly, spirits may not need to "visit" the physical world because the spirit world and physical world already overlap. Instead, they just need to materialize to be able to affect things physically. In this case spirits exist simultaneously in both worlds.

Another option is for spirits to "jump" from the spirit world into the physical world. This assumes the two worlds are separate, with no overlap, so the spirit world is by definition an inner world. In this situation, spirits can "cross over" from their inner spirit world to the physical world and back again. While they're in the physical world, they're essentially physical beings (although they may have advantages like Insubstantiality or Body of Air, allowing them to take nonphysical forms here). These spirits are Spirit-Jumpers (p. 76) from nonphysical universes. Alternatively, some or all spirits may have Planar Visit (see p. 24) as an innate spell for the physical plane, their home plane, or both.

If spirits are capable of visiting the physical world but lack the ability to return to their own plane without help, they will likely be reluctant to visit. Many spirits in the physical world may remain because they are trapped here, seeking a way back home. There may also be ways of forcing a spirit to return to its own world, from rites of exorcism to brandishing certain symbols to getting it to say its name backward (as in the case of Superman's old foe Mr. Mxyzptlk).

The Shamanic Worlds

Shamanism recognizes three spirit "worlds" which make up a single, larger spiritual realm outside the physical world. These worlds are typically organized along a central axis (referred to as the "axis mundi"), symbolized by a sacred mountain, tree, standing stone, or pole (like the *poteau-mitain* of Voodoo or the world-tree Yggdrasil in Norse myth).

These middle worlds correspond to the physical world and are often seen as outer spirit worlds, where the shaman can travel in spirit form to see and affect things in the physical world. The term "middle world" is sometimes also used to refer to the physical world itself, such as the Norse Midgard.

Above the middle world is the upper world, reachable by climbing the central axis (or by flying). The upper world has traits associated with the sky and is often the home of spirits and divine powers. Shamans travel to the upper world to communicate with the spirits and gain insight and magical power.

Below the middle world is the lower world, also known as the Underworld. It is reached by traveling down through an opening or hole in the ground, often along the central axis. The lower world is associated with primal, chthonic spirits, the world of the dead, and forces of life and rebirth. Modern shamanism often emphasizes journeys to the lower world, where the shaman meets with spirits to learn from them.

Other magical and spiritual traditions have different "maps" of the spirit worlds, from the ten *sephiroth* of the Kabalah to the nine worlds of Norse mythology. GMs can draw upon different myths and cultures to create unique spirit worlds. Depending on the nature of the spirit world in the campaign, any or all of these models might be true.

Spirits may be capable of returning to their own world at will, but unable to enter the physical world without the assistance of mortals, such as summoning rituals or spells. This cuts down on the number of "free" or wandering spirits, since most spirits are in service to or cooperating with mortal summoners. Still, there is always room for the occasional spirit that was summoned and chose to stick around.

The default assumption is that spirits can move freely between the spirit world and the physical world, depending on their own abilities and advantages but restricted by the influence of mortal summoners or masters.

Methods of Spirit World Travel

The possible means of reaching a spirit world are almost limitless, but they can be grouped into five basic categories. For more information on character abilities related to spirit worlds, see Chapter 3.

Magic

GURPS Magic and GURPS Grimoire offer several spells which access spirit worlds.

Dream Viewing, Dream Sending, and *Dream Projection* (p. G21): These spells allow the caster to access and influence the dream world to some degree. If the GM desires, the Dream Projection spell can allow a caster to enter the dream world and interact with it, similar to the Path of Dreams ritual Dream Visitor (see p. 94).

Ethereal Body (p. M72): This spell shifts the subject to the ethereal plane (see p. 26). The subject does *not* gain the benefits of the Spirit Form advantage, only those abilities given in the spell description. Spells and abilities that affect spirits affect beings in ethereal form and are resisted at -2! Ethereal beings cannot touch anything, including other ethereal beings. They can use magic, but at -5 to skill, since the ethereal plane is low mana.

Phase and *Phase Other* (p. G46): These spells briefly shift the subject to the ethereal plane and back, allowing one attack to pass harmlessly through the subject's body. Otherwise, their effects are the same as Ethereal Body.

Planar Visit (p. G45): The caster leaves his body behind and his spirit moves to another plane of existence or spirit world. The caster is treated as a spirit for the purposes of magic and other effects that influence spirits, and he is invisible and intangible to physical things. He does not possess any other spirit abilities given under the Spirit Form advantage (p. 35), nor can he cast spells (although he can maintain any current spells). Each plane or spirit world requires a separate spell.

Plane Shift and *Plane Shift Other* (p. G46): These spells allow the subject to move physically to another plane or spirit world. In an outer spirit world (like the outer astral plane), the subject is able to see the physical world and is effectively an invisible, intangible spirit, much like the Planar Visit spell (above). Each world requires a separate spell, and the caster must know the spell for his home plane (and be able to cast it!) in order to get back.

Projection (p. G61): This spell sends the caster's spirit out of body to explore an area. The caster is invisible and intangible but can be sensed and affected by abilities that detect and affect spirits, including spells like Astral Block and Turn Spirit and rituals of the Path of Spirit (see Chapter 6). The caster does not gain any other spirit powers while under the effects of Projection.

Psionics

As described under *The Astral Plane* (p. 26), the Astral Projection power from *GURPS Psionics* may or may not access a spirit world. It's up to the GM to decide if it does and whether or not other spirit worlds are accessible from it. In psionic campaigns, the astral plane may be the only spirit world.

Ritual Magic

Magicians able to use Ritual Magic can enter the dream world using the Path of Dreams ritual Dream Visitor (p. 94). Ritual magicians also have a number of rituals that detect and affect spirits, allowing them to interact with denizens of spirit worlds.

Technology

Although spirit worlds are considered magical or spiritual phenomena, it's conceivable that there might be a technological means of reaching them, particularly in ultra-tech campaigns (see *Ultra-Tech Spirit Worlds*, p. 30). For "spirit worlds" like cyberspace, technology is the primary means of access. It's up to the GM as to what sort of technology is capable of accessing a spirit world (if any) and what the boundaries and limitations are. Technology able to access a spirit world should be expensive, experimental, and complex, limiting its usefulness to the PCs. Spirit-travel technology is superscience, so it can appear at any Tech Level the GM chooses and can be reserved for TL15 "artifacts" created by time travelers or mysterious aliens (spirits?). GMs may find the information in *GURPS Ultra-Tech* and *GURPS Time Travel* useful, along with the psychotronic technology from *GURPS Psionics*.

Advantages

Certain advantages, such as Spirit Projection (p. 76) and Spirit-Jumper (p. 76), allow entry to spirit worlds. The Spirit Form advantage (p. 35) also allows mortals to exist in the spirit world.

Other advantages may grant access to spirit worlds, depending on how their "special effects" are handled. Someone with the Insubstantiality advantage (p. CI59) may define it as the ability to shift into an outer spirit world – possibly the ethereal plane (p. 26) – where he can still see and be seen by the physical world but is intangible. In this case, spirits in that world would be able to interact with him normally. Spirit-Jumper is a specialized version of the World-Jumper advantage (p. CI48) limited to spirit worlds.

Portals

Spirit worlds are normally inaccessible except using certain special abilities, as described above. However, in some settings there may be entries nearly anyone can use, provided they know how. These entries are called "portals" to spirit worlds.

A portal may be just that, a kind of doorway or passage anyone can step through to enter the spirit world. These could be naturally occurring, or they might be ancient artifacts, created by wizards, aliens, or spirit visitors in times past. The ancient Greeks (among others) believed that passages to the underworld could be found in certain places, and the Celts believed people could find their way into the Otherworld as easily as crossing a stream or meadow. This is a form of physical transference, usable by anyone who passes through the right portal.

Portals for projection may exist as well, from sleeping in a faerie ring (a natural ring of mushrooms) to using certain herbs. If the dream world (see p. 26) exists, then reaching it may be as simple as falling asleep.

It's up to the GM to decide what portals (if any) are available and what their relative advantages and disadvantages are. Generally, it's best if those with special training or advantages are better at reaching spirit worlds and operating there.

Outer and Inner Worlds

Spirit worlds come in two main types. Outer spirit worlds overlap or overlay the physical world in some way. These realms are often spiritual reflections of the physical world and allow perception of (and possibly interaction with) the physical world to some degree. This is the sort of spirit world inhabited by an intangible ghost that is visible to people in the physical world. It is also the realm usually referred to as "the spirit world" in this book.

Inner spirit worlds are (or appear) entirely separate from the physical world. An inner spirit world may still mirror many qualities of the physical world, but it does not interact with it. Inhabitants of an inner spirit world cannot normally perceive or affect the physical world, although it may be possible using powers like magic. Inner spirit worlds can be thought of as separate universes altogether.

The terms "outer" and "inner" are arbitrary and do not relate to the "physical" location of a spirit world, since outer spirit worlds occupy the same space as the physical world, while inner spirit worlds are technically somewhere else altogether. Inner spirit worlds are also often referred to as "higher" or "lower" worlds or planes, relating to the shamanic structure of worlds (see box) or the idea of heaven above us and hell below us.

Outer Spirit Worlds

There are two main outer spirit worlds. They may coexist or might be one and the same, depending on the campaign.
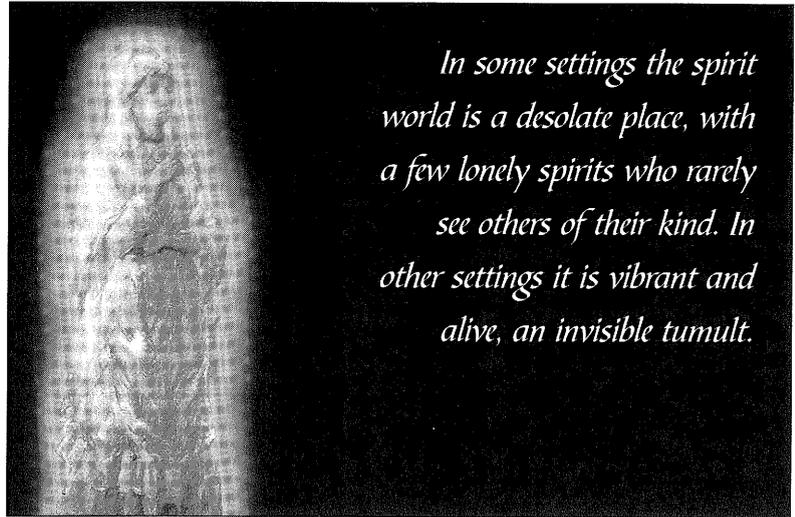
In some settings the spirit world is a desolate place, with a few lonely spirits who rarely see others of their kind. In other settings it is vibrant and alive, an invisible tumult.

The Spirit World

The "spirit world" is the default realm inhabited by spirits, an outer plane overlaying the physical world and existing parallel to it, but invisible and intangible to physical things. Only those with special awareness can see and interact with the spirit world. They often become seers, shamans, and magicians – or outcasts, sometimes even driven insane by their ability to see and hear what others cannot.

From the spirit world, the physical world appears solid, but spirits can pass through any physical object. Spirits can see and hear, even smell and taste, things in the physical world, but they can only make themselves seen or heard in the physical world with effort. Inhabitants of the spirit world can move in any direction, through the air or solid objects, at their normal Move (see Spirit Abilities, p. 33, for more information).

Various spirits inhabit the spirit world, depending on the nature of the campaign. In some settings the spirit world is a desolate place, with a few lonely spirits who rarely see others of their kind. In other settings it is vibrant and alive, an invisible tumult. Most settings assume something in the middle – the spirit world is active, but not as much as the physical world. A "haunted" area might be thick with ghosts, a tribal jungle is crawling with totem, animal, and plant spirits, but a lifeless desert might have only the occasional nature spirit.

The spirit world might have an "inner" element, correlating to one of the inner planes described here, like Godshome or the afterlife.

Astral Plane

The astral plane described in *GURPS Psionics* is a spirit world of sorts. It may be the only spirit world, particularly in a campaign focused more on spirits as "psychic" phenomena (see p. 44). Individuals with the Astral Projection power (p. P10) can visit the astral plane, as can those using certain spells, like Planar Visit (Astral).

The astral plane has both outer and inner layers. The outer astral plane overlays the physical world, much like the spirit world described above. They may be one and the same. If that is the case, those with the Astral Sight skill can perceive spirits normally, and astral projectors can interact with spirits as if they were both physical, gaining their normal astral DR and Move. (For the interaction of psi abilities with spirits, see Chapter 3.)

The astral plane may be one of many spirit worlds in the campaign. If so, astral projectors may be able to travel to the other spirit worlds with a successful Astral Projection skill roll, modified according to the nature of the desired plane. This is similar to travel to the inner astral plane (p. P51) and may be the same thing. If an astral projector can travel to other spirit worlds, all the normal abilities and restrictions of astral projection apply. See *GURPS Psionics* (particularly *The Astral Plane*, pp. P51-52) for more information.

Magic on the Astral Plane

The astral plane is a low-mana area, so all spells cast there are at -5 to skill, and any other effects of low mana apply. Spells cast on astral beings work normally, just like a wizard casting a spell into a low-mana area in the physical world, except that astral beings can be affected only by spells that affect the mind or spirit. If the astral plane is the only spirit world in a magical campaign setting, the GM may wish to change this restriction to allow spirits with Magery and innate spells to function normally.

Faerie realms are often portrayed as places of powerful and wild magic, filled with all manner of wonders, from plants made of gold and glass to talking animals and powerful spirits.

Ethereal Plane

The ethereal plane is a particular type of outer spirit world, another "plane" or "phase" of existence parallel to the physical plane. By entering the ethereal plane, beings and objects shift "out of phase" with the rest of the world, allowing them to pass harmlessly through physical things and vice versa. The ethereal plane doesn't appear to have any sort of native life or spirits (although it could, if the GM wants). It's low mana, so it's more difficult to use magic there, although magic is the most common means of accessing it (via spells like Ethereal Body, p. M72). Someone with the Insubstantiality advantage may also access the ethereal plane if that suits the "special effects" of his ability.

Inner Spirit Worlds

Described here are some archetypal spirit worlds, along with possible variations. These are by no means the only spirit worlds that can exist in a campaign; the GM should feel free to mix and match them to suit the needs of the campaign.

Dream World

There is a spirit world potentially accessible to everyone; we travel there every time we sleep. It is the world of dreams. The dream world is an inner spirit world created by (or perhaps simply influenced by) our dreams. It may be the dreams of intelligent beings, or it may be the dreams of all creatures, perhaps even the dreams of rocks, rivers, and clouds.
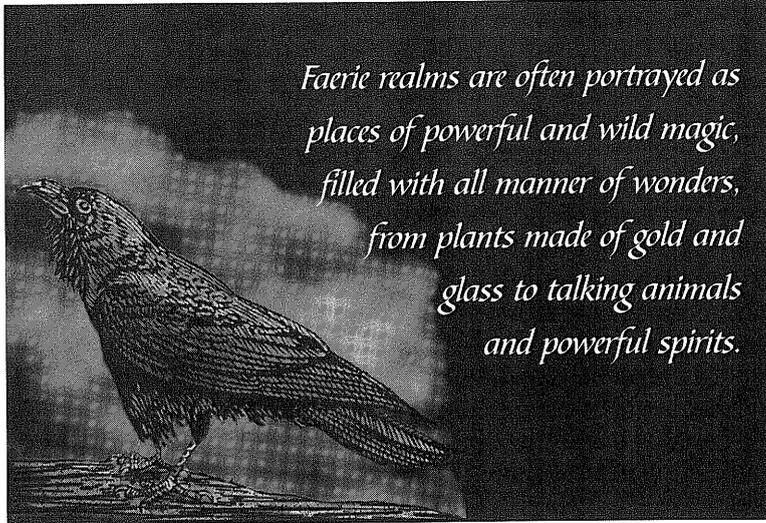
> ## No Outer Spirit World
>
> In some cosmologies there may be no outer spirit world, only the physical world and an inner spirit world (or worlds). Spirits cannot perceive the physical world from the spirit world and can enter it only by materializing or possessing a physical form. (A spirit that fails to possess someone is cast back to the spirit world it came from.) Alternatively, spirits are all Spirit-Jumpers (p. 76), essentially travelers from another dimension with the ability to move between the spirit and physical worlds. These spirits should be treated more as nonhuman races (possibly with the ability to become invisible and/or insubstantial) than as "true" spirits.

There may be as many dream worlds as there are dreamers, with each person inhabiting his own personal dreamscape. If so, there is little or no interaction between dreams without the use of special abilities like psionics, spells, or the rituals of the Path of Dreams (p. 94). These abilities allow someone to "visit" someone else's dreamscape and interact with him there.

It is also possible that dreams tap into a wider plane of existence, that there is a single "dream world" we can visit. The two views are not incompatible. It may be that everyone dreams in a personal "inner" dreamscape but that those dreamscapes are contained within a greater, "outer" dream world. Someone who manages to "step outside" his personal dreamscape can visit the larger dream world (and things in the dream world can sometimes insinuate themselves into a person's dreams . . .). This kind of dream world appears in *In Nomine* and is the default assumption in *GURPS Spirits*.

As a rule, the dream world is a highly mutable place, made up of the stuff of imagination. Dreamers with the Lucid Dreaming skill (p. CI142) can influence events in their own dreamscapes at least and possibly in the dream world as a whole. Abilities like psionics, magic, and rituals can also influence events in the dream world. GMs may wish to allow special advantages like Magery, psionics, or ritual magic that are usable only in the dream world (at -40% Accessibility limitation) to reflect people who have extraordinary powers only in their dreams.

Faerie Realm

The "faerie realm" is a generic term for a spirit world inhabited by faeries or other spirits that are neither human nor celestial. The best known faerie realms are those from Celtic and European mythology. They are generally described as "hidden lands" accessible though hollow hills, across strange rivers or seas, through secret trails in the wilderness, and so forth. The "Otherworld" described in *GURPS Celtic Myth* is one such realm. The faerie realm might be accessible through portals (see above), as easy to walk into as walking around a particular hill or tree or falling asleep in a ring of mushrooms. Or it might be accessible only through the powers of the faerie, and mortals who "stumble" into the faerie realm do so because its inhabitants want them to.

The Faerie Veil

The "Faerie Veil" described in *GURPS Castle Falkenstein* is somewhat different from the faerie realm described in this book, but functionally the same. The Faerie Veil is a realm of pure energy, shaped by the will of its inhabitants to resemble fantastic structures out of human history and mythology. The Faeries of *Falkenstein* can manipulate the stuff of the Veil to create (or, more accurately, duplicate) anything they wish. The Veil also serves as a kind of "bridge" between different parallel Earths and may connect to other spirit worlds, although the faerie folk haven't discovered any yet. Or, if they have, they aren't talking.

Spiritual Time Travel

Some spirit worlds feature differences in the flow of time relative to the physical world; an hour there may pass as a year in the physical world, or vice versa. The ratio of time that passes may not remain constant, either, fluctuating in a cycle, at random, or at the will of the spirit world's inhabitants. This feature may allow visitors or spirits to travel into the future; a visit to a spirit world could result in a jump of years, decades, or even more. Unfortunately, the trip is one-way, unless the travelers have some other means of time travel at their disposal.

Some spirit worlds may also transcend time, touching upon all space-time and allowing spirits to travel to any point in time they wish. GMs can give spirits a transtemporal nature as a mere curiosity in the campaign, allowing a group of fantasy adventurers to encounter a demon that's trying to kill them for some slight they have yet to inflict on it, for example. Or this idea can be the basis for a spiritual time-travel campaign, where the characters are spirits (or mortals with access to the spirit world) able to travel through time, physically or using Retrogression (p. CI43). The Order of the Hourglass (p. TT76) may use this sort of "spiritual time travel." Consult *GURPS Time Travel* for further ramifications of traveling through time.
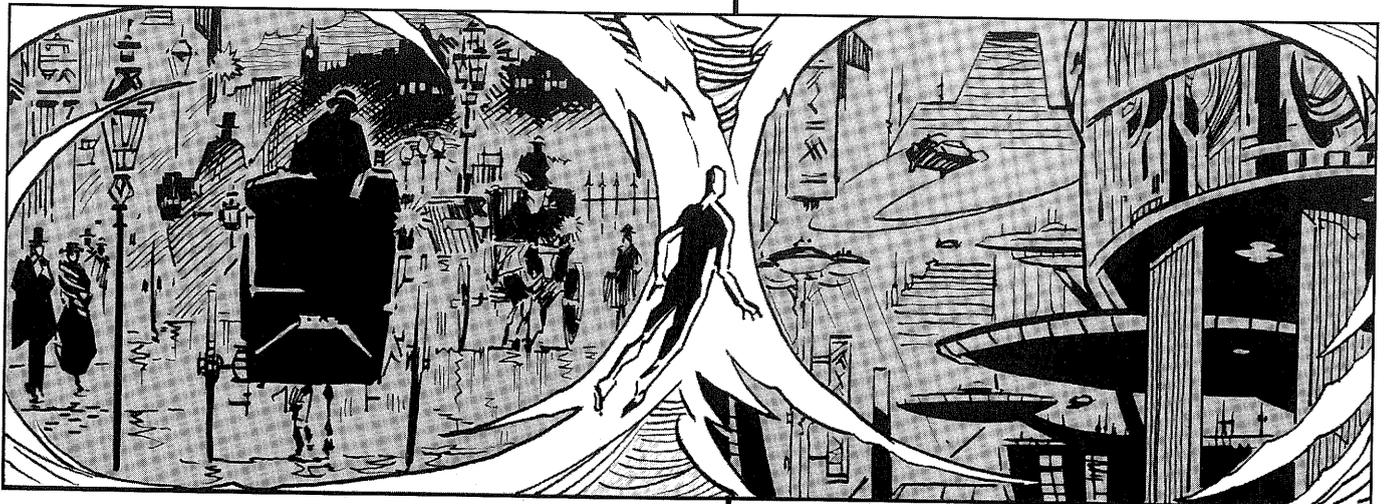
For the most part the faerie realm is like an alternate universe in that it appears solid to its inhabitants, although it may be far more mutable than the physical world. Faerie realms are often portrayed as places of powerful and wild magic, filled with all manner of wonders, from plants made of gold and glass to talking animals and powerful spirits. The faerie realm is typically an inner spirit world, apart from the physical world, although it often duplicates characteristics of the physical world and may have similar geography.

The faerie realm is a highly magical place. It generally has a mana level higher than that of the normal campaign world. GMs may wish to make the effects of wild mana from *GURPS Celtic Myth* apply to the entire faerie realm, making magic *very* powerful there, but the effects of magical failures potentially disastrous. Mana in the faerie realm may be aspected (see p. M94) toward things like elemental and mind-control spells, life-aspected (or death-aspected in dark and sinister areas), or aspected toward illusions and other forms of trickery.

Illusion or "glamour" is often associated with the realm of faerie, and GMs may wish to treat many of the grand structures and vistas of the realm as illusory creations of its faerie inhabitants. They may be the result of powerful illusion and creation spells powered by high levels of mana, or simply the faerie ability to shape the stuff of their realm to suit their needs. In fiction, faeries are often portrayed as having little or no imagination; thus, everything in their realm is merely a copy of something in the physical world (or in the imagination of a particularly clever mortal). This is why faeries have castles, horses, verdant glens, and so forth.

A common tale in folklore is spending a night "under the hill" with the faerie folk. Usually there is a great party with food, drink, music, and dancing. Mortals who comport themselves well are rewarded with gifts (although they're often mixed blessings at best). The visitors wake up in the normal world and discover that time has passed differently in Faerie: the night of merriment may have taken 20 years in mortal time, or months spent in Faerie passed in a single night in the physical world. Such a Faerie visitation can start a campaign, or be a one-way means of "time travel" to send the party years into the future.

The Afterlife

Every human civilization has speculated about what happens to us after death, and many cultures believe in some form of afterlife, where human (and perhaps other) spirits dwell.

The afterlife takes on many forms. Cultures often have multiple afterlives, where spirits are segregated based on their deeds and worthiness in life. The ancient Greeks had the Elysian Fields, where the spirits of heroes and good folk lived in peace and plenty, while the spirits of the wicked were punished in Tartarus. Catholic Christianity has the afterlives of heaven, hell, and purgatory, where souls are divided based on their sins.

Afterlives are generally inner spirit worlds, set apart from the physical world, although the spirits of the dead may linger in the outer spirit world, able to interact with the physical world to a limited degree. Once these spirits resolve the issues keeping them tied to the physical world they can "move on" to the afterlife. The spirits of the dead may be able to move between the afterlife and the spirit world at will, allowing them to look in on the living (particularly their loved ones and descendants) and influence events in the physical world. This is common in beliefs of ancestor worship or ancestors as "guardian spirits."

The afterlife may be an active place where spirits have things to do, or an endless eternity of waiting (for the Apocalypse, Judgment Day, or something entirely unknown). Mythology often portrays the afterlife as a cold, dark, dreary place where spirits wander aimlessly. Although the afterlives of good people tend to be more pleasant, they can often sound just as dull.

The afterlife is often associated with other sorts of spirits, usually celestial spirits – divine beings and their intermediaries. These spirits may rule or administer the afterlife, or they may be aloof, existing on a "higher" plane and only rarely interacting with the spirits of the deceased. In some beliefs, human spirits evolve over time to take on these higher roles, becoming ascended spirits, angels, or loas (see Chapter 4).

Depending on the nature of the afterlife, a character's involvement in the campaign doesn't necessarily have to end at death. It may be possible to bring someone back to life, either using magic like the Resurrection spell (p. M51) or by visiting the afterlife and petitioning the powers there. Mythology is filled with gods and heroes traveling to the underworld or afterlife to petition for the return of a loved one or worthy individual. The returnee might come back as a living person, or as a ghost (see p. 59). The deceased might also be sent back to the physical world by more powerful spirits or deities to serve as their agent there. This allows him to continue interacting with the campaign (although perhaps only as an NPC, if his spirit abilities are likely to make him too powerful).

The afterlife may also be an intermediary step to another existence. There may be "higher" spiritual planes to which the souls of the dead can ascend, making the afterlife just one in a series of "lives." Or the afterlife might be only a temporary "holding area" for spirits before they go on to another afterlife or are reincarnated into the physical world. GMs can run linked campaigns where the PCs are continuously reincarnated into different eras of history, meeting again and again, sometimes with awareness of their past-life connections, sometimes not.

Godshome

"Godshome" is a generic name for the realm inhabited by the gods. Call it Mt. Olympus, Asgard, or heaven, it is a realm inhabited by powerful spirits (gods), their various servants, and, perhaps, the spirits of their mortal worshippers. Godshome often has many of the aspects of the afterlife; it often *is* the afterlife. Many religions have a pleasant Godshome for good gods and the spirits of faithful worshippers, and a grim or terrible afterlife for unbelievers or others who have earned the gods' displeasure.

In general, Godshome is an inner spirit world largely inaccessible to mortal beings. It is often seen as a "higher" plane of existence above the physical world, high in the sky, among the stars, or atop a high mountain. Mortals who attempt to reach Godshome without an invitation from the gods usually fail and often suffer punishment for their hubris. In some fantasy literature, however, mortals can and do visit the realm of the gods with little difficulty. Depending on the nature of the campaign, the GM may wish to limit the access characters have to Godshome and their ability to communicate with and petition the gods.

Multiple Afterlives

While it's possible that only one belief about the afterlife is true in the campaign setting, it's equally possible that all (or nearly all) of the human beliefs about the afterlife are true. Perhaps people choose (consciously or unconsciously) what sort of afterlife they will have by their beliefs and their actions. Good Christians go to heaven, while bad Christians go to hell or purgatory. Buddhists and Hindus are reincarnated, along with neo-Pagans, and the souls of atheists just seem to disappear and nobody really knows what happens to them. This raises other questions: if someone is baptized Catholic and becomes a Buddhist later in life, does he go to hell or reincarnate? This approach can offer diversity and mystery, but it can also complicate matters, so GMs should consider carefully before implementing it.

Net Shamans

In a high-tech or ultra-tech environment, GMs may with to allow for "Net shamans," mystics able to use the traditional powers of the shaman in the "spirit world" of cyberspace. A great many of the rituals from Chapter 6 can be devastatingly effective when applied to the operation of computers (particularly rituals from the Path of Luck), and the Poltergeist Effect and Probability Alteration abilities of spirits can affect systems as well. A Net shaman can even perform his rituals in cyberspace, gaining bonuses for programming appropriate symbols and special effects to focus his concentration, consecrating his "virtual workspace" as sacred space, and using gene maps and digital video to represent subjects.

In campaigns featuring Net shamans, the GM may wish to allow cyberdeck programs to default to a new ritual magic path (see p. 93) called the Path of the Net (defaulting to Ritual Magic -6). This represents the shaman's mystical influence over the Net. It allows otherwise "primitive" magicians to operate effectively in cyberspace with little software or Computer Hacking skill, but keeps these skills valuable to Net shamans. For example, a Net shaman confronted by a rival hacker wishes to call upon the spirits of the Net to banish the interloper (a Sever program, p. CY91). The shaman has Ritual Magic-18 and Path of the Net-15. Since Sever defaults to Computer Hacking -6, he can perform the program with an effective skill of 9 (his Path skill minus the default), even without Computer Hacking.

Ultra-Tech Spirit Worlds

Immaterial realms beyond the physical are not unknown in scientific theory and science fiction literature. Whether they can be considered "spirit worlds" is a matter of debate, depending on whether or not they are inhabited by anything and how capable humans are of interacting with them. GMs interested in adding a spiritual dimension to an ultra-tech campaign can consider the following:

Cyberspace

Although it's not a spirit world per se, the virtual reality environment created by a cyberpunk-style computer network has many of its properties. It exists "parallel" to the physical world, is highly mutable and not subject to physical limitations, is inhabited by strange, "incorporeal" beings (programs and artificial intelligences), and can be visited by physical beings using special means (VR goggles and suits or direct neural interface). In a cyberpunk or ultra-tech campaign, virtual reality can take on spiritual meaning for people, as did the Voodoo cyberspace cult in William Gibson's Sprawl Trilogy.

Mystical and "neotribal" societies may see cyberspace as a kind of spirit world and treat it as such. Certainly the knowledge and abilities of a skilled hacker can be compared to those of a tribal shaman: both have specialized knowledge and the ability to enter an alternate state of consciousness in which they can acquire information and perform feats to aid their people in the physical world. Likewise, the "inhabitants" of cyberspace and a shamanic spirit world are comparable. Software often takes the form of creatures or things a hacker can interact with, while the hacker's programs are like the mystical tools and rituals of a shaman. AIs may be seen as powerful spirits or even "gods" in the Net.

It's also possible cyberspace really *is* a spirit world. If the dream world (p. 26) or something analogous to it exists, perhaps the "waking dreams" of cyberspace carry over or blend into it in some way, putting VR users into an alternate state of consciousness from which they can contact an immaterial world beyond our own. This also opens the possibility of "virtual magic," where the use of VR stimulates psionic powers, Magery, or Ritual Aptitude (p. 84) to blossom, turning hackers into true "Net wizards." It also opens up VR users to things like possession by spirits (rogue software?) while in an altered state, or madness from opening "doors of perception" best left closed.

In truly ultra-tech campaigns, the existence of neural interface technology and things like neural-induction fields (p. UTT43) allows the possibility of virtual reality functioning much like a true spirit world. It exists everywhere and is accessible to anyone able to enter the right state of mind (via a neural implant). The Oneirochronon from Walter John Williams' novel *Aristoi* is one example.

Hyperspace

Hyperspace is an alternate dimension described in science fiction as a means of faster-than-light (FTL) travel, accessible by ships equipped with hyperspace drives. In many stories, hyperspace is home to some kind of life. It may be aliens stranded or exiled there, or it may be immaterial beings of energy not unlike spirits. Some of these energy beings have godlike powers and may even be the source of human myths about gods and spirits (or they may take on those forms after contact with humans, reading the ideas from our minds). It's possible that hyperspace and the astral plane are one and the same, or that hyperdrives work by sending a ship on a brief trip through heaven (or hell) to get to its destination!

The Universal Unconscious

The psychological theory of the collective or universal unconscious may point to a spiritual or psychic realm similar in many ways to the dream world, where the archetypes of human (and perhaps nonhuman) consciousness reside. Spirits may arise from the universal unconscious as psychic manifestations of thoughts and emotions. In effect, humanity creates its own gods, angels, demons, and other spirits. This idea places the emphasis in a spiritual setting on human achievement and abilities. It also works well in campaigns with psychic abilities and phenomena like RSPK (recurrent spontaneous psychokinesis), the uncontrolled use of psi abilities (see pp. P46-47 for more information).

Campaign Seeds

These are some ideas to get started on a spirit campaign.

Death Is Only the Beginning

The PCs are mortals who have died and passed on to the afterlife, only to find out that they're not getting eternal rest out of the deal. Instead, certain spiritual forces (gods, angels, demons, etc.) want them to return to Earth as their agents. This may be a reward for virtuous souls, or a punishment for wicked ones (or both).

They are sent back to the land of the living armed with spiritual powers to carry out their mission. Naturally, the opposition has spirits working for it, too. At a low level, characters may have to make clever use of their spirit abilities to carry out their work and are likely forbidden to reveal their true nature to mortals for a variety of reasons. At higher levels this becomes more of a supers campaign, with powerful spirits fighting it out in the physical world. The returnees likely have several exotic powers, although they may still be required to keep things quiet so as not to alarm the mortals.

This sort of campaign works well in conjunction with *GURPS Undead* and can be an interesting way to end an old campaign and start a new one.

The Dreamers

The PCs are fairly normal, mundane people living their daily lives. They may live in different parts of the world and may not even know each other. They're the sort of people you'd never take any special notice of. Not while they're awake, at least.

When they're asleep, they are special. They're gifted with the ability to influence the dream world and can do great things there. They might have Astral Projection along with Telepathy and other psi powers (usable only while sleeping), be powerful Lucid Dreamers, be able to use the Path of Dreams, or some combination of the above. The characters' dream-selves meet in the dream world and have adventures together. At first they may not even realize that their recurring dreams have some basis in reality. Then they find out that some of the other people they meet also think they're dreaming, and really exist in the waking world, too. Not only that, some of their opponents make cryptic references to having waking lives as well.

This sort of campaign is good for a ripping game of genre-hopping, limited only by the imagination. In the dream world the PCs can be fantasy adventurers one night, space-opera heroes the next. Nightmares provide opportunities for horror adventures. The campaign can remain confined to the dream world, or waking lives can be roleplayed also. The characters might find out there are other people able to do what they can do, and not all of them are as scrupulous. The game can be lighthearted fun, or things can turn nasty when the dreamers discover that dying in a dream equals death in the real world.

Adventures in Godshome

Godshome tends to be an active place, with gods and their servants going about their business. In mythology, Godshome is often a place of adventures perfectly suited for a fantasy campaign where the players run gods.

The GM can run this as a kind of fantasy supers campaign, with gods having extraordinary powers and abilities (possibly enhanced by the mana level or unusual physical laws of Godshome). Alternatively, the GM can borrow a page from *GURPS Bunnies and Burrows* and treat deities adventuring on their home plane as relatively normal characters operating on a "god scale," with human abilities so far beneath them as to be insignificant. Gods' weapons do normal damage to each other, but a godly attack would automatically annihilate a mortal. Likewise, godly defenses are too great for any mortal weapon to breach.

Godshome can also be the setting for a campaign for mortal characters, either visitors from the physical world or those who have died and passed on. The party might have a particular god or gods as a Patron and be working to further the Patron's agenda on Earth and in the spirit world. *GURPS In Nomine* is an example of this sort of game, with the players taking the roles of angels and demons in the war between heaven and hell.

SPIRIT ABILITIES

He prays to the spirit of the place and to Earth, the first of the gods, and to the Nymphs and as yet unknown rivers.
— Virgil, **The Aeneid**

Spirits have a number of abilities (and drawbacks) that distinguish them from other creatures. This chapter defines those abilities in game terms. *GURPS Basic Set* and *Compendium I* are required to follow this material. *Magic* and *Psionics* are useful, but not required.

Form and Function

Spirits deviate so far from the human baseline and have so many special powers that it's simplest just to define their abilities outright. These rules were adapted from *GURPS Voodoo* and *GURPS Undead*.

Attributes

Spirits have the same attributes as humans: ST, DX, IQ, and HT. When confronted in the spirit world, these attributes define what the spirit can and can't do.

Fatigue

In order to interact with the material world, a spirit must spend energy, expressed as a Fatigue cost. Fatigue is the most important attribute of a spirit; powerful spirits may have *hundreds* of Fatigue points! The average tends to be closer to the human norm, however: 10-20 Fatigue. Spirits recover Fatigue normally (see p. B134).

Special Sources of Fatigue: Spirits can tap into some places or people to obtain Fatigue quickly. They can use this siphoned Fatigue to replenish their own or to power their special abilities. Places of occult power can provide a spirit with an additional 5-30 energy points per day (as determined by the GM). This energy can be tapped into only if the spirit is in the area. Acts of worship from a great number of people can allow spirits to gain 20-100 additional Fatigue points per day, depending on the number of worshippers (roughly 1 Fatigue point per worshipper).

Spirit Abilities

Most spirits are usually invisible and intangible to the physical world (see *Materialization*, p. 34); only other spirits can sense them without the aid of magic, psi, or other special abilities. Beyond this, they have a number of powers:

Spirit Powers

Perception

Spirits can see, hear, and smell normally. Their sense of touch is very limited unless they materialize (see p. 34). They can even taste objects to a limited degree, especially objects offered to them in ritual. Many spirits enjoy the smell and taste of ritually offered food and drink.

A spirit's senses go beyond the normal human range, however. All spirits have the equivalent of the Awareness advantage at the 35-point level (p. CI33). They can sense the presence of other spirits and magic. A successful IQ roll allows a spirit to sense the location and approximate power of a nearby magic item, a being's mental or emotional state, mortals with advantages like Channelling, Magery, Medium, or psionic powers, or anything else the GM allows.

Spirits also have the ability to hear their names whenever they are ritually invoked, regardless of distance or intervening barriers. This can include anything from a sincere prayer from a descendant or loved one to a medium attempting to channel a departed one's soul or a sorcerer's ritual of summoning.

Summoning Tokens: Spirits sometimes give mortals tokens like feathers, locks of hair, and magic dust, allowing mortals to call upon the spirits by burning the token, casting it onto the winds, and so forth. This works like ritually invoking a spirit's name (above), allowing it to appear immediately.

Movement

Move is determined normally for spirits. Since they aren't bound by physical limits, they can move in any direction, through the air and solid objects. A spirit can instantly transport itself into the presence of someone who ritually invokes its name (see above). A spirit can also "hitch a ride" inside a vehicle, but this costs 1 Fatigue per hour to maintain a connection to the vehicle (and is not available to spirits that cannot physically materialize; see below).

Although physical barriers do not impede spirits, many magical ones do. See *Repel Spirits* (p. 108) and *Astral Block* (p. 108) for two examples, along with rituals from the Paths of Protection and Spirit (pp. 101 and 104).

Communication

Spirits can project their thoughts as speech and hear thoughts directed at them. This works like telepathy, except that communication is not stopped by psionic Mind Shields, and neither the spirit nor the people it's communicating with can read thoughts or do anything other than "speak" to each other. Such communication costs the spirit 1 Fatigue per short sentence (a few seconds' worth of speech). Evil spirits sometimes use this power to "plant" thoughts in a mortal's head, making him "hear voices." Someone with the Voices disadvantage (p. CI94) may be tormented by spirits. These thoughts can't control a person's actions, but may trigger repressed anger or fear and cause people to do things they otherwise wouldn't.

Spirit Travel

Spirits exist in the outer spirit world and have the innate ability to travel to one inner spirit world (see Chapter 2 for details). Usually this is the spirit's "home" – angels travel to and from heaven, demons to and from hell. If the spirit has no particular "home" spirit world, it may choose one it can travel to. The dream world (p. 26) is a common one. Spirits can travel to multiple spirit worlds with the appropriate enhancement (see p. 35).

Possession

Spirits have the ability to displace a living being's soul, taking control of his body. This is resolved as a Quick Contest of Wills and can be attempted only once per day on any given person. If the spirit wins, it gains control over the body for 3d seconds. This costs 5 Fatigue. On a tie, the victim suffers from the equivalent of the Split Personality disadvantage (with the subject in control, not the spirit) for the same length of time.

The spirit can try to extend the possession by taking a penalty to its Will roll and spending extra Fatigue. Taking possession for 3d minutes is done at -2 Will and costs 7 Fatigue. Attempts to possess for 3d hours are at -4 Will and cost 10 Fatigue. Possession for 3d days has a -8 penalty and costs 15 Fatigue. A critical success on the spirit's part or a critical failure by the victim doubles the length of the possession. A critical failure by the spirit or a critical success by the victim costs the spirit 3d Fatigue (in addition to the normal cost) and renders it incapable of possessing anybody for 3d days.

The subject's state modifies the possession attempt. If the subject's soul has left his body (from a near-death experience or Spirit Projection), the spirit's roll is at +8. If the victim is undergoing a painful or terrifying ordeal (torture, rape, starvation, etc.), the spirit is at +6. If the target is in an altered state of mind (from drugs, alcohol, fever, etc.), the spirit has a +4. Even a willing person gets a resistance roll (representing an instinctive reluctance to lose control), but the spirit's roll is at +10! Each previously successful possession of a particular subject by the spirit gives that spirit +1 to its roll (maximum +3).

When a person is possessed, the spirit's vital energy infuses his body with greater strength, speed, and endurance. The possessed body's ST is raised by 1/5 the spirit's ST (not Fatigue), and its DX and HT are raised by 1/8 the spirit's DX and HT, respectively.

Poltergeist Effect

A spirit can use its energy to manipulate objects in the physical world. By spending Fatigue it can move things, throw punches, and perform other physical actions. The Fatigue cost is great, however; most spirits are capable only of affecting small objects for short periods of time.

Each *action* the spirit attempts costs it Fatigue. The effective ST and DX the spirit exerts in the world determines the cost, and can exceed the spirit's "natural" attributes. An action costs 1 Fatigue per 2 ST exerted. DX costs 1 Fatigue for a base level of 10 and 1 Fatigue for every DX +2. By spending enough Fatigue, a spirit can perform various effects: slamming doors, writing on typewriters or computers, or even pushing or punching people. A direct attack does Thrust-3 damage based on the ST of the effect.

Probability Alteration

Spirits have the power to channel their will to affect the outcomes of events. The effects of this power depend on the intended result and the amount of Fatigue the spirit spends.

The spirit must first win a Quick Contest of Wills with the target, unless the spirit is trying to *help* the subject, in which case only an unopposed Will roll is required. A bonus or penalty to any one roll can be applied on a success, at 2 Fatigue per +/-1 (maximum +/-10, for 20 Fatigue). This includes short actions, long actions, or such things as rolls on the Jobs Table. Activities that are not normally resolved by random rolls may also be affected in this way, but the GM must assess the base probability for success or failure before assessing the bonus or penalty. The chart on p. B45 can be useful here.

Use of this power requires a great deal of imagination on the part of the GM and players. Anybody who's had a bad day knows the myriad little things that can go wrong in the course of normal life and can draw upon those experiences for inspiration.

Materialization

Spirits can assume a material or semimaterial form. There are four levels of materialization, ranging from sound effects to actual solidity. Most spirits don't have enough energy to become fully solid for very long; only powerful spirits can maintain materialization for any length of time. Full materialization is also dangerous because physical attacks can hurt or destroy the spirit while it is materialized. The levels of materialization are:

Sounds: The spirit can produce disembodied sounds. Simple sounds (moans and howls) are easier than complex noises or speech. Microphones and recording devices can pick up the sounds. If the spirit wishes, the sounds can be picked up *only* by machines, and not by living creatures (producing disembodied voices on an audio recording or over a radio, for example). Producing simple sounds costs 1 Fatigue per 10 seconds. Speech or complex sounds cost 1 Fatigue per second, and a Will roll is required to make the sounds clear. A failed Will roll results in unintelligible noise.

Visual Effects: The spirit can cause a visual manifestation of its form to appear. This form has no substance and is translucent unless the spirit spends extra Fatigue to make it appear solid. This costs 1 Fatigue per 5 seconds, doubled if the spirit wants to appear solid. The spirit can choose to make itself visible to some people and not others, or only to cameras and not to living beings (or vice versa), if it wishes.

Ectoplasm: Victorian spiritualists often spoke of *ectoplasm*, a tenuous substance like smoke associated with spirits. Manifesting ectoplasm allows a spirit to touch physical beings and to have a sense of touch, but not to exert force or inflict damage (the ectoplasmic form has a ST of 0). This costs 1 Fatigue per 10 seconds.

Full Materialization: This effect is costly, but it temporarily provides the spirit with a physical body. It costs 1 Fatigue for every two levels in *each* physical stat (ST, DX, and HT), rounded up. Clothing appears around the spirit at no additional cost, but other objects (including weapons and armor) cost 1 Fatigue per pound of weight. This energy cost is per minute. If the spirit has any special powers or advantages, it may use them in material form. Spirits in material form are still immune to many of the concerns of mortal beings. They are unaffected by starvation, suffocation, disease, poison, and most weather conditions, although they can be harmed by the same attacks as other physical beings, unless they have special advantages protecting them. If the spirit's physical form is reduced to 0 HT and it fails a HT roll, it is forced back into spirit form.

Multiple Forms: A spirit normally materializes in the same form every time (its "base" form). Spirits can learn to materialize in forms other than their base forms by using the Shapeshifting skill (p. CI144). The spirit's advantages and disadvantages do not change, and its attributes are determined as above. The spirit can vary its size and appearance, however. Spirits most often use this ability to appear as animals or strange inhuman creatures (or to assume human form if their base form is something other than human).

Spirit Weaknesses

Most spirits have very short lifespans. Every month, a spirit must make a Will roll. A roll of 14 or higher is an automatic failure, and any missed roll reduces HT by 1. If HT ever reaches 0, the spirit is destroyed.

Modifiers (these *do* affect the 14 maximum): +2 if the spirit has a compelling reason to stay in the material world; +2 if it stays within 50 yards of a suitable place of power for the whole month; +1 to +5 if the spirit is worshiped or paid respect.

If these bonuses add up to +3 or more, Will rolls to maintain HT fail only on a roll higher than modified Will or a 17 or 18, whichever is lower. If they total +5 or more, the spirit doesn't have to make a Will roll that month.

Point Cost

All the abilities under *Spirit Powers* (pp. 33-35) and *Spirit Weaknesses* (above) are treated as a 100-point advantage, called Spirit Form. The enhancements and limitations below can modify it. Treat any total less than -75% as -75%.

Special Enhancement: Animation. The spirit can "possess" physical objects as well as living beings. This includes dead (or undead) bodies. Most objects provide a +8 bonus to possession as they have no spirit. The object's abilities depend on its form (and the GM's judgment): a painting could talk, a statue or suit or armor could move around normally, a car could drive. +20% for a small class of objects (a specific make or model of car, the works of a particular artist), +40% for a large class (cars, buildings, corpses), +80% for any physical object.

Special Enhancement: Easy Materialization. The spirit can materialize at a lower Fatigue cost. Each halving of Fatigue cost is +20%, and Fatigue costs reduced below half a point become 0.

Special Enhancement: Extra Worlds. The spirit can travel to additional spirit worlds, +10% per additional world. For +100% it can travel to *any* spirit world the GM allows.

Special Enhancement: Physical Form. The spirit has one physical form it can materialize at will for only 1 Fatigue point, remaining in that form for as long as it wishes. It costs no Fatigue for the spirit to return to its normal incorporeal form. The physical form has the spirit's normal Attributes and abilities, plus any advantages the spirit may have that apply to the physical world. The spirit cannot change the appearance of its physical form without materializing another (and paying the full Fatigue cost) or having an appropriate advantage or spell. This enhancement can be taken multiple times for multiple physical forms. +80%.

Special Enhancement: Spectral Touch. The spirit can use "touch only" abilities while insubstantial by interpenetrating with the target. Any spirit can use Steal HT, Steal ST, or the Chilling Touch version of Terror (p. 40) while insubstantial, but this enhancement is required to use all other touch-only abilities this way (e.g., Deathtouch, the Pestilence advantage). +40%.

Special Enhancement: Unlimited Lifespan. The spirit doesn't have to make monthly Will rolls to avoid losing HT, making it effectively immortal. +30%.

Special Enhancement: Visible. The spirit is normally visible, at no Fatigue cost. The advantages (free visual effects) and disadvantages (being visible to normal sight) cancel out. +0% if the spirit is obviously unnatural (glowing, translucent, etc.), +5% if it looks human, +5% if the spirit is visible only to living beings and not machines (cameras, etc.), -5% if the spirit is normally visible only to machines and not living beings (showing up in photographs, on film, etc. but invisible to the naked eye).

Special Limitation: Limited Materialization. The spirit can't produce all the effects listed under *Materialization.* -20% for Can't Materialize, -15% for Sounds Only, -10% for Sounds and Visual Effects Only, -5% for Sounds, Visual, and Ectoplasm Effects Only. Only the -10% and -5% levels can be combined with Visible. Cannot be combined with Physical Form.

Special Limitation: Limited Perception. The spirit can only dimly perceive the physical world from the spirit world. -5% for each -1 to Sense rolls. -30% if the spirit cannot perceive the physical world *at all.*

Special Limitations: Missing Power. The spirit lacks a basic spirit ability. Each missing power is a separate limitation: -5% if it can't taste/smell, hear its name being invoked, travel instantly to the site of a summoner, or ride in vehicles; -10% if it can't use Awareness, spirit travel, communicate telepathically, or tap Fatigue from places of power and worshippers; -20% if it can't use Poltergeist Effect, Possession, or Probability Alteration.

Motivation and Role

What spirits are capable of doing is often not as important as *why* they do it. Spirits tend to fall into three main categories in terms of motivation: free-willed, servitors, and mindless.

Free-Willed Spirits

This is the broadest category of spirits. Free-willed spirits are intelligent beings capable of making their own decisions. Their personalities are defined by their advantages, disadvantages, quirks, and general roleplaying. They have no required set of mental disadvantages (although common ones are discussed on pp. 41-43).

A free-willed spirit may have been a servitor at one time, "graduating" to free-willed status when released from service (either willingly or through the death of its former master). The spirit may have been "born" free-willed. It is possible, through certain spells and rituals, for a free-willed spirit to become a servitor (see Chapter 6 for more details). In general, free-willed spirits resent servitude and do whatever they can to escape from it.

Servitor Spirits

A servitor spirit is bound to obey a particular master, either another spirit with the Dominance advantage (p. CI53) or a summoner. Servitors effectively have the Slave Mentality disadvantage (p. CI94) [-40] where their master is concerned. Their master can give them orders and they have no choice but to obey. Servitor spirits have no will of their own, although they are capable of making Will rolls to use their powers or to resist any effect that might interfere with their orders.

In some cases, servitor spirits have limited freedom, in which case they should be given a Reprogrammable Duty (p. CI104) [-25] rather than Slave Mentality. This represents spirits that must obey those who perform certain rituals or possess a certain item (such as a djinn's lamp). These servitors often plot and scheme against their masters in order to gain their freedom, making them dangerous servants.

Mindless Spirits

These spirits are little more than immaterial robots, without feelings, thoughts, or ideas of their own. Their loyalty to their master is total, but they are incapable of coming up with their own ideas or doing anything other than exactly what they're told. A great many servitor spirits in modern literature, particularly "artificial" spirits created by magicians, are of this type. This also includes spirits completely devoted to a particular task or role in the world; they cannot be communicated with and will never waver from their tasks. Add the following to all mindless spirit templates:

Attribute Modifiers: IQ -2 [-15]
Advantages: Invulnerability (Mind Control) (p. CI59) [75]*; Single-Minded (p. CI30) [5]; Unfazeable (p. CI31) [15]
Disadvantages: Cannot Learn (p. CI86) [-30]; Dead Broke (p. B16) [-25]; Hidebound (p. CI91) [-5]; Low Empathy (p. CI91) [-15]; No Sense of Humor (p. CI92) [-10]; Obdurate (p. CI92) [-10]; Reprogrammable Duty (p. CI104) [-25]; Slave Mentality (p. CI94) [-40].
Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: No mental skills [0].
*They are, however, vulnerable to spells that specifically control spirits.

This package subtracts 80 points from the spirit template cost. Mindless spirits are incapable of doing *anything* requiring independent thought.

Special Powers

Spirits often have powers and abilities beyond those of physical beings. The most basic spirits have only the abilities granted by the Spirit Form advantage, while others have many special powers.

Attributes

Spirit attributes may be higher or lower than those of physical beings and may represent different qualities that are functionally the same in game terms.

ST

Free of the limitations of flesh (and, often, the laws of physics), spirits in material form can be incredibly strong. Many spirits have a ST bonus to reflect this superhuman strength in physical form. The maximum ST a spirit can gain using Materialization is based on the spirit's "natural" ST, not Fatigue.

Fatigue and Extra Effort: Since they are not physical beings, spirits often have the Doesn't Fatigue advantage (p. 39) and No Extra Effort disadvantage (p. 43); they don't tire from physical exertion but have no "reserves" of strength to draw upon.

DX

Spirits are sometimes quicker and more agile than material creatures, even while in physical form. This can be reflected by a high DX. Most spirits have DX similar to that of humans.

IQ

Servitor spirits often have low IQ, reflecting their limited capacities, while ancient spirits may have high IQ to reflect their vast experience. Freed from the constraints of physical existence, some spirits may have truly inhuman levels of IQ, although the motivations of such beings are often beyond mortal comprehension (and thus best left in the realm of non-player characters).

HT

HT represents the strength of a spirit's "life force" rather than its health in human terms, since spirits are immune to most physical health concerns. The HT score represents the spirit's ties to the physical and spirit worlds and how hard those ties are to break (i.e., how difficult the spirit is to kill). Powerful or tenacious spirits may have high HT.

Advantages

Some advantages are common among spirits, while others function differently when applied to the denizens of the spirit world.

The following advantages are redundant for spirits, as their effects are included in the Spirit Form package: Awareness (at the 35-point level, p. CI33), Doesn't Breathe (p. CI53), Doesn't Eat/Drink (p. CI53), Doesn't Sleep (p. CI53), Immunity to Disease (p. B20), Immunity to Poison (p. CI58), Insubstantiality (p. CI59), Invisibility (p. CI59), Invisibility to Machines (p. CI59), and Unaging (p. CI69). They have no need to purchase any of these advantages. Spirits that wish to be invisible in material form *do* need to buy Invisibility and Invisibility to Machines, however.

Alertness   see p. B19

Spirits add Alertness to IQ rolls to use their Awareness-like ability. Powerful spirits often have very high Sense rolls. Spirits can also have Acute Awareness (a bonus added only to Awareness IQ rolls) for 2 points per +1. 5 points/level.

Being of Pure Thought   see p. CI34

This advantage may be used to reflect a particular type of spirit, especially in a "psychic" campaign setting (see *Psionic Spirits*, p. 44). In general, spirits should use the Spirit Form advantage (p. 35) rather than this one to reflect their unusual abilities and limitations. 250 points.

"Body of" Advantages   *see pp. CI50-51*

Spirits may have these advantages, reflecting the ability to materialize (p. 34) in forms other than mortal flesh, a common power for nature spirits like elementals. Spirits with these advantages gain their benefits when encountered in the spirit world as well – a fire elemental can burn someone in the spirit world as well as the physical world. Variable.

Spirits with a "Body of" advantage are able to assume either type of form (human or elemental). If the spirit is capable of materializing *only* in its "Body of" form, treat the advantage as unswitchable, reducing its cost or even turning it into a disadvantage. Thus a spirit that can materialize only as a being of flame gains the -40% reduction in cost for the Body of Fire advantage, while a spirit that can materialize only as a creature of water has a -20 point disadvantage.

Extra Fatigue   *see p. CI24*

Spirits use Fatigue to fuel their special abilities, and powerful spirits typically have high levels of Fatigue (sometimes in the *hundreds* or more). See *Spirit Abilities* (p. 33) for more information on use of Fatigue. This advantage is common among older and more experienced spirits. It increases the size of the spirit's "natural" Fatigue pool (which can be recovered with rest and time). It does not take into account the extra sources that spirits can tap into to augment their natural Fatigue (see p. 33). 3 points/level.

Extra Life   *see p. CI36*

This advantage can reflect spirits that have to be slain multiple times before they are finally destroyed. When the spirit is slain it vanishes, only to reappear again elsewhere. Spirit characters can use earned character points to buy more Extra Lives during play with the GM's permission. Spirits that can do this more than five times should take the Resurrection advantage (p. CI64) instead. 25 points/extra life.

Faz Sense   *see p. CI55*

Some spirits (particularly nature spirits) may have this advantage to represent a particular sensitivity to their environment. It may represent sensing vibrations through a medium other than air, such as water or earth. 10 points.

Higher Purpose   *see p. CI26*

This advantage is common for spirits with strong purposes, particularly celestial spirits that embody or support specific moral concepts. 5 points.

Immortality   *see p. CI58*

Since spirits effectively have all the components of this advantage except for Regeneration, they cannot take it.

Injury Tolerance   *see p. CI58*

Spirits in their natural, immaterial form automatically have all forms of this advantage; as incorporeal beings, they have no vulnerable points. Spirits can take this advantage to apply to their physical forms; otherwise it is assumed they suffer from injury the same as mortals. Variable.

Invulnerability   *see p. CI59*

Spirits are often immune to physical concerns. In their natural form they are immune to any and all physical attacks that aren't specifically described as affecting spirits. In physical form they can have Invulnerability to particular attacks, or to certain effects, even if they don't cause damage. For example, spirit-affecting spells are considered a Rare hazard, so it costs 75 points to be invulnerable to them. Some other examples:

Common: Fire, Metal, Nonmagical Weapons. *150 points.*
Occasional: Earth/Stone, Magic, Wood. *100 points.*
Rare: Any one college of magic (Body Control, Mind Control, etc.), Radiation. *75 points.*

Magery   *see p. B21*

Spirits, like mortals, require Magery in order to cast spells. Spirits with innate spells (p. 43) must have Magery in order to cast them. Limited Magery (pp. CI39-40) is appropriate for spirits with a narrow focus, like many nature spirits. Limited Magery *can* meet the Magery requirements for innate spells. 15/25/35 points.

Magic Resistance   *see p. B21*

In some settings, particularly those that differentiate between spiritual and magical power, spirits may have an innate resistance to spells. This precludes the spirit having Magery or any innate spells. A spirit's Magic Resistance *does* apply to any spells that normally affect spirits. 2 points/level.

Pressure Support   *see p. CI63*

The Spirit Form advantage does *not* include either this advantage or Vacuum Support (p. CI70). Spirits in physical form can suffer damage from extremes in pressure if they do not have either advantage. Spirits in spirit form are, of course, completely unaffected by physical pressure. Variable.

Reawakened   *see p. CI43*

If the campaign features reincarnation, spirits may have led physical existences prior to their current state of being. A spirit with this advantage is aware of its previous incarnation(s) and can draw upon its experience. This can give the spirit unusual skills or knowledge of the physical world (although its knowledge could be years, even centuries, out of date). 10 points.

Regeneration   *see p. CI64*

Spirits may possess the ability to recover rapidly from damage in either physical or spirit form (and the advantage works in either form). Spirits commonly have the limitation that certain forms of damage prevent regeneration. Variable.

Secret Communication   *see p. CI65*

Spirits do not have to have this advantage to use their normal communication abilities, which are already factored into the cost of Spirit Form. Their ability to communicate secretly among themselves is balanced by the difficulties they have communicating with people in the physical world. 20 points.

New Advantages

The following new advantages are intended for spirits, although the GM may allow them for mortal characters in some settings.

Doesn't Fatigue   15 points

The individual doesn't lose Fatigue *at all* due to extended running, swimming, combat, or other strenuous activity. Extra Effort for physical activities still costs Fatigue, however. Recovery rates and HT rolls aren't affected.

Fatigue is still marked off normally for Extra Effort, as well as magic and psi use, and recovered normally. But the character never feels tired or suffers any penalties as long as his ST is greater than 0; he just can't perform any more extra effort/magic/psi until he recovers his Fatigue. However, if he spends or loses his last point of Fatigue, he falls unconscious just like anyone else.

The No Extra Effort disadvantage (p. 43) can be taken to balance the cost of this advantage, yielding a creature that does not tire but has no "reserve" of strength. This is the case for many spirits.

Gust   Jet, DX, 15 points

This is a natural attack (see p. CI72), a powerful blast of air. It is treated as a Jet attack that hits on a DX roll, not a Missile attack.

Damage: 2d, but does only *knockback* damage. Because of this, extra dice damage using the "cheap" improvement scheme cost only 3 points, not 6.

Range: 3 hexes.

Pestilence   5 points/disease

Many cultures blame spirits for causing disease and illness. This advantage grants that ability. In some fantasy campaigns, spirits may be the sole cause of disease! For spirits, this is a deadly (if slow-acting) attack. Mortal disease carriers should take Social Disease or Terminally Ill (p. CI84) instead. Each disease the spirit carries is a separate advantage; see pp. CII167-174 for ideas. Bubonic plague, leprosy, and typhoid fever are all possibilities, but the GM may wish to invent more exotic illnesses for spirits to carry. Also see the Malaise ritual on p. 96 for some effects of spiritually induced illness.

After contact with a spirit with Pestilence, the GM should secretly roll vs. the HT of each character. Modifiers: -3 if wounded by the spirit, +1 if merely touched, +2 otherwise. On a failed HT roll, the victim is infected with the disease, which progresses normally. If there was no direct contact with the spirit, use the *Contagion* rules (p. B133) instead. Multiple diseases require multiple HT rolls. Spirits can use their power of Probability Alteration (p. 34) to improve the chances of a victim becoming infected by applying a penalty to the HT roll (at 2 Fatigue per -1 to the roll, maximum of -10). Immunity to Disease protects completely.

Special Enhancement: Affects Substantial. The spirit can infect people *without* materializing. Those with Spectral Touch (p. 35) don't need this enhancement. +40%.

"Speak with" Advantages   see p. CI66

Nature spirits in particular may have Speak with Animals, Speak with Fish, or Speak with Plants to reflect their ability to communicate with the primal spirits of those forms of life. Alternatively, GMs running campaigns where animistic spirits are common may simply choose to allow all spirits to do so at no cost, or to learn individual languages (M/A or M/H) to speak with such spirits. Variable.

Strong Will   see p. B23

This is one of the most common advantages among spirits, since most of their special abilities are Will-based. Older, powerful spirits often have extraordinary Will scores. Will also affects how difficult a particular spirit is for a mortal to summon and control (see Chapters 5 and 6 for more information). 4 points/level.

Wealth   see p. B16

Although spirits can have wealth or poverty as mortals do, material wealth is usually of little use to them, and poverty only a minor inconvenience. The GM may wish to modify the cost of Wealth for spirits to reflect this, and keep a close eye on potential abuses. Variable.

Special Limitation: Possession Only. As above, but the spirit must actually possess its victim to cause disease. If it leaves, the victim is no longer ill and starts to recover normally, although he can be "reinfected." The victim's symptoms are normal for the disease, but he cannot infect others and can be cured only by exorcism. -20%.

Spirit Invulnerability   50 points

This is an advantage available only to spirits with the Materialization ability (p. 34). Spirits that have it cannot be killed by damage to their physical forms; reducing them to 0 HT simply forces them back into spirit form and prevents them from assuming material form again until their lost HT would have fully recovered. When the spirit's physical form is destroyed it automatically returns to spirit form with full normal HT and suffers no ill effects. This applies only to damage from physical sources. Damage that directly affects the mind or spirit remains.

The cost of this advantage can be reduced by taking Vulnerabilities (see p. 42 and p. CI106). One level of Vulnerability negates the advantage with respect to that form of attack, while additional levels do extra damage as usual.

Splash   *Jet, DX, 20 points*

This is a natural attack (see p. CI72), a high-pressure stream of water like a firehose. The water can short-circuit electrical equipment, cause water damage, fill containers (at a rate of one gallon per die of damage per second), and so forth.

Damage: 1d. Damage is doubled for knockback purposes, but halved for crushing damage.

Range: 3 hexes.

Terror   30 points

+10 points/-1 to Fright Check

Many spirits can cause irrational fear. This can take different forms: a psychic attack, an aura of dread, a face that looks like a dead loved one to everyone who views it. Anyone who sees the spirit must make a Fright Check immediately; a new roll is required if it reappears after an absence of at least an hour.

Modifiers: the modifiers on p. B93; +1 per appearance after the first within 24 hours. Penalties to the Fright Check can be purchased for 10 points per -1. Multiple beings with Terror cause *one* Fright Check at the highest penalty among them, with an additional -1 for 5 creatures, -2 for 10, -3 for 20, -4 for 50, and -5 for 100 or more.

Special Limitation: Chilling Touch. The spirit causes fear as outlined above, but only in those it touches. Spirits need not materialize in order to use this ability. Neither PD nor DR protects against Chilling Touch. -20%.

Special Limitation: Terror can normally be turned off to engage in social activities. Beings that can't turn it off have Horrific Appearance (p. CI80) *instead* of Terror and suffer a -6 reaction penalty at all times. This is a disadvantage worth -30 points. Beings with Horrific Appearance can still purchase Fright Check penalties as above.

Disadvantages

In addition to the disadvantages inherent in Spirit Form (notably limited ability to interact with the physical world), spirits often have a number of other disadvantages related to their unique nature.

Addiction

Spirits can be addicted to a variety of exotic things, from mundane food and drink to certain emotions, worship, or the presence of certain elements or substances. In general, anything a spirit must have in order to survive is better handled as a Dependency (below). Addictions are things a spirit desires greatly but can live without. Most spirit Addictions are common and easily obtained (particularly in a culture that believes in propitiating spirits), but some are illegal and often expensive. Variable.

Allergic Susceptibility

Spirits that are physically incapacitated (but not injured) by the presence of a certain substance should take this disadvantage. The Susceptibility affects the spirit whether it is in physical or spirit form, and so serves as an effective barrier against it. Use the rarities listed under *Dread* (below) to determine cost. Variable.

Astral Entity

This disadvantage is incompatible with the Spirit Form advantage. Astral Entities have extremely limited abilities to interact with the physical world and must use magic or psi to do so. This disadvantage can be used to represent a spirit lacking *all* the various abilities given under Spirit Form, and limited solely to operating in the spirit world. -25 points.

Cannot Learn

Mindless spirits have this disadvantage to reflect their limited capabilities; they know only what they are "programmed" to and cannot improve. -30 points.

Compulsive Behavior

Spirits often have certain behaviors "hardwired" into their personalities. These can range from quirks (a spirit never using its true name) to things like Compulsive Generosity or Compulsive Lying. The GM should differentiate between Compulsive Behaviors that are part of a spirit's racial template and those that are just individual personality traits. -1 to -15 points.

Dependency

Spirits often require special things to maintain them. Some common requirements include:

Rare (-30 points): A unique magic item, a ritual performed by a specific person, a special potion with rare and expensive ingredients.*

Infrequent (-20 points): A specific place (grove, natural spring, temple, graveyard, etc.).

Occasional (-10 points): Any place of a particular type (grove, temple, graveyard, etc.); human flesh, blood, or life energy*; worship or religious ceremonies.

Common (-5 points): Human emotions, mana.

*May be illegal or contain illegal ingredients. If so, add -5 points to the listed value.

Frequency can vary. Some guidelines:

Constantly (×5): Magical spirits may require mana constantly to exist, while guardian spirits may be bound to the places or things that they guard.

Daily (×3): Common for most requirements, particularly "feeding" requirements, worship, and emotional needs.

Monthly (×1): May be the case for special rituals, potions, and such to sustain the spirit's existence.

Any Dependency is in addition to the normal Will roll a spirit must make each month to avoid losing HT (p. 35).
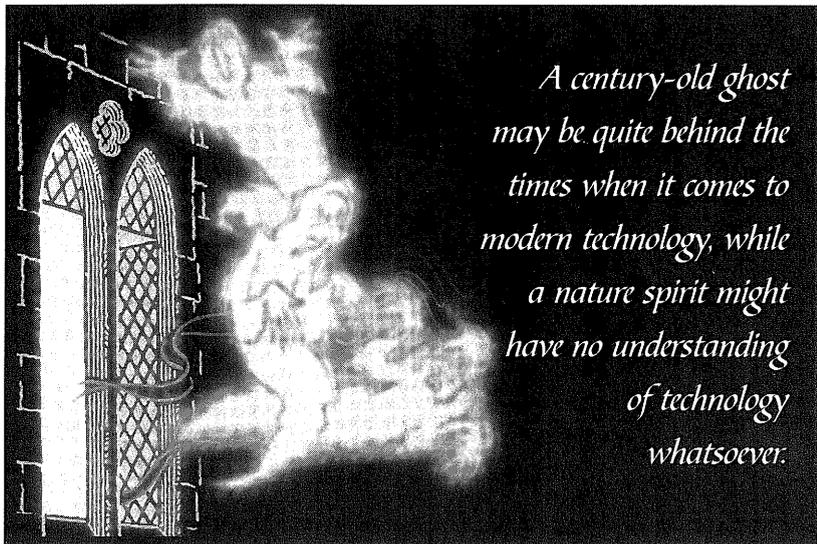
A century-old ghost may be quite behind the times when it comes to modern technology, while a nature spirit might have no understanding of technology whatsoever.

Dread

Spirits often have things that keep them at bay. Dread is worth -10 points plus another -1 point per yard of radius in the "forbidden zone." This is modified by rarity:

Rare (×1/2): Consecrated or holy objects, consecrated ground, extremely rare magical herbs.

Occasional (×1): Herbs and plants (including garlic, mistletoe, mountain ash, holly, and numerous others), ordinary religious symbols, church bells, incense, clothing worn backward, iron, silver.

Common (×2): Fire, mirrors, music, running water, salt.

Very Common (×3): Sunlight.

0-point Repulsions: Spirits' vulnerability to spells like Pentagram and Astral Block, advantages like True Faith, and rituals of the Path of Spirit (p. 104) are *not* considered part of this disadvantage, but 0-point taboo traits.

At the GM's option, the object of a spirit's Dread can be used to imprison it if the object is placed as a barrier across the spirit's only avenue of escape. The classic example is the Seal of Solomon, used to trap djinn inside bottles, lamps, and similar containers.

Phobias

If a spirit's repulsion is more psychological than physical, it can be treated as a Phobia. Use the rarities for Dread as a guideline: a Rare substance is worth -1 point (a quirk), an Occasional or Common one is worth -5 to -10 points, and a Very Common one is worth -10 to -20 points as a Phobia.

Sterile

This refers to the ability to produce offspring. If the GM decides spirits arise in some other manner than reproduction, this is not a disadvantage for them. The ability to produce offspring with human partners is common for spirits in folklore and literature. This is not considered an advantage or disadvantage. The ability or inability to interbreed with humans is a 0-point Feature. -3 points.

Unliving

Spirits *don't* automatically have this disadvantage; their hold on existence is as strong as that of any material being (stronger in some cases). Unliving is appropriate for many spirits, however, particularly servitors and "artificial" spirits created by mortal agents. Such spirits are destroyed when they reach 0 HT. -50 points.

Vulnerability

Although they are invulnerable to a wide range of things, spirits are often more vulnerable to certain forms of damage and are even damaged by things that don't harm material beings at all. This disadvantage applies only to attacks; for items that cause harm to spirits by their mere presence, use Weakness (below).

The first level of Vulnerability allows the attack to affect the spirit in its spirit form and negates the effect of the Spirit Invulnerability advantage (p. 38). If the Vulnerability affects the spirit only when it is materialized, the total value is halved. Keep in mind that spirits in spirit form are invisible to most people unless they choose to materialize, making striking one with its Vulnerability more difficult.

Examples of spirit Vulnerabilities:

Very Rare (-3 points): Consecrated or magical weapons, holy water; items listed as "Rare" under *Dread* (above).

Rare (-5 points): A specific called shot (head blow, heart shot, decapitation, etc.), magical fire, silver or wood weapons; items listed as "Occasional" under *Dread*.

Occasional (-10 points): Fire, light, magic; items listed as "Common" under *Dread*.

Common (-15 points): Sunlight, water; items listed as "Very Common" under *Dread*.

Weakness

This disadvantage is used for spirits that suffer damage merely in the presence of a certain item or substance. Use the rarities given for *Dread* (above) to determine the cost multiplier.

Soul Objects: Some spirits keep their soul or life-force elsewhere, in an object, plant, or animal. If the soul object is destroyed, the spirit takes 1d damage per minute until it is dead. This damage *cannot* be regenerated! This may occur rarely, but since it's irreversible, it's considered an "Occasional" Weakness worth -20 points. If the soul object is particularly difficult to damage (more than DR 15 or 75 hit points), treat the frequency as "Rare" and reduce the value to -10 points. This cannot be taken in conjunction with a Dependency on the same object.

Primitive

Spirits are primal beings and may not have an understanding of material science and technology. The default assumption is that spirits manage to "keep up" on current technology, having as much understanding as their IQ and skills allow, but this may not always be the case. A century-old ghost may be quite behind the times when it comes to modern technology, while a nature spirit might have no understanding of technology whatsoever (effectively TL0).

Since most spirits don't really *need* technology to take care of their daily needs, GMs should be careful to enforce the limitations of this disadvantage to keep it from becoming "free points." -5 points per tech level.

New Disadvantages

The following new disadvantages are intended for spirits, although the GM may allow them for mortal characters in some settings.

Capricious   -15 points

The character's moods are totally unpredictable. One minute he is happy and laughing, the next ferociously angry or bursting into tears. Those familiar with him are extremely wary around him, since they do not know how he will react to anything they do or say; reactions are at -2. If the Capricious person is in a position of authority or has the power to get his own way due to physical or magical power, subordinates are afraid of him and react at -4.

In any stressful or emotionally charged situation the player must make a roll on 1d. On an even roll, the character's emotions stay the same; on an odd roll, his emotions become completely different. The GM may require the player to make a Capricious roll at any time, for whatever reason, or simply to roleplay it.

Capricious is a disadvantage particularly suited to spirits like the faerie (see p. 57).

No Extra Effort   -15 points

The character cannot spend any Fatigue for Extra Effort (p. B89) for either physical or mental (e.g., psionic) feats. Fatigue use and recovery is otherwise unaffected. This disadvantage is common for spirits with the Doesn't Fatigue advantage (p. 39).

Taboo   Variable

The character suffers pain and injury from taking certain actions, such as a particular cultural taboo or breaking his word. These are similar to Obsessions or Vows (p. CI93 and p. B37, respectively) in that they govern his behavior, but the price is *much* more severe. This is a sort of Vulnerability or Weakness (p. CI106). The rarity is based on how difficult it is to avoid violating the taboo:

Very Rare: Wearing a particular color, swearing marriage vows, confessing love for someone, killing a member of one's own family, having a child.

Rare: Breaking one's sworn word, harming a member of one's own family, speaking one's own name backward, consuming forbidden food or drink.

Occasional: Hearing one's true name spoken aloud, revealing one's true identity, eating while others are present, entering a church (or other forbidden place), killing a specific sort of person (priest, shaman, noble, etc.).

Common: Having one's true identity revealed, failing to play a trick on someone after meeting him, killing any person.

Very Common: Harming a person, killing any living thing.

If the character breaks the taboo, the associated damage is suffered until the problem is corrected and he atones for his error (if possible). If the damage comes off Fatigue rather than HT, the total value is halved. If breaking the taboo results in banishment from the physical world, or some similar incapacitating effect, rather than harm, the value is twice the base value from rarity.

Other Disadvantages

There are a number of other disadvantages appropriate to spirits but requiring no further explanation. The chart below lists these disadvantages. *Psychological* disadvantages are personality quirks often possessed by spirits. *Physical* disadvantages represent certain limits spirits may operate under, while *supernatural* disadvantages are tied to the nature of the spirit's unique existence.

Spirit Disadvantage Table

Disadvantage	Point Cost	Page
Pyschological		
Berserk	-15	B31
Callous	-6	CI86
Curious	-5 to -15	CI89
Disciplines of Faith	Variable	CI89
Fanaticism	-15	B33
Innumerate	-1/-5/-10	CI91
Intolerance	Variable	B34
Low Empathy	-15	CI91
Pacifism	-15/-30	B35
Sense of Duty	-5 to -20	B39
Trickster	-15	CI94
Uneducated	-5	CI79
Physical		
Appearance	Varies	CI80
(Horrific or Monstrous)		
Disturbing Voice	-10	CI81
Gluttony	-5	B33
Unnatural Feature	-5	CI85
Supernatural		
Bloodthirst	-15	CI96
Cursed	-75	CI96
Destiny	Variable	CI97
Divine Curse	Variable	CI96
Draining, The	-10	CI97
Karmic Ties	Variable	CI98
Lifebane	-10	CI98
Murder Addiction	-60	CI98
No Body Heat	-5	CI99
No Reflection	-10	CI103
No Shadow	-10	CI103
Weirdness Magnet	-15	CI100

Innate Spells

Spirits are often considered magical beings (particularly in fantasy settings) and may have *innate spells*. An innate spell is the same as a normally learned spell except the spirit doesn't have to learn it; it knows it automatically as part of its nature. Spirits must have Magery to use innate spells, and cannot have both Magic Resistance and Magery.

Spirits with Magery can also learn and use other spells normally. If a spirit's Magery is good *only* for casting innate spells (i.e., the spirit cannot learn and use any other spells), reduce its cost to 8 points for the first level and 5 points for the second and third levels.

The minimum cost for an innate spell is the number of points to bring it to a level of 12, based on the racial template's Magery and default IQ. This can never be less than 1 point. Spirits gain the normal reductions in casting time and energy cost for high skill (p. B148).

If an individual has his IQ reduced to the point where his skill with an innate spell would fall below 12, it won't work and is considered "dormant." If he later has his IQ or Magery raised to the point where his skill is 12 or more, the ability reactivates and he can use it normally.

Rituals

Since innate spells are intuitive, spirits don't have to gesture or speak to use them. They still require concentration and take the usual amount of time to cast, but the time is spent silently staring or meditating. Spirits receive no bonus or penalty for magical rituals.

Prerequisites

Innate spells do not have the normal prerequisites, only a base skill of 12 or more with the spell. There are certain times when the normal prerequisites become necessary, however:

1. Before the caster can increase his skill with an innate spell, he must acquire all the normal prerequisites for that spell. *Example:* A spirit has the innate spell Panic-13. Before he can raise his skill to 14, he must learn the prerequisite spell, Fear. If a character increases his IQ or Magery, his skill with the innate spell rises automatically without his needing to worry about prerequisites.

2. Before a spellcaster can use an innate spell as a prerequisite, he must acquire all its normal prerequisite spells. *Example:* A spirit has the innate spell Darkness. He wishes to learn Shape Darkness, which lists Darkness as a prerequisite; therefore, he must learn the spells Continual Light and Light, the normal prerequisites of Darkness.

3. Before an innate spell can be taught, both pupil and teacher must have acquired all the normal prerequisite spells.

Recommended Spells

Although spirits can have virtually any innate spell, the following *GURPS Magic* spells are particularly appropriate:

Create Food (p. M43) is common among faeries and other spirits that entertain or serve mortals.

Death Vision (p. M63) is associated with ghosts and other fearful spirits.

Elemental spells (pp. M28-38) are appropriate for nature spirits, particularly elementals, which often have One College Only Magery for the appropriate element.

Light (p. M49) and *Darkness* (p. M50) are useful innate spells for celestial spirits and for nature spirits associated with either element.

Mind Control spells (p. M56), particularly *Charm, Drunkenness, Emotion Control, Fear, Panic, Sleep*, and *Suggestion*, are common for spirits, particularly faeries and other trickster spirits.

Perfect Illusion and *Illusion Shell* (p. M46), along with other Illusion and Creation spells, are common for faeries and trickster spirits.

Pestilence (p. M65) may be used in place of the advantage of the same name (p. 39) for spirits that cause disease.

Plant spells (p. M66) are, of course, common for nature spirits, particularly those associated with plants (like dryads).

Repair (p. M52) is commonly used by household spirits like brownies to complete their work in a single night.

Ruin (p. M51) suits spirits of decay and destruction, allowing them to age and corrode most materials.

Steal Health and *Steal Strength* (p. M64) are associated with certain undead spirits like ghosts.

Inherent Magic (Knacks)

Generally speaking, knacks are not well suited to modeling various spirit abilities. They are better handled as innate spells instead (see above). Most spirit abilities that would require knacks are already inherent in the Spirit Form advantage or other advantages.

Magical Spirits

GURPS Spirits assumes spirit phenomena are different from magic. Some may find this distinction artificial. At the GM's option, spirits with Dependency (Mana) can be treated as "magical creatures." Magical spirits cannot cross the border of a Pentagram spell, but can pass through a Force Dome as if it weren't there. They can be detected by Detect Magic, Mage Sense, and Mage Sight. Their special powers – like Terror, Materialization, and Possession – require mana to work. Rolls made to use these powers receive a bonus in appropriately aspected areas (like a fire elemental operating in a fire-aspected area, or a ghost operating in a death-aspected area) and a penalty in oppositely aspected ones (see p. M94). Finally, their abilities are affected by spells that block magic and by the Magic Resistance (or Susceptibility) of their victims.

Psionic Spirits

The default assumption in *GURPS Spirits* is that spirits and their abilities are different from psionic abilities. However, that may not be the case. Many modern parapsychologists and neo-Pagans equate spiritual and psychic phenomena. If the GM wants, spirits can be treated as psychic entities using the following rules:

Spirits exist on the astral plane and interact normally with astrally projecting psis. (The astral plane and the spirit world are effectively one and the same. See Chapter 2 for more information.) They cannot enter the area of effect of a psi Screamer, and lose HT at the same rate as psionic Power when attacked with Neutralize (p. P10) or Steal Power (p. P17). All

their special powers are considered psionic: telepathic skills for communication, the Poltergeist Effect as a kind of psychokinesis, etc. Their powers can be detected with Psi Sense (p. P24), leave a residue detectable using Signature Sniffer, and are affected by their victims' Mind Shield and Psionic Resistance.

Psionic spirits may be Astral Entities (p. CI96) or Beings of Pure Thought (p. CI34). GMs who want to treat spirits as psionic phenomena should see *GURPS Psionics*, particularly pp. P45-53. For an example of ghosts as psi entities, see *GURPS Black Ops* (p. BO100).

Ultra-Tech Spirits

In an ultra-tech campaign setting, there are some additional things to take into account for spirits. The following traits may be common for them, in which case they should be added to spirit templates:

Cyber-Rejection (-10/-25 points; p. CI81): Since they are not material beings, spirits can't have cybernetic implants, although spirits might materialize with the *appearance* of cyberware (and perhaps even some of the effects, if they have the appropriate advantages).

Primitive (-5 points per TL; p. B26): Spirits may be *very* out of touch with technology in an ultra-tech campaign, giving them little or no understanding of how it works. On the other hand, they might be just as tech-savvy as anyone else. Spirits that are actually advanced alien beings might even have the High Technology advantage!

Zeroed (10 points; p. CI32): Unless their existence is widely acknowledged, spirits aren't likely to be listed in most ultra-tech databases as anything other than myths and "strange sightings," making them effectively Zeroed.

Skills

For the most part, spirits have access to the same skills as other characters and use them in the same manner. Spirits may have access to greater knowledge about certain subjects (particularly the spirit world). If this is the case, GMs can assign a Racial Skill Bonus for certain skills, such as Occultism, Spirit Lore, and Theology. Specific spirits might have bonuses in other areas, such as nature spirits gaining a Skill Bonus with Naturalist or even Geology (appropriate for earth spirits). Other Racial Skill Bonuses (p. CI177) can be assigned as the GM sees fit.

Fine Tuning

A number of small touches can round out spirit templates and tweak them for particular campaigns.

Taboo Traits and Features

Taboo traits are trivial restrictions or limitations that make sense given the nature of spirits but don't affect template cost (in other words, count as 0-point disadvantages). *Features* are 0-point "special effects" that change how a trait or

ability works but don't impose an overall restriction, such as "Can interbreed with mortal beings." Taboo traits and features can refine and customize a spirit template to better suit the needs of the campaign.

It would be impossible to list every single 0-point trait of a spirit, so most are left implicit in order to save time and space. As a general rule, if it makes sense for a spirit to be affected differently by a particular specialized or obscure effect, the GM should simply rule that is the case and move on with the game.

Some 0-point traits of spirits that merit particular attention include the following:

Affected by spirit spells and rituals. These include Pentagram and all of the spells from Chapter 6, along with rituals of the Path of Spirit. While humans aren't affected by these things and spirits are, spirits are immune to many other spells that affect humans, so the trade-off is worth no points.

Can be turned using True Faith. While this can be quite limiting to spirits at times, mortals with True Faith are rare. Additionally, spirits might be affected only by certain faiths.

Can be detected by sensitive individuals. Mortals with advantages like Awareness and Medium can sense spirits even in their normal, invisible form. The advantages (easy communication) and disadvantages (easy detection) balance out.

No mental skills. This is a limitation primarily of servitors and mindless spirits. It is a special effect of low IQ and the Cannot Learn disadvantage and therefore worth no additional points.

Quirks

Some traits may count as very minor disadvantages, effectively "racial quirks" (p. CI177) for that type of spirit. These are traits added primarily for roleplaying and "flavor," and they should be things found among *all* spirits of that particular type, rather than individuals. Possibilities include common behaviors, likes and dislikes, a dislike of certain things listed under *Dread* (p. 41), a minor aversion to consecrated ground, a fondness for certain types of food or drink, etc.

Spirits That Aren't

Finally, there's the matter of certain beings called "spirits" that don't fit the definition in this book. Spirits are incorporeal beings that may or may not be capable of assuming physical form. Some physical beings may also be called "spirits." The Sidhe of *GURPS Celtic Myth* might be considered faerie spirits, but they are corporeal beings that live in an alternate dimension and do not have the Spirit Form advantage, so they are not spirits. The In-Betweeners of *GURPS Voodoo* are associated with the spirit world and are affected by spirit rituals, but they are always corporeal and not true spirits. Likewise, most corporeal undead (from *GURPS Undead*) have a spiritual element but are not spirits. These "psuedospirits" may have advantages, disadvantages, taboo traits, and features in common with spirits (notably being affected by spells that block or affect spirits) but, for the purposes of this book, they are not considered "true" spirits.

> *Hear Me, and make all Spirits subject unto Me: so that every Spirit of the Firmament and of the Ether: upon the Earth and under the Earth: on dry Land and in the Water: of Whirling Air, and of rushing Fire: and every Spell and Scourge of God may be obedient unto Me.*
> — *The Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon*

This chapter presents a variety of spirits from different cultures and myths, ranging from the weak to the tremendously powerful. They are treated as "racial templates," following the guidelines from *GURPS Compendium I*. Each entry includes:

Name

In some cases the name chosen is somewhat arbitrary and may vary according to culture of origin. Some spirits may share names with certain corporeal creatures, in which case the template presents a spirit version of that creature, not necessarily the definitive version.

Other Names: Alternate names the spirit might be known by, particularly in other cultures. Where applicable, the culture of origin is noted in parentheses after the name.

Type: Nature, celestial, or human spirit. If more than one type is applicable, the most common is listed.

Motivation: Free-willed, servitor, or mindless. Where there are multiple possibilities, the most common are listed.

Appearance

What the spirit looks like, both in its normal (incorporeal) form and material form, if it has one.

Habitat

Where the spirit is normally found. "Summoned" spirits normally appear in the physical world only when called there by an outside agency (usually a mortal summoner).

Template

Repeats name of spirit and lists total point cost to be a member of the spirit "species." The spirit's abilities follow, with point costs given in brackets [ ]. These may include:

Attribute Modifiers: The spirit's racial attribute modifiers (see p. CI175).

Advantages: All of the spirit's racial advantages, including knacks and other innate abilities.

Disadvantages: All of the spirit's racial disadvantages.

Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: The spirit's racial quirks and 0-point traits (see p. 45). This is in addition to features and taboo traits inherent in all spirits (see *Taboo Traits and Features*, p. 45).

Innate Spells: Any innate spells the spirit possesses.

Skills: Any racial skill bonuses or racially learned skills.

Variations

Options for modifying the template to fit certain cultural or mythological versions of the spirit. These are usually additions to or subtractions from the basic template.

Angel

Other Names: Apsara (Indian), Archai, Archangel, Cherub, Deva, Domination, Exusiai, Gandharva (Indian), Kyriotete, Malakh (Hebrew), Marut, Power, Principality, Seraph, Throne, Valkyrie, Virtue.

Type: Celestial.

Motivation: Free-Willed.

"Angel" comes from the Greek word *angelos*, meaning "messenger." Angels are celestial spirits that embody or serve ideals of moral goodness. Although they are most often associated with the Judeo-Christian religion, angels and angel-like beings appear in many cultures around the world. They are good spirits, although they may have terrible or frightening aspects. Angels range in power from minor guardian spirits to tremendous archangels possessing the power of deities (although not true omnipotence, which is reserved only for the angels' Creator).

Angels serve as agents and messengers of a moral higher power on Earth, usually a powerful deity like the Judeo-Christian God. Angels appear in the Bible as God's messengers, but also as agents of God's wrath, as in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. They are described as both beautiful and terrible. Angels are often arranged into complex hierarchies of power, influence, and closeness to God or the divine spirit. The highest-ranking angels are typically referred to as "archangels" in modern Judeo-Christian tradition. Under them come hosts of other angels in different groups.

Demons (see p. 51) are often believed to be angels that have "fallen" from their moral ideals to serve evil.

Appearance

The most common modern depiction of angels is that of beautiful (often androgynous) humans with feathered wings, wearing bright haloes of light. Angels are also described as beings of pure light, probably the closest thing they have to a true appearance. In ancient folklore, angels display a wide variety of appearances, from winged serpents to animals to wheels of fire. Most angelic forms are described as breathtakingly beautiful or awesome. Angels can assume human (and other) forms as needed.

Habitat

Angels dwell in a spirit world far removed from Earth, like the heaven of the Bible, but visit Earth as emissaries and agents of a higher power. Angels are usually only seen on Earth while performing their duties, although some angels' work sends them to Earth quite regularly. In some traditions, every person has his own "guardian angel" (see *Guardian Spirits*, p. 7).

Angel   556 points

Attribute Modifiers: ST +4 [45]; DX +4 [45]; IQ +4 [45]; HT +4 [45].

Advantages: Charisma +3 [15]; Does Not Fatigue [15]; Flight [40]; Higher Purpose [5]; Pious [5]; Power Investiture 3 [30]; Sanctity [5]; Spirit Form (Physical Form +80%, Unlimited Lifespan +30%) [210]; Spirit Invulnerability [50]; Strong Will +2 [8]; True Faith [15]; Unfazeable [15]; Very Beautiful [25].

Disadvantages: Code of Honor (Uphold Good) [-15]; Extremely Hazardous Duty [-20]; No Extra Effort [-15]; Sense of Duty (All Humanity) [-15].

Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: Humble [-1].

Skills: +3 racial bonus to Theology [4].

Variations

The racial template presents the bare *minimum* abilities for a typical angel. Angels may have many, many other advantages, particularly Extra Fatigue, Extra Hit Points, Faith Healing, Regeneration, Resurrection, and Invulnerability to many attacks, including magic. Angels may also know a large number of spells using their Power Investiture; see *GURPS Magic* and *GURPS Religion* for ideas.

Even a single angel is a force to be reckoned with. They are best left as NPC allies (or even patrons) in lower-powered campaigns, putting in a rare appearance as their duties demand. In high-point campaigns they are suitable as player characters.

On the other hand, if angels are common in the campaign, or the hierarchy of angels is extensive enough, there may be minor angelic beings considerably less powerful than the racial template given here. GMs should begin by reducing Attributes and dropping the Physical Form enhancement from Spirit Form.

For a number of variations on angels, including an entire heavenly hierarchy, see *GURPS In Nomine*. The angels in that book are similar to those described here, but with abilities unique to the *In Nomine* setting.

Angelic Patrons: The template above assumes angels serve a relatively distant or uninvolved deity (or superior angel). If an angel is likely to gain assistance from a superior, the angel should have the Divine Favor (p. CI36) or Patron advantage.

Immaterial Angels: GMs who prefer angels with less ability to meddle in physical affairs should drop the Physical Form enhancement from the template's Spirit Form advantage, forcing angels to spend considerable amounts of Fatigue to manifest in the physical world and making such appearances correspondingly rare.

Animal Spirit

Other Names: Animal or Beast King, Totem, Manitou.
Type: Nature.
Motivation: Free-Willed, Mindless.

Animal spirits are archetypal spirits associated with particular species of animals. An animal spirit is often referred to in occult literature as the "oversoul" or "deva" of that particular animal species. Animal spirits are associated only with animals (i.e., creatures with a racial IQ less than 8 or the Presentient disadvantage); intelligent creatures are usually regarded as having distinct, individual spirits or souls.

Unlike the animal species they embody, animal spirits can be quite intelligent and often are. They tend to manifest personality traits associated with their species: fox spirits are sly, cat spirits haughty, seal spirits playful, crocodile spirits lazy, and so forth. They're protective of their animal species, although the spirits of prey animals can often be persuaded to allow some of their species to be hunted and killed as part of the natural order. They're also protective of nature, which may include certain people. Many tribal cultures consider themselves descended from animal spirits and honor them as totems or patron spirits for their tribes, clans, or families.

Nonsentient animal spirits may also exist in the spirit world. These creatures are like normal animals with a number of special abilities. They often serve intelligent spirits much in the same way animals in the physical world serve humans: as companions, guards, pets, or prey. Spirit predators may prey on humans, particularly in out-of-the-way places or at the behest of other spirits or magicians.

Appearance

An animal spirit usually materializes (or appears to those able to see spirits) as an idealized, perfect specimen of its animal species. It may be unusually large or strangely colored, indicating its true nature. Whether in spirit or material form, intelligent animal spirits can use their spirit abilities to speak and they usually know at least one human language.

Habitat

Animal spirits tend to be found in the same environments as their mundane counterparts: monkey spirits are more common in jungles, while shark spirits live in the sea, and dog spirits are often encountered in places of human habitation. The spirits of animals that live in the "urban jungle" – rats, pigeons, dogs, cats, cockroaches – may even appear in urban campaign settings. Animal spirits are also sometimes connected to particular people or social groups as patrons or totems, and may appear in conjunction with them wherever they are.

Statistics

Animal spirits are based on an animal template rather than the default human template, so their statistics can vary widely. They tend to have the same general Attribute Modifiers, Advantages, Disadvantages, and Innate Skills as the animals they are based upon, plus the Spirit Form advantage. They often raise IQ and drop disadvantages like Mute and
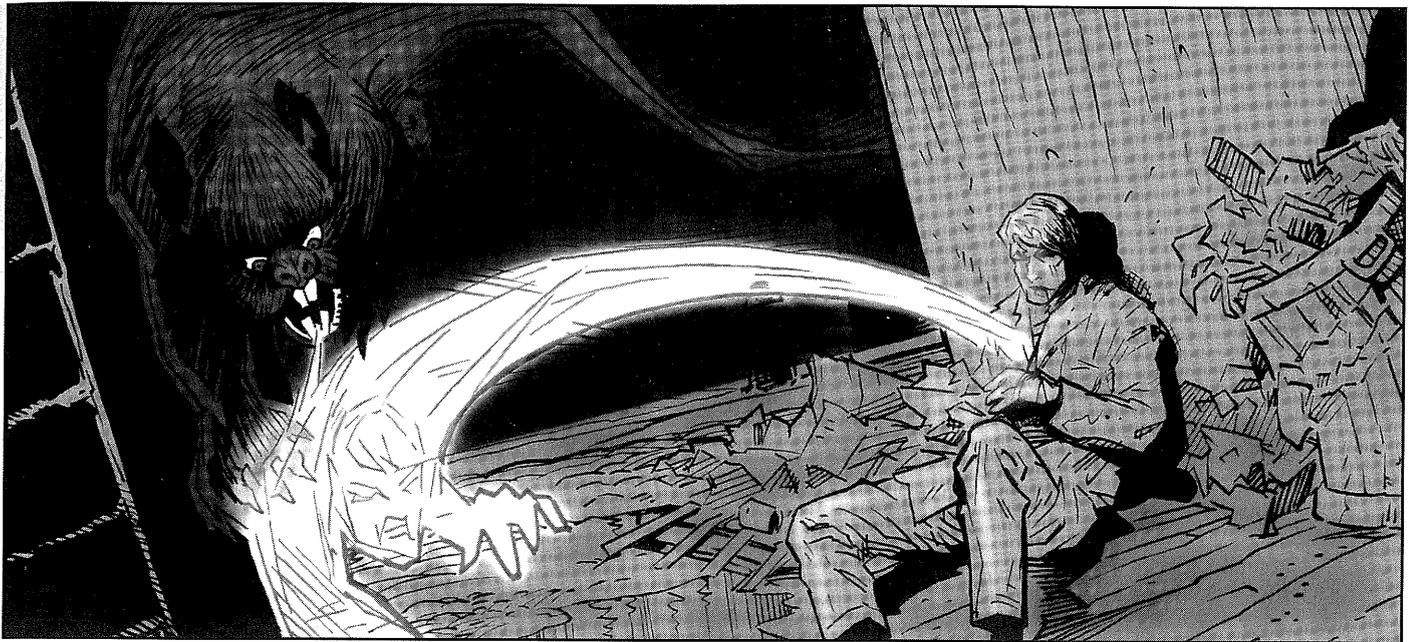
Presentient, as well as advantages already covered or made superfluous by their spirit nature (see p. 37). For various animal templates (and rules for creating new ones), see *GURPS Bestiary*.

Variations

Human-form spirits: Some animal spirits are capable of taking on human form if they choose. They use the Shapeshifting skill to do so (see *Materialization*, p. 34). If the spirit has this ability it gets no points for any disadvantages not normally associated with the human form (such as No Fine Manipulators), since the spirit can easily shift into human form to overcome the disadvantage. The spirit's animal form still has the disadvantage; the spirit just gets no points for it.

Totems: Totem spirits that offer aid to their followers should grant advantages such as Ally (p. B23), Blessed (p. CI34), or Divine Favor (p. CI36), depending on the kind of aid and abilities given. Totems may also provide Magery or Power Investiture, access to or bonuses for certain colleges of spells (see pp. M94-95), or Ritual Aptitude (see p. 84). A character with a close relationship with his totem spirit may be allowed to purchase the Spirit Warrior advantage (p. 77) or the Shapeshifter ("Were-form") advantage (p. CI43), if the character can actually assume the totem spirit's form.

Apparition

Other Names: Corpse Light, Fetch, Phantasm, Phantom, Vision, Will-o'-Wisp.
> *Type:* Human.
> *Motivation:* Mindless.

Apparitions are phantom images, sounds, and similar sensory phenomena that appear to one or more observers. They may be extremely simple, like floating lights or random tapping or other noises, or they may be very realistic, but they usually have an "unearthly" quality. Apparitions are completely mindless and ignore all attempts to communicate with them; most don't appear as beings at all, merely as strange sensory impressions.

Other than their (sometimes frightening) appearance, apparitions don't really *do* anything. They're impossible to communicate with and don't have any goals. The most common apparitions appear in times of crisis or following a significant or traumatic event.

Many people describe visions or dreams of loved ones immediately before hearing that they have died. Those who are dying (or attending the dying) report apparitions of angels, religious figures, deceased loved ones, or "luminous beings." Apparitions like the Irish banshee herald impending doom or disaster.

Trauma apparitions are similar to ghosts (see p. 59) except they have no discernible intelligence and simply act out the same things over and over. They're like "spiritual recordings" of a particular event. Some apparitions appear at regular intervals, like clockwork; others appear only in response to certain stimuli, such as the presence of particular emotions, religious ceremonies, environmental conditions, and so forth.

Appearance

Apparitions are rarely visual in nature. Most of them involve some kind of sound: thumps, rapping, moaning, clashing weapons, animal noises, and so forth. They also often involve the feeling of a presence and may include physical sensations like chills, a spectral touch, or strange odors. More rare are ghostly images of people and animals (often only a particular part, like a disembodied hand or head), floating lights, and glowing patches of mist or fog.

Some apparitions are visible only to people with the ability to sense spirits, such as mediums or psychics. Others are visible to anyone. Apparitions have been known to appear solely on film or videotape, and to produce sounds on recordings or even over the radio or telephone, without being visible or audible in any other way.
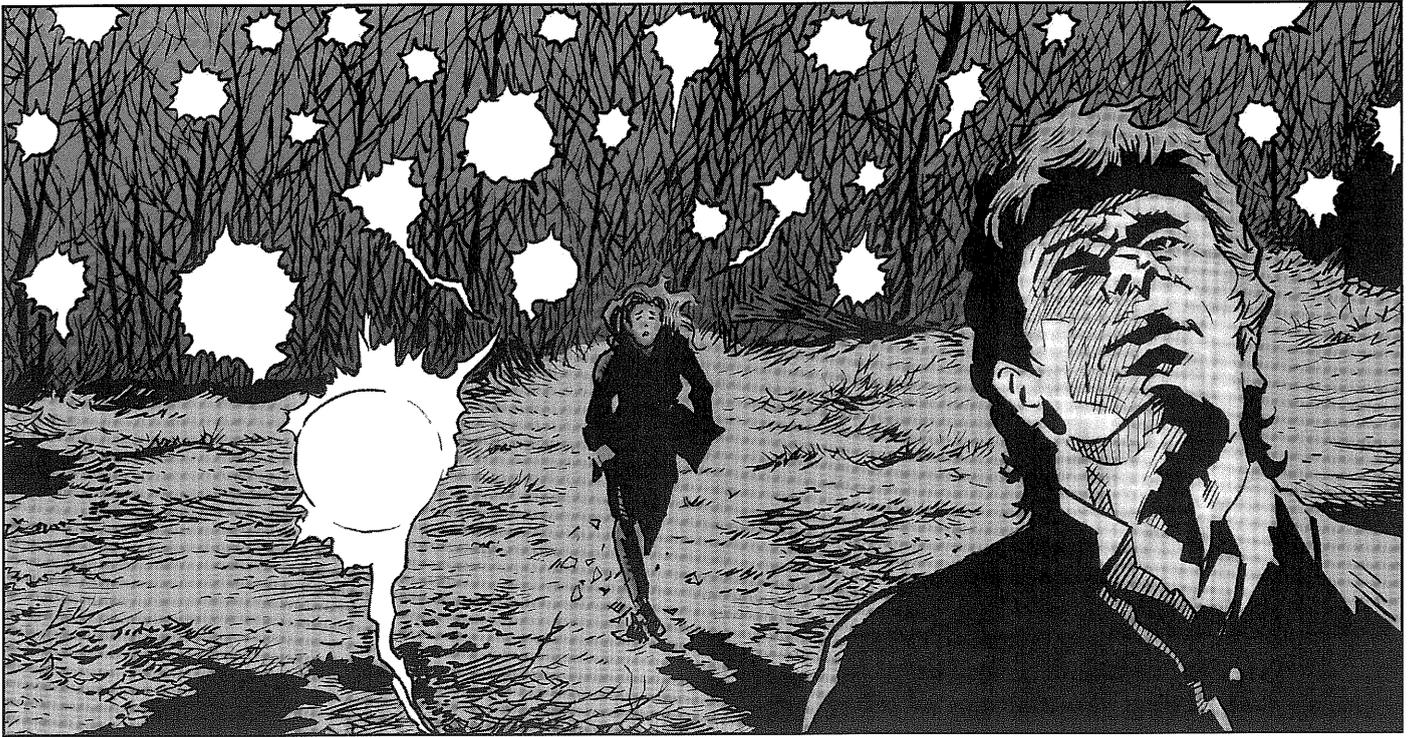
Habitat

Trauma apparitions tend to be restricted to particular places, like an ancient castle or the site of a bloody murder. An area where an apparition appears usually becomes known, and sensitive individuals can feel the presence of an apparition, even when it doesn't appear, with a successful Sense or IQ roll.

Crisis apparitions can appear virtually anywhere, but they always appear in proximity to whatever person(s) they carry a message for. They have been known to appear in dreams.

Apparition   -2 points

Attribute Modifiers: IQ -2 [-20].

Advantages: Doesn't Fatigue [15]; Invulnerability (Mind Control) [75]; Single-Minded [5]; Spirit Form (Can't Materialize: sounds, visual, and ectoplasm effects only -5%, can't ride in vehicles, Tap Fatigue, use Awareness, Poltergeist Effect, or Probability Alteration -65%, Possession only affects victim's mood or emotions -5%) [25]; Strong Will +2 [8]; Unfazeable [15].

Disadvantages: Cannot Learn [-30]; Compulsive Behavior or Obsession (severe) [-15]; Dead Broke [-25]; Hidebound [-5]; Low Empathy [-15]; No Extra Effort [-15]; No Sense of Humor [-10]; Obdurate [-10].

Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: No Mental Skills [0].

Variations

Corpse Lights: Also known as corpse candles, corpsant, fetch-candles, fetch-lights, fire-demons (American Indian), irrlicht (German), ignis fatuus (Latin), jack-o'-lantern, liekko ("flaming one," Finnish), will-o'-wisps, and witch-fire (Africa). Corpse lights are apparitions of glowing or flickering light similar to a torch or lantern flame, often seen at a distance and nearly always at night. They often behave like a light being

carried by an unseen person and are known for leading people astray in the dark. They're also commonly considered omens of death. Modern scholars attribute corpse lights to natural phenomena like marsh gas or lightning discharges.

Fetch: Also known as a banshee (Irish), co-walker, doppleganger (German), fye, swarth, task, or wraith. A fetch is a duplicate of a living person, sometimes ghostly and other times quite real-looking. Sometimes they speak, but more often they are silent. Banshees wail mournfully. Fetches are considered omens of bad luck and death, although in some cases they indicate good fortune. (In Irish folklore, seeing a fetch in the morning is good luck, while seeing one at night is bad luck.) A fetch is often visible only to the person it looks like, or to his loved ones.

Psychic Apparitions: Many modern parapsychologists associate apparitions with psychic phenomena, and at least some apparitions may be the result of psionic abilities like Astral Projection, ESP, and Telepathy. Someone having visions of the death of a loved one may be using Precognition or Clairvoyance, fetches may be astral bodies, and corpse lights can be produced using Photokinesis (p. P13). Apparitions may also be the result of "psychic impressions" left by people on places or objects (see *GURPS Psionics* for more information on apparitions as psi phenomena, particularly pp. P49-50).

Ascended Spirit

Other Names: Ascended Master, Bodhisattva, Enlightened Master, Loa (Voodoo), Mahatma, Saint, Secret Master.
Type: Human.
Motivation: Free-Willed.

An "ascended spirit" was once incarnated as a mortal but has passed on (either through physical death or spiritual discipline) to become a being of pure spirit, devoted to furthering

the enlightenment of other beings. Unlike ghosts, which have incomplete tasks or unresolved strong emotions, leaving them restless and discontent, ascended spirits are at peace and may have even sought their current state of being. It might be possible (at the GM's discretion) for a ghost to become an ascended spirit after resolving its compulsions (see *Ghosts*, p. 59).

Ascended spirits interact with the physical world in order to help living beings (particularly people). They aid in the quest for spiritual enlightenment, whatever that may mean in the spirits' own beliefs, and work against the forces that hinder enlightenment. Most often they do so secretly, appearing only to those with a degree of spiritual awareness. This includes many mystic and occult groups, such as the "Mahatmas" of the Theosophists or the "Secret Masters" of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (said to appear only in spirit form).

Ascended spirits are often associated with angels (p. 47). In some belief systems ascended spirits *are* angels or, more accurately, angels are ascended, perfected human souls that return at the behest of a higher power to offer aid and comfort to the living and further the cause of goodness in the world. The 18th-century mystic Emanuel Swedenborg believed this was the case, saying that all angels once lived as men and women. Catholic saints are also examples of ascended spirits.

While ascended spirits are generally seen as benevolent, nothing says they have to be. An ascended spirit's idea of "enlightenment" could be based on the beliefs of a malevolent or maltheistic religion instead, making it an antagonist.

Appearance

Ascended spirits generally look much as they did during their physical existences, although often idealized or surrounded by auras or haloes of light, indicating their otherworldly nature. In some cases, ascended spirits have reasons to conceal their true identity from others, in which case they often appear as hazy or indistinct "beings of light." They rarely (if ever) make themselves visible to mundane people, appearing only to the spiritually aware, like shamans, initiates, or priests. They generally cannot materialize, although they can sometimes affect the physical world.

Ascended spirits also commonly make themselves known through mediums and channelers (see p. 65), using them as mouthpieces for their messages. This can be seen in the practices of Voodoo, the spiritualist craze of the late 19th century, and many trance-channelers of the modern New Age movement.

Habitat

Like celestial spirits, ascended spirits usually interact with the physical world to further the moral causes they serve. They're associated with spiritual people and groups, so they're most commonly encountered in churches, temples, and other sacred places where those people work.

Ascended spirits may not linger in the physical world overly much, spending most of their time in an inner spirit world (see p. 26) until something in the physical world requires their attention. Or they might be quite active in the physical world, working through various intermediaries and occasionally taking a hand through possession or the use of spirit warriors (see p. 70).

Ascended Spirit   115 points

Advantages: Higher Purpose [5]; Spirit Form (Unlimited Lifespan +30%, Can't Materialize: sounds and visual effects only -10%) [120].

Disadvantages: Sense of Duty (toward a particular group) [-10].

Variations

Active Spirits: For ascended spirits that take a more direct hand in the physical world, remove the Can't Materialize limit on their Spirit Form advantage, allowing the spirits to materialize and act directly rather than requiring intermediaries. This makes ascended spirits more suitable as player characters (although the challenge of playing a character with limited power over the physical world can be an interesting one). *125 points.*

Guardian Spirits: Some spirits that watch over or guide people are identical to ascended spirits in statistics but are not mortal souls that have passed on to another sort of existence. Examples include the Greek *daemon* and Roman *genius* as well as various sorts of "guardian angels." This spirit may be a "higher" (more spiritually active and aware) part of the mortal's own spirit, a common belief in modern occultism known as the "higher self."

Loa: The loa are spirits worshipped in Voodoo, associated with ancestors and primal African gods. They interact with worshippers primarily through visions and possession, much like ascended spirits. Use the Ascended Spirit template as a base, dropping Higher Purpose and adding traits that suit the loa's sphere of influence. For example, Ghede, the loa of the dead, has abilities involving the dead and zombies. See *GURPS Voodoo*.

Demon

Other Names: Devil, Fallen Angel, Imp, Incubus, Malebranche, Oni (Japan), Rakshasa (India), Succubus.
Type: Celestial.
Motivation: Free-Willed, Servitor.

A demon is a celestial spirit associated with the forces of immorality and evil, or at least selfishness and pride, as opposed to the selflessness and humility of good celestial spirits like angels. Demons are the opposite numbers of angels; many religions, such as Christianity, believe demons are angels that have "fallen" from their lofty positions.

"Demon" is a very broad category, often widened to include every kind of evil spirit. The prime qualities demons (as defined in this book) have in common is that they are spirits that embody or further evil causes and are vulnerable in some way to "good" forces (holy symbols and the like). Although they're fully capable of temptation and trickery, many demons are either unable or unwilling to harm the truly innocent, and they can be affected by the power of the truly holy.

Appearance

Demons have no fixed physical description. Their appearances range from impossibly beautiful tempters to hideous monsters, and many stories give demons the ability to change their appearance through shapeshifting or illusion. The classical modern "devils" are handsome humanoids with small horns on their foreheads, pointed ears (and often pointed canine teeth), sometimes with cloven hooves in place of feet, often with forked tails. These sorts of demons can disguise their appearance with the right sort of clothing instead of using supernatural abilities.

Habitat

Demons normally inhabit a spirit world (often referred to as "hell") that reflects their dark and evil nature. Often this world is a kind of prison or exile for fallen celestial spirits. In other cases it is simply part of the natural cosmology and demons may actually enjoy their home, especially if it affords them the opportunity to indulge their various appetites.

Demons usually appear on Earth either to cause evil or at the behest of a mortal summoner. In the former case, the demon's job may be anything from random mayhem and destruction to the subtle and systematic corruption of an individual, group, or entire society. Demons may work together toward their mutual goals, but such alliances tend to be tenuous at best, given demonic personalities and proclivities.

Summoned demons can appear at the command of a more powerful demon or spirit (including evil gods and demigods) or of an ambitious mortal. In the latter case, the summoner either tries to force the demon to submit to his will using the appropriate spells or rituals, or bargains with the demon for a service in exchange for some kind of payment. More often than not this payment is the mortal's soul, which may have ramifications during the mortal's life or only after death, depending on the cosmology of the campaign and the nature of the agreement.

Demon   *250 points*

Advantages: Doesn't Fatigue [15]; Extra Fatigue 5 [15]; Invulnerability (spells resisted by IQ) [75]*; Night Vision [10]; Spirit Form (Physical Form +80%, Unlimited Lifespan +30%) [210].

Disadvantages: Cannot Harm Innocents (Prevents direct harm of *truly* good or holy folk only, -50%) [-5]; Excommunicated [-10]; No Extra Effort [-15]; Social Stigma (Demon) [-15]; Vulnerability (1d from blessed or holy items) [-5]; and at least 25 points in "evil" mental or occult disadvantages like Bloodlust, Frightens Animals, Lecherousness, Lifebane, Sadism, Self-Centered, etc.

*Demons resist these spells *automatically*. This is a modification of Invulnerability (p. CI59).

Variations

Types of Demons: Demons in myth and literature come in every conceivable form, but some common types appear over and over.

Imp: Imps are tiny demons that often serve as familiars for evil wizards and generally seek to cause trouble. Their material form is that of a small, bat-winged humanoid. In addition to the basic template they have ST -5 [-40]; Flight (Winged, -25%) [30]; Duty (to their master or another demon, all the time) [-15]; Hideous [-20]; Inconvenient Size [-15]. *190 points.*

Oni: Oni are Japanese demons that materialize in the form of hideous ogres, 8 feet tall with red or blue skin, horns, bulging eyes, and sharp teeth and claws. They typically wear animal skins or nothing at all and may also materialize with a weapon like a large club. In addition to the basic template, oni have ST +10 [110]; DX +1 [10]; HT +5 [60]. They have Butting Horns [5]; Claws [15]; Fangs [10]; and Extra Hit Points +10 [50]. They have the disadvantages Appearance (Monstrous) [-25]; Dread (Shinto and Buddhist holy symbols, occasional) [-10]; and Gullibility [-10]. Some oni also have Magery and know various spells (mostly Illusion and Creation). Others learn the Shapeshifting skill to materialize in other forms, usually human, although any oni form will have at least one unnatural feature (p. CI85). See *GURPS Japan*. This template also suits "ogre" demons of various sorts. *465 points.*

Rakshasa: Rakshasa are Indian demons. They materialize as hideous, hairy creatures with backward-pointing clawed fingers or as normal-looking people. They have a kingdom called Gabhastala, which may exist in the spirit world. In addition to the basic template they have ST +4 [45]; IQ +2 [20]; HT +1 [10]. They have the advantages Claws [15]; Fur [4]; Magery 2 [25]; Sharp Teeth [5]; and Spirit Invulnerability [50] and the disadvantage Appearance (Monstrous) [-25]. They have Shapeshifting as a racial skill at IQ +2 [8] and the following innate spells (1 point each for skill 12, Magery bonus included): Charm, Darkness, Illusion Disguise, Perfect Illusion, Zombie [5]. *412 points.*

Succubus: Succubi are demons of carnal temptation and lust. They typically appear in female form. In male form they are called incubi. Succubi materialize as beautiful humans, although often with demonic attributes like small horns, bat wings, and forked tails. Add the following to the standard template: ST +2 [20]; DX +1 [10]; HT +3 [30]; Claws [15]; Flight (Winged, -25%) [30]; Hermaphromorph [2]; Magery 1 [15]; Racial Skill Bonus (+3 with Erotic Art) [8]; Sharp Teeth [5]; Very Beautiful [25]; Voice [10]; Broad-Minded [-1]; Lecherousness [0, included in the Demon template]; Responsive [-1]; and Self-Centered [-10]. They have the innate skill Shapeshifting at IQ+1 [6] and the innate spell Steal Strength at IQ+9 (requires intimacy, -25%, includes Magery bonus) [15]. *429 points.*

Tempter: These demons seek to tempt and corrupt people, although not always through sex. They're capable of altering their appearance to suit the situation, although they rarely manifest, preferring to operate through disembodied voices or possession. Add the following to the template: ST +2 [20]; IQ +1 [10]; HT +2 [20]; Attractive [5]; Charisma +3 [15]; Extra Fatigue 5 [15]; Extra Hit Points 3 [15]; Magery 1 [15]; Racial Skill Bonus (+3 with Fast Talk) [3]; Voice [10]; and the racial skill Shapeshifting at IQ+2 [8]. *386 points.*
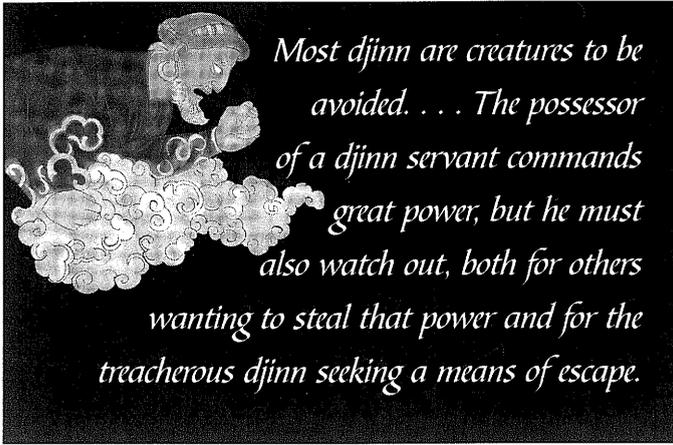
Warrior: Warrior demons are massive, muscular humanoids, 8 feet tall with horns, razor claws, and teeth. They enjoy hunting and killing humans and often feed on human flesh and blood. Add the following to the demon template: ST +5 [60]; DX +1 [10]; HT +5 [60]; Butting Horns [5]; Claws [15]; DR 5 [15]; Extra Hit Points +5 [25]; PD 1 [25]; Flight (Winged, -25%) [30]; Sharp Teeth [5]. They have the disadvantages Appearance (Monstrous) [-25]; Bad Temper [-10]; Bloodlust [0]*; Frightens Animals [-5]; Murder Addiction [-60]; Odious Racial Habit (eats other sentients) [-15]; and Sadism [0]* (*cost of Bloodlust and Sadism are reduced by Murder Addiction, to -5 and-10 points respectively, and are included in Demon template; see p. CI98). *385 points.* A basic warrior demon possessing a mortal grants him ST +3, DX +1, HT +2, DR 5, and 5 Extra Hit Points, along with all the demon's mental disadvantages. It costs no points to be a spirit warrior of such a demon, since the advantages and disadvantages (particularly Murder Addiction) cancel each other out.

Elder Demons: Add levels of Extra Fatigue and Strong Will to the existing templates to create more powerful demons, able to use their spirit powers to greater effect.

Occult Demons: Demons in occult literature are more often incorporeal entities with limited (or no) ability to materialize. Drop the Physical Form enhancement from Spirit Form. They may also have Can't Materialize. These demons tend to be more psychological and metaphysical in nature, and their favorite trick is possession (see p. 34), particularly taking control of victims whom other people are reluctant to harm, like children.

Misunderstood Demons: Modern fiction often portrays demons as misunderstood, even unfairly treated. Their statistics remain the same except they are not required to have "evil" mental disadvantages and may substitute more palatable ones.

Djinn

Other Names: Efreet, Genie, Ifrit, Jann, Jinn, Marid, Si'lat, Zar.
   Type: Celestial.
   Motivation: Free-Willed, Servitor.

Djinn are spirits from Arabian mythology, "creatures of smokeless fire" that have many magical powers. Djinn are generally portrayed as deceitful, proud, overbearing, lecherous, and generally unpleasant beings, although some come to see the error of their ways and become good Muslims.

Most djinn are creatures to be avoided. A number of them are imprisoned in different sorts of containers to stay their influence on the material world, thanks to King Solomon, who bound djinn to build his legendary temple. His Seal retains power over the djinn to this day. The possessor of a djinn servant commands great power, but he must also watch out, both for others wanting to steal that power and for the treacherous djinn seeking a means of escape.

Appearance

Djinn generally appear as monstrous humanoids of great size. They can assume the form of a cloud of smoke, allowing them to (among other things) fit into very small containers and fly through the air. Masters of magic and shapeshifting, djinn can assume almost any appearance imaginable, although lesser djinn tend to be more limited in that respect.

Habitat

Apart from their penchant for becoming trapped in containers that turn up in treasure troves and fishermen's nets, djinn are generally encountered in places good folk avoid, or away from civilization in desolate deserts and wild lands. They may also appear as servants virtually anywhere, on errands for their masters.

Djinn are often said to build fabulous cities of brass and gold. These places may exist somewhere in the spirit world the djinn hail from, or they might be real, physical places built by the djinn and concealed from most mortal eyes by the power of their magic. (Or both: perhaps the physical places are mere imitations of the glory of true djinn palaces in the spirit world.)

Djinn   643 points

Attribute Modifiers: ST +10 [110]; DX +4 [45]; IQ +1 [10]; HT +4 [45].
Advantages: Alertness +3 [15]; Body of Air (Heavy Encumbrance +100%) [100]; DR 3 [9]; Doesn't Fatigue [15]; Enhanced Move 2 (Body of Air-based flight) [20]; Extra Fatigue 5 [15]; Extra Hit Points 3 [15]; Magery 2 [25]; Night Vision [10]; PD 3 [75]; Spirit Form (Unlimited Lifespan +30%, Physical Form +80%, Can't tap Fatigue or use Possession -30%) [180].
Disadvantages: Dread (Solomon's Seal; occasional) [-10]; No Extra Effort [-15]; Overconfidence [-10]; Social Stigma (Outcast) [-15]; plus -20 points in other appropriate mental disadvantages such as Bully [-10], Callous [-6], Code of Honor, Extravagance [-10], and Lecherousness [-15].
Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: Proud [-1]; Can be imprisoned by Solomon's Seal [0].
Innate Spells: 16 points in innate spells such as Fear, various Illusions, Recover Strength, and Rejoin. The exact spells vary, but a minimum of 2 points must be spent on each spell to bring it to skill 12.
Skills: Brawling (P/E) at DX [1]; Shapeshifting (M/H) at IQ+2 [8].

Variations

Servitor Djinn: Djinn are often found bound inside bottles, lamps, magic rings, and so forth. In some cases these items are merely prisons. Once free the djinn can do whatever it wishes. Some items force the djinn to obey the holder of its prison. Djinn in this case have a Reprogrammable Duty worth -25 points. Djinn generally resent servitude and seek to escape it, but cannot disobey their masters.

Genies: In modern stories, a genie often has almost limitless power to grant wishes or change reality to suit its master's whims. This ability (if the GM allows it in the campaign at all) is best treated as a plot device and kept out of the hands of PCs.

Greater Djinn: The above template represents the average *lesser* djinn. More experienced and powerful djinn also exist:

Jan: These are the common ranks of greater djinn. Substitute the following ability modifiers: ST +20 [175]; DX +6 [80]; IQ +4 [45]; HT +5 [60]. Add +1 DR and PD [28]; 7 Extra Hit Points [35]; 1 level of Magery [10]; and 10 more points in spells. *876 points.*

Ifrit: The *ifrit* (or *efreet*; feminine *ifriteh*) are the powerful nobles of the djinn. They have the following attribute modifiers: ST +36 [183]; DX +7 [100]; IQ +7 [100]; HT +5 [60]. Add +1 PD and +3 DR [34]; 17 Extra Hit Points [85]; 1 level of Magery [10]; and 20 more points in spells. Increase Shapeshifting skill to IQ+4 [12]. *1,029 points.*

Marid: The most powerful of the djinn, the lords of their kind. They have the following attribute modifiers: ST +40 [185]; DX +8 [125]; IQ +10 [175]; HT +6 [80]. Add +1 PD and +3 DR [34]; 19 Extra Hit Points [95]; 1 level of Magery [10] and 30 more points in spells as a *minimum.* Increase Shapeshifting skill to IQ+4 [12]. *1,171 points.*

Zar: By comparison with their brethren, these female djinn are quite weak. They commonly possess married women, demanding things like fine food, perfumes, clothing, jewelry, and attention. They can be gotten rid of only by meeting their demands or by a proper exorcism, but they can come back a month later. Use the following template in place of the one above:

Zar   4 points

Advantages: Spirit Form (Can't Materialize -20%, Can't ride in vehicles, or use Poltergeist Effect or Probability Alteration -45%) [35].

Disadvantages: Bad Temper [-10]; Greed [-15]; Gluttony [-5].

Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: Only possesses women, preferably married women [-1]; Can be exorcised [0].

Elemental

Other Names: Deva, Nature Spirit, Gnome (earth), Salamander (Fire), Sylph (air), Undine (water).

    Type: Nature.

    Motivation: Free-Willed, Servitor, Mindless.

Elementals are nature spirits embodying the essence of the four elements of Western mysticism (air, earth, fire, and water). The term "elemental" is also sometimes used to refer to nature spirits as a whole, but here it refers solely to the embodiments of the four elements. Elementals range in power and intelligence from fairly weak, mindless beings similar to small animals to vast and powerful entities (the so-called "elemental kings"). In some folklore, certain archangels are rulers of the elements: Uriel for earth, Raphael for air, Michael for fire, and Gabriel for water. If this is the case, then angels (see p. 47) may have authority over elementals (at least to some degree).

An elemental is strongly associated with its native element and is nearly always encountered in close proximity to it. However, elementals also are among the most common spirit servants of wizards in fantasy literature and modern occultism, so servitor elementals can be encountered nearly anywhere their master's bidding takes them. A free-willed elemental is often associated with a place strong in its element, which it protects and which may be aspected toward mana of the elemental's type (see p. M94).

An elemental is affected by Summon and Control Elemental spells and by spells that destroy or transform its element (see p. M114). The Create Elemental spell can create new servitor elementals.

Appearance

In physical form an elemental generally looks like a vaguely humanoid being made up of its particular element, though some have animalistic traits. Fire elementals in particular are associated with reptiles from their medieval name, salamanders. Air and water elementals often have faerielike physical forms, in which case they may be confused with certain types of faeries. In their immaterial forms, elementals are invisible to the naked eye but look much like their physical forms to those able to perceive them. The assumption below is that elementals appear as humanoid masses of their native elements. If not, adjust the cost of their Appearance accordingly.

Habitat

A free-willed elemental is nearly always encountered in or near its native element. For earth elementals this is unspoiled rocky or natural earth terrain. For air elementals it's any place in the open air, particularly with high winds, like a mountaintop or in the midst of a storm. For water elementals it's in or near any open water, and for fire elementals it's places of heat and fire, particularly volcanoes and forest fires (and possibly blast furnaces and other manmade fires).

Wandering elementals tend to be servitors working for a particular master. They can be encountered nearly anywhere, although no elemental will enter the environment of its opposite element: earth spirits don't like to leave the ground, air elementals won't go underground, water elementals avoid fire, and fire elementals avoid water.
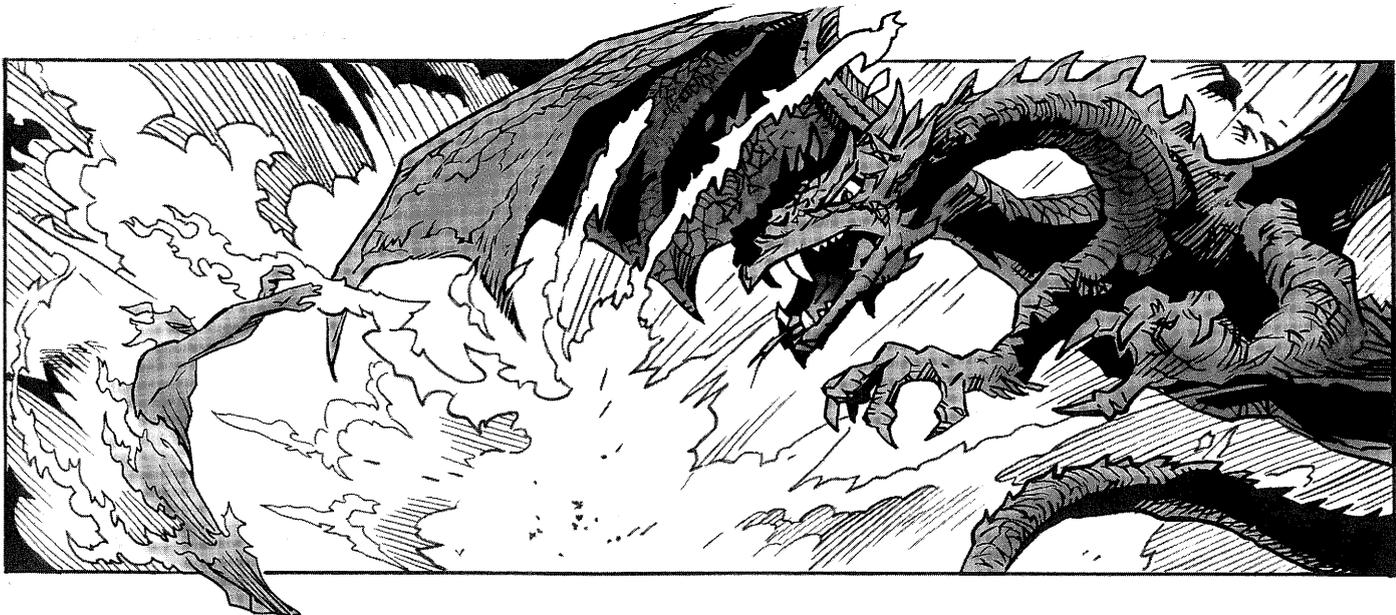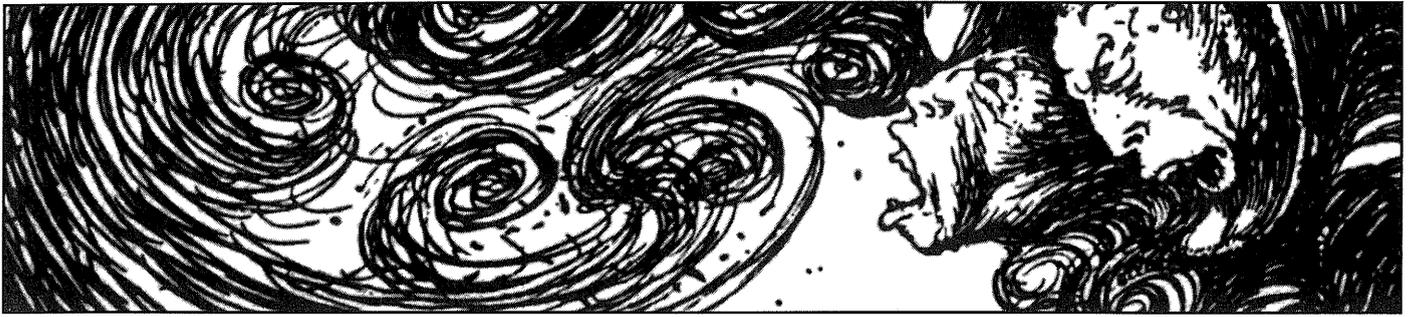
Air Elemental   123 points

Advantages: Doesn't Fatigue [15]; Enhanced Move 4 (Body of Air-based flight; see p. CI50) [40]; Faz Sense [10]; Gust (2d) [15]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Spirit Form (physical form, +80%; can't use Spirit Travel, Tap Fatigue, Possession, Poltergeist Effect, or Probability Alteration, -80%) [100].

Disadvantages: Body of Air (Unswitchable) [-30]; Callous [-6]; Impulsiveness [-10]; No Extra Effort [-15]; Uneducated [-5].

Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: Affected by Elemental Spells [0]; Distractible [-1].

Earth Elemental   158 points

Advantages: Body of Earth (Unswitchable, -10%) [36]; DR 2 [6]; Doesn't Fatigue [15]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Injury Tolerance (No Blood, Brain, Neck, or Vitals) [20]; Imperturbable [10]; Sensitive Touch (Only to sense ground vibrations, -50%) [5]; Spirit Form (physical form, +80%; can't use Spirit Travel, Tap Fatigue, Possession, Poltergeist Effect, or Probability Alteration, -80%) [100]; Tunnel (Speed 2) [60].

Disadvantages: Appearance (Monstrous) [-25]; Callous [-6]; Dependency (Contact with the ground, common, constantly) [-25]; No Extra Effort [-15]; Oblivious [-3]; Reclusive [-10]; Reduced Move -2 [-10]; Stubbornness [-5]; Uneducated [-5].

Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: Affected by Elemental Spells [0].

Fire Elemental   154 points

Advantages: Body of Fire 10 (Unswitchable, -40%) [30]; Doesn't Fatigue [15]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Infravision [15]; Invulnerability (Fire/Heat) [100]; Spirit Form (Physical form, +80%; can't use Spirit Travel, Tap Fatigue, Possession, Poltergeist Effect, or Probability Alteration, -80%) [100].

Disadvantages: Body of Air (Unswitchable) [-30]; Callous [-6]; Dependency (Full immersion in fire, common, daily) [-15]; Impulsiveness [-10]; No Extra Effort [-15]; Overconfidence [-10]; Pyromania [-5]; Self-Centered [-10]; Thalassophobia (Mild) [-10]; Uneducated [-5].

Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: Affected by Elemental Spells [0].

Water Elemental   134 points

Advantages: Amphibious [10]; Doesn't Fatigue [15]; Enhanced Move 1 (Swimming) [10]; Fast Regeneration (Only in large bodies of water, -30%) [35]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Injury Tolerance (No Blood, Brain, Neck, or Vitals) [20]; Spirit Form (physical form, +80%; can't use Spirit Travel, Tap Fatigue, Possession, Poltergeist Effect, or Probability Alteration, -80%) [100]; Splash (1d) [20].

Disadvantages: Body of Water (Unswitchable) [-20]; Callous [-6]; Dependency (Full immersion in water, common, daily) [-15]; Impulsiveness [-10]; No Extra Effort [-15]; Overconfidence [-10]; Pyrophobia (Mild) [-5]; Uneducated [-5].

Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: Affected by Elemental Spells [0].

Variations

·*Magical Elementals:* For elementals in a campaign using the standard *GURPS* magic system, add Dependency (Mana, common, constantly) [-25]. A magical elemental will also have Magery 3 (limited to its element) [22] and the appropriate Jet spell for its element (Air Jet, Flame Jet, Sand Jet, or Water Jet) at IQ+6 [10, includes Magery bonus]; for air and water elementals, this *replaces* Gust and Splash, respectively.

Artificial Elementals: In some occult lore, elementals can be created whole cloth from their native elements, animated by magic (using the Create Elemental spell or a similar effect; see p. B157). Such artificial elementals may be considered Unliving [-50] (p. CI100). If they reach 0 HT, they are destroyed.

Physical Elementals: In some sources, elementals are physical beings, not spirits. In this case, replace Spirit Form with Doesn't Breathe [20], Doesn't Eat and Drink [10], Immunity to Disease [10], Immunity to Poison [15], and Unaging [15] [a net -30 points]. Physical elementals may be native to Earth or come from "elemental planes." In the latter case, if elementals can move between worlds, they should have the Spirit-Jumper advantage (p. 76) or Plane Shift as an innate spell (along with the Magery to cast it).

Exotic Elementals: Fantasy literature and RPGs often feature elementals of "elements" like metal, glass, electricity, radiation, and other modern things, or classes of "subelementals," such as dividing earth into elementals of stone, sand, soil, mud, and so forth. GMs can use the basic elemental racial templates and modify them to create other types of elementals. For example, earth elementals are a good basis for spirits of material substances, while fire elementals are a basis for spirits of different types of energy.

Faerie

Other Names: Gentry, Good Folk, Good Neighbors, Seelie, Unseelie.

Type: Nature.

Motivation: Free-Willed.

Faeries are a broad category of nature spirits associated with rural settings and natural wilderness. They range from tiny sprites to human-sized and even larger. Faeries are capricious creatures, often seen as tricksters that enjoy leading mortals astray, playing games with them using their powers of illusion. Most faeries are skilled in illusion, shapeshifting, and related trickery, although some are hard-working and honest, provided they aren't offended.

Faeries observe a sort of code of honor, although they are easily offended and tend to take out their pique on those who have offended them. Because of their capricious natures, mortals often refer to faeries by names like "Good Folk" and "the Gentry" so as not to offend them.

They're known for occasionally abducting mortals into their realm. Faeries take people "under the hill" (into the faerie realm) to attend parties or to act as servants or companions; the hapless mortals return to find that years have passed in the course of a single night, or vice versa. Faeries are also known for stealing mortal babies and leaving faerie "changelings" in their places to be raised by mortal families.

Celtic mythology divides the faerie folk into two "courts": the Seelie faeries are generally kind and good (although still mischievous), while the Unseelie Court is made up of faeries that are dark and dangerous. People dealing with faeries are well advised to be polite and courteous at all times, regardless of the court they're dealing with.

A number of things are believed to keep faeries at bay, including religious symbols and rites, certain herbs or plants, and certain metals, like iron.

Appearance

Most faeries are humanoid, although they often have refined, delicate features, slim bodies, and pointed ears. Faeries are usually either quite beautiful or terrifyingly ugly, and most of them are accomplished shapeshifters, able to appear in whatever forms suit their whims.

Habitat

Faeries tend to be found in wilderness areas away from human civilization, although some faeries prefer to live close to humans. Faeries dwell in a spirit world known as the Faerie Realm that exists somewhere other than Earth, but which may be reachable through hidden (and not so hidden) portals or at particular times of the year. Mortals who stumble into the Faerie Realm may serve as the faeries' entertainment, which can be exhausting but memorable in the case of the Seelie and deadly in the case of their Unseelie counterparts.

Faerie   91 points

Faeries tend to be wide-ranging in their abilities, but the following are common to almost all of them.

Advantages: Spirit Form (Easy Materialization, 1/4 cost, +40%; Unlimited Lifespan, +30%; Can't hear name or travel to summoners, -10%; Can't use Possession, -20%) [140].

Disadvantages: Capricious [-15]; Dread (Iron; common) [-20]; Vulnerability (Iron; occasional, 2d) [-20].

Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: Distractible [-1]; Dull [-1].

Skills: Shapeshifting at IQ+2 [8].

Variations

Bakemono: Goblins from Japanese myth, bakemono vary in size and appearance but tend to be small like human children and Ugly [-10]. They use weapons but rarely wear armor. They have a Dread of Shinto and Buddhist religious symbols [-10] rather than iron (a net +10 to cost), but no Vulnerability [+20]. They also have at least -30 points in assorted mental disadvantages like Gluttony, Greed, Laziness, and Sadism. *81 points.*

Bogeys: This class of small, malevolent faeries includes boggarts, boggles, bugbears, goblins, redcaps, and spriggans. They tend to look like small, deformed humanoids, although their powers are often out of proportion with their appearance. They delight in evil trickery and causing misfortune. Add the following to the template above: DX +2 [20]; HT +2 [20]; Extra Fatigue 6 [18]; Dread (holy symbols, magical herbs, or clothing turned inside out) [-20]; Hideous [-20]; Sadism [-15]. *94 points.*

Brownies: Kindly household faeries that look like small, rustic humanoids. They include brownies, domovoi, fennoderee, gnomes, gremlins, grogans, hobs, kaboutermanikens, killimoulis, klabautermanikins, leprechauns, piskīes, and trows. Their cousins encountered in mines include blue caps, coblyneas, knockers, kobolds, and tommyknockers. These faeries use their powers to perform tasks around the household (or in the workplace), warn people of danger, and protect them from malevolent influences. If offered gifts they depart. Add the following to the template above: DX +2 [20]; HT +1 [10]; Extra Fatigue 8 [24]; Code of Honor (Care for and protect the household, but leave if offered a gift) [-10]; Reduced Move (Ground) -2 [-10]. Substitute Congenial [-1] for Distractible. *125 points.*

Faerie Animals: A number of faeries appear in animal shapes, usually as dogs or cats. In some cases this is just a matter of faerie shapeshifting. For true faerie animals like black dogs or cu sith, combine the appropriate animal template with the faerie template above. See *GURPS Bestiary* for more information on animal templates.

Kappa: A kappa is a Japanese water goblin, the size of a child. It has greenish skin and webbed fingers and toes. The top of a kappa's head has a saucerlike depression filled with water. If the water spills, the kappa's ST is reduced to half until it is refilled (a -20% limitation on ST). This happens if the kappa is knocked down or if it is hit and fails a DX roll. A kappa can also be tricked into spilling its water, such as bowing politely to it to get it to bow in return. Kappa are vicious and like to wrestle and drown humans. Kappa have ST +10 [88]; DX +5 [60]; IQ -2 [-20]. They are Amphibious [10] and have Fast Regeneration [50 points]. Eliminate the Dread and Vulnerability [+40] and add Sadism [-15]. Drop Shapeshifting skill [-8]. *296 points.*

Pixies: Pixies are tiny faeries that appear most often as beautiful little people with insect wings, also known as sprites. They're mischief-makers and are fond of using illusions to play pranks on people, or causing mortals to fall in love at the behest of others. They have the following additional abilities: ST -5 [-40]; DX +2 [20]; Beautiful [15]; Extra Fatigue 10 [30]; Flight (Winged, -25%) [30]; Magery 3 (Illusion & Creation only) [22]; Inconvenient Size [-15]; Reduced Move (Ground) -2 [-10]; Short Arms [-10]; and the innate spells Illusion Shell at IQ+4 [6] and Perfect Illusion at IQ+4 [6]. *145 points.*

Puca: Also known as brags, bugganes, and phooka, these Celtic faeries are consummate shapeshifters and tricksters, but friendly toward those who can take a joke. They take the form of a particular animal like a fox, rabbit, or dog, often black or white in color. They can also appear as small trees or humanoids. Puca tend to attach themselves to particular people for a while, playing pranks and protecting them from harm before losing interest and moving on. They have DX +2 [20]; IQ +2 [20]; Extra Fatigue 10 [30]; raise Shapeshifting to IQ+6 [8]; Sense of Duty (To the people they play pranks on) [-5]; and Trickster [-15]. *149 points.*

Sidhe: Sidhe are rulers of the faerie in Celtic myth and usually appear as beautiful men and women dressed in finery, often riding faerie steeds. They can be as capricious as their lesser cousins but comport themselves with great dignity. A typical Sidhe has the following additional characteristics: DX +3 [30]; IQ +2 [20]; HT +2 [20]; Beautiful/Handsome [15]; Charisma +2 [10]; Code of Honor (Live elegantly, always keep to the letter of a promise) [-15]; Extra Fatigue 10 [30]; Magery 2 [25]; the Physical Form enhancement on Spirit Form [80, but removes the need for the Easy Materialization enhancement [40]; net cost 40]. *266 points.*

Tengu: These Japanese forest goblins look like tall, winged humans with long red noses and clawlike fingernails. They wear kimonos and carry feather fans and katanas (which they are usually quite skilled with). Tengu have DX +5 [60]; HT +5 [60]. Remove the Dread and Vulnerability [+40] and add Magery 1 [15]. *266 points.*

Physical Faeries: Faeries may be physical beings rather than spirits. In this case, replace Spirit Form with Doesn't Breathe [20], Doesn't Eat and Drink [10], Immunity to Disease [10], Immunity to Poison [15], and Unaging [15] [a net -70 points]. (GMs may delete some of these advantages to make faeries more "mortal.") Drop Shapeshifting skill, for a final template cost of *13 points.* Faeries who do have Shapeshifting should also have Morph [40 points], for a final template cost of *61 points.* Physical faeries may be native to Earth or come from another world. In the latter case, they may have the Spirit-Jumper advantage (p. 76) or use magic (like Plane Shift, p. G46) to move between worlds.

For some alternate versions of faeries, see *GURPS Celtic Myth*, *GURPS Fantasy Folk*, and *GURPS Castle Falkenstein*.

Ghost

Other Names: Acheri (Indian), Dybukk (Hebrew), Ekim-mu (Assyrian), Haunt, Keres (Greek), Manes (Roman), Mopaditit (Northern Australia), Preta (Hindu), Shi-ryo (Japan), Specter.
Type: Human.
Motivation: Free-Willed.

A ghost is the undead form of a human being who has died but whose spirit remains attached to the physical world for some reason, usually some unfinished task or unresolved strong emotion. Ghosts range in power and complexity from relatively weak and mindless creatures that carry out the same tasks over and over to intelligent and aware beings capable of rational thought and possessed of a wide variety of supernatural powers. (For the former type of ghost, see *Apparition*, p. 49). Ghosts are not necessarily evil (indeed, many are highly moral beings), but many ghosts are unrepentant criminals or madmen, returning to the scenes of their crimes, seeking vengeance or trying to continue their crimes after death.

Ghosts tend to fade over time (see *Spirit Weaknesses*, p. 35) and usually "pass on" when they have resolved the tasks that keep them in the physical world, or simply when they run out of spiritual energy with which to sustain themselves. They can be driven off or held at bay by certain magical spells and religious rituals, but these are temporary measures at best. They can also be destroyed in spiritual combat or by damage inflicted on them while they are materialized.

Appearance

Like most spirits, ghosts are normally invisible, although their presence can often be felt by sensitives. They also speak through channelers and mediums (see Chapter 5). A ghost looks exactly as it did in life, although it may assume an idealized form, such as a ghost of someone who died of old age looking as she did when she was young. Sometimes a ghost bears grisly death wounds when it materializes, or manifests other gruesome effects like carrying its severed head under its arm.

Habitat

Ghosts are found anywhere people are, although they commonly haunt graveyards, tombs, and other death sites, or places that were particularly important to them in life. Watching over or haunting a particular place is often part of a ghost's obsession.

Ghost   80 points

Advantages: Spirit Form [100].
Disadvantages: Severe Compulsive Behavior or Obsession (varies) [-15]; Dread (Exorcism) [-5].

Variations

The basic template given here can be used to create a wide range of spectral undead. For more detail on ghosts and all forms of undead, see *GURPS Undead*.

Ghosts in Other Cultures: The statistics above suffice for most kinds of ghosts, but in some cultures, ghosts have predilections for certain kinds of behavior. The *dybbuk* of Jewish myth likes to possess the living, while the Japanese *shi-ryo* always materializes to attack. This kind of thing should be handled simply by roleplaying the ghost appropriately. At the GM's option, a habit like this may be worth from -5 to -15 points as a Compulsive Behavior, Vow, or Odious Racial Habit if it's time-consuming, limiting, or likely to lead to the ghost's exorcism or destruction.

More Powerful Ghosts: Ghosts that stay in the physical world long enough may learn to transcend their obsession and learn more about their new existence. Add Unlimited Lifespan [30] to Spirit Form, and levels of Extra Fatigue and Strong Will. Reduce or eliminate the ghost's compulsion. Such ghosts may become ascended spirits (see p. 50).

Scary Ghosts: Ghosts that can materialize in terrifying forms have the Terror advantage (p. 40) and *not* Horrific Appearance. Even if they can materialize only in a horrific form, they don't have to materialize to interact with the living, so they can control the effects of their Terror.

Personification

Other Names: Avatar, Embodiment, Essence, Ideal, Incarnation.
Type: Nature.
Motivation: Free-Willed.

A personification is the essence of a thing or concept, given form and intelligence. They are common in animism, which attributes spirit to everything. Elementals (p. 55) and spirits of place (p. 60) can both be considered personifications.

Personifications can range in power from relatively minor spirits to godlike for incarnations of things like the Earth, death, or war. Some beliefs draw a line between a spirit that belongs to a concept (e.g., a spirit of fear) and a spirit that *is* that concept (e.g. *the* spirit of fear). The latter are usually far more powerful.

A personification exists to protect and advance what it embodies: spirits of disease spread plagues, spirits of death end lives, spirits of compassion offer aid and comfort. In some cultures such spirits are considered responsible for every unexplained event. Mortals, such as shamans, able to communicate with personifications have considerable power.
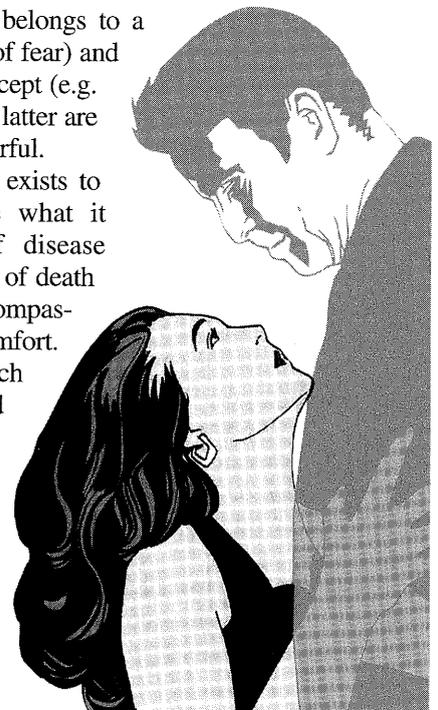
Appearance

Personifications – as the name implies – usually appear humanlike, although they may have unusual features associated with their concepts. They often appear as archetypal images of their concepts, death spirits appearing as robed skeletons, for example. In some cases they may appear differently to each person who sees them, according to the viewer's culture and preconceptions. This is a 0-point Feature, since the benefits and drawbacks largely cancel out.

Habitat

Personifications tend to appear near places associated with their concepts. Death spirits appear on battlefields and mass-murder sites, while spirits of fear tend to show up in dark, scary places. Such a place may act as a ritual invocation of the spirit, allowing it to travel there instantly (see *Movement* in Chapter 3, p. 33). Some personifications are constantly on the move, carrying out their duties in the physical world.

Personification   *100 points*

Advantages: Doesn't Fatigue [15]; Higher Purpose [5]; Spirit Form [100]; and at least 25 points in appropriate abilities based on its concept (e.g., Healing for spirits of health, Pestilence for spirits of disease, Terror for spirits of fear, etc.). For magical personifications this may include Magery or Power Investiture and spells.
Disadvantages: No Extra Effort [-15]; Obsession (with its concept; severe) or Duty (to its concept; all the time) [-15]; plus at least another -15 points in disadvantages associated with its concept (e.g., Bloodlust or Berserk for a spirit of war, Jealousy for a spirit of envy, etc.).
Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: Takes on characteristics of its concept [0]; May appear differently to different people [0].

Variations

Personifications are as diverse as the concepts they embody. A virtually limitless number of spirits may be created using the basic template given above. Some variations include:

Magical Personifications: These spirits have Dependency (Mana, common, constantly) [-25]; Magery; and often innate spells. They appear in magical settings and may be formed out of raw mana by the power of human belief or emotion.

Eternal Personifications: The template describes a spirit dependent on human belief and emotion for its continued existence, suitable for personifications that come into being, then eventually lapse back into nothingness when the conditions that called them have passed. Some beliefs make personifications eternal beings, in which case they should have the Unlimited Lifespan enhancement on Spirit Form. It may be possible for limited personifications to "graduate" to this state. *130 points.*

Archetypal Personifications: The template gives the most basic abilities of a personification. Ancient personifications, or embodiments of powerful concepts, may be *much*

more powerful! Add levels of Extra Fatigue and Strong Will, along with any other advantages appropriate for the spirit.

Mortal Avatars: Some mortals channel the power of a personification to enhance their own abilities, acting as agents of the spirit in the physical world. They are spirit warriors (see p. 70) of the personification.

Spirit of Place

Other Names: Gei-ryo (Japanese), Genius Loci (Roman), Kami (Japanese), Leshy (Russian), Nymph (Greek).
Type: Nature.
Motivation: Free-Willed.

Places are often said to have spirits. In animistic belief systems all places have spirits, from forest glades to lakes, rivers, seas, deserts, and mountains. Modern fantasy literature also includes spirits of places like cities, subway tunnels, monuments, and so forth. The spirit of a place may be dormant much of the time, unless "awakened" by magic, or it may be active on its own.

A spirit of place protects and preserves the area it embodies, known as its "domain." People aware of the existence of these spirits respect their territories and avoid offending them. If a spirit is dormant, it may not be able to take an active hand in protecting its domain until it's too late to prevent its destruction. This may result in the destruction of the spirit as well, or it may simply make the spirit *very* angry with those responsible for the damage.

This does not mean a spirit of place cannot get along with humans; it may consider local inhabitants part of its domain and be protective of them as well. Religions like Japanese Shinto respect spirits of place and seek to honor and placate them. Tribal shamans help maintain good relations with their local spirits.

Spirits of place usually have great awareness and power where their domains are concerned. They may control certain aspects of the domains, able to change the flow of a river, create storms and earthquakes, and similar phenomena. In this respect they are similar to elementals (p. 55).

Appearance

Spirits of place can appear in several forms. The most common are human or humanlike, an animal, or a feature of the domain, sometimes in humanoid form, such as a stone, tree, and so forth. In human form, such spirits look very much like normal humans, although they may have exotic features (a forest spirit having leaves in place of hair, or a river spirit having blue skin). Their animal forms are usually those of animals common to their domains. A sea spirit might appear as a dolphin, while a city spirit materializes in the form of a pigeon or stray cat. Finally, a spirit of place may materialize as a natural feature of its domain. To do so, the spirit should have the appropriate "Body of . . ." advantage (see p. 38), although this manifestation may just be a visual "special effect" of the spirit's materialization abilities instead, providing no real game effects.

Habitat

Spirits of place are strongly tied to their domains. Most spirits of place cannot leave their domains without suffering ill effects. Although the spirit of each place is unique, they may exhibit similar characteristics. The GM can assume, for example, that most forest spirits are similar in ability, in the same way that most people in the campaign world are similar. The size of a spirit's domain depends on its power and influence. A spirit may oversee a single tree in a forest, a particular grove, or the entire forest. Often such spirits have a hierarchy, with more powerful spirits ruling over lesser ones.

Spirit of Place   182 points

Advantages: Alertness +3 [15]; Doesn't Fatigue [15]; Extra Fatigue 20 (only in its domain -10%) [54]; Higher Purpose (protect its domain) [5]; Speak with Animals [15]; Spirit Form (Unlimited Lifespan +30%, can use Poltergeist Effect, Possession, and Probability Alteration only in domain -10%) [120].

Disadvantages: Dependency (Domain; common, constantly) [-25]; No Extra Effort [-15]; Sense of Duty (to its domain) [-10].

Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: Affected by Astral Block, Repel Spirit, and Turn Spirit *except* in its domain [0]; Takes on characteristics of its domain [0].

Skills: Area Knowledge (Domain) IQ+4 [8].

Variations

Spirits of place vary depending on the places and cultures where they are found. Most often these variant spirits have Magery and spells relating to their specific domains. One College Only Magery (p. CI39) is particularly appropriate (e.g., Water Magery for river and sea spirits).

Nymphs: These are feminine spirits of natural phenomena found in Greek mythology. They are beautiful and alluring and sometimes abduct men to be their companions in the spirit world. Add Magery 1 [15]; Very Beautiful [25]; and the innate spell Charm at IQ+6 [14, includes Magery bonus] to the template above. Dryads are the spirits of trees. Naiads and nereids are the spirits of rivers and seas, respectively. *236 points.*

Kami: Kami are nature spirits in the Japanese Shinto tradition. A kami is placed in charge of every natural feature in the world; they range in power from minor kami (similar to the template above) to powerful gods like Amaterasu, the kami (goddess) of the sun. More powerful kami have additional Extra Fatigue (sometimes *hundreds* of points) and many levels of Strong Will.

Regional Spirits: The domain of a spirit of place can be *very* large, like an entire country, or even a planet! "National" spirits like Uncle Sam in the United States or Britannia in

England may be considered spirits of place, with their entire nations as their domains. In some campaigns planets or even stars may have their own spirits watching over them. Regional spirits use the basic template above but have lots of Extra Fatigue and Strong Will, and their limitations are fewer because their domains are so vast. They also have much larger responsibilities to deal with. The -10% limitation for powers that work only in the spirit's domain could be reduced to -5% if the domain is huge; similarly, Sense of Duty (to its domain) might be worth -15 points for a huge domain such as a planet.

Spirits of Objects: Some spirits of place have *objects* as their domains rather than places. This includes particularly fine works of art, ancient weapons, mirrors, jewelry, and a wide variety of other items. In some cases the spirit is the ghost (see p. 59) of a previous owner of the item or its maker. In others it is the spirit of the item itself, "awakened" through mystical means. These spirits have abilities similar to those in the template, except that they lack Speak with Animals [-15] and have the Sounds and Visual Effects Only limitation on Spirit Form [-10], for a net -25 points. Drop the Area Knowledge (Domain) skill as well [-8]. A spirit of object will often use the Poltergeist Effect to move its object, either to protect it or to make it function (animating a sword to fight), and it can use Possession on anyone who touches its domain object (creating legends of haunted or "willful" weapons and other items). Its Probability Alteration may cause its object to fall into certain hands (in the form of a blessing or curse) or affect any rolls involving the object. A PC who possesses an object with such a spirit should take the object as an Ally or Patron. (He does not get points for it as an Enemy if it is nasty, though – after all, he could just chuck the thing.) *149 points.*

Thought Form

Other Names: Artificial Elemental, Egregore, Servitor, Spirit-Form, Tulpa (Tibetan).
Type: Human.
Motivation: Free-Willed, Servitor, Mindless.

Thought forms are a fairly modern concept of spirits, although they could explain some ancient spirit ideas. A thought form is a spirit created by a person or persons with psychic ability, either as a short-term agent or as an independent being. Thought forms can be created deliberately through effort and training or accidentally by someone with a strong emotional focus and the potential to do so. This is similar to the psychic phenomenon of RSPK (see p. P47) and may even be the same thing.

Temporary thought forms exist to perform particular tasks, such as altering probability in a certain way, passing on a message, and so forth. These thought forms aren't even really entities – more like mindless, spiritual "robots" running a particular program. They usually expire when their tasks are complete. They don't really have game stats, but thought forms might be one of the mechanisms of ritual magic (see Chapter 6 for more information on ritual magic). Those affected by a ritual might sense the presence of a thought form nearby, although they may not know what the feeling implies.

More permanent thought forms are created using spirit-summoning rituals (see *The Path of Spirit*, p. 104). The only difference between these and other spirits is that thought forms are designed by their summoner, whereas other spirits are pre-existing beings the summoner calls to him. Some schools of magic suggest that all spirits are thought forms, or at least that all spirits started out that way. Some have gained independence and drawn strength from worship and belief over the years to become powerful beings. But ultimately, the theory says, all spirits sprang from human belief and spiritual power.

Appearance

Thought forms rarely manifest physically. They can look like nearly anything, but often take on some of the characteristics of their creators. A thought form may look like an abstract swirl of color and light, a creature (often a fantastic one), or a person (often a small sprite or imp). A deliberately summoned thought form may take on the aspect of the summoner's desires, while others take on their creators' subconscious impulses and fears.

Habitat

A thought form appears only when summoned by a mortal with the power to do so. Some rare thought forms gain a measure of free will and independence and can be encountered almost anywhere in the spirit world, although they tend to linger near their creators.

Thought Form   20 points

Attribute Modifiers: IQ -2 [-15].
Advantages: Doesn't Fatigue [15]; Invulnerability (Mind Control) [75]*; Single-Minded [5]; Spirit Form [100]; Unfazeable [15].
    *Thought forms are, however, vulnerable to spells that specifically control spirits.
Disadvantages: Cannot Learn [-30]; Dead Broke [-25]; Hidebound [-5]; Low Empathy [-15]; No Extra Effort [-15]; No Sense of Humor [-10]; Obdurate [-10]; Reprogrammable Duty [-25]; Slave Mentality [-40].

Variations

Their various disadvantages naturally make thought forms unsuitable as player characters, although a thought form that has achieved free will and bought off most of its racial disadvantages may be suitable (and more akin to a ghost; see p. 59).

Psionic Thought Forms: An individual can use the Ectoplasmic Projection power (p. 71) to create thought forms similar to the ones described here, except they are essentially a part of the person's psionic consciousness, impressed upon the stuff of the astral plane. Add the taboo trait Affected by Psi Screamers [0]. A psionic thought form carries its creator's mental signature. The thought form's creator can tinker with the template above as desired, but it provides a basic model of the classic thought form in psychic literature.

Permanent Thought Forms: Most thought forms are temporary. Its creator can make a thought form permanent by spending character points to buy it as an Ally. Allies created

this way will probably have Unlimited Lifespan, +30% on Spirit Form, since they are permanent. This adds 30 points to template cost. See *Ally and Ally Group*, p. 73, for more information on buying servitor spirits as Allies.

Ultraterrestrial

Other Names: Alien, Ancient One, Elder Being, Grey, Horror, Old One, Visitor.
    Type: Celestial.
    Motivation: Free-Willed.

Many ultraterrestrials are so terrible to look at that they cause witnesses to go insane or suffer nervous breakdowns; the mind simply cannot accept the horror of what it sees.
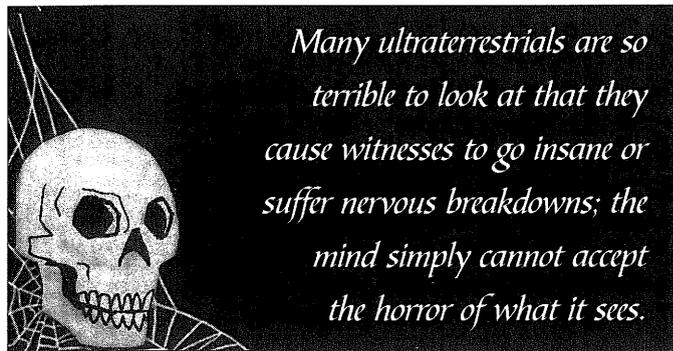
"Ultraterrestrial" is a catch-all term for beings from realms beyond normal space-time (as opposed to extraterrestrials, which are lifeforms from worlds other than Earth). Technically *all* spirits can be considered ultraterrestrials, but in *GURPS Spirits* the term specifically refers to spirits that are extremely alien in nature. They are best suited to modern occult, horror, and conspiracy settings, although ultraterrestrials could show up nearly anywhere (or anywhen) given their transdimensional nature. In *GURPS Horror* they are referred to as Things Man Was Not Meant to Know (p. H69). H.P. Lovecraft's Great Old Ones, like Cthulhu and his kin, are archetypal examples of ultraterrestrials.

Ultraterrestrials tend to fall into three basic categories: *Cosmic Entities* are beings with the power of deities and are often completely incomprehensible to mortal beings. *Ancient Ones* are considerably less powerful, sometimes avatars of cosmic entities, other times unique beings that lurk outside the physical world waiting for an opportunity to enter. *Minions* are the servants of these greater beings, similar in power to most spirits. They're the most likely to be encountered in the physical world.

Cosmic entities are so powerful that they don't really need game stats. They also tend to be aloof enough that their involvement in a campaign is a plot device. The GM can assign them whatever qualities and abilities are necessary for the story. The most important fact about cosmic entities is that they may have some use (however small) for mortals. Often they require worship or sacrifices. This might provide them with a vital mystical link to keep them from fading away (see *Spirit Weaknesses*, p. 35) or might serve some other purpose. Thus cults tend to form around the worship of cosmic entities, aided by the entity's minions.

Ancient ones are less powerful than cosmic entities but still tremendously powerful by player character standards, having high attributes, a vast number of hit points, and general immunity to physical harm. Fortunately, they rarely

manifest on the physical plane, usually only when summoned by mortal magicians or cultists.

Minions are the most like conventional spirits. They are servants of the more powerful ultraterrestrials, or in some cases independent races. They visit the physical world when summoned by a cult worshipping a cosmic entity or ancient one, when sent by their masters on some errand, or for incomprehensible reasons of their own. Their motives and thought processes are alien and frightening.

Appearance

The only consistent thing that can be said about ultraterrestrial appearance is that it is horrifying. Many ultraterrestrials are so terrible to look at that they cause witnesses to go insane or suffer nervous breakdowns; the mind simply cannot accept the horror of what it sees. Some ultraterrestrials are vaguely humanoid in form, but others are amorphous blobs of viscera, masses of mouths and tentacles, or even worse things. The size of an ultraterrestrial seems directly linked to its power. The more powerful it is, the more massive it is, with powerful ancient ones and cosmic entities manifesting as larger than skyscrapers (or in some cases larger than *planets*!).

Habitat

Ultraterrestrials visit the material world rarely. Even minions tend to appear in lonely, out-of-the-way places where they are less likely to be noticed. This means their existence is often doubted by the majority of people, who find ways to dismiss the strange happenings and reports from faraway places as hallucinations, folk tales, or outright fabrications. Ultraterrestrials are also associated with ancient ruins and lost civilizations, which they may have ruled (or destroyed, or both).

Ancient One   1,705 points

Attribute Modifiers: ST +40 [185]; DX +5 [60]; IQ +8 [125]; HT +10 [175].
Advantages: Doesn't Fatigue [15]; Extra Fatigue 200 [600]; Extra Hit Points 30 [150]; Fangs [10]; Magic Resistance 30 [60]; Psionic Resistance 30 [60]; Spirit Form (Physical Form +80%, Unlimited Lifespan +30%, Must be summoned, -30% limit on Physical Form) [186]; Spirit Invulnerability [50]; Talons [40]; Terror (-10 penalty on Fright Checks) [100].
Disadvantages: Appearance (Horrific) [-30]; Callous [-6]; Fanaticism (self) [-15]; Frightens Animals [-5]; Inconvenient Size [-10]; Lifebane [-10]; Low Empathy [-15]; Megalomania [-10]; Self-Centered [-10].
Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: Affected by Astral Block, Repel Spirit, and Turn Spirit (but note Magic Resistance!) [0]; Completely alien psyche and motivations [0]

Minion   344 points

Attribute Modifiers: ST +10 [110]; DX +2 [20]; HT +5 [60].
Advantages: Doesn't Fatigue [15]; Spirit Form (Physical Form +80%) [180] and 40 points from Claws [15]; Damage Resistance [3/level]; Extra Fatigue [3/level]; Horns [5]; Magic Resistance [2/level]; Passive Defense [25/level];

Psionic Resistance [2/level]; Sharp Teeth [5]; Strikers [Variable]; and Terror [10 points per -1 to Fright Checks].
Disadvantages: Appearance (Horrific) [-30]; Callous [-6]; Frightens Animals [-5]; Lifebane [-10]; Low Empathy [-15]; No Extra Effort [-15].
Quirks, Features, and Taboo Traits: Completely alien psyche and motivations [0].

Variations

Stronger or Weaker Minions: The template provides the abilities of the average minion. For weaker minions, reduce attribute modifiers (particularly ST) and the number of points of additional advantages. Unless ultraterrestrials are treated like other spirits in the campaign, they should retain the Horrific Appearance disadvantage.

Physical Minions: In some cases, the minions of ultraterrestrials are physical alien races rather than incorporeal spirits. GMs should build them using the racial creation guidelines from *GURPS Compendium I* using the Minion template as a rough guideline, dropping Spirit Form but retaining Horrific Appearance.

More Powerful Entities: The ancient one template is the *minimum* power for such an entity. Naturally the proper tactic for player characters confronted by such a creature is to run, but GMs may find circumstances where more powerful ultraterrestrials are needed. GMs can up the power of ancient ones by giving them even more Fatigue for their spirit powers (allowing them to radically alter probability and exert tremendous ST with the Poltergeist Effect). You can also give them high levels of Magery or psionic power (despite their Resistance; ultraterrestrials tend to break the rules).

Greys: Some modern theories suggest that the sightings of "Greys" do not actually involve extraterrestrials but ultraterrestrials. "Alien abductions" are likened to faerie abductions, and some believe Greys and faeries are one and the same! They suggest Greys are the source of modern faerie legends (see *Faerie*, p. 57). If Greys are spirits rather than physical beings, some of their "abductions" may take place in the spirit world, particularly while victims are asleep. They may be a means of draining Fatigue from abductees to sustain themselves, or may have an entirely different purpose. These sorts of Greys can be considered normal spirits, albeit with an alien outlook and appropriate mental disadvantages. This type of Grey may exist in the *GURPS Technomancer* setting, or would make an interesting adversary in a *GURPS Black Ops* campaign.

Ultraterrestrial Technology: Although ultraterrestrials are incorporeal beings, they may have access to technology far in advance of humanity's. Perhaps they conquered and assimilated advanced civilizations ages ago, or perhaps the technology comes from their own distant dimension. Ultraterrestrial technology tends to be so advanced as to be incomprehensible to modern people. It's a good source for mysterious TL15 artifacts for curious PCs to tinker with until they manage to set them off. For examples of all sorts of "mystery tech," see *GURPS Warehouse 23*. High Technology (p. CI26) would be a logical addition to the template in some cases. High Technology costs 20, 50, or 100 points for +1, +2, or +3 TLs. Each additional +1 to TL doubles cost (e.g., 200 points for +4 TLs, 6,400 points for +9 TLs).

> Glendower: I can call spirits from the vasty deep.
> Hotspur: Why, so can I, or so can any man;
> But will they come when you do call for them?
> — William Shakespeare, **Henry IV**, Act 3, Scene 1

Although almost any campaign can feature spirits, certain types of characters are common in spirit campaigns. Those characters and their related abilities are detailed in this chapter.

Character Templates

A character template is a list of attributes, advantages, disadvantages, and skills that a player can choose from in order to build a specific type of character quickly without neglecting important abilities or getting bogged down in the rules. The point costs of these abilities are listed and the sum is given as the "template cost." The player pays this cost, specifies the options he wants, writes those abilities down on his character sheet, and spends his remaining points to customize his character.

You never *have* to choose a template, and it's possible to mix characters created with and without templates in the same campaign. Templates are just a way of buying many abilities at once; they have no in-play effects and aren't discount-priced package deals. Characters made from templates are 100% compatible with characters cut from whole cloth, and the abilities on templates can be treated as nothing more than recommendations, exactly like those listed in the *Character Types* sections of other **GURPS** books.

Skills

On the templates in this section, *primary skills* are skills that are absolutely required, *secondary skills* are helpful skills that it's hard to imagine the character not having, and *background skills* are chosen for descriptive reasons rather than utility. Skills are listed in the following format:

Skill Name *(Difficulty)* Relative Level **[Point Cost]**-Actual Level

Customization

Once a template is purchased, the player must customize it by spending his remaining character points. The template does not influence how these points are spent. If the template has fewer disadvantages than the campaign permits, more may be taken, giving extra points to spend. Likewise for quirks, which should always be selected by the player.

Altering Templates

Templates are *guidelines*, not rules. When customizing a template, the player is free to alter any or all of the items that come with it. Subtracting items from a professional template may result in a character who is regarded as incompetent by his peers, however.

Character Templates vs. Racial Templates

Character templates are not the same things as the racial templates in Chapter 4. Racial templates use attribute modifiers instead of attribute levels, include advantages that are unavailable on a nonracial basis, and include disadvantages that don't count against the campaign disadvantage limit. Racial templates also frequently contain 0-point taboo traits and features, which character templates do not.

Channeler/Medium

55 points

A channeler is a person who lets spirits possess his body so they can speak or write messages; a medium is someone who can perceive and talk with spirits. While the two are functionally quite different, they serve the same dramatic role: allowing communication with spirits. Both kinds of spiritualists tend to be sympathetic toward spirits unless it has been clearly demonstrated that the spirit in question is evil.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Either Channelling or Medium (Preparation Required, one hour, -50%) [5]; and 15 points chosen from Ally (Friendly spirit, 150 points, 9 or less) [10], Autotrance [5 points], Charisma [5/level], Clerical Investment [5/level], Ectoplasmic Projection (Indomitable, -20%, preparation required, one hour, -50%) [6/level, -70% from total value], Empathy [15], Intuition [15], Reawakened [10], Spirit Empathy [10], and Strong Will [4/level].

Disadvantages: A total of -15 points from Absent-Mindedness [-15]; Disciplines of Faith [-5 to -15]; Low Pain Threshold [-10]; Nightmares [-5]; Reputation (As weird or sacrilegious) [-5 to -15]; Split Personality [-15]; Unfit [-5]; Voices [-5 to -15]; Weirdness Magnet [-15]; and Youth [Varies]. Split Personality and Voices may be interpreted as interfering spirits.

Primary Skills: Performance/Ritual (Spiritualist) (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-14; and *one* of Diplomacy (M/H) IQ [4]-13, Exorcism (M/H) IQ [4]-13, or Lucid Dreaming (M/E) IQ+2 [4]-15.

Secondary Skills: Savoir-Faire (M/E) IQ+1 [2]-14; and *two* of Anthropology, Philosophy (any), Psychology, Thanatology, or Theology (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Hidden Lore (Spirits) or Occultism (M/A) IQ [2]-13; and Psionics (M/VH) IQ-2 [2]-11.

Background Skills: A total of 6 points in Area Knowledge (Astral Plane) (M/E); Bard or Criminology (M/A); and Detect Lies, Hypnotism, or Psychology (M/H).

Customization Notes: In a campaign where spirits are psionic entities, levels of Astral Projection [3/level] may be substituted for Channelling/Medium and any other of these advantages, and mediums may also have the powers of ESP [3/level], Healing [3/level], or Telepathy [5/level]. Astral Projection (M/H) IQ [4]-13 should replace the other primary skill options.

Charlatan   70 points

Even in worlds where spirits exist there are likely to be people who merely pretend to have the ability to commune with them and curry their favor. In worlds where spirits don't exist, *anyone* who claims to have spiritual powers is a charlatan (or deluded, or both). That's not to say that charlatans are necessarily bad people. Tribal shamans still offer their patients some comfort through primitive psychology and the placebo effect, where the patients' belief in the cure actually helps them. In fact, a client with latent spiritual powers may gain a real benefit and give credit to the charlatan!

A charlatan qualifies for the Secret disadvantage (p. CI78) only if a large number of people believe his abilities are real; if most people are skeptical (as in modern society) a revelation that the charlatan has no mystical powers is a minor concern.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 11 [10]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 10 [0].
Advantages: Charisma +2 [10] or Voice [10]; and 20 points chosen from Alcohol Tolerance [5], Alertness [5/level], Ally Group (Followers) [Varies], Alternate Identity [5 or 15], Animal Empathy [5], Appearance [Varies], Charisma [5/level], Empathy [15], Intuition [15], Manual Dexterity [3/level], Patron [Varies], Pious [5], and Sanctity [5].
Disadvantages: A total of -20 points chosen from Addiction (Hallucinogens) [-15]; Alcoholism [-15]; Callous [-6]; Compulsive Lying [-15]; Cowardice [-10]; Delusion ("I really have occult powers!") [-10]; Greed [-15]; Imaginative [-1]; Kleptomania [-15]; Poverty (Struggling) [-10]; Reputation (As a charlatan) [-5 to -15]; and Secret (Charlatan) [-5 to -30].
Primary Skills: Acting (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Bard (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Performance (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-14.
Secondary Skills: Any *four* of Fast-Talk (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Fortune Telling (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Occultism (any) (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Psychology (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Sleight of Hand (P/H) DX-1 [2]-10; and Snake Charming (M/A) IQ [2]-13.
Background Skills: A total of 4 points in Forgery (M/H); Gambling (M/A); Holdout (M/A); Law (M/H); Pickpocket (P/H); Streetwise (M/A); and Ventriloquism (M/H).

Occultist   60 points

An occultist is anybody who studies the supernatural and paranormal, whether he believes in them or not. An occultist can be a fanatical mystic, a skeptical parapsychologist, or anything in between. His knowledge of the supernatural can be invaluable when dealing with spirits, making him a natural advisor for more action-oriented characters in a supernatural campaign. Fictional occultists tend to be either capable field investigators or sheltered academics.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 14 [45]; HT 10 [0].
Advantages: A total of 20 points chosen from Alertness [5/level]; Awareness [15]; Common Sense [10]; Danger Sense [15]; Intuition [15]; Second Sight [5]; Serendipity

[15]; Single-Minded [5]; Spirit Empathy [10]; and Tenure [5].
Disadvantages: One of Curious [-5], Delusions ("All tales of the occult are true!") [-5], or Odious Personal Habit (Annoying skeptic) [-5]; plus -15 points chosen from Absent-Mindedness [-15], a more severe level of Curious [-5 or -10], Light Sleeper [-5], Reputation (As weird) [-5]; Stubbornness [-5], Weirdness Magnet [-15], and Xenophilia [-5 or -15].
Primary Skills: Occultism (any) (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-15; Research (M/A) IQ [2]-14.
Secondary Skills: A total of 8 points in Detect Lies (M/H); Electronics Operation (Sensors) (M/A); Forensics (M/H); Interrogation (M/A); Photography (M/A); Psychology (M/H); Spirit Lore (M/A); and Writing (M/A).
Background Skills: Any *one* of Conspiracy Theory (M/VH) IQ-3 [1]-11; Psionics (M/VH) IQ-3 [1]-11; Ritual Magic (any) (M/VH) IQ-3 [1]-11; or Thaumatology (M/VH) IQ-3 [1]-11.

Priest   100 points

A priest serves as an intermediary between the faithful and the divine, as defined by his religion. Priests perform religious ceremonies and carry a certain measure of authority in the spirit world, depending on the individual priest and the nature of the campaign world. The spirits of the priest's religion are considered good and holy, while other spirits are usually looked upon with suspicion at the least, if not considered actively evil. A priest can wield his faith like a weapon against such spirits in order to protect the faithful from harm. Fantasy priests may have Combat/Weapon skills in addition to the abilities given here, and Power Investiture [10/level] (p. CI42), along with appropriate spells, in place of ritual magic and its related advantages.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 15 [60]; HT 10 [0].
Advantages: Religious Rank 1 [5]; Ritual Aptitude 5 [5]; and a total of 20 points chosen from Blessed [10 or 20], Charisma [5/level], Divine Favor (Deity, 6 or less) [13], Higher Purpose [5], Legal Immunity [5 to 20], Patron (Church, 6 or less) [13], Pious [5], additional Religious Rank [5/level], Ritual Adept [10/level], Strong Will [4/level], and True Faith [15].
Disadvantages: Duty (To church, not dangerous, 12 or less) [-5]; -5 points in *one* of Disciplines of Faith, Sense of Duty, or Vows; and another -20 points chosen from those three disadvantages or Charitable [-15], Honesty [-10], Intolerance (Religious) [-10], Odious Personal Habits (Sanctimonious or always preaching) [-10], Pacifism [-15], and Truthfulness [-5]. Priests in service to evil gods or cults may choose their additional -20 points from Bloodlust [-10], Compulsive Lying [-15], Fanaticism [-15], Jealousy [-10], Megalomania [-10], Paranoia [-10], Sadism [-15], Selfish [-5], and Stubbornness [-5].
Primary Skills: Performance/Ritual (any) (M/A) IQ [2]-15; Ritual Magic (Religion) (M/VH) IQ [8]-15; Theology (M/H) IQ [4]-15.

Secondary Skills: Any *four* of Bard (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-14; Exorcism (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-13; Leadership (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-14; Occultism (any) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-14; Sacrifice (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-13; Spirit Lore (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-14; and Teaching (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-14.

Background Skills: A total of 4 points in Administration (M/A); Diplomacy (M/H); Fast-Talk (M/A); Law (M/H); Philosophy (any) (M/H); Psychology (M/H); Research (M/A); Singing (P/E; HT); and Writing (M/A).

Paths and Rituals: Any *two* of the following Paths, plus 10 points in any of the associated Rituals (at 2 points/level):

1. Path of Cunning (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Cloud Memory-7; Guise-13; Hallucination-8; Lust-10; Mist-10; Obscurity-9; Slumber-11; Suggestion-8; Veil-10.

2. Path of Dreams (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Dream Sanctum-11; Dream Shackles-6; Dream Visitor-12; Dreamwalk-14; Night Terrors-9; Slumber-12.

3. Path of Health (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Dose-14; Evil Eye-7; Fertility-12; Lust-9; Malaise-9; Slumber-11; Soothe-14; Sterility-10; Succor-10; Vitality-11; Warrior's Blessing-8.

4. Path of Knowledge (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Aura Reading-14; History-10; Locate-9; Read Memories-7; Read Thoughts-7; Scry-8; Veil-11; Vision of Luck-11.

5. Path of Luck (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Chaperone-11; Gremlins-10; Hunter's Blessing-10; Journeyman's Blessing-11; Journeyman's Curse-11; Love Charm-11; Loyal Item-10; Malediction-6; Stroke of Luck-13; Vision of Luck-9; Weapon Blessing-8; Windfall-12.

6. Path of Nature (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Command Beast-10; Endure Elements-14; Fertility-11; Gentle Beast-13; Hasten Mount-9; Hunter's Blessing-11; Mist-11; Predict Weather-14; Seek Beast-14; Summon Beast-11; Thunderbolt-7; Weatherworking-9.

7. Path of Protection (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Chaperone-9; Cleansing-10; Curse Mirror-11; Curse Sanctum-14; Dispel-8; Dream Sanctum-8; Endure Elements-14; Ghost Shirt-7; Obscurity-6; Turn Spirit-9; Veil-10; Vitality-10; Ward-10.

8. Path of Spirit (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Banish-10; Bind-11; Exorcise-12; Fetish-9; Ghost Sword-10; Lay to Rest-14; Spirit Slave-8; Spirit Trap-10; Summon-14.

Customization Notes: Choice of ritual Paths should be suited to the priest's deity and religion. A typical "good" priest might focus on Health and Protection, while a rural pagan priest might choose Luck and Nature. Some Paths might be restricted or even forbidden within the priest's religion, at the GM's discretion.

Seer   75 points

A seer has the ability to perceive spirits or to foretell the future through visions. Both are valued abilities in cultures that believe in the existence of spirits and mystical abilities, and likely to get the seer committed in a culture that doesn't. Seers may have limited abilities to do anything about what they perceive, which tends to lead them to cooperate with other adepts. They may value their ability as a gift or consider it a curse they wish to be rid of. In horror settings, seers are often plagued by terrible visions and taunted by spirits only they can see. Some seers may become Priests (p. 66), Shamans (see below), or Spirit Hunters (p. 69) to deal with their visions.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 14 [45]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: One of Awareness [15], Danger Sense [15], or Oracle [15]; plus 20 points chosen from the previous three or Alertness [5/level], Animal Empathy [5], Blessed [10 or 20], Destiny [Varies], Empathy [15], ESP Power [3/level] (Note that Danger Sense counts as ESP, Power 5), Luck [15], Patron [Varies], and Reawakened [10].

Disadvantages: A total of -20 points chosen from Alcoholism [-15]; Destiny [Varies]; Edgy [-5]; Flashbacks [-5 to -20]; Guilt Complex [-5]; Insomniac [-10/-15]; Light Sleeper [-5]; Nightmares [-5]; Secret [-5 to -30]; Sense of Duty (To prevent bad visions from happening) [-10]; Unluckiness [-10]; and Voices [-5 to -15].

Primary Skills: Choose one of Augury (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-13; Fortune Telling (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-15; Occultism (any) (M/A) IQ+1 [4]-15; or Precognition (M/H) IQ [4]-14*.

Secondary Skills: 6 points in any of the above skills plus Astrology (M/H); Conspiracy Theory (M/VH); Research (M/A); and Spirit Lore (M/A).

Background Skills: A total of 5 points in Administration (M/A); Criminology (M/A); Diplomacy (M/H); Fast-Talk (M/A); Philosophy (any) (M/H); Psychology (M/H); Theology (M/H); and Writing (M/A).
*Only if seer has ESP.

Shaman   100 points

A shaman performs a number of duties, including interceding for his people in the spirit world, guarding against hostile spirits, performing beneficial rituals for clients, serving as healer and counselor, and guiding the spirits of the dead to their rest. See Chapters 1 and 6 for more details on shamanism. Although they are associated with tribal cultures, shamans can (and do) exist in the modern world and are not limited to low-tech settings.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 15 [60]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: World Sight [10]; and 25 points in Ally (Guardian Spirit, 150 points, 9 or less) [10], Ally Group (tribe) [Varies], Autotrance [5], Channelling [10], Intuition [15], Luck [15], Mystic Symbol 1 or 2 [10 or 20], Reawakened [10], Religious Rank [5/level], Reputation [Varies], Ritual Adept [10/level], Spirit Advisor [Varies], Spirit Empathy [10], Spirit Projection (can't hear name -5%, can't tap

Fatigue -10%, can't use Poltergeist Effect, Possession, or Probability Alteration, -60%) [25], Status 1 or 2 [5 or 10], Strong Will [4/level], and Visualization [10].

Disadvantages: A total of -30 points selected from Disciplines of Faith [-5 or -10]; Duty (to tribe, 12 or less) [-10]; Epilepsy [-30]; Fanaticism [-15]; Intolerance [-5 or -10]; Reputation [Varies]; Sense of Duty [-5 to -15]; Voices [-5 to -15]; and Vows [-5 to -15].

Primary Skills: Performance/Ritual (any) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-14; Ritual Magic (Shamanism) (M/VH) IQ [8]-15; Symbol Drawing (any) (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-13.

Secondary Skills: A total of 4 points in Occultism (any) (M/A) and Theology (M/H).

Background Skills: Any two of Bard (M/A) IQ-2 [1/2]-13; Dancing (P/A) DX-2 [1/2]-8; First Aid/TL3 (M/E) IQ-1 [1/2]-14; or Herbalist, Musical Instrument (any), or Poisons, all (M/H) IQ-3 [1/2]-12.

Paths and Rituals: Path of Spirit (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Banish-10; Bind-11; Exorcise-12; Fetish-9; Ghost Sword-10; Lay to Rest-14; Spirit Slave-8; Spirit Trap-10; Summon-14. Plus any one of the following Paths, and 12 points in associated rituals (at 2 points/level).

1. Path of Cunning (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Cloud Memory-7; Guise-13; Hallucination-8; Lust-10; Mist-10; Obscurity-9; Slumber-11; Suggestion-8; Veil-10.

2. Path of Dreams (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Dream Sanctum-11; Dream Shackles-6; Dream Visitor-12; Dreamwalk-14; Night Terrors-9; Slumber-12.

3. Path of Health (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Dose-14; Evil Eye-7; Fertility-12; Lust-9; Malaise-9; Slumber-11; Soothe-14; Sterility-10; Succor-10; Vitality-11; Warrior's Blessing-8.

4. Path of Knowledge (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Aura Reading-14; History-10; Locate-9; Read Memories-7; Read Thoughts-7; Scry-8; Veil-11; Vision of Luck-11.

5. Path of Luck (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Chaperone -11; Gremlins-10; Hunter's Blessing-10; Journeyman's Blessing-11; Journeyman's Curse-11; Love Charm-11; Loyal Item-10; Malediction-6; Stroke of Luck-13; Vision of Luck-9; Weapon Blessing-8; Windfall-12.

6. Path of Nature (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Command Beast-10; Endure Elements-14; Fertility-11; Gentle Beast-13; Hasten Mount-9; Hunter's Blessing-11; Mist-11; Predict Weather-14; Seek Beast-14; Summon Beast-11; Thunderbolt-7; Weatherworking-9.

7. Path of Protection (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Chaperone-9; Cleansing-10; Curse Mirror-11; Curse Sanctum-14; Dispel-8; Dream Sanctum-8; Endure Elements-14; Ghost Shirt-7; Obscurity-6; Turn Spirit-9; Veil-10; Vitality-10; Ward-10.

Sorcerer   100 points

A sorcerer is a ritual magician who bends the forces of the spirit world to his will. He may maintain another profession – practicing magic on the side or in secret – or he may work as a professional sorcerer in cultures that believe in and allow such things.

Attributes: ST 10 [0]; DX 10 [0]; IQ 15 [60]; HT 10 [0].

Advantages: Ritual Aptitude 5 [5]; and 25 points in Ally Group (Followers) [Varies], Autotrance [5], Awareness [15], Channelling [10], Intuition [15], Luck [15], Mystic Symbol 1 or 2 [10 or 20], Reawakened [10], Reputation [Varies], Ritual Adept [10/level], Second Sight [5], Spirit Advisor [Varies], Status 1 or 2 [5 or 10], Strong Will [4/level], Visualization [10], and Wealth (Comfortable or Wealthy) [10 or 20].

Disadvantages: A total of -30 points selected from Callous [-6]; Disciplines of Faith (Ritualism or Mysticism) [-5 or -10]; Duty [-2 to -15], Fanaticism [-15]; Intolerance [-5 or -10]; Overconfidence [-10]; Reputation (As dangerous or strange) [Varies]; Secret [-5 to -30]; Sense of Duty [-5 to -15]; Social Stigma [-5 to -15]; Voices [-5 to -15]; and Vow [-5 to -15].

Primary Skills: Ritual Magic (any) (M/VH) IQ [8]-15; Symbol Drawing (any) (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-14.

Secondary Skills: Occultism (any) (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-14.

Background Skills: Any *two* of Bard, Performance, or Performance/Ritual (any), all (M/A) IQ-2 [1/2]-13; Dancing (P/A) DX-2 [1/2]-8; or Musical Instrument (any), Poisons, or Theology, all (M/H) IQ-3 [1/2]-12.

Paths and Rituals: Any *three* of the following Paths, plus 16 points in any of the associated Rituals (at 2 point/level):

Spirit Combat

Someone with the ability to sense spirits (via Awareness, Medium, Second Sight, World Sight, and similar advantages) can engage them in spirit combat. This is a Contest of Wills between the spirit and the mortal, a struggle on the spiritual rather than physical level. If the spirit wins the contest, it may possess the loser, and he gets no chance to resist (see *Possession*, p. 34). If the mortal wins, the spirit must perform one task for him (of limited duration, subject to the GM's approval). Shamans and other mystics use spirit combat to coerce willful spirits on occasion. Once beaten, a spirit tends to be respectful toward the victor and is unlikely to initiate spirit combat with him again.

1. Path of Cunning (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Cloud Memory-7; Guise-13; Hallucination-8; Lust-10; Mist-10; Obscurity-9; Slumber-11; Suggestion-8; Veil-10.
2. Path of Dreams (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Dream Sanctum-11; Dream Shackles-6; Dream Visitor-12; Dreamwalk-14; Night Terrors-9; Slumber-12.
3. Path of Health (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Dose-14; Evil Eye-7; Fertility-12; Lust-9; Malaise-9; Slumber-11; Soothe-14; Sterility-10; Succor-10; Vitality-11; Warrior's Blessing-8.
4. Path of Knowledge (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Aura Reading-14; History-10; Locate-9; Read Memories-7; Read Thoughts-7; Scry-8; Veil-11; Vision of Luck-11
5. Path of Luck (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Chaperone -11; Gremlins-10; Hunter's Blessing-10; Journeyman's Blessing-11; Journeyman's Curse-11; Love Charm-11; Loyal Item-10; Malediction-6; Stroke of Luck-13; Vision of Luck-9; Weapon Blessing-8; Windfall-12.
6. Path of Nature (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Command Beast-10; Endure Elements-14; Fertility-11; Gentle Beast-13; Hasten Mount-9; Hunter's Blessing-11; Mist-11; Predict Weather-14; Seek Beast-14; Summon Beast-11; Thunderbolt-7; Weatherworking-9.
7. Path of Protection (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Chaperone-9; Cleansing-10; Curse Mirror-11; Curse Sanctum-14; Dispel-8; Dream Sanctum-8; Endure Elements-14; Ghost Shirt-7; Obscurity-6; Turn Spirit-9; Veil-10; Vitality-10; Ward-10.
8. Path of Spirit (M/VH) IQ-1 [4]-14. *Rituals:* Banish-10; Bind-11; Exorcise-12; Fetish-9; Ghost Sword-10; Lay to Rest-14; Spirit Slave-8; Spirit Trap-10; Summon-14.

Spirit Hunter   100 points

A spirit hunter hunts spirits in order to capture or (more likely) destroy them. A hunter might go after only certain kinds of spirits, such as evil spirits like demons and undead (or good spirits for an evil hunter!). Or he might treat *all* spirits as potential prey, although such hunters rarely last long in a world with a lot of powerful spirits! Spirit hunters know a great deal about their prey, particularly their weaknesses and how to use them effectively. They tend to be tough, determined people willing to go up against beings far more powerful than they are. In a cinematic campaign, hunters can add advantages like Trained by a Master [40] (p. CI31), Weapon Master [20 or 45] (p. CI32), and the appropriate cinematic Combat/Weapon Skills. They may also have Spirit-Jumper (p. 76) and Spirit Projection (p. 76), allowing them to take the battle directly to their enemy's turf.

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 13 [30]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 11 [10].

Advantages: Any *one* of Awareness [15], Combat Reflexes [15], Danger Sense [15], True Faith [15], or Unfazeable [15]; plus 10 points chosen from ST +1 [10], HT +1 [10], Alertness [5/level], Fearlessness [2/level], Higher Purpose (Slay spirits) [5], Imperturbable [10], Magic Resistance [2/level], Night Vision [10], Psionic Resistance [2/level], Second Sight [5], and Strong Will [4/level].

Disadvantages: Either Greed [-15] or Obsession (Slay spirits or die trying) [-15]; plus another -15 points chosen from Bloodlust [-10], Guilt Complex [-5], Insomniac [-10 or -15], Intolerance (Spirits) [-5], Nightmares [-5], Overconfidence [-10], Pyromania [-5], Stubbornness [-5], and Weirdness Magnet [-15].

Primary Skills: Exorcism (M/H) IQ [4]-13; *one* of Philosophy (any) (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12, Spirit Lore (M/A) IQ [2]-13, or Theology (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; and 8 points in Combat/Weapon Skills.

Secondary Skills: Stealth (P/A) DX-1 [1]-12; Tactics (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; and 6 points in Demolition (M/A), Electronics (Sensors) (M/A), Fireworks (M/H), Throwing (P/H), Tracking (M/A), and Traps (M/A).

Background Skills: Any *two* of Mental Strength (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-11; Mind Block (M/A) IQ-1 [1]-12; Psychology (Spirits) (M/H) IQ-2 [1]-11; and Thaumatology (M/VH) IQ-3 [1]-10.

Spirit Warrior — 175 points

A spirit warrior has the ability to channel a patron spirit into his body, gaining greater physical abilities, sometimes even superhuman abilities. Spirit warriors come from all walks of life and have many different kinds of patron spirits, so a spirit warrior might be a tribal soldier, a fantasy holy warrior, or a silent assassin. Some spirit warriors are good and noble, others are mercenary, and some are outright evil and interested only in using their abilities to cause death and suffering. In societies where spirits are known, spirit warriors are likely to be respected and feared for their powers. In settings where spirits are largely unknown or disbelieved in, spirit warriors may keep their abilities secret or be considered practitioners of arcane martial arts or meditative disciplines.

In general, spirit warriors are best suited to cinematic campaigns, although they can show up as "secret warriors" in realistic campaigns where spirits and magicians operate behind the scenes.

Attributes: ST 11 [10]; DX 13 [30]; IQ 13 [30]; HT 11 [10].

Advantages: Up to 100 points in Spirit Warrior. Leftover points can go into any of Allies [Varies]; Autotrance [5]; Awareness [15]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Extra Fatigue [3/level]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Metabolism Control [5/level]; Reawakened [10]; Spirit Advisor [10]; Strong Will [4/level]; True Faith [15]; and Visualization [10].

Disadvantages: A total of -30 points chosen from Bad Temper [-10]; Bloodlust [-10]; Code of Honor [-5 to -15]; Disciplines of Faith [-5 to -15]; Duty [-5 to -15]; Overconfidence [-10]; Reputation [Varies]; Sense of Duty [-5 to -15]; and Vows [-5 to -15].

Primary Skills: 12 points in Combat/Weapon Skills, including at least one skill at DX+1.

Secondary Skills: Choose any *four* of Acrobatics (P/H) DX-1 [2]-12; Intimidation (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Leadership (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Meditation (M/VH) IQ-2 [2]-11; Occultism (any) (M/A) IQ [2]-13; Stealth (P/A) DX [2]-13; Tactics (M/H) IQ-1 [2]-12; Throwing (P/H) DX-1 [2]-12; and Tracking (M/A) IQ [2]-13

Background Skills: 5 points in any of Climbing (P/A); Combat/Weapon Art; Dancing (P/A); Fire Walking (M/E); Heraldry (M/A); Lifting (P/H; ST); Spirit Lore (M/A); and Running (P/H; HT).

Spirit Characters

It may be possible for PCs to *become* spirits in the course of a campaign. If this happens, apply the appropriate spirit template from Chapter 4 to the character's existing abilities, delete any advantages and disadvantages inappropriate to the new form, and recalculate the character's point total. If this results in a net gain, the GM can require the new spirit to "pay off" the gain in points with future earned character points.

Advantages which duplicate abilities that spirits already possess (e.g., Immunity to Disease, Unaging) are redundant and should be removed, along with disadvantages that don't apply to spirits, such as Alcoholism or Hemophilia. Social advantages and disadvantages like Allies or Enemies might remain or not, depending on the circumstances of the transformation and the society's reaction to spirits in general.

New Super-Power

The following ability is a super-power and uses the rules found on pp. SU27-34. However, it may be appropriate even in non-*Supers* campaigns.

Ectoplasmic Projection (Ranged/Mental) — 6 points/level

With this power, your imaginary friends, spirit guides, guardian angels, etc., can appear to aid you! They may be astral projections of your fragmented subconscious, acting out your hidden desires, or actual supernatural entities that obey you. Projections can be tangible or insubstantial, and you might not even know that they originate from you – only that they exist (see *Special Enhancements* and *Special Limitations* below).

Projections can range from giant invisible rabbits to wispy incarnations of dead relatives to full-fledged superbeings. They are built as separate characters using 10 points per Power level; summoning one costs 1 Fatigue per 20 points of the projection's value, but a projection remains for as long as you want once summoned. This excludes combat, which is limited to 5 seconds per level of Power per projection. For example, if Molly Muffet has Ectoplasmic Projection at Power 10, she can call "Captain Plasmatron." Upon making a successful skill roll, the 100-point super appears to take her for rides on his Plasmascooter, or whatever else Molly likes. For Molly, this power costs 60 points and drains 5 Fatigue per use. Combat, however, is far more exhausting, and Captain Plasmatron can only turn on the deflecto-field or fire his cosmic raygun for 50 seconds total before dissipating – unless Molly chooses to spend another 5 Fatigue.

There is no limit to the number of projections you can have, but the points must be divided among your projections, *and* all projections must be developed at character creation. For example, Ninjaman spends 72 points on Ectoplasmic

Individual projections can be personalized using enhancements and limitations. Unless specified, they apply to all projections created with the power. Regardless of the number of limitations taken, treat any total less than -75% as -75%.

Special Enhancements for Ectoplasmic Projection

The following special enhancements may apply to the Ectoplasmic Projection Power.

Astral Link   +20%

Your Ectoplasmic Projection is "linked" to Astral Projection (p. P10), allowing you to leave your body behind and "step into" your projection. This is like Transformation or Multiform, except that your original body is left unprotected. The new body can, however, risk death with only the fear of the 1d of mental shock damage to the original. (As this can invite abuse, GMs may wish to require a Fright Check when characters experience death while in ectoplasmic form, or just rule that ectoplasmic death is the same as astral death and that the character's mind/spirit is destroyed.)

Catalog   +10% per Entry After First

You can summon more than one projection, just not all at the same time. Each set of projections totaling up to your maximum limit counts as one "projection."

Example: Sister Mary Inez has a copy of the Book of Angels. She has Ectoplasmic Projection 8 and can summon angels up to a total of 80 points. The Book lists four 20-point cherubim (1 entry), two 70-point seraphim (1 entry each), and one 100-point elohim (one entry, though in excess of the good sister's ability) for a total of four entries (1 free + 3 additional) and +30% to the cost of her power. If Sister Mary Inez decides to summon the elohim before she buys up her Power, she'll need to use Extra Effort (see p. P7).

Channel   +20%/+30%/+40%

Your projections can take over your body, similar to Channelling (p. CI34). This can be useful if they have different skills or abilities, though there are risks. This enhancement is +20% if a projection is an alter ego, acting as one half of a split personality. If your psyche is still awake and aware during "possession," you can communicate with the guest at the speed of normal speech, worth +30%. If you can read and remember any of the projection's knowledge, the enhancement is worth +40%. If your projections grant you additional physical as well as mental abilities, you should take the Spirit Warrior advantage (p. 77).

Projection, giving him Power 12; he can create two 60-point ancient samurai bodyguards; or one 120-point super; or one 10-point dog, one 30-point masseuse, and one 80-point nail technician – any combination totaling 120 points is possible. If Ninjaman wants all the projections, just not all at once, he should take the "catalog" enhancement (below).

If your projections take damage, you must make a Will roll to avoid being mentally stunned. If you remain stunned for more than 2 turns, your projections dissipate. They can be called again once you shake off the stun, but each successive use of this power within an hour is at a cumulative -2 to skill. If a projection is brought to 0 HT, you take 1d damage from the mental shock (DR does not protect). The projection dissipates and cannot be called again for 2d hours.

Giant-Sized +20%

Normal projections are human-sized, but with this enhancement your projections are five times larger than normal. This does not give any bonus to ST or HT, but it can make the projection very intimidating and may necessitate a Fright Check for some opponents.

No Stunning + 20%

You are not stunned if your projections are injured. If a projection is killed, you do not take any damage, but the projection still cannot be called again for 2d hours.

Telepathic Communication +30%/+40%

You can communicate telepathically with your projections, giving them directions and receiving input at the speed of normal speech. No roll is required; however, your range is based on your Ectoplasmic Projection power, using the Telepathy Range Table (p. B167).

For +40%, you have complete telepathic rapport with your projections (see *Full Communion*, p. P36). You know everything a projection thinks or senses and all communication is 10 times faster than normal speech. This enhancement can be used with only one projection at a time.

Special Limitations for Ectoplasmic Projection

The following special limitations may apply to the Ectoplasmic Projection Power. Remember to treat any total greater than -75% as -75%.

Always Visible -20%

Your projections are always visible. They cannot have Invisibility or Invisibility to Machines. If they have Spirit Form, they must take the Visible enhancement (see p. 36).

Always Tangible/Intangible -20%

Your projections are always tangible and cannot turn insubstantial, or vice versa. In the former case, they cannot have the Insubstantiality or Spirit Form advantages. In the latter, they must have either Astral Entity (p. CI96), Being of Pure Thought (p. CI34), Insubstantiality (with the -50% always insubstantial limitation, p. CI59), or Spirit Form with the -10% Sounds and Visual Effects Only limitation (p. 36).

Indomitable -20%/-30%/-50%

Your projections have free will; they come when called but do not necessarily follow your orders. This is either because you create them so or because they really *are* independent beings! In the latter case, you use your power to create physical bodies out of ectoplasm for spirits to inhabit, allowing them to materialize in the physical world with no effort on their part. This ability often appears in conjunction with the Medium advantage (p. CI41). Your projections protect you from harm, but other than that they act in whatever way the GM decides. This reduces the cost by -20%.

For -30%, you cannot even control *when* your projections show up. They protect you from harm, but otherwise appear at their own whims. You may not be aware you are causing the projections. This is basically equivalent to the Uncontrollable limitation (p. CI112).

For -50% your projections are not only out of your control but also mischievous, a general nuisance for you and anybody around you. They show up at odd, often embarrassing, times. They reluctantly protect you from harm, but cause as much damage as possible to nearby people and objects as they can in the process.

No New Abilities -30%

Your projections cannot have any abilities or skills at higher level than yours or have any ability you lack. If you have advantages like Magery, psi, or super powers, you can give your projections the same abilities, but only up to your level of power and skill. Your projections can be *weaker* than you (having disadvantages you don't) and they don't have to be exact duplicates – they can look like anything you want – but they can't exceed you in any way. This is a common limitation for psis creating ectoplasmic "thought forms" (see p. 62). While projections can't have abilities like Insubstantiality or Spirit Form if you don't have them, they *can* have Astral Entity, which is a *disadvantage* (see p. CI96).

Omnipresent -5% to -30%

Always Visible or Always Tangible must be taken with this limitation. Projections are constantly flocking around you, perching on your shoulders, and peering out from behind you. Reaction modifiers range from -1 to -6, depending on the appearances and actions of the projections (-1 per 5% of limitation). The projections disappear when you are unconscious and you pay the Fatigue cost for them each time you wake.

Only While Asleep -40%

You must be sleeping, unconscious, or in a deep trance before you can generate projections. The projections follow your wishes and subconscious commands. Adding the Indomitable limitation makes things more difficult – your ectoplasmic alter ego may be out living a completely different life while you're asleep!

Security Blanket -50%

Your projections are tied to physical objects, which can be stolen or destroyed. Stuffed animals and mannequins that come to life and Volkswagens that drive themselves are some of the classic examples. This may make your projections similar to Spirits of Objects (p. 61).

Advantages

A number of advantages from the *Basic Set* and *GURPS Compendium I* are particularly appropriate for characters in a spirit-based campaign, or are affected by the existence and intervention of spirits:

Ally and Ally Group

Free-willed spirits can be Allies or part of an Ally Group for a character using the normal rules. Servitor spirits bound to obey someone through spells or rituals do not normally count as Allies and do not have to be purchased using this advantage. However, GMs may wish to institute the following optional rule to keep the proliferation of spirit allies under control in the campaign:

Servitor spirits can be treated as an Ally Group with the base cost reduced by 10 points. Thus, 0 points buy 2-5 servitor spirits, 10 points buy 6-20, and 20 points buy 21-100. The GM may permit larger numbers of spirits in certain campaigns (see **GURPS Undead**, p. 96, for guidelines). This allows those with spirit summoning abilities to have a few servitor spirits but prevents them from having an army of spirits for the cost of a simple summoning spell or ritual.

Spirit Allies and Ally Groups are often Unwilling Allies (p. CI19), forced into service. This is only the case if the spirit is actually capable of rebelling against its master; mindless spirits and servitors with the Slave Mentality disadvantage are incapable of doing so.

Animal Empathy and Beast-Kin

These advantages *may* improve the reaction rolls of animal spirits (p. 48), at the GM's discretion. Characters with them are prohibited from harming animal spirits the same as normal animals.

Autotrance

This advantage is common among shamans and ritual magicians (see Chapter 6). Autotrance provides a +2 bonus on all Ritual Magic and Path skill rolls. It also makes it easier for a spirit to possess the subject, giving the spirit a +4 bonus on its Will roll for possession (see p. 34).

Awareness

The 15-point level of Awareness allows you to sense the presence of spirits with an IQ roll (subject to the long-distance modifiers on p. B151). The 35-point level of Awareness allows you to see and communicate with spirits without any effort or Fatigue cost on the part of the spirit. An IQ roll will reveal the type of spirit and whether it is free-willed, a servitor, or mindless.

Blessed

Blessings are often granted by powerful spirits (along with fairy godmothers, good witches, and the like). The reaction bonus for Blessed includes any spirits that serve or respect the being that blessed you. The Divination ability granted by this advantage may be considered a spiritual rather than magical ability at the GM's discretion, making it unaffected by considerations like mana level. Alternatively, the GM might allow the Blessed individual to use the Vision of Luck ritual (p. 97) at IQ-5 (IQ for Very Blessed characters).

Channelling

This advantage is quite useful for allowing spirits to communicate with mortals without having spend their own Fatigue to do so. A party of mixed mortals and spirits may want to include a channeler to help facilitate communication. The channeler gets +5 to Will rolls to resist any spirit that attempts to take full possession (rather than simply speaking through the channeler).

Clerical Investment and Religious Rank

This advantage is required for anyone who functions as a religious or spiritual official. However, it is *not* required of anyone not part of an organized or recognized religion of any kind. A person with Clerical Investment does not have to possess supernatural or spiritual powers. Clerical Investment reflects the political and social aspects of being a priest, shaman, etc.; the supernatural aspects are covered by advantages like True Faith, Magery, Power Investiture, and Ritual Aptitude.

Compartmentalized Mind

In a campaign where spirits exist, this advantage may represent someone with more than one spirit (mind) inhabiting his body. The compartments are all considered separate minds, able to act independently of each other. This would allow the individual to perform one action while his "familiar spirit" casts a spell, uses a spirit power, and so forth. This advantage does not grant the various other attributes of spirits; they must be purchased separately.

Divine Favor

Use Divine Favor rather than Patron when the Patron is a spirit or supernatural being. This reflects a patron that can hear its name invoked anywhere, respond instantly, and use supernatural powers to aid its agent. The power of the spirit determines its value as a Patron: a fairly average spirit (with Spirit Form and a few advantages) is a "single powerful individual" worth 10 points. More powerful spirits are worth 15 points, while deities are worth from 20 points for a lesser god to 25 for a major god and 30 for a truly omnipotent deity. Modify the base cost by the *Frequency of Appearance* multipliers (p. B23) to reflect how likely the spirit is to come to the petitioner's aid.

Faerie Empathy

This advantage is useful in dealing with faerie spirits. The GM has final say on whether or not a particular spirit can be considered a "faerie" in the campaign world. Use the descriptions on p. 58 of Chapter 4 as a guideline. This advantage may represent an ancient pact or favor from the Fair Folk, or a mortal with some measure of faerie blood (or even a reincarnated faerie spirit born into mortal flesh). Those with Faerie Empathy are loath to harm or enslave faeries in any way and must discourage others from doing so. Players who fail to roleplay this aspect of the advantage may find they've lost the faeries' favor.

Faith Healing

This advantage is provided by the goodwill of certain spirits. Faith healers can lose the spirits' favor, and the use of this ability, if they fail to act according to the spirits' best interests or moral guidelines.

Insubstantiality

In settings where mortals can have this advantage (e.g., *Supers*), it *may* represent the ability to shift bodily into an outer spirit world, allowing the user to interact normally with spirits. This depends on the character's background and "special effects." By default, spirits and the insubstantial exist on different "planes" and cannot interact.

Magic Resistance

By default, spirit powers are considered spiritual rather than magical in nature and are unaffected by Magic Resistance. If spirits are considered magical beings in the campaign (see *Magical Spirits*, p. 44), then Magic Resistance applies against all of their powers.

Mana Damper

Normally, this advantage has no effect whatsoever on spirits, since they are not affected by mana levels. If spirits are considered a magical phenomenon (see *Magical Spirits*, p. 44), they will avoid Low Mana areas and flee as quickly as possible from No Mana areas, provided they are not destroyed outright. A No Mana area may also block certain spirit powers based on mana, such as innate spells.

Medium

A person with this advantage can sense when a spirit is nearby with a successful IQ roll. He can hear and speak with spirits with no Fatigue cost on the part of the spirit, making mediums quite useful in communicating with spirits, particularly weaker ones with low Fatigue scores. This advantage complements Channelling well, and mediums often have both. For the ability to see spirits as well as hear them, see *Awareness* (p. CI33).

Patron

A spiritual Patron that grants miracles or supernatural aid should be bought as Divine Favor (see above and p. CI36). A spirit that functions as a conventional Patron does – available only via certain means (from a phone call to a specific ritual) and offering only advice, material resources, and social influence – should be considered a regular Patron.

Plant Empathy and Tree-Kin

These advantages may grant reaction bonuses from nature spirits strongly associated with plant life, at the GM's discretion.

Psionic Resistance

The powers of spirits are considered spiritual rather than psionic in nature, so psionic resistance has no effect on them. If spirits are considered psionic beings (see *Psionic Spirits*, p. 44), then Psionic Resistance applies against all of their powers.

Second Sight

This advantage normally allows its users only to sense the presence of magic, but GMs may change it to function for spiritual phenomena instead, sensing when spirits are nearby with a successful IQ roll. In its normal form it allows users to detect magical spirits (p. 44).

Spirit Empathy

This advantage is useful for dealing with spirits of all kinds. However, anyone with Spirit Empathy will *not* use ritual magic or similar abilities to enslave spirits or force them to do his bidding. He can summon spirits and negotiate with them in good faith, but is very reluctant to force them to do things against their will, and does not help others who do so!

True Faith

True Faith may be able to keep certain types of spirits at bay, at the GM's discretion. The spirit must be considered "evil" (or at least a threat) by the adherent's faith in order to be affected by this advantage. Some faiths consider all spirits except their own evil, while others are more open and accepting. How True Faith interacts with spirits from outside the doctrines of the faith altogether is up to the GM. For example, a Christian with True Faith can use it against demons, since Christianity considers them evil. However, he may or may not be able to use True Faith to keep an elemental or an ultraterrestrial at bay.

Visualization

This advantage is common among ritual magicians. In a spirit campaign it may represent the force of an enlightened will being applied to the success of a particular task. In effect, it is influencing probability through sheer willpower, much as a spirit does (see p. 34).

World Sight

This advantage grants the same benefit as 5 levels of Ritual Aptitude: the ability to perform ritual magic at no penalty. It also grants the ability to sense when spirits are nearby, similar to Second Sight (p. CI43).

New Advantages

There are several advantages dealing specifically with spirits and spirit magic. Some of these are updated from *GURPS Voodoo*.

Mystic Symbol   10 points/level

A mystic symbol is an object that acts as a focus for your will. The exact form of the symbol varies depending on your culture. It may be a weapon, piece of jewelry, chalice, rattle, wand, or similar item, subject to the GM's approval. The symbol grants you a +1 bonus per level on all rolls made for ritual magic. It also aids resistance rolls, granting +1 to any roll to resist possession, hostile rituals, or any attack resisted by the mind (Will or IQ), as long as it is worn or carried on your person. If your character's symbol is stolen or destroyed, his point value is reduced until he can recover or repair it.

Ritual Adept   10 points/level

You can ignore the need for some or all of the components of ritual magic (see Chapter 6). For each level in this advantage (up to a maximum of three), you can ignore the need for one ritual magic component, chosen when you perform the ritual. The sacred space and material components can be dispensed with altogether at no penalty. The time component is reduced to 1d seconds of concentration, just enough time to visualize the effect. Decreasing it further imposes a -1 to skill per -1 second (e.g., 1d-3 seconds would be -3 to skill); minimum time is 1 second. With two levels of Ritual Adept, you can ignore two components. With three levels you can ignore them all, performing any ritual you're capable of with just 1d seconds of concentration.

Special Limitation: Can't vary ritual element eliminated (must be chosen when the advantage is purchased), -50% if only one or two levels are taken, but -0% if three levels are taken. Only for a single ritual path, -50%; only for a single ritual, -70%. Treat any total less than -75% as -75%.

Ritual Aptitude   1 point/level

You're particularly gifted in performing ritual magic (see Chapter 6). Most people have a -5 penalty to skill when performing rituals, but each level of this advantage buys off 1 point of penalty, up to a maximum of 5 levels, which allows you to perform ritual magic at no penalty. This advantage does not allow you to perform ritual magic without the skill; it simply makes the rituals more effective than those of others. In some cultures, people with Ritual Aptitude are identified as gifted and guided toward studying ritual magic.

Piecemeal Aptitude: You can also take aptitude in specific Paths or rituals if the GM allows (see Chapter 6); 2 points lets you use a single Path at no penalty, while 1 point lets you use a single ritual at no penalty.

Spirit Advisor   Variable

You have a spirit "friend" that shares its wisdom with you. This can be a ghost, a manifestation of a previous incarnation, a guardian angel, a personal genius (p. 7), or nearly any other type of minor spirit. The spirit advisor is roleplayed by the GM and should be built like any other NPC. Unlike an Ally, the spirit advisor is not expected to fight on your behalf; it simply provides information and advice. Most spirit advisors have the equivalent of Occultism-16 and may have two or three Scientific or Professional skills at a high level. The GM can use the spirit advisor to give warnings, clues, and other valuable information. Generally, the advice of the spirit is good, although it may be colored by the entity's prejudices. The base cost of this advantage is 10 points. Use the Frequency of Appearance Modifiers on p. B23 to determine the actual cost.

Spirit Form   100 points

You are a spirit! See Chapter 3 (particularly pp. 33-35) for the details of this advantage.

Psionics

It's up to the GM whether or not spirits are affected by psionics. Total Invulnerability (p. CI59) to all psi powers is an advantage worth 150 points, but in settings where psi powers are rare, like classic high fantasy, this can be reduced to 75 or even 50 points. In settings without psi, it's irrelevant. By default, psi skills work on spirits as follows:

Astral Projection: A psi *may* be able to use Astral Projection to interact with spirits and Astral Sight to detect them, depending on whether or not the astral plane and the spirit world are one and the same (see p. 26). If not, the GM may still allow astral psis to visit the spirit world (and spirits to visit the astral plane).

Electrokinesis: Since spirits don't have physical brains, they are unaffected by Confuse.

ESP: Anyone with ESP Power 5+ (i.e., Danger Sense) can sense the presence of spirits on an IQ roll. Psychometry can be used at a site where a spirit materialized (see p. 35) in order to learn something about the spirit's personality and nature.

Healing: Psionic healing works only on spirits that have assumed solid form using materialization (see p. 34). Sense Aura allows the psi to see spirits and their auras within range.

Psychic Vampirism: Spirits are affected by this power normally, although the psi must be able to sense them first.

Psychokinesis: Spirits in physical form are affected normally by PK, but are otherwise completely immune to it.

Telepathy: Mental Blow, Mental Stab, and Mindsword affect spirits normally. Mind Shield does *not* block the psi-like powers of spirits (particularly Possession) unless the GM rules they are psionic in nature (see p. 44). Mindswitch and Sleep do not work on spirits.

Spirit Projection   100 points

Your spirit can leave your body and act independently. Your spirit body has all the normal abilities of the Spirit Form advantage (described on pp. 33-35); your physical body lies unconscious and helpless for the duration.

The maximum safe distance you can travel from your physical body in spirit form is 10 miles. Going beyond this distance can make it difficult to return. While inside the safe range, you can return instantly, even if you are miles away. Returning to your body beyond this range requires a Will roll at -1 per 10 miles beyond the safe limit. A failure means you must either try again in an hour or travel back at normal speed until you can see your body – if you traveled far, this may take a long time.

You can leave your body safely for up to an hour. Every ten minutes past the first hour costs a Fatigue point. When Fatigue is reduced to 0, your body falls into a coma and starts deteriorating rapidly, losing 1 hit point every five minutes. This loss of Fatigue and HT does not affect your spirit form, but you are aware of it, no matter how far you have traveled.

If your spirit is killed outside your body, your body begins to lose hit points as described above until it dies as well. If your body dies while your spirit is gone, you become a normal ghost (see p. 59) and must begin making Will rolls to avoid losing HT. A new ghost is extremely weak, starting with 1 Fatigue point and regaining 1 Fatigue per day until back at full strength, at which point you regain Fatigue normally.

This cost of this advantage can be adjusted using the enhancements and limitations for Spirit Form (p. 35).

Spirit-Jumper   100 points

This is the spiritual version of World-Jumper (p. CI48). You have the ability to move physically from the physical world to the inner spirit worlds and vice versa (see Chapter 2). Your body is translated into ectoplasm (or whatever spirits are made of), allowing you to exist in the spirit world and interact with other spirits normally. While you're in the spirit world you have your normal abilities, subject to the spirit world's laws. You're effectively a spirit there and affected by things that normally affect spirits.

Making the transition from one world to another requires a second of concentration and 1 point of Fatigue, followed by a Will roll. If successful, you shift from one world to the other. A failed roll means you cannot make the transition for at least an hour. A critical failure may trap you in the outer spirit world "between" worlds, unable to affect either one (similar to the Astral Entity disadvantage, p. CI96). It might draw the attention of malign spirits or send you somewhere else altogether, at the GM's discretion. Regardless of limitations, the cost of this advantage can't be reduced below 25 points.

Special Enhancement: Additional Weight. As a default you can carry up to No Encumbrance, but based on your Will, not ST! Thus if you have a Will of 12, "no encumbrance" is up to 24 lbs., regardless of your ST.

+10% for light encumbrance, +20% for medium encumbrance, +30% for heavy encumbrance, +50% for extra-heavy encumbrance. -10% if you can carry nothing (meaning you leave even your clothes behind). At the heavy encumbrance level you can bring one other person with you regardless of weight. At the extra-heavy encumbrance level you can bring any number of other people with you, as long as they are in relatively close proximity with you. By spending 5 Fatigue, you can increase your normal encumbrance level by one step for a single passage between worlds.

Special Enhancement: No Concentration. When you want to move between worlds you need only spend Fatigue and make a Will roll. *+15%.*

Special Enhancement: No Fatigue Cost. You don't have to spend Fatigue to move between worlds. *+20%.*

Special Limitation: Limited Access. You can spirit jump to only a specific inner spirit world or worlds. For example, a demon may be able to travel to hell and back, but not visit other spirit worlds. The value of the limitation depends on how many inner spirit worlds there are. If there's only one, the limitation is meaningless. If there are many, it's worth -20%, or more, at the GM's discretion.

Special Limitation: Special Portal. You need a particular sort of "gateway" to shift between worlds, such as a reflective surface, a natural cave opening, or a sacred stone circle on a moonlit night. The value of the limitation depends on how rare the required gateway is; a reflective surface is -20%, as is a relatively common geographic feature. Only in one specific sacred spot at a specific time of the year is -75%.

Special Limitation: Spirit Walker. You must be able to move (at least a step or two) in order to shift between worlds. You have to divest yourself of any weight over your encumbrance before making the attempt and free yourself of anything that restricts your movement (like manacles), or the attempt fails. *-10%.*

Special Limitation: Stunning. You're always mentally stunned after a shift. *-10%.*

Spirit Warrior   *Variable*

This advantage allows you to take on the abilities of a possessing spirit while retaining control of your own faculties. These abilities include increased strength and endurance, new skills (or higher levels in existing skills), and increased resistance to injury. You gain a number of advantages (and possibly some disadvantages) while the patron spirit possesses you. While you retain consciousness and freedom of will, you are not completely in control; enough of the spirit's personality may filter through to give you mental and even physical disadvantages associated with the spirit. These changes in personality, speech patterns, and attitudes must be roleplayed fully, or the next time you may find it more difficult to invoke your spirit patron. Skill increases are expressed as a number of character points that go into temporarily raising the skills affected.

Example: The loa Ochosi grants his Spirit Warriors 8 points in the Tracking skill. If you don't have Tracking, those 8 points give you the skill at IQ+3; if you have Tracking already, the extra 8 points raise your skill. So if you have Tracking at IQ [2], the spirit's presence improves your ability to IQ+4 [10].
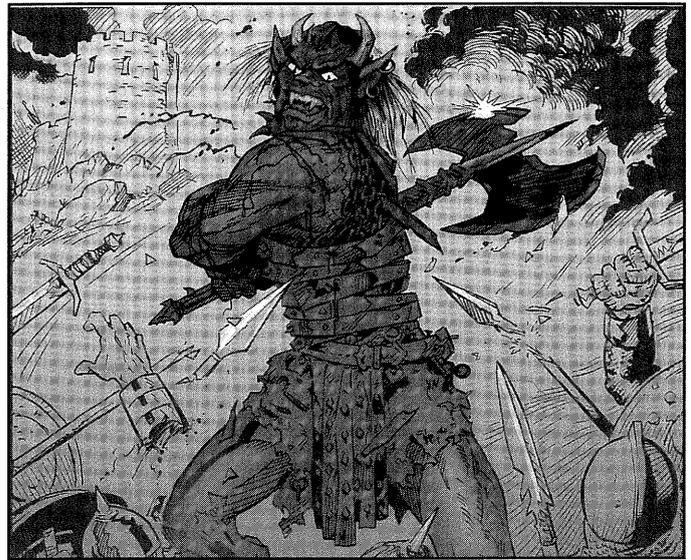
Summoning and temporarily absorbing a spirit are not automatic: you must persuade the spirit to enter your body. To call upon this power, you must concentrate for one second, after which the GM makes a reaction roll for the spirit. On a Good or better result, you are endowed with the spirit warrior powers. Other modifiers:

Mystic Symbol: +level
Faerie Empathy (where appropriate): +3
Spirit Empathy: +3
A ceremony of summoning lasting 10 minutes: +4
Going against the spirit's ideals, morals, etc.: -2 to -6 (GM's discretion)

Summoning a spirit when an antagonistic entity is in the same area: -4 to +4, depending on the spirit's temperament and your relationship with the other spirit (warrior spirits welcome the opportunity to attack their enemies, but are reluctant to work with them, for example).

The spiritual investment lasts one minute, at which time a new reaction roll must be made, with a -1 penalty for every minute after the first. The possession drains you physically at the rate of 1 Fatigue per minute; pay this total energy cost when you dismiss the spirit. If Fatigue is reduced below 0 in this manner, take any additional Fatigue off HT instead, which may lead you to unconsciousness, injury, or death after the possession ends.

Each spirit grants different powers to its warriors. Generally speaking, the spirit warrior gains the usual benefits of Possession (see p. 34): bonus ST (not Fatigue) equal to 1/5 the spirit's ST, and bonus DX and HT equal to 1/8 the spirit's DX and HT, respectively. Other bonuses include additional skill points, Damage Resistance, High Pain Threshold, Combat Reflexes, and various occult advantages. ST bonuses cost 5 points per +1, other abilities as per normal. To calculate the cost of this advantage, add up the value of the advantages and disadvantages the spirit grants and reduce the total by 30% (round in your favor). This represents the fact that these advantages function for only a short period of time, cost Fatigue, and depend on the good will of the spirit.

This advantage cannot be taken for more than one spirit: a spirit warrior is dedicated to a single spirit and cannot divide his loyalties.

Disadvantages

A number of disadvantages merit particular attention in a campaign where spirits exist.

Epilepsy
see p. B28

Epilepsy has been viewed in many cultures as a sign of a potential shaman or someone who is touched by spirits (or, in some cases, possessed by demons). In a *Spirits* campaign, an epileptic seizure can be seen as an involuntary trance state which the epileptic can also bring on voluntarily (see p. B28). While having a seizure, the epileptic is considered to be in a trance and gains the benefits and drawbacks of it, including bonuses to Ritual Magic rolls and greater vulnerability to spirit possession; see *Autotrance* (p. 73) for more on trances. The only difference is he cannot voluntarily end the trance early; the seizure has to run its course. This can cause problems if he is threatened by a spiritual danger or has to react to something in the physical world.

Epileptics may have a reaction bonus or penalty if it is widely known or believed that they are in special communication with spirits and the spirit world. This reaction is positive from those who respect and honor spirits, and negative from those who believe the person is cursed, possessed, or in league with evil spirits.
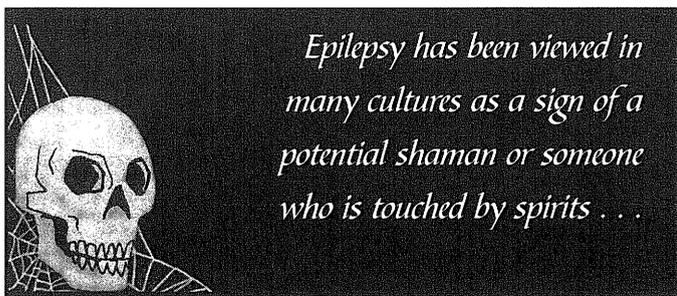
> *Epilepsy has been viewed in many cultures as a sign of a potential shaman or someone who is touched by spirits . . .*

Split Personality
see p. B37

People once believed multiple personality disorder was a matter of spirit possession. In a campaign with real spirits, it just might be! In this case, no amount of psychological treatment will help the victim; an exorcism is what's required. The other personality might be an outside spirit (particularly a demon) that takes over to carry out its own agenda. Or it might be a past life brought to the surface and seeking to use its current incarnation to fulfill some particular goal, or just to live again.

Terminally Ill
see p. CI84

In a campaign with spirits this disadvantage might be the result of a curse or spiritually caused pestilence (see *Malaise*, p. 96). A Terminally Ill person, finding medical science helpless to treat his condition, might turn to the supernatural in search of a cure. An entire campaign can be based around someone who is Terminally Ill searching to find the magician or spirit that cursed him to end the curse before it's too late. If a player character with this disadvantage finds a way to "cheat the reaper," all earned character points should go into buying off the disadvantage.

Voices
see p. CI94

This disadvantage may be supernatural rather than psychological in a campaign with spirits. The sufferer is tormented by disembodied voices. Rituals of exorcism and other things that keep spirits at bay may offer temporary relief or eliminate the disadvantage altogether (in which case earned character points should go into buying it off).

Weirdness Magnet
see p. CI100

This disadvantage is an occasional hazard of being a magician or otherwise associated with spirits. The individual is at the center of strange happenings, spirit visitations, hauntings, and so forth. Weirdness Magnet is also a good disadvantage for involving an otherwise "mundane" person in a campaign where spirits and ritual magic are kept hidden from the rest of the world.

Skills

A number of skills are particularly useful in dealing with spirits or are related to spirits and ritual magic in some way. Ritual Aptitude (or Ritual Adept) may be considered a prerequisite for most of the Esoteric Skills listed here (Augury, Autohypnosis, Dreaming and Lucid Dreaming, Fire Walking, Mental Strength, Meditation, and Ritual Magic), although the GM may allow them for other characters for an Unusual Background cost, depending on the nature of the campaign.

Augury
see p. CI137

Magicians often have this skill as a means of knowing the wishes of various spirits by interpreting omens and dreams. GMs can use Augury skill rolls to communicate hints and information about the intentions of spirits.

Autohypnosis
see p. CI137

Autohypnosis is a common skill for magicians. Its bonus to Will applies when resisting spirit powers and ritual magic.

Dreaming and Lucid Dreaming
see pp. CI139 and CI142

These skills allow you to control your dreams and influence the dream world (p. 26) to some extent. Dreaming is common among seers and shamans and can provide intuitive insights. When you are subjected to Path of Dreams rituals (p. 94), you can roll Dreaming or Lucid Dreaming in place of Will to resist. Spirits attempting to enter your dreams via spirit travel must win a Contest of Will vs. your skill in order to do so. On a failure, the spirit spends Fatigue normally but is shut out of your dreams that night.

Exorcism
see p. CI153

In campaigns where spirits really exist, this skill is useful in driving them away from places and possessed victims. Clerical Investment may be a prerequisite for this skill. Magicians generally use the more effective Path of Spirit rituals (see p. 104), but they can learn and use Exorcism.

Fire Walking

A skill commonly found among ritual magicians and other mystics.

Hidden Lore

The Spirit Lore specialization of this skill is especially useful. If the campaign has a large number of different spirit entities, the GM may wish to require a further specialization to focus on a particular type of spirits, like Faerie Lore and Demon Lore specializations.

Mental Strength

This skill can replace Will when resisting the powers of spirits or ritual magic (see Chapters 3 and 6 for more information).

Meditation

The Will bonus from using Meditation applies to resisting spirit powers and ritual magic. The bonus Meditation grants to Mental Skills does not apply to Ritual Magic, Paths, or rituals.

Occultism

Occultism does *not* provide the ability to actually perform ritual magic, even at a default level.

Performance/Ritual

This skill defaults to Ritual Magic-2 when dealing with the religious and ceremonial aspects of a particular tradition. Someone with Ritual Magic will usually operate at the default level when performing the various mundane functions of his office – officiating weddings, funerals, holidays, etc. In settings with Ritual Magic these rituals may include actual magic to offer blessings and protection, such as incorporating a Chaperone or Vitality ritual into a child-blessing ceremony, or a Lay to Rest ritual into a funeral ceremony. Likewise, a ritual of excommunication could place a dire curse upon the subject.

Rituals and Ceremonies

This TL0 version of Theology (p. B62) is common for shamans and other ritual magicians in primitive cultures.

Ritual Magic

This skill is at the heart of the ritual magic rules in Chapter 6. See that chapter for more information.

Sacrifice

This skill is essential in preparing a sacrifice (see p. 88) so that it has mystical power. A successful Sacrifice roll is required to prepare and perform the sacrifice properly. At the GM's option, this skill can default to Ritual Magic-4, provided the sacrifice is of a type used in the supplicant's tradition. See Chapter 6 for more information.

Symbol Drawing

This skill can provide bonuses with Ritual Magic rolls. It defaults to Ritual Magic-4. The person must specialize in a type of Symbol Drawing appropriate to his tradition (Voodoo *vevers*, Kabalistic symbols, runes, etc.). See Chapter 6 for details.

Theology

This skill can act as a default for Occultism (at -2 or more) when dealing with information about spirits native to a particular belief system or religion. Theology covers the beliefs, dogma, myths, and history of a spiritual tradition, while the Performance/Ritual and Ritual Magic skills cover the actual rituals and ceremonies.

SPIRIT MAGIC

> Magic is the Highest, most Absolute, and most Divine Knowledge of Natural Philosophy, advanced in its works and wonderful operations by a right understanding of the inward and occult virtue of things; so that true Agents being applied to proper Patients, strange and admirable effects will thereby be produced.
> — **The Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon**
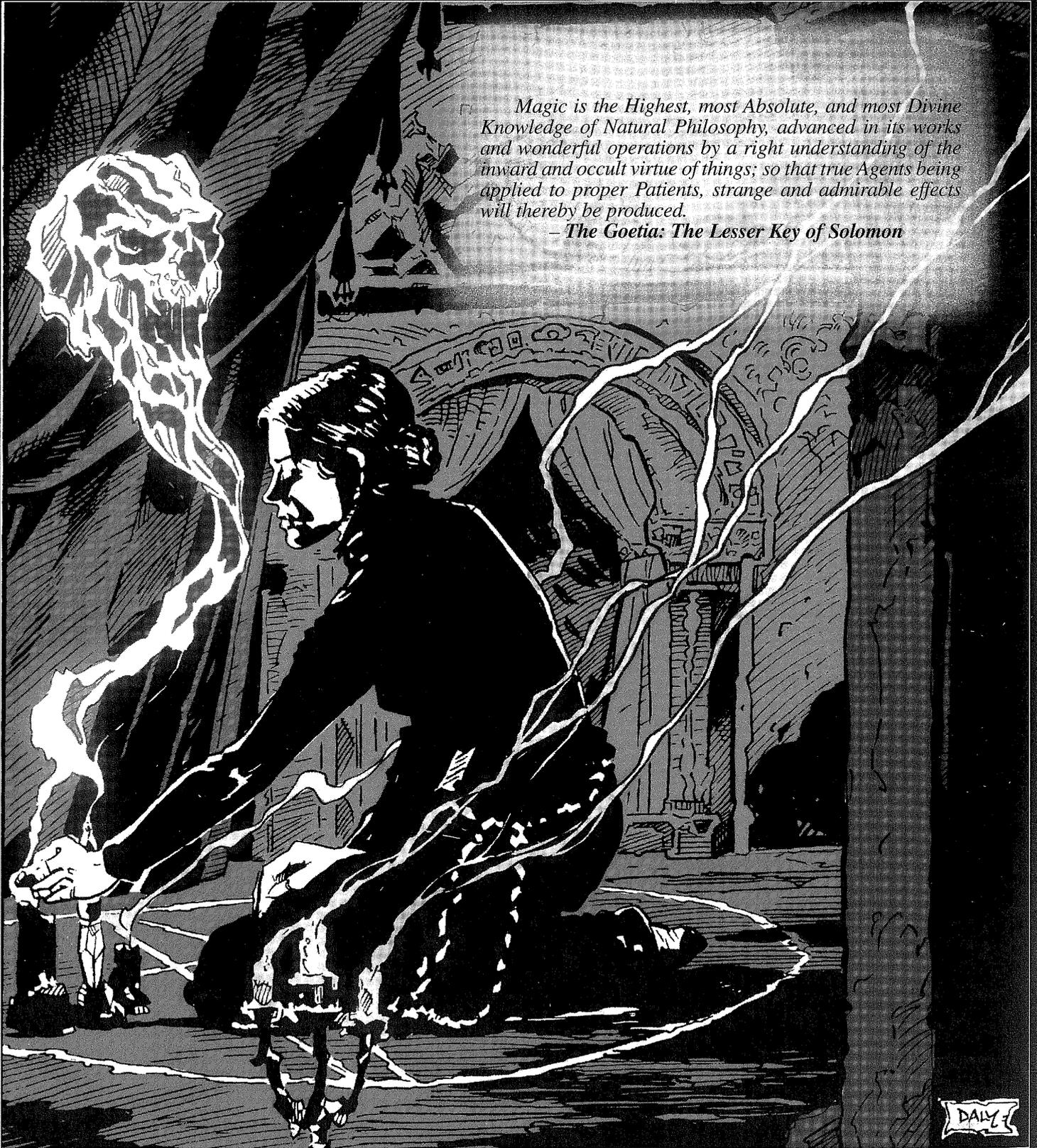
Spirits have many powers, and mortals can tap into those powers in different ways to perform magical feats. This chapter looks at different techniques of spirit magic, focusing on ritual magic associated with spirits.

Spirit magic can take several forms, depending on the needs of the campaign. Magic associated with spirits breaks down into three main categories: clerical magic, miraculous magic, and ritual magic.

Clerical magic is based on the Power Investiture advantage (p. CI42) and uses standard *GURPS* spells, given in the *Basic Set* and *GURPS Magic*. It represents the power to wield magic granted by spirits or divine beings.

Miraculous magic is based on the Divine Favor advantage (p. CI36). It represents the favor of a spirit or spirits (including deities), which may grant miracles at the request of the favored character. Miraculous magic is also described in detail in *GURPS Religion* (pp. R113-115).

Ritual magic involves performing certain ceremonies to invoke the favor of the spirit world, petitioning or commanding spirits to cause things to happen. It requires the Ritual Magic skill (p. 79) and anyone can perform ritual magic, but advantages like Ritual Aptitude (p. 75) and Ritual Adept (p. 75) make it much easier. A practitioner of ritual magic is called a "magician," although different cultures may use different titles (see *Types of Magicians*, below).

Ritual Magic is divided into "Paths" or areas of interest. These Paths represent the knowledge of how to appeal to the spirits for particular effects. Since the Paths all default to Ritual Magic, all magicians have some measure of skill in all Paths, although some may specialize in one or two areas and have only the most rudimentary skill in the others.

Types of Magicians

Magicians are found in cultures around the world and throughout history (see *Magical Traditions*, p. 82). They break down into three broad groups based on how they view their relationship with the spirit world: priests, shamans, and sorcerers.

Priests

Priests worship and serve spiritual beings they usually revere as deities. They see themselves as subservient to these spirits, but can petition them for aid through prayer and invocation. In some campaign settings, priests may use clerical or miraculous magic; priests using ritual magic fall somewhere in between the two. They tend to lack the immediacy of clerical magic, but their rituals are more reliable than miraculous magic, which depends entirely on the whims of the deity.

Despite the title, priests are not necessarily part of a religious hierarchy, nor must they have Clerical Investment, although most priests do. Clerical Investment is a social advantage, while Ritual Aptitude and Ritual Adept are spiritual advantages. Inspired holy persons outside the religious hierarchy may have Divine Favor, Power Investiture, or Ritual Aptitude. The church may seek to recruit such people as having a divine "calling" or may consider them heretics, limiting "true" spiritual magic to recognized priests.

Shamans

Shamans are gifted with the ability to sense the spirit world and perform magic (usually via World Sight, p. CI48). They also often have the ability to enter a trance state, leaving the body behind and journeying in spirit form. Shamans see spirits as allies to bargain with for power and assistance. They respect and honor powerful spirits and exert their wills over less powerful ones. For them, ritual magic represents the means to contact and bargain with spirits for their aid. Shamans may also have other occult advantages allowing them to deal with spirits (see Chapter 5).

Shamans serve many different roles in a society. See *Shamanism* in Chapter 1 (p. 13) for more information.

Sorcerers

Sorcerers use ritual magic to gain mastery over spirits, ordering them to do their bidding. While they may have the ability to sense spirits (with Second Sight, Medium, or Awareness), their prime ability is summoning and commanding them. Sorcerers may revere a higher power, beyond even their ability to control, but they consider all other denizens of the spirit world potential servants. This arrogant attitude often results in Contests of Will between sorcerers and spirits, and Strong Will is a key advantage for a sorcerer (see *Spirit Combat*, p. 69). Spirit Empathy (p. CI46) is *not* an appropriate advantage for sorcerers!

Cultures with priests and shamans sometimes consider sorcerers evil or misguided. Sorcerers are looked upon with no small amount of respect (and fear) because of their powers.

Ritual Magic Terms

Adept: Anyone with the Ritual Adept advantage (p. 75).

Caster: Person performing or casting a ritual.

Charm: Item empowered through a ritual. Protective charms are often called *amulets*, while charms that draw things to the wearer are called *talismans*.

Client: Person on whose behalf a magician performs a ritual. In many cases the client and the magician are the same person.

Fetish: Item containing the essence or power of a spirit.

Focus: An item which aids in the performance of ritual magic.

Magician: Any character with the Ritual Magic skill.

Path: Branch of ritual magic focused on a particular type of effect. The eight paths are Cunning, Dreams, Health, Knowledge, Luck, Nature, Protection, and Spirit.

Ritual: Ceremony intended to have a magical effect. More broadly, any use of the Ritual Magic skill or one of its associated paths.

Subject or **Target:** Person, place, or thing a ritual is being cast upon.

Tradition: Set of beliefs and practices for learning and using ritual magic.

Learning Ritual Magic

Students can normally learn the Ritual Magic skill (see p. 79) only from a teacher. Depending on the nature of the campaign world, would-be magicians may be apprenticed or accepted as members of a magical order and taught ritual magic. Or students may be able to learn on their own – albeit at half speed (see p. B83) – if there is sufficient published information. In some campaigns, people may recall memories from past lives when they were magicians (see the *Reawakened* advantage, p. CI43), allowing them to use some of those abilities. The GM may also allow those with Ritual Aptitude to develop a certain instinctive level of skill with Ritual Magic, although this should probably not exceed IQ, with no points in specific rituals.
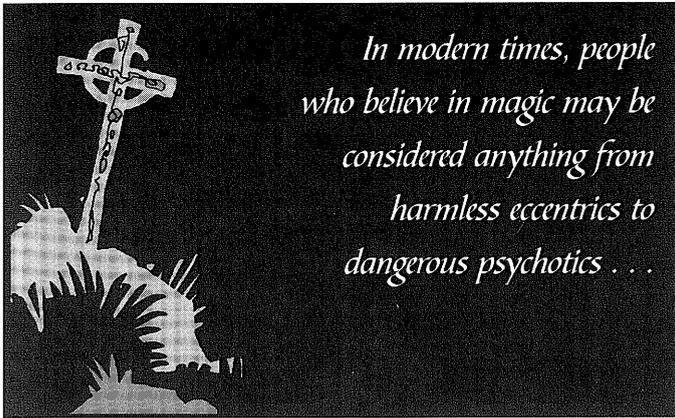
> *In modern times, people who believe in magic may be considered anything from harmless eccentrics to dangerous psychotics . . .*

Generally speaking, magicians carefully choose whom they take as students, both to keep their secrets out of the wrong hands and to keep them secret. In historical settings, magicians are respected and feared but are just as often hunted and killed. In modern times, people who believe in magic may be considered anything from harmless eccentrics to dangerous psychotics, depending on their behavior and discretion.

Magical Traditions

The Ritual Magic skill requires a specialization in a particular *tradition* of magic. A magical tradition is a set of beliefs, rites, and rituals that define how the magician sees and interacts with the spirit world. There are dozens of different traditions in the real world. Entire books have been written on individual magical traditions: a quick browse through the occult or New Age section of a bookstore (or a search on the Internet) can provide a glimpse of the breadth of material available. Here are some examples of traditions for campaigns with ritual magic.

Eastern Traditions

Hindu magic draws on the culture's rich mystical heritage, including understanding of *prana* or life force and the use of yogic techniques of meditation and breath control. Some of the more esoteric disciplines involve the ability to withstand lengthy fasts and trials like lying on a bed of nails, or elaborate sexual rituals intended to raise spiritual energy.

Shinto is the ancient religion of Japan, said to recognize eight million *kami* (spirits), from powerful divinities to spirits of lakes and forests to ancestor spirits. Shinto priests carry out rituals to appease the spirits, bring good fortune, and honor the spirits of ancestors. See *GURPS Japan*.

Taoist magic is based on an understanding of the Chinese elements of fire, earth, metal, wood, and water and the dynamic balance of yin and yang. It often involves specialized meditation, diet, and exercise intended to cultivate *chi* or life force. See *GURPS China*.

Western Traditions

Arabian magical traditions honor the Qu'ran and Allah's role as supreme Creator, delving into alchemy, astrology, and an understanding of the djinn (see p. 54). Arabian magicians were scholars interested in arcane learning as well as scientific thought. At the height of Islamic civilization, the two were nearly inseparable. See *GURPS Arabian Nights*.

Christian mysticism is often obscured by the official stance of many denominations that magic is evil. However, Christianity has a long heritage of mystics, from the early Gnostics to St. Francis and St. Hildegarde. The Catholic Mass fits the structure of a ritual, and many pagan cultures have noted similarities between Christian practices and their own rituals, often combining them to form hybrid traditions like Voodoo.

Kabalistic magic began as a Jewish tradition and is still studied by students of Hebrew mysticism, but the Kabalah spread throughout Western ceremonial magic in the 19th century and is frequently used by non-Jews (usually spelled Qabalah in that context). It is based around a diagram known as the "Tree of Life" that serves as a kind of mystical "map" of reality. See *GURPS Cabal*.

Ceremonial vs. Improvised Magic

Some ritual magic traditions distinguish between "ceremonial" magic and "improvised" or "spontaneous" magic. Both use the magic system described here, but with different emphases.

Ceremonial magic tends toward tried-and-true ritual procedures handed down from one magician to another. Improvised magic is based more on the spur of the moment and whatever feels right at the time.

In game terms, a ceremonialist tends to buy up his skill in the specific rituals he uses, having them at the same level or close to the level of his Path skill. A spontaneous magician, on the other hand, tends to have high levels in the Ritual Magic and Path skills and uses many rituals at default value, making them up as he goes and using ritual elements to make up the difference in skill. The spontaneous magician is able to improvise ritual elements to deal with the unexpected. The ceremonialist's well-rehearsed rituals are often more reliable, however.

Shamanism

Siberian shamanism may be the origin of the word "shaman," from the Siberian *saman*, medicine men who enter trances and journey into the spirit world to bring back mystical power.

American Indian shamanism covers a wide range of beliefs and practices found among the different North American tribes. See *GURPS Old West*.

African shamanism strongly influenced modern traditions like Voodoo. African tribal gods are often personifications of primal or elemental forces, or ancestor spirits like the loa of Voodoo (see below).

Australian shamanism is based around the Koori belief in the Dreamtime, the primal world of ancestor spirits and totems. Folk magicians known as *koradji* or *mekigars* speak with spirits, communicate over vast distances, and influence the physical world.

European shamanism (if such a thing can be said to exist) is most often tied up in various ancient pagan traditions (see *European Paganism*, below), which use techniques similar to shamanism.

Voodoo

Voodoo (spelled a number of different ways in English) specifically refers to a spiritual tradition combining African beliefs with French Catholicism and a smattering of Carib Indian practices. Voodoo is best known in former French colonies like Haiti and New Orleans, where it is still practiced. Voudounistas revere spirits known as *loa*, which combine aspects of African tribal gods and Christian saints.

Santería, similar to Voodoo but based on Spanish Catholicism, is found primarily in Hispanic communities. Santeros worship the *orishas*, similar to Voodoo loa.

Brujería, found in Central and South America, combines Catholicism with native Central American beliefs, particularly Aztec mythology. Practitioners are known as *brujos* (male) or *brujas* (female).

GURPS Voodoo provides more information about Voodoo and related traditions.

European Paganism

The *druids* were priests, teachers, and magicians of the ancient Celts. Some modern neo-Pagan authors suggest druids had many shamanic qualities. Certainly modern practitioners of druidry often use shamanic techniques. Druidic rituals may have included animal (and even human) sacrifices. See *GURPS Celtic Myth*.

Teutonic cultures include rune magic and a tradition of shamanism involving trance, visions, and spirit travel called *seidr*. Many of the practices (particularly runes) have been incorporated by modern neo-Pagans as well as less pleasant groups, like the infamous Thule Society in Nazi Germany. See *GURPS Vikings*.

The *streghe* (witches) of Italy were well known for their mystical powers, as were the *Benandanti* (p. 7), who "traveled" in their sleep to fight battles in the dream world against "evil witches" known as the *Malandanti*. Belief in things like the *malocchio* ("evil eye") was common.

The modern neo-Pagan revival of witchcraft is often referred to as *Wicca*. It incorporates a broad range of mystical beliefs, including elements of shamanism and various cultural traditions. Some modern witches claim an unbroken tradition stretching back for centuries, while others acknowledge Wicca as a modern phenomenon.

Learning the Paths

The prerequisite for all the Path skills is the Ritual Magic skill. Furthermore, no Path skill can be higher than the practitioner's Ritual Magic skill – to advance he must first improve his basic knowledge. A student must spend at least 1 character point on Ritual Magic in order to learn it effectively.

This skill gives a basic understanding of how magic works, the cosmology of a magical tradition, and how to conduct rituals effectively. The Ritual Magic skill gives the student the potential to conduct rituals without any further training.

Each Path is a Mental/Very Hard skill. All Paths default to Ritual Magic-6 (to a maximum default level of 14); they can be improved from the default (see sidebar, p. B45).

Example: Dark Cloud is a shaman with Ritual Magic-17 and Path of Luck-16. He has spent character points to raise his Path of Luck level above the default of 11. His level in Path of Luck cannot rise above 17 until he raises his level in Ritual Magic; once he does, he may pay points to raise his level in Path of Luck.

Each Path has a number of rituals, each of which produces a specific effect. These rituals default to the appropriate Path at a level of -0 to -8 (see the specific rituals). Any default penalty can be bought off for 2 character points per -1. A magician cannot have more skill with a ritual than he has with the Path that controls it.

Syncretism

Magical and religious traditions have a long history of "borrowing" from each other to create new, hybrid traditions; this is known as *syncretism*. For example, the Romans adopted the Greek pantheon and "Romanized" them, combining them with some local Etruscan deities. The Hebrews may have adopted elements of Egyptian and Babylonian mysticism during their exiles in those lands. The Catholic church co-opted various pagan religious sites, turning them into churches and the gods worshipped there into saints (or demons). Voodoo combines African shamanism with Catholic and American Indian elements. Hermeticism draws from a wide variety of sources, as do many modern neo-Pagan traditions. Despite the claims of believers and practitioners, few traditions are ever "pure" or remain uninfluenced by other sources.

In *GURPS Spirits*, syncretism underlines the fundamental sameness of ritual magic across time and cultural boundaries. A modern current in ritual magic, called Chaos Magic, encourages syncretism and "borrowing" from diverse magical traditions to suit the needs of the practitioner and the situation.

Ritual Magic Defaults

The assumption in *GURPS Spirits* is that ritual magic is something *anyone* can do, given enough training in the Ritual Magic skill. Not everyone can do ritual magic *well*, since most people perform rituals at -5 to skill (see column at right), but everyone has at least a little potential.

In other campaigns, this may not be the case. The GM should feel free to change the requirements for ritual magic to suit the campaign. For example, a "secret magic" campaign may require at least one level of Ritual Aptitude, an Unusual Background, or both in order to use ritual magic at all. The Ritual Adept advantage (p. 75) may be forbidden or may come with a heavy Unusual Background cost to keep ritual magic slow and cumbersome.

On the other hand, in a high-magic setting, the -5 penalty for performing rituals without Ritual Aptitude might be lessened or removed altogether, making it possible for anyone to learn and use the Ritual Magic skill (and making the Ritual Aptitude advantage redundant). High-fantasy or "fairy tale" settings might even allow people to perform ritual magic from a default of -1 to -5 (based on IQ or Will) without knowing the skill. Levels of Ritual Adept might be inherent for *everyone*, eliminating one or more ritual elements (see p. 85). GMs should be cautious about making ritual magic cheaply available to everyone; it can unbalance the game and distract from other abilities.

Example: Dark Cloud wishes to master the ritual Malediction (which defaults to Path of Luck-6). He starts with a base skill of 10; he can raise this by spending character points to a maximum of 16 (for 12 points). After reaching level 16, he cannot raise his skill with Malediction until his level in the Path of Luck rises above 16. Every time he improves his Path of Luck skill by 1, his Malediction skill level also goes up by 1.

Ritual Aptitude

While anyone can learn and use ritual magic, only the truly gifted can use it to full effect. Those without the Ritual Aptitude advantage (p. 75) can learn the Ritual Magic skill, Paths, and Rituals normally, but roll at -5 if they actually try to perform ritual magic. This means their Paths effectively default to Ritual Magic at -11, making them virtually useless. Furthermore, the maximum skill level they can have with any Path is 12 (they must still spend a minimum of 1 character point, no matter how high their IQ is). Ritual Aptitude reduces this penalty by 1 per level and eliminates the maximum skill level. Characters with 5 levels of Ritual Aptitude use Ritual Magic and Paths at no penalty. GMs may change these assumptions depending on the nature of the campaign (see box).

Conducting Rituals

Magical rituals have five steps, each designed to focus the magician's will. Free from distractions, the will of the magician is able to tap into the spirit world and draw on the power there to effect change. Some magical traditions change the elements or the order of the steps, but for the most part they are always present.

Preparation: The magician readies himself, the subject of the ritual, and the place where the ritual will take place. This includes things like drawing or painting mystical symbols on the walls and floor (using the Symbol Drawing skill, p. 79); ritually cleansing the area with a broom, water, or incense; anointing the participants with special oils or potions; ritual baths; and meditation or prayer to clean and center the mind. Shamans often use dance, chant, and drumming to raise their energy and focus it on the ritual. Magicians also often prepare a working area with rituals intended to protect themselves and the participants from harmful forces (see *Path of Protection*, p. 101).

Invocation: When all is ready, the magician calls on the spirits involved in the ceremony. This process often begins during the preparation, but continues beyond it – the chanting or ritual activity is repeated throughout the ceremony. During the invocation, the name of the spirit or spirits involved or a symbolic representation is used.

Intent: The magician expresses what he wants the ritual to accomplish. This can be a simple, direct petition ("destroy this enemy") or something more complicated, such as linking a symbol of an effect with the subject of the ritual. During a harmful ritual, for example, the magician destroys or damages a representation of the victim. Some exorcisms use a ritual bath, symbolizing the cleansing of the foreign presence. While the symbolic event is being performed, the invocation continues and is often linked to the intent.

Offering: Most rituals add an offering of some sort to convince the spirits to carry out the ritual's intent. The offering can be a sacrifice, a gift of food or drink (which may be consumed by the participants or left out for the spirits), or something less tangible, like a pledge of servitude or a prayer of thanks.

Dismissal: The ritual concludes with the dismissal of the invoked spirits. Most of the time this is the easiest part of the ritual. Some magicians, however, deal with hostile spirits that may resist dismissal and try to attack their summoners. The dismissal is also an important component of harmful rituals, because the magician must take steps to shield himself and his client from the harmful effects of the magic.

Ritual Elements

All rituals have three basic elements: time to conduct the ritual, sacred space attuned to the spirits, and material components. Normally, ritual magic is an involved process that takes a great deal of time and effort. These elements act as a focus for the magician's will, making it easier to concentrate and achieve results. In the right quality or quantity, ritual elements grant bonuses to ritual rolls. The combined bonus from ritual elements cannot exceed +15.

It is possible, in an emergency, to dispense with ritual elements. In theory, none of them are necessary. Adepts (p. 81) can eliminate some of these steps from a ritual and still make it effective, but most magicians who take such shortcuts risk having the ritual fail or backfire. Doing without them is possible but imposes a penalty to ritual rolls. Cumulative penalties for lack of the appropriate elements have no limit: ill-prepared magicians could have penalties of -15 or more! Adepts can dispense with some or all of the ritual elements at no penalty. A first-level adept can eliminate one of the three elements. A second-level adept can do the same with two ritual elements, and third-level ritual adepts can dispense with all the trappings of ritual – they visualize a ritual in a few seconds, and it works as if they had physically performed it.

Time

Rituals are meant to be conducted over a period of minutes, hours, or even days. Even after the ritual is over, the effects may not take place immediately. Most blessings and curses (see *The Path of Luck*, p. 97), for example, take days to occur. This may be changed by any conditions placed on the ritual (see *Conditional Rituals*, p. 89). The delay between a ritual and its effects is out of the magician's hands, but the time to perform a ritual isn't. Most rituals take between 10 minutes and an hour to complete. More complex and powerful rituals may take hours or days.

Most of the time goes into repetitive activities like chanting and dancing. Eliminating these elements makes the ritual more difficult (-2 to all ritual rolls) but reduces the time to a mere 1d+2 minutes (time varies with each ceremony). Reducing the ritual time to 1d seconds (just enough time for the magician to visualize the intended result and concentrate on it) puts him at -5 on all rolls. An adept who eliminates the time element can further reduce the base 1d seconds by taking a skill penalty of -1 per -1 seconds (e.g., 1d-3 seconds would be -3 to skill), but minimum time is 1 second.

On the other hand, putting extra time and care into a ritual improves its chances of success. Repeating the same ritual once a day gives a +1 bonus for every two days of ritual casting. The caster must dedicate at least half an hour each day to the ritual to gain this bonus. Extended rituals (more than three times the minimum time requirements) add +2 to all rolls. The effects do not take place until the ritual is over, whether it takes hours or days to complete.

Roleplaying Rituals

The actual steps of a ritual are mechanistic, even boring. GMs should emphasize the occult significance of rituals rather than the process itself. The ritual connects the magician to the spirit world, opening a window into the supernatural. When the ritual works, it places the participant in an altered state of consciousness. Strange things can happen during a ritual; this is particularly true of more powerful or intricate rituals.

Sometimes the magician sees images from the past or future. These may relate to the purpose of the ritual. A magician cursing an enemy might see flashes of past encounters with him. These images could either reinforce any animosity he feels for the target or make him waver (by showing a positive side of the victim, for example). Or he might see his target (or himself!) being struck down by misfortune.

The flashbacks could become even more extreme, becoming full-fledged hallucinations. The caster could suddenly find himself clad in furs, performing the ceremony in a cold cavern while a saber-toothed tiger roars in the distance, or dancing around a bonfire in a tropical jungle, or even performing the ritual on a virtual-reality computer while floating in low Earth orbit. The images can belong to past incarnations of the magician, or even pieces of the lives of other people involved in the ritual (such as the magician's client or target).

The act of summoning spirits can attract other entities unintentionally. If the magician is not working in a warded area (see p. 103), other spirits may choose to "drop by" for a visit! Most of the time, the interlopers make only a brief appearance (just long enough to speak a sentence or let the magician catch a glimpse of them) and then are gone. These visitations provide a good opportunity for GMs to drop hints, warnings, or red herrings.

The GM can either roll randomly for these events using the Flashbacks disadvantage (p. B240) or throw them in at his whim. The most extreme disruptions might require the magician to make a Ritual Magic or Will roll to continue performing the ceremony. Throwing in these complications once in a while makes rituals the uncertain, powerful events they should be, rather than a purely mechanical activity.
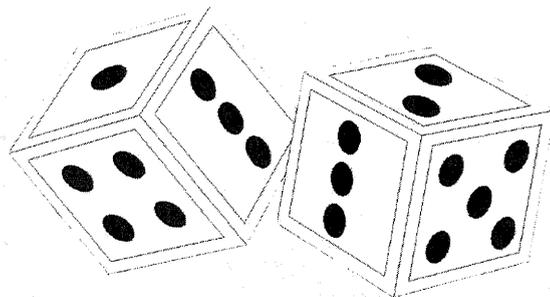
Mystic Symbols

Some common ritual tools and symbols used by magicians:

Broom: This humble domestic tool has mystical significance in many folk magic traditions, particularly witchcraft. Magicians sweep an area with a broom to represent removing bad influences, curses, or spirits.

Chalice: Cups and drinking vessels are symbols for many traditions, from the legend of the Holy Grail to the cauldrons of pagan myth. Chalices may hold liquids infused with mystical power (see *Potions*, below).

Clothing: Magicians often wear special vestments for their rituals, from the regalia of a priest or shaman to a hooded cloak (bespeaking mystery) or monkish robe to working "skyclad," without any clothing at all. Special clothing often includes jewelry and badges of office, from a druid's torc to a priest's stole.

Drum: Drums are quintessential shamanic tools, used to create a driving beat for achieving trance states. Shamans are often said to "ride" their drums into the spirit world. Other percussion instruments are common in ritual magic, including rattles (like the *asson* of Voodoo) and bells (found in Hermetic magic).

Fire: Fire is a powerful magical symbol, associated with humanity's earliest sense of wonder at the world. It is considered a source of power: creative, transforming, and destructive. Rituals are often performed by candlelight or torchlight, burning symbolic representations represents the fulfillment or banishment of those influences, and lighting or snuffing a flame is a symbol of creation or destruction.

Incense: The sense of smell is one of our most primal, and rituals often involve incense or perfumes intended to evoke a particular mood. Incense is used to ritually cleanse and create sacred space, and incense smoke often represents spirits.

Jewelry: Rings, necklaces, bracelets, crowns, and other items of adornment are attributed with mystic powers. Rings represent the unbroken circle of eternity. Crowns represent authority and majesty, and so forth.

Plants: Many traditions believe certain plants, herbs, and fruits have mystical properties. They are used in rituals as magical symbols and for medicinal purposes.

Potions: Magicians make use of potions, philters, and oils in their rituals. As with herbs, potions have both symbolic and practical purposes. They may contain hallucinogens to help the magician attain an altered state of awareness, or narcotics to reduce the defenses of a victim. A little poison sometimes enhances a curse: witches have been accused of being poisoners as well as magicians, not entirely without cause. The act of imbibing a potion (whether or not it is chemically effective) serves as a powerful symbol of "inviting in" the forces that carry out one's desire.

Randomizers: Things like cards (particularly Tarot cards), coin flips, joss sticks, dice, shells, and runes are used for divination and insight into the spiritual world. The patterns they form provide intuitive knowledge to the magician.

Runes: This includes not just Norse *Futhark* runes, but any form of magical writing or pictogram, from Kabalistic diagrams to Celtic *ogham* script to Voodoo *vevers*, Chinese paper charms, and the pentagram, a powerful Western magical symbol.

Swords: Blades of various sorts are common magical symbols, from the witch's *athame* to the ceremonial swords and daggers used in Hermeticism and Voodoo. Swords are often used to "cut" ties between a subject and a curse, to draw barriers of protection, and to direct the magician's will.

Stones: Many magical traditions attribute special powers to certain stones, particularly crystals and precious stones. They may be used in jewelry, made into charms, or used to focus the magician's concentration, such as looking into a crystal ball. Stones are also considered "grounding" because of their associations with the Earth.
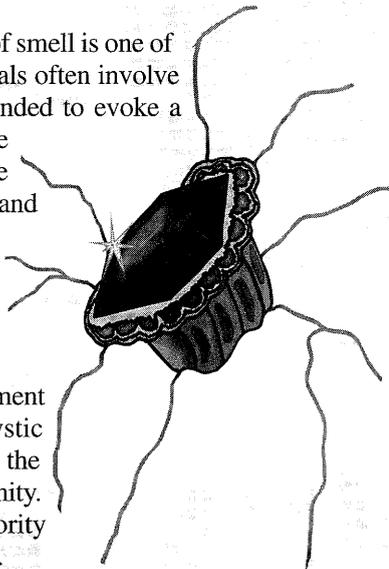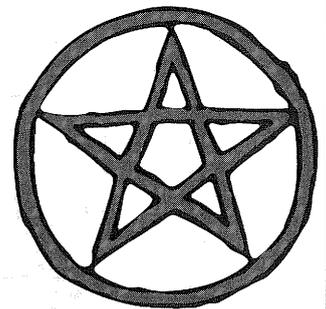
Example: Miles, a Voodoo houngan, is going to send a Malediction against a corrupt cop extracting protection money from the neighborhood. If he were in a hurry, he might conduct the ritual in as little as five or six seconds. His effective skill, however, would go down from 16 to 11, making it very likely the victim would resist the effects or, worse, that Miles wouldn't be able to protect himself against the effects of the ritual. Erring on the side of caution, Miles decides to take the slow and sure way. Having acquired clippings of the policeman's hair at the local barber shop, Miles conducts a complex ritual every day for eight days. At the end of this time, he makes his ritual rolls, which now have an effective level of 20. Predictably, the ritual works perfectly. Over the next two weeks, the cop is suspended on suspicion of corruption, his wife kicks him out of the house, and he finally falls down a fire escape into a dumpster and breaks his neck.

When a magician conducts a ritual may also be a factor in its success. Some magical traditions believe in auspicious and inauspicious times for working magic, such as sunrise or sunset, the cycles of the Moon, astrological influences, and holy days (like the Wiccan Sabbats). If the GM chooses to use these factors, apply a -3 to +3 modifier based on the occasion. Some occasions affect rituals in different ways: the waning moon may aid rituals of banishing and cursing while hindering rituals of blessing and summoning. A successful Occultism, Ritual Magic, or Theology roll reveals (roughly) the modifier for performing a ritual at any given time.

Sacred Space

Temples, hidden groves, medicine lodges, magic circles, and the like are considered sacred space. This is an area specially dedicated to rituals and specially attuned to receive spirits. This requirement is not hard to fulfill. A Ritual Magic roll and a ceremony lasting 1d minutes (this time cannot be reduced), including placing candles, mystic symbols, sacred items, and the like in a defined area, effectively consecrate an area for ritual purposes, although only for one ritual and with a -1 penalty to skill. Properly consecrating an area for ritual use requires at least an hour's ceremony, performed every day for a week, in order to cleanse the area of any negative influences. A magician conducting a ritual without sacred space has a -5 penalty to skill.

A place used constantly for rituals acquires a mystical "charge" that aids any ritual conducted within its boundaries (see table, p. 106). Old mystic areas or temples (used for 20 years or more) grant a +1 to all ritual rolls, or +2 if used for 50 years or more. Historical ritual places (used for 100 years or more) give a +3 to rolls. Those used 500 years or more give a +4. Truly powerful mystical centers, used for 1,000 years or more, give a +5 to all ritual rolls. Such sacred places (especially powerful ones) are likely to be claimed by a magical tradition or group which may or may not allow others to use them. GMs may wish to consult **GURPS Places of Mystery** for ideas regarding various sacred sites on Earth.

Sacred Space and Sanctity

The types of sacred space mentioned on p. 106 are not necessarily the same as levels of Sanctity for clerical magic, but they can be. Sacred space and sanctity can be related, as follows: areas of No Sanctity are not sacred space, imposing a -5 penalty. Low Sanctity equates to a makeshift consecration, for -1 to skill. Normal Sanctity is the same as normal sacred space, with no bonus or penalty. Places of High and Very High Sanctity equate to powerful mystical centers, granting a bonus of +1 to +3 (for High Sanctity) or +4 to +5 (for Very High).

Alternatively, if clerical and ritual magic are opposed for some reason, the relationship might be reversed, with areas of No or Low Sanctity best suited to ritual magic and places of High and Very High Sanctity imposing penalties on ritual magic use (and vice versa for clerical magic).

Aspected Sacred Space

The default assumption is that "sacred space" is the same thing for all magical traditions. GMs desiring some additional detail can decide that sacred space is tradition-specific; one magician's sacred space is not necessarily suited to another.

If the sacred space belongs to the magician's tradition, the normal modifiers on p. 106 apply. If it was consecrated by a similar tradition, it counts as one level less – a makeshift consecration counts as no sacred space, and an American Indian medicine lodge counts as makeshift conditions for a pagan priest, for example. Sacred sites have their bonus reduced by 1. If the traditions are completely unrelated, but not opposed, one's sacred space counts as no sacred space for the other – a Catholic priest working in a shaman's medicine lodge, or a shaman in a Catholic church. If the traditions are opposed, their sacred spaces count as no sacred space for each other and any bonuses are treated as penalties for the opposing tradition. So a demon-worshipping priest trying to perform a ritual at a timeworn Christian religious site is at -5 for having no sacred space and -4 for the power of the site, for a total of -9 to skill! As always, the GM is the final judge of what places are considered sacred to which traditions.

Material Components

Material components include representations of the target and the spirits involved in the ritual, sacrificial offerings, and occult symbols of power. They can be as simple as a photograph, a small necklace, a candy bar, and a ring . . . or as complex and bulky as a life-sized mannequin, a fully stocked temple with statues and paintings, a small herd of animals, and a set of robes, wands, and staves. Simple ritual components allow the magician to conduct the ritual at no penalty, while elaborate preparations provide bonuses (see table, p. 106).

Symbolic Representations are necessary when the subject is the unwilling target of a ritual effect; willing recipients do not require special symbols for the ritual to work. Conducting a ritual without a good symbolic representation of the target has a penalty of -2 (if at least a good drawing of the person is available) to -6 (if only the subject's name is known). Pieces of clothing or small articles belonging to the victim grant no bonus or penalty. Nail or hair clippings give a +1 bonus. Very good representations (photographs and blood samples) add a +2 bonus. A DNA sample (either an actual distilled laboratory sample or a computerized diagram of it) or video tape of the subject adds +3 to ritual rolls. Having the subject physically present during the ritual puts the magician at +4 skill.

Sacrifices are never necessary (there is no penalty for not having them) but can make the spirits more inclined to aid the magician. Offering luxuries like food, drink, fine cigars, and liquor, among other things, can appease spirits, which can taste or otherwise experience the offerings by virtue of their being offered. The sacrifice of live animals also helps gain the attention of spirits. Food offerings provide bonuses of +1 or +2, while animal sacrifices may grant a bonus of +2 to +4 (if both food and animals are offered, only the higher bonus counts). Animal sacrifices may lead to trouble with the authorities, animal protection groups, and other outsiders; such sacrifices are often tied to demon worship and raise suspicions that the magician is plotting to sacrifice humans as well as animals. Human sacrifices, however, attract only spirits associated with harm and negative emotions, granting bonuses of +1 to +5 per person sacrificed. A human sacrifice conducted while contacting any other spirit bestows an equivalent penalty to the ritual roll – the negative psychic energies of the sacrifice scare off or disgust the spirits. At the GM's discretion, a *willing* human sacrifice can bestow a bonus where an unwilling one would not.

It is possible for magicians to make a sacrifice of *themselves* as well. This is done only *in extremis* because it is likely to have permanent effects on the caster's health. For every 2 HT points "spent" during the performance of a ritual, the caster gets a +1 to any ritual roll. At the end of the ritual, whether it is successful or not, the caster receives wounds totaling the HT lost; these usually manifest as internal bleeding, bruises, tears of blood, and stigmata, but may instead appear as starvation or dehydration. These bonuses do not count against the +15 maximum bonus; the magician can add a bonus equal to his HT (meaning he will be reduced to -HT by doing this).

Whenever a magician sacrifices his life force in this way, however, he must make aging rolls for all his stats (see p. B83) without adding any tech level, Longevity, or Unaging bonuses. Multiple self-sacrifices in a short period of time (GM's decision) give penalties to the roll of -1 to -5.

Spiritual Symbols are also important in ritual. Even a drawing, amulet, or talisman depicting the spirits invoked allows the ritual to be conducted without penalty. Having no such symbols puts the magician at a -3 penalty to his Path rolls. Very detailed symbols, such as sculptures and paintings, give a bonus of +1 to +3. A mystic symbol (see p. 86) adds its level to all ritual rolls, and extensive symbols created using the Symbol Drawing skill (p. 79) also provide bonuses.

Resistance Rolls

Hostile rituals are always resisted; roll a Quick Contest between the modified Path skill and the target's Will. Many Path of Protection rituals resist hostile rituals with their own modified skill levels.

The subject resists beneficial rituals only when he is unaware of the ceremony. In that case, he subconsciously senses the supernatural intrusion in his life and instinctively resists it, as above, but at Will-4.

Causing fear and unease in a subject can weaken his ability to resist. Many magicians announce curses and other hostile rituals by leaving ritual elements where the target can find them (dead chickens, symbols drawn on the victim's front door, etc.) or through showy announcements of the subject's impending doom. This intimidation attempt may backfire, however. Whenever a curse is "announced" in this way, make a reaction roll for the subject, modified from +5 to -5, depending on how intimidating the announcement is and whether the person believes in the supernatural. Most modern Westerners react at -1 to -3 against such threats, while a

superstitious person (or someone with the appropriate Phobia) reacts at +5. Announcements made in person are also modified by the magician's own reaction modifiers. On a Good or better reaction, the victim is intimidated and at -2 to resist the ritual. On a Poor or worse reaction, the target's reaction is the exact opposite and he resists at +3 to Will.

Hostile Rituals

Hostile rituals – rituals used to harm or influence a target against his will – are subject to a special rule for resistance. These rituals require two ritual skill rolls: a normal resisted roll to determine if the ritual succeeds, and a second roll to protect the magician or his client from the hostile forces raised in the ritual. If the second roll fails, the client suffers the effects of the ritual! If the magician is the client, then he is affected. If the second roll is a critical failure, the client suffers the effect of a critical success on the ritual. The magician and client do *not* get a resistance roll against this; it represents a sort of "instant karma," or what some magical traditions refer to as the "Law of Return." Hostile magic has its risks, which is why ethical magicians are very careful in handling it.

Sensing Ritual Effects

Most people, even magicians, do not know when a hostile ritual is used against them unless they have some sort of spiritual defenses prepared to warn them, such as a Chaperone (see p. 98). Those able to sense spirits (i.e., with advantages like Awareness, Medium, or Second Sight) always know when they are cursed, particularly if they know magic themselves. This knowledge can help save their lives – or fill their final days with anguish.

When a sensitive is cursed, he feels the spiritual attack, often as pain or nausea. Some may even perceive the spiritual forces involved in the attack. If the sensitive does not have the power or skills to remove the curse, its presence oppresses him, like a weight dragging him down. A cursed sensitive is prone to nightmares, fits of depression, or nasty mood swings. These can be roleplayed, or the GM may assign one or two mental disadvantages that the victim suffers from until the curse is lifted. Some possibilities include Bad Temper, Berserk, Manic-Depressive, and Paranoia.

Combined Rituals

Although the rituals described on pp. 92-105 are individual effects, a magician can combine them together into a longer ceremony intended to have more than one effect. For example, a magician may conduct a ceremony to summon a spirit (Summon) and bind it to carry out his bidding (Bind). The rituals must all have the same intended target in order to be combined. The time to perform the rituals is added together. A separate ritual roll is made at the end of the time for each effect in the ritual, using the magician's modified skill. If the rituals are resisted, the target resists each separately, in turn.

Conditional Rituals

The effects of a ritual normally happen after the ritual is completed (often with a short delay) and last as long as the

magician intended when casting the ritual. However, magicians can alter this if they wish, by specifying *conditions* in the ritual. There are two types of conditions: those affecting when the ritual starts and those affecting when it ends.

A magician can specify a particular condition when the ritual will take effect. For example, a Malediction ritual is cast over a magician's sanctum, set to affect any intruder that enters, or a combined Slumber and Dream Shackles ritual is cast over some apples, set to affect whomever takes a bite from one. A common use of conditional curses is in magical oath-taking, where the subject is struck by a curse if he breaks the terms of an oath. Many of the charms described on p. 92 are effectively conditional rituals; for example, Chaperone is a protective ritual that takes effect when it encounters a danger to the subject.

A magician can also set a condition for the end of a ritual, causing it to end before its duration expires. This is commonly used in conjunction with curses, such as a group of ecologically minded witches cursing a polluter "until he reforms his ways." If the polluter sees the light and comes around to their way of thinking, the curse is lifted.

Conditional rituals do not apply any modifiers to the ritual skill roll, except where the conditions change the components of the ritual (see above). For example, a symbolic representation of the target is not usually available for conditional rituals where the target is unknown.

Multiple Target Modifiers

Some rituals can affect a group of people, or even a whole nation or continent. When casting a ritual for or against a group, the caster or casters can define the targets, from a generic "everyone in the city" to "all redheads in the city" or "all redheads named Diana in the city." Base the penalty applied to the roll on the total number of targets that meet the magician's specifications – a very general curse is likely to blow up in the caster's face! The penalties for very large groups are prohibitive for most lone magicians (see *Combined Efforts*, below). Use the following table to determine the penalty for affecting a group of people:

Multiple Target Modifiers Table

Size of Group	Roll Penalty
2-5	-4
6-10	-8
11-20	-12
21-50	-14
51-100	-18
101-200	-22
201-500	-26
501-1,000	-30
1,001-5,000	-34
5,001-20,000	-38
20,001-50,000	-42
50,001-100,000	-44
+ every doubling	an additional -4

Groups resist with a single roll of 12 if there are few or no magicians among them, at 14 if at least 10% of the group are magicians, and at 16 if at least 20% of the group are magicians. Groups made up entirely of magicians use the resistance roll of their most powerful member. This system is for quickly determining resistance for a generic group. For specific, known groups the GM may take NPC magicians and their protective rituals into account.

Even if the ritual succeeds, it may not affect everyone in the group. Groups of 10 people or fewer are always affected. For groups between 10 and 100, the total number of people affected is equal to 10 or half the total (75% on a critical success), whichever is greater, plus one person per point by which the ritual roll was made. Only 20% of groups bigger than 100 are affected (40% on a critical success), plus 2% per point by which the ritual roll was made (round up).

Example: Claudius the Adept curses a small town that dared offend his magnificence. He decides to send a Malaise down on the residents. He has specialized in Malaise, so his skill level in that ritual is 23. He takes his time and uses a number of ritual aids, multiple castings, and animal sacrifices (mutilating locally owned cattle) for a total bonus of +12; that gives him a base roll of 35. Since this is a small place, he casts the curse on all males aged 20-40 in the town. There are 89 such people, so the penalty is -18, which reduces the base roll to 17. Claudius wins the Quick Contest by 6 points, so half of the 89 adults, plus 6, a total of 50 people, fall prey to a disease that strikes them within the week. The mystery plague devastates the local economy as the town grinds to a halt. Only a handful of the victims die, but damage to the town's finances and morale is severe.

Combined Efforts

When two or more magicians combine their efforts, they can attempt very powerful rituals. Many ritual effects, especially those affecting a great number of people or a large geographical area (see above), can have skill penalties from -20 to -100 or more! These are obviously beyond the power of a single caster. When a group of magicians attempts a potent feat, the skill penalty is divided evenly among them (rounded up). Furthermore, the numbers of points by which their combined rolls are made (after calculating penalties) are added together to determine the total effect of the ritual. Only penalties related to the ritual effect (multiple targets, area, and duration) can be shared in this way. Default penalties and penalties for not using proper ritual elements (see p. 85) apply equally to each caster; by the same token, bonuses granted by ritual elements also apply individually.

The casters must conduct the ritual at the same time. They can be in different places, but if they are out of each other's sight they are all at -1 skill. If they are in different places but have contacted each other through the dream world (see p. 26), they have no penalty. At the end of the ritual, everyone rolls against the appropriate ritual skill. If any of the casters fails, the whole ritual fails. Any critical failure also affects the entire group. Effects that require a resistance roll use the average of all modified skill levels involved, +1 for each additional magician involved, in the contest against the victim's Will (see below).

· Besides these dangers, the magicians are vulnerable to treachery from within. The link between them can be used as
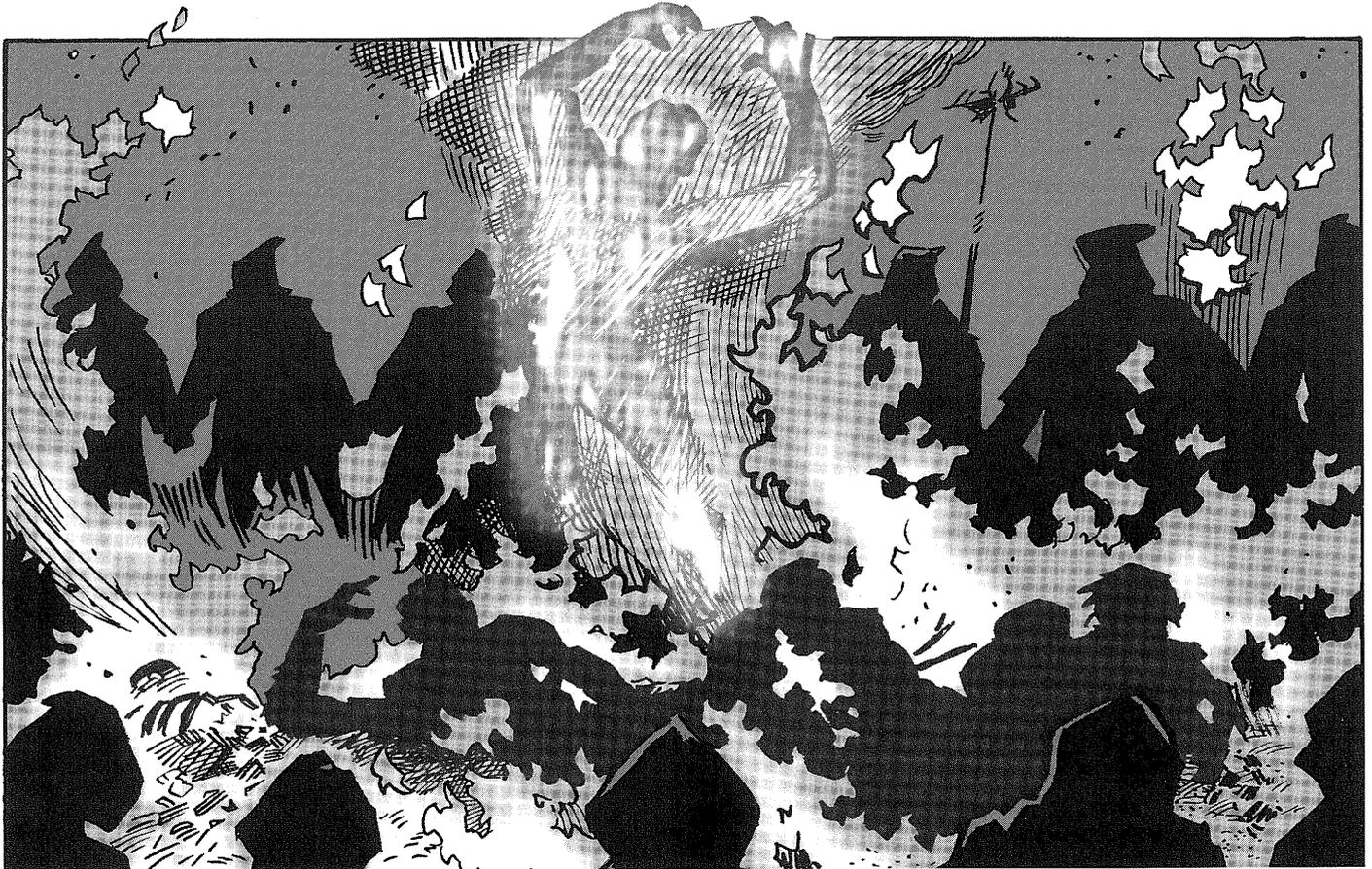
Sample Magic Items

These are examples of magic items which could appear in a campaign.

Cloak of Invisibility

A cloak (or cap, or other garment) with the Obscurity ritual cast over it. When worn, the cloak confers the benefits of the ritual to the wearer, making him less likely to be noticed, although not truly invisible.

Cursed Apples

Red, ripe apples with a combined Slumber and Dream Shackles ritual cast on them. Any woman who takes even a bite of one will begin to feel drowsy and eventually fall asleep. When the victim falls asleep, the Dream Shackles ritual prevents her from waking for a year and a day, or until a particular condition of the curse is fulfilled, such as being kissed by a handsome prince.
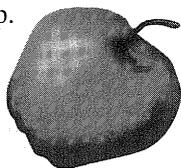
Drum of Thunder

A tribal drum with a magical air elemental bound into it, making it a fetish. The spirit has 20 Fatigue. Anyone playing the drum and making a successful Musical Instrument (Drum) roll can call upon the spirit's spells (all at 14): Shape Air, Destroy Air, Clouds, Rain, and Lightning.

Ghost Knife

A fetish dagger. The blade is made from stone (cheap quality), but with a permanent Ghost Sword ritual, allowing it to affect incorporeal spirits. A minor spirit is bound to the dagger to maintain the effects of the Ghost Sword on it.

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a conduit for attack. If one of the magicians involved in the combined ritual casts a harmful ritual at another participant, the original ritual fails automatically and the target gets no resistance roll!

Example: Six magicians wish to cast a ritual on their sanctuary so that anybody entering who is not a member of their group will be struck by a Malediction. Their skill levels in Malediction or Path of Luck defaults are (from greatest to least) 17, 16, 15, 15, 13 and 12. The area protected has a radius of 5 yards (no modifier), and the effect will last two months (-12). The Initiates' careful use of ritual elements gives each of them a bonus of +4 to their roll. The -12 penalty is divided evenly among the six Initiates (-2 to each), for a net bonus of +2. All the rolls are successful, and a Malediction curse with an effective skill level of 21 (their average modified skill of 16, +1 per additional caster involved) will strike any outsider who enters the place.

Area and Duration Modifiers

Some rituals can be cast to affect a given area for a given period of time. The ritual affects anybody who enters the area or who performs certain activities in the area as if it had been cast on him personally. The ritual involves mystically defining the affected area's boundaries using drawings, mystical cornerstones, and similar elements.

During the ceremony, the magician must determine what activity must occur in the area to trigger the ritual effect. Some examples: a sacred site protected by a powerful curse that affects anyone who disturbs it; a small spring that grants the effects of a Path of Health ritual to anyone who drinks from it; a doorway enchanted so that crossing it will summon a hostile spirit (see *Conditional Rituals*, above).

Conducting a ritual over a large area requires the efforts of several magicians working together. The modifiers for "area effect" rituals are determined by the radius of the area affected:

Area Effect Modifiers

Area	Modifier
Under 5 yards:	0
5-10 yards:	-1
11-100 yards:	-1 per 10-yd. increase (-10 for 100-yd. rad.)
101-200 yards:	-1 per 25-yd. increase (-14 for 200-yd. rad.)
Over 200 yd.:	-4 per 100-yd. increase

Duration determines how long the ritual effects last once the area is defined. Very large, powerful groups of magicians can affect an area for years or even centuries.

Duration Effect Modifiers

Duration	Modifier
≤ 12 hour:	0
≤ 1 day:	-2
≤ 1 week:	-4
≤ 1 month:	-8
Additional weeks (to 1 year):	-1 per week (-52 for a full year!)
Each additional year:	-4 per year

Area-effect ceremonies require one roll, after all penalties have been set, to determine if the ritual works. When the effect is triggered, roll again against the modified ritual roll to determine whether the effect works at that time. A critical failure on any of these triggered rolls causes the ritual effect to stop working for 1d weeks (or altogether, if the duration is less than that time).

Magic Items

Ritual magic produces different magic items than the Enchantment spells from the *GURPS Basic Set* and *GURPS Magic*. There are three types of items: charms, fetishes, and foci.

Charms

Most magical items produced by ritual magic are *charms*, objects empowered to grant the benefits of a ritual to their owner. Only one charm of each ritual can be used or carried at any given time. Charms usually work only for the person they were made for, although some charms are "general purpose." Protective charms are often known as *amulets*, while charms intended to draw things to their wearer are called *talismans*. Many amulets break when their effects have lapsed or they have failed, in order to alert their wearer.

Some rituals require charms (mentioned in the ritual's description). For others, charms are optional, usually a means of preparing the ritual in advance and setting conditions for its activation, such as someone picking up, putting on, or using a charm (see *Conditional Rituals*, p. 89).
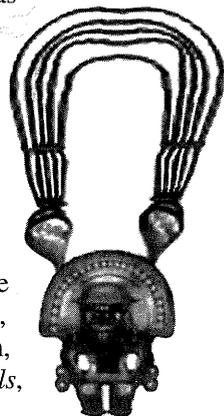
The exact form of a charm varies depending on magical tradition. Common charms include jewelry (particularly necklaces and rings), small bags or pouches filled with herbs and other ingredients, stones or crystals, vials of liquid (oils or potions), ointments, incense (burned to activate the charm), feathers or other animal parts, woven cords, and pieces of paper with magical writing.

Fetishes

A *fetish* is an object containing the essence of a spirit. In effect, the spirit is bound into the object, allowing its holder to use its powers. Servitor or mindless spirits are usually used to make fetishes. Free-willed spirits may allow themselves to be bound into fetishes as part of some bargain, but most are bound against their will and resent it. Fetishes are created using the Fetish ritual (p. 105).

A fetish allows its owner to access the powers and energy of the bound spirit or uses the spirit's energy to sustain some other ritual, effectively creating a permanent charm.

In the first case, the holder of the fetish can use the spirit's powers as if he were the spirit. The fetish provides none of the powers of Spirit Form or other advantages that affect only the spirit, like DR, Body of Air, or Regeneration. For example, an air elemental fetish allows its wielder to use the elemental's Gust power (see p. 39) but not the spirit's Body of Air or Spirit Form advantages. A disease spirit fetish allows its wielder to use Pestilence (p. 39) or the spell of the same name (p. M74), and so forth. The spirit's Fatigue powers the fetish's abilities; when it is reduced to 0 Fatigue, the fetish stops working until the spirit recovers at least 1 Fatigue point.

The holder of a fetish can also draw on the spirit's energy like a powerstone (p. B161), using its Fatigue to power his own spells (and possibly other paranormal abilities, at the GM's discretion).

A critical failure when using either of the above abilities allows the spirit in the fetish a chance to escape if it wants: roll a Quick Contest of Wills between the spirit and the wielder. If the spirit wins, it escapes the fetish (and may flee or attack, depending on its disposition and a reaction roll). If the wielder wins, the spirit remains trapped.

Finally, a fetish can serve as a permanent charm (see *Charms*, above). The power of the spirit maintains the ritual cast on the fetish indefinitely (allowing the caster to ignore modifiers for duration; see p. 106). This comes at the cost of the fetish's other abilities; its holder cannot use the spirit's powers or Fatigue.

Foci

A *focus* is an item imbued with spiritual power that aids in the performance of ritual magic. A focus grants its owner the Mystic Symbol advantage (see p. 75). A focus can be anything but tends to be an item used in magical or religious ceremonies (see *Mystic Symbols*, p. 86, for examples). A focus may grant a bonus from +1 to +5 on all ritual magic rolls. At the GM's option there *may* be foci that grant larger bonuses; such items should be extremely rare and will be desired by every magician who knows of them!

Normally, in order to use a focus, a magician must spend character points to buy the Mystic Symbol advantage. This represents the magician either making the focus or "attuning" an existing focus to his spiritual energy. The GM may allow a magician to use a focus on a one-time basis without attuning it; treat this as a normal bonus for having good ritual elements (see p. 85).

Rituals

Described below are the ritual paths, along with some sample rituals. Although they cover the most of the common rituals, the list is by no means exhaustive. GMs are encouraged to create more rituals, using the examples as guidelines.

The names of particular rituals or paths may differ from one magical tradition to another. GMs and players should feel free to make up other evocative names for rituals and paths for in-game use, as a way of making each tradition and character distinctive.

The Path of Cunning

The rituals of this path focus on trickery and deception. They fool the senses and influence the mind.

Guise   Defaults to Path of Cunning-1

The subject looks and sounds like someone else for the duration of the ritual. The effects of the ritual include clothing, so it can clean and dress a scullery maid like a fairy princess, for example, without otherwise changing her appearance. The GM can require an Illusion Art (p. CI148) roll for matching exact details or creating an esthetically pleasing effect. Guise does not change the subject's abilities in any way.

Slumber   Defaults to Path of Cunning-3, Path of Dreams-2, or Path of Health-2

See *Path of Dreams*.

Lust   *Defaults to Path of Cunning-4 or Path of Health-5*

This ritual inspires sexual desire in the subject. The magician creates a charm in an hour-long ritual and gives it to the client. When the client next comes into contact with the target of the ritual, the target can attempt to resist normally (p. 88). Targets with Lecherousness resist at -5. Targets that fail to resist are consumed with desire for the client and react accordingly. This ritual inspires *desire*, not love, and the target will react in accordance with his personality traits (including mental disadvantages).

Mist   *Defaults to Path of Cunning-4 or Path of Nature-3*

See *Path of Nature*.

Veil   *Defaults to Path of Cunning -4, Path of Knowledge-3, or Path of Protection-4*

See *Path of Knowledge*.

Obscurity   *Defaults to Path of Cunning-5*

Casting this 10-minute ritual on a person, place, or object renders the subject less likely to be noticed or found by others. This is not invisibility; the subject is still visible, but others are more likely to overlook it. The subject gains +1 to Stealth and related skill rolls for every point by which the magician makes the ritual roll. Objects affected by this ritual provide a similar bonus to Holdout skill. Places affected by Obscurity apply a penalty equal to the ritual's success to things like Area Knowledge and Sense rolls when it comes to unwanted people finding or entering that place. People walk past the odd house on the corner without even noticing it's there, and tend to forget it even when it's pointed out to them.

Hallucination   *Defaults to Path of Cunning-6*

This ritual causes the target to hallucinate. The target resists with Will. If the target fails to resist, the caster can affect the target's perceptions, convincing him of the complete presence or absence of a single "thing." The hallucination appears completely real to the subject; he can see it, hear it, feel it, and so forth, but it exists entirely in his mind. The hallucination is limited to a single "thing": a person, a torch-wielding mob, a building, a flock of birds. If it can be described as a single entity, it should pass muster. The GM's judgment is final, as always. Particularly creepy or scary hallucinations – biting into a hamburger only to find it full of maggots, waking up to find your bed full of snakes – may merit a Fright Check, at -1 for every point the caster won the contest.

Suggestion   *Defaults to Path of Cunning-6*

The caster can use this 10-minute ritual to plant a single command in the target's mind, like a posthypnotic suggestion. The subject resists normally. If the caster is successful, the suggestion is implanted. When it activates, the subject makes a Will roll, minus the amount by which the caster won the

Creating New Paths

The eight Paths described in this chapter are by no means the only possible ones. GMs should feel free to create new ritual Paths to suit the needs of their campaigns and to rename or rearrange the existing paths as desired. As a rule of thumb, a ritual's most favorable default is the default to the most appropriate Path, while less favorable defaults are for secondary paths where the ritual may be useful. Some rituals are accessible to multiple Paths, but most are restricted to only one.

The simplest means of customizing the Paths is to rename them according to the culture of the tradition. A Celtic magical tradition might call the Path of Cunning the Path of Glamour, while a Norse tradition calls the Path of Luck the Path of Wyrd (or Fate). Specific traditions may also have their own names for particular rituals, giving them more character and individualized flavor.

You can also rearrange the rituals into Paths that suit a particular tradition. A GM running a campaign with an emphasis on ancient Chinese magic might create five Paths associated with the five Chinese elements of earth, fire, water, metal, and wood. Rituals are assigned to the new Paths based on their spiritual as well as physical associations, with wood rituals associated with fertility and growth, earth rituals with strength, and so forth. Likewise, you can create a set of Paths based around the ten *sephiroth* of the Kabalah or the five points of the pentagram (representing the elements of earth, air, fire, water, and spirit).

contest. If successful, he ignores the command. Otherwise, he carries it out to the best of his ability.

Cloud Memory   *Defaults to Path of Cunning-7*

Performing a one-hour ritual, the caster seeks to alter or erase one of the target's memories. The target resists normally (see p. 88). If successful, the caster can erase a selected memory (leaving the subject with a period of "missing time") or replace it with a false memory. The erased or altered memory can be recovered using hypnosis, the Mindwipe psionic skill, or the Read Memories ritual, at a penalty equal to the amount by which the caster won the contest when casting this ritual. Otherwise, the effect is permanent.

The Path of Dreams

This path gives magicians access to the dream world (see p. 26), which in turn allows them to affect other people's dreams. The path assumes that the dream world is a spirit world in the setting, but that doesn't have to be the case. The rituals work just fine by interacting with "mundane" dreams.

While in the dream world, the caster can conduct other rituals, although these affect only any "dream selves" in the area and not the physical bodies of normal people. Thus a Health ritual would heal (or harm) the target's dream persona, but not his physical body.

Dreamwalk   Defaults to Path of Dreams

After conducting this hour-long ritual, the magician enters a trance. After a brief (1d minutes) period of disorientation, he begins to dream. At first the caster determines the surroundings (see *the Dream World*, p. 26), but encounters with other travelers in the dream world may change the scene. The sojourn to the dream world can last as long as the magician wills. To leave, all that is necessary is a Path of Dreams roll, unless an outside force attempts to detain the visitor there (see Dream Shackles).

Dream Visitor
Defaults to Path of Dreams-2

The magician can enter someone else's dream. The subject must be asleep for the 10 minutes it takes to conduct the ritual, and resists with Will. If the ritual is successful, the subject immediately begins dreaming. The caster falls into a trance and, after a brief sojourn in the dream world, enters the subject's dreams. Once there, the caster can try to reshape elements of the dream by imposing his will on the environment. The visitor can send messages, deliver warnings, create pleasant images, or inflict nightmares on the dreamer. The dreamer always remembers the content of these dreams.

Slumber   Defaults to Path of Dreams-2, Path of Health-2, or Path of Cunning-3

This ritual causes the target to fall into a deep, natural sleep. The ritual takes 10 minutes. If successful, the target must make an immediate Will roll to avoid falling asleep. For every 2 hours the target has been awake past 16 hours, subtract 1 from his Will roll; for instance, a target that has been up for 24 hours straight makes his Will roll at -4. The target must make another Will roll every 2 hours until he falls asleep. The target's slumber is normal in every way and untroubled (unless some outside force intervenes). If left undisturbed, the target sleeps for 1d+2 hours before waking. The target can be awakened normally at any time. Magicians often use this ritual as a prelude to other Dream rituals, although it can also be used to provide rest and comfort. When cast on a lone subject driving along a highway late at night, it can be deadly.

Dream Sanctum
Defaults to Path of Dreams-3
or Path of Protection-6

A dream sanctum is created around an object or area in the material world to resist intrusions from the dream world. Any Dream ritual that attempts to affect anyone inside the Sanctum must win a Quick Contest of Skills against the Sanctum in order to succeed; roll once each hour until the sanctum or the ritual fails. If the subject moves away from the protected space using a Dream ritual, his dream self is vulnerable to attack in the dream world.

Night Terrors
Defaults to Path of Dreams-5

This ritual inflicts terrifying nightmares on the victim the next time he goes to sleep. He resists normally (see p. 88). The ritual takes an hour to cast, during which the caster visualizes the basic elements of the nightmare. The nightmare itself lasts

1d minutes; during that time, the subject's body becomes totally rigid. Even if the target realizes he is suffering a nightmare, waking up before the dream is over requires a Will roll at -6. At the end of the dream, the target must make a Fright Check, at -2 for every point by which the caster won the contest. Failed Fright Checks may result in psychological or even physical harm (see p. B94).

If the ritual is used successfully against the same target for several consecutive days, the Fright Checks become more severe, suffering an additional -1 per day. Magicians can drive targets insane, or even kill them, through repeated use of Night Terrors.

Dream Shackles
Defaults to Path of Dreams-8

This powerful ritual imprisons the subject's soul in the dream world. The target is unable to wake and wanders in the dream world while his body remains in a deep sleep. The ritual takes effect the next time the target falls asleep, or immediately if the hour-long ritual is conducted while he is asleep. The imprisonment normally lasts for an entire night, but a longer duration is possible (see p. 106), effectively putting the target in a coma. While it lasts, other Dream rituals can affect the victim, and he will not be able to wake up. Also, his body is helpless against physical attacks; if his room were set on fire, he would burn or suffocate without being able to wake. A victim imprisoned long enough will die of dehydration and starvation unless he receives medical attention.

The Path of Health

These rituals affect the physical body for good or ill. The principles are the same, so skill in healing also means skill in harming.

Dose   Defaults to Path of Health

This ritual cures diseases and long-term ailments (from arthritis to a heart condition). The severity of the ailment and the physical condition of the patient determine the difficulty of the ritual (a cancer-ravaged body is much harder to help than that of an 18-year-old athlete). The ritual is conducted around the patient and lasts an hour. At the end of the ritual, the caster makes his roll. On a success, the symptoms and eventually the disease are eradicated over a period of 3d days.

Modifiers: The ritual has a base penalty of (patient's HT -12); if the patient has a HT of 12 or higher, there is no bonus or penalty. The caster is at +1 against simple ailments (common cold, mild allergies, minor infections). Moderate ones (bronchitis, moderate infections, fevers, smallpox) he cures at no penalty. Tougher ailments like malaria, tuberculosis, and severe infections are at -4. Against a congenital heart condition he is at -7; against diseases like cancer and AIDS, -15.

Soothe   Defaults to Path of Health

A simple ritual to relieve pain and ease the symptoms of illness or injury. The ritual takes 10 minutes, after which the caster rolls. If successful, any penalties affecting the subject due to illness, pain, or fatigue are eliminated for 2d hours.

This is not a cure; it treats only the symptoms. In addition to alleviating pain due to illness and injury, this ritual is also used to ease labor and childbirth.

Fertility   Defaults to Path of Health-2 or Path of Nature-3

This ritual helps ensure growth and reproduction, for crops or animals (including people). For crops, the magician performs a one-hour ritual and rolls; if successful, the affected plants grow quickly and well, untroubled by pests and disease. Overall yield is increased by 5% for every point by which the caster succeeded, to a maximum of +100% (a true bumper crop).

For animals, the ritual prepares a charm that is placed on or near a female subject. The next time it is possible for the subject to conceive, she does. The ritual does not circumvent contraception nor any medical conditions that make it impossible for the subject to conceive.

Slumber   Defaults to Path of Health-3, Path of Dreams-2, or Path of Cunning-3

See *Path of Dreams.*

Vitality   Defaults to Path of Health-3 or Path of Protection-4

Vitality protects the subject from illness. The amulet created by this hour-long ritual protects the wearer against one possible infection or contagion (see p. B133); the disease does not infect the subject unless he rolls a critical failure on a HT roll. If the wearer is the target of a hostile Health ritual, it must win a Quick Contest against the Vitality ritual before attempting to affect the target.

Sterility   Defaults to Path of Health-4

The opposite of Fertility (above), this ritual *prevents* conception and renders plants and animals barren. An area of earth affected by this ritual will not grow anything for at least a full season. Females targeted by it are rendered barren and unable to conceive. Males are rendered impotent. A successful Fertility or Cleansing ritual will undo the effects of Sterility, although the magician must win a Quick Contest of Skills against the Sterility ritual. Otherwise the effects are permanent. Mundane medical science can neither explain nor correct the problem.

Succor   Defaults to Path of Health-4

This ritual involves dressing a wound to stop bleeding and promote healing. This takes 5d minutes. At the end of the ritual, the wounds are considered bandaged and, if the caster has First Aid, they gain the benefits of a successful First Aid roll at the appropriate tech level (see p. B128). The caster then rolls against Succor skill; the effects of the ritual last for one day per point the roll is made by (with a minimum of 1 day). A failure means the patient receives no additional benefits. The subject makes six HT+1 rolls per day the ritual lasts to recover from injuries. The subject also recovers from lasting injuries (p. B129) as if they were temporary. Succor has no effect on permanent injuries.

Physical Effects

Readers familiar with the basic *GURPS* magic system may notice the general lack of rituals with overt physical effects. Rituals affect matters of thought and perception or quirks in fate or probability. Ritual magicians don't toss around fireballs or conjure walls of stone out of thin air. Their rituals *can* have physical effects (rapid healing, sudden illness, spontaneous "accidents," and so forth) but they tend to be things that can be considered "coincidental." However, magicians do have indirect means of achieving physical effects.

Magicians can use the Path of Spirit to command various spirits to do their bidding. The range of possible effects depends on the types of spirits the GM has in the campaign (see Chapter 7 for more on this). With access to just the basic spirit abilities a magician can cause poltergeist phenomena, influence probability, create sounds and images (to communicate, frighten, or impress), and command spirits to possess people (or animals) or to materialize and perform services in the physical world. If spirits have other powers, the magician can take advantage of them as well. Having a fire elemental set an opponent on fire is just as effective as an Ignite Fire spell!

Lust   Defaults to Path of Health-5 or Path of Cunning-4

See *Path of Cunning*.

Hasten Mount
Defaults to Path of Health-5 or Path of Nature-5

See *Path of Nature*.

Malaise   Defaults to Path of Health-5

This ritual inflicts a disease on the subject. Depending on the skill and the intent of the magician, this illness can be minor, severe, or life-threatening. Like most curses, two rolls must be made, the second to protect caster and client. The subject resists with Will. A successful Malaise roll infects the target with a disease of some sort (see p. B133). Every 2 full points the magician wins the contest by modifies the HT roll to resist the disease's effects by -1. Medical attention helps in the usual way, unless the caster won the contest with a critical success, in which case the disease is extremely rare or resistant to normal treatment. The caster cannot specify the nature of the disease; it is up to the spirits (and the GM).

Warrior's Blessing
Defaults to Path of Health-6

Warrior's Blessing increases the subject's physical prowess. The one-hour ritual produces a charm for the client. Any time thereafter he can use the charm to invoke one of two benefits. First, he can gain Combat Reflexes and +1 to Basic Speed by paying 1 Fatigue per turn. (If he already has Combat Reflexes, double the normal benefits.) Second, he can increase his ST by 50% at a cost of 1 Fatigue per turn. When the subject stops paying Fatigue, the effect ends and the charm no longer has any power. If the subject of this ritual already has Hyper-Reflexes or Hyper-Strength (p. CI58), the normal Fatigue costs for those advantages are halved (1 Fatigue every other turn).

Evil Eye   Defaults to Path of Health-7

This is one of the most powerful Health rituals, but it is very risky. The magician performs a one-hour ritual to "prime" the enchantment. At any time during the next 24 hours, the caster can try to kill one person with a glance.

Any time after the ritual is complete, the magician can activate it by making eye contact with his target. The caster and the target roll a Quick Contest of Wills. If the caster wins, the target has to make a HT roll at -1 for every point by which the Evil Eye roll succeeded. If the subject makes his HT roll, he is wracked with nausea and a feeling of general illness; his ST and DX are reduced by 2d each, and if either attribute drops to 0, the target passes out.

On a failure, a severe effect strikes his body: the actual symptoms may be those of a heart attack, a stroke, kidney failure, or any such sudden ailment. He is immediately reduced to 0 HT and collapses. If First Aid is not applied in HT minutes, he dies. The same happens if he does not receive medical attention at TL6 or better (or magical assistance as described below) in HT hours. Even then, his survival is in the hands of the attending physicians: they must make two rolls, one against Physician-4 and one against Surgery-4. A Dose ritual or a Faith Healing roll can substitute for medical treatment, with no penalty.

If the attacker loses the Quick Contest, he is affected in exactly the same manner as if he had been the target. The forces invoked in this ritual are not particular! Ties bring no result (but do "use up" the ritual). Whatever the outcome, the ritual affects only one person; it works well for assassinations, but not against a mob or more than one foe.

The Path of Knowledge

The rituals of this path provide knowledge and insight. Rolls for Path of Knowledge rituals should be made secretly by the GM, since the magician does not necessarily know if the ritual's information is accurate.

Aura Reading
Defaults to Path of Knowledge

The magician performs a 10-minute ritual that permits him to see the subject's aura, with the effects of an Aura spell (p. B163). The aura reading also shows if the subject is magical or has any rituals currently affecting it.

Veil   Defaults to Path of Knowledge-3, Path of Cunning -4, or Path of Protection-4

Veil resists all Knowledge rituals cast on the subject or any subject in the affected area. The ritual must win a Quick Contest of Skills against the Veil ritual to affect its intended target.

Vision of Luck
Defaults to Path of Knowledge-3 or Path of Luck-5

This 10-minute ritual shows whether good or bad luck awaits the subject in the future. Results are usually vague and describe what may happen if the subject picks a course of action. Most of these rituals use divination aids like Tarot cards, rune stones, conch shells, animal entrails, etc. On a successful roll, the caster gets an answer to a question pertaining to the consequences of an action. The answer tends to be simple, preferably limited to one or two words. Greater degrees of success may yield slightly more elaborate answers. For example, if the question were, "Should I return home?" some possible answers include "No," "It's dangerous," and "Yes, but great danger awaits."

History Defaults to Path of Knowledge-4

This ritual lets the caster know the history of an inanimate object, which must be present for the ritual. The magician knows the past of the object, its user's personality, events of significance to the object, and so forth, but only information available from the object's point of view. The history can be detailed or general, at the caster's discretion. A general overview of the item's history requires a 10-minute ritual. A detailed history requires an hour-long ritual.

Locate Defaults to Path of Knowledge-5

This ritual helps locate a person or object. The ritual takes 10 minutes; the caster is at an additional -2 if he does not have a symbolic representation of the subject. (This applies even if the magician is normally able to disregard material elements.) Other modifiers: -1 to -5 if the object or person is very well hidden. If this ritual seeks a magician without his consent, he can resist it with Will. A Ward or Obscurity ritual on the target subtracts its Power from the ritual skill roll.

If successful, the caster senses the location of the target. Often, the ritual uses some symbolic tool to help guide the caster toward the target. Typical tools include a pendulum (which swings faster the closer it gets to the target), a magnetic compass (which aims in the direction of the target) or a dowsing rod, often used over a map (or other symbolic representation of the area) for long-range rituals.

Scry Defaults to Path of Knowledge-6

The caster performs a 10-minute ritual, then slips into a trance and sees a brief vision of the subject, as if the magician were physically present, floating above the subject. The vision lasts for one minute per point the ritual roll succeeded by and may allow the caster to gather information about the subject's activities and whereabouts. A failure results in no effect. On a critical failure, the caster is subjected to a false vision created by the GM. The magician may receive the vision in the form of a dream or as images seen in a mirror, a crystal ball, on the surface of water, or some other medium. All subjects apply a penalty equal to the ritual's success to Scry rituals cast on them.

Read Thoughts
Defaults to Path of Knowledge-7

By performing a 10-minute ritual, the magician can read the subject's mind. The ritual is resisted by Will; if successful, the magician may read the subject's thoughts for 1 minute per point by which he won the contest. The caster can hear the subject's surface thoughts (what he is thinking at the moment). Language is not a barrier, but very alien minds may impose a modifier of -2 or more to the ritual roll. The subject is not aware of the intrusion, except on a critical failure.

Read Memories
Defaults to Path of Knowledge-7

The caster performs an hour-long ritual to reach into the target's mind and retrieve a particular piece of information. This can be everything relevant the target knows about a particular person, place, or thing, or an answer to a specific question the caster has (provided the target knows the answer). Two ritual rolls are required: a Quick Contest against Will to enter the target's mind and an unresisted roll to remain undetected. If the second roll fails, the subject is aware of the intrusion. If the first roll is successful, the caster gets the desired information in the form of a vision or flash of insight. A failure results in no information, and a critical failure results in misleading information.

The Path of Luck

The Path of Luck is the broadest ritual path. These ceremonies directly affect probability according to the will of the magician. Both good luck (blessings) and bad luck (curses) can be created. Nearly any event can be caused (or prevented), although the greater the chances (for or against) the more difficult they are to influence. Luck rituals also allow the magician to get visions of the future, although such predictions are not always reliable.

Stroke of Luck Defaults to Path of Luck-1

This is a simple ritual designed to grant the subject a measure of good fortune. The ritual takes 10 minutes to conduct. If successful, the subject enjoys one small success or lucky break for every 2 points of the ritual roll's success (with a minimum of one) over the next 2d days. Alternatively, one problem in his personal or professional life is solved in that time. Some examples: a coworker who was previously rude or uncooperative apologizes and acts friendlier; he finds a $20 bill on the street; he decides not to order the three-alarm chili at the new Tex-Mex restaurant and avoids a violent bout of stomach trouble.

The effects of this ritual are not spectacular or life-changing, nor do they protect against life-or-death situations, although the ritual might (GM's option) tilt the balance in the subject's favor: say, an assassin's bullet misses his heart, leaving him seriously wounded, but still alive. Any such major intervention "uses up" the effects of the ritual, no matter how many "breaks" are left.

Windfall　　　　Defaults to Path of Luck-2

This ritual consists of associating symbols of prosperity with the subject. Within 2d days of its successful completion, the subject receives an amount of money equivalent to one fourth of his monthly income (or $100, whichever is greater) multiplied by the amount of the roll's success. The money doesn't materialize out of thin air; instead, he benefits from some stroke of luck (he wins the lottery, he gets an unexpected inheritance, an old debt is paid back, and so on). A critical success brings him the equivalent of two months' income (or $1,000, whichever is greater) multiplied by the amount of the roll's success.

A failure means no money is forthcoming. A critical failure works the other way, with the subject *losing* money at the same rate he would have gained it on a normal success. Or he may get money through a stroke of bad luck (for instance, a loved one dies and the insurance pays off).

Chaperone
Defaults to Path of Luck-3
　or Path of Protection-5

This amulet safeguards the wearer against one danger, threat, or curse. Investing it with spiritual power requires an hour-long ritual, after which the wearer is automatically protected against the next danger that occurs. The wearer may be the only survivor of a train wreck or remain untouched by a drive-by shooting that hits other bystanders. Also, any minor curse (such as Journeyman's Curse and other rituals that do not directly threaten the life or soul of the victim) automatically fails against the protected party. If desired, the caster can specify a particular danger or type of danger when the ritual is cast, such as "accidents" or "violence." When the amulet has acted, it breaks and become useless. Chaperones cannot be saved or hoarded; only one can be made for an individual at any given time, and no other can be created until he has used up the previous one.

Against a major curse like Malediction, the charm only delays the attack for 1d days. During that period, the wearer of the charm is plagued by nightmares indicating the hostile spiritual forces, barely kept at bay by the amulet. He may seek help in time, *if* he understands the meaning of the dreams!

Journeyman's Blessing
　　　　　　Defaults to Path of Luck-3

This blessing helps the subject on the job, making things go his way, drawing attention to his good points, helping him avoid accidents, and so forth. The ritual requires an hour and produces a charm the subject must carry with him at all times while on the job for the next month. If he does so, any failed roll on the Job Table (p. B194) is considered a success and any success becomes a critical success. A critical failure on the Job Table is treated as a normal failure instead. The charm lasts for only one roll on the Job Table.

If the subject is *looking* for a job, the next die roll he makes to find a job is at +1 per point by which the magician made the Journeyman's Blessing roll.

Journeyman's Curse
Defaults to Path of Luck-3

This curse harms a person in the performance of his job. The ritual takes an hour to perform. If the first ritual roll is successful, the subject suffers a mishap at work within the following 3d days. Specifics are up to the GM (the boss walks in while the target naps on the job, his computer loses a week's worth of work, the dog eats his performance report), but the result is equal to a failure on the Job Table. This can range from a mere loss of income to actual injury, depending on the job. A critical success with the ritual results in a critical failure for the target on the Job Table; the mishap is so serious it severely injures him or causes him to lose his job.

If the second roll fails (whether the first one succeeded or not), a spiritual backlash affects both client and caster. Thus, if the first roll was a critical success and the second a critical failure, both the target *and* the client suffer a critical failure on the Job Table!

This ritual and Journeyman's Blessing (above) can cancel each other. Roll a Quick Contest of Skills between the two. Whichever ritual wins cancels the other. On a tie, both are canceled.

Love Charm   Defaults to Path of Luck-3

This ritual creates a charm to attract a suitable romantic partner for the client. The magician performs an hour-long ritual to empower the charm, which must be carried by the client. If the ritual is successful, the client will meet a suitable person within 3d days. On a critical success, the potential partner is absolutely ideal for the client, and the magician gets some hint of how the client will know that person ("She'll be wearing a green dress" or "He will give you a rose"). On a failure, nothing happens. A critical failure attracts someone who *seems* right but ultimately is bad for the client (a stalker, someone who's already married, etc.).

This ritual does not guarantee love or romance; it only provides an opportunity. Because the ritual attracts a suitable person, it does provide a bonus on that person's initial reaction roll toward the client equal to the amount the ritual roll succeeded by.

Gremlins   Defaults to Path of Luck-4

The forces of luck are powerful when dealing with complex machines. This ritual causes a particular machine to break down and become inoperative – a car might develop engine trouble, a computer a fatal hard-disk error, and so forth. The ritual takes 30 minutes. If successful, the machine breaks down within 1d hours. It can be fixed normally, but on a critical success on the ritual roll, the machine is damaged beyond repair.

If sentient machines exist in the campaign world, the GM must decide if they are able to resist ritual magic. If they are, this ritual does not affect them. Use Malediction (below) instead.

Hunter's Blessing
Defaults to Path of Luck-4
or Path of Nature-3

See *Path of Nature*.

Loyal Item   Defaults to Path of Luck-4

This ritual enchants a particular item to always return to its owner (usually the caster) through the most expeditious means possible. The item must be in the character's possession and present when the one-hour ritual is performed. Thereafter, if the caster loses the item, the forces of chance conspire to return it. For example, a passerby will pick up the item without really noticing it, taking it in the direction of the owner, then losing or putting down the item when headed in a different direction. Then someone else might pick up the item, or it might float down a river, be found by a bird or squirrel, fall into the back of a truck, and so forth.

The GM decides how long it takes a particular item to return to its owner. As a general rule of thumb, small, portable items return faster than large, unwieldy ones (which have to wait for the right circumstances to come along). Items return faster in densely populated areas than in sparsely populated ones, since there are more possible avenues for the item to make its way back. A small item might cross a city in an hour or two while a large item or one lost in an isolated place may take days, weeks, or even months to make the journey.

This ritual ends immediately if the owner willingly gives the item to someone else. It does not improve the owner's chances of finding the item; it only ensures the item will eventually find him. If the item is brought into a warded area, the ritual must win a Quick Contest against the ward to leave the area. Otherwise it is stuck there.

Vision of Luck   Defaults to Path of Luck-5
or Path of Knowledge-3

See *Path of Knowledge*.

Weapon Blessing
Defaults to Path of Luck-6

Weapon Blessing makes a weapon more efficient in combat. The ritual takes an hour and has a penalty of -1 per pound of the weapon's weight. Duration is determined normally, and the magician can cast the ritual over multiple weapons by taking the normal penalties for multiple targets. A successful ritual roll allows the weapon's wielder to ignore 1 point of skill penalties for every 2 points the roll succeeds by. This does not increase the wielder's skill, but does allow him to overcome penalties to make more difficult attacks or maneuvers with the weapon. For example, the wielder could reduce penalties for visibility, injury, or the penalties to hit a target in a specific location. This allows the wielder of a blessed weapon to achieve "impossible" feats on occasion. The ritual also changes the next critical failure rolled with the weapon to a normal failure, although this ends the effect of the ritual.

Malediction   Defaults to Path of Luck-8

This powerful curse involves great risk for the caster and the client. It brings great harm to the target, leading to his ruin, injury, and probable death. The roll to protect the caster and client from the ritual (see p. 89) is made at -2 skill (for a total default value of Path of Luck-10!). The target resists with Will.

The ritual takes an hour. Starting the night it is completed, nightmares plague the victim for several days. These nightmares have elements of the ritual and may give the victim clues to the identity of the people wishing him harm. Within a week of the ritual's completion, the first effects become apparent. Misfortune hounds the target. The first consequence is the equivalent of a critical failure on the Job Table (p. B194). After 1d days, he will offend or otherwise drive away most relatives and friends: make a reaction roll for every person or group the subject associates with, at -2 per point the ritual roll was made by. On a Bad or worse roll, friends and loved ones turn their backs on him. He could cause this with an inadvertent offense or unlucky "accidents" (his wife discovers that he had an affair years ago and leaves him, he runs over his best friend's dog, and so on).

Finally, 1d days after that, the victim suffers a horrible accident or act of random violence (a car accident, a fall down a skyscraper elevator shaft, a blow from a falling safe, a run-in with a marauding band of fanatics, or some such mishap). As a result, the victim takes the equivalent of 3d of damage per point of the ritual roll's success (minimum 3d).

At any point during the Malediction, the subject may realize he is the victim of a curse and seek help from a magician (see *Path of Protection*, p. 101), who might save the victim before the most serious effects take place. Malediction is very strong, however, and protective ceremonies are at -4 against it! If he finds the caster and somehow persuades him to lift the curse, the effects on the victim stop and the curse affects the client instead (since the caster and the client are sometimes the same person, the caster may be *very* reluctant to do this). The most drastic solution is to kill the caster before the Malediction runs its course; this also lifts the curse. In some cultures killing someone suspected of casting a Malediction on you is considered self-defense.

The Path of Nature

The Path of Nature deals with animals, plants, and natural forces like the weather.

Endure Elements
Defaults to Path of Protection or Path of Nature

This brief (10-minute) ritual temporarily grants the subject the equivalent of 10 levels of Temperature Tolerance (p. CI30) per point by which the roll is made (minimum 10 levels). A sufficiently powerful ritual can make the subject effectively immune to the effects of heat and cold (see pp. B129-130). Magicians use this to do things like walk barefoot on hot coals without injury.

Predict Weather
Defaults to Path of Nature

A brief (10-minute) ritual gives the caster a general idea of the weather for the next 1d days. This does not include supernatural effects that alter the weather (like Weatherworking, p. 101).

Seek Beast   Defaults to Path of Nature

A 10-minute ritual gives the caster a vision of the nearest specified animal or group of animals and indicates direction and distance.

Gentle Beast   Defaults to Path of Nature-1

This 10-minute ritual improves an animal's reaction roll toward the caster by the amount by which the ritual roll is made (minimum +1). The caster can affect multiple animals with the usual Multiple Target penalty.

Fertility
Defaults to Path of Nature-3 or Path of Health-2

See *Path of Health*.

Hunter's Blessing
Defaults to Path of Nature-3 or Path of Luck-4

This ritual assists a group of people in hunting one species of animal, selected at the time the ritual is cast. The individual animal cannot be specified; the hunters must take their opportunities as they appear. However, the animal *is* considered the "target" of the ritual; for example, Multiple Target penalties apply if the hunters plan on bringing down more than one animal. (This is rarely considered necessary, and most casters limit the ceremony to a single prey animal.)

The caster performs the hour-long ritual with the hunters present. If the ritual is successful, the hunters gain a bonus for the blessing's duration on all skill rolls *directly* related to the pursuit of the specific animal species. The bonus is a base +2, with a further +1 for every 2 full points the ritual roll was made by. This usually adds to Tracking and Weapon Skills, and often Stealth and Camouflage when the hunters are setting up an ambush; the relevance of other skill rolls to the hunt is left to the GM's judgment.

Mist
Defaults to Path of Nature-3 or Path of Cunning-4

The caster performs a 10-minute ritual, summoning a thick fog that fills the affected area. The magician can enlarge the area with the usual modifiers. The fog blocks vision as does the Fog spell (p. B159, p. M40).

Summon Beast
Defaults to Path of Nature-3

Summon Beast works like the Beast Summoning spell on p. B155 (or p. M23), except it requires a 10-minute ritual. To call many animals, the caster must take a Multiple Target penalty for the desired number of animals (see p. 106).

Command Beast
Defaults to Path of Nature-4

This 10-minute ritual allows the caster to control the actions of a single animal. The ritual empowers a charm (usually a collar or leg band) and allows the caster to fasten it onto the animal. The animal obeys the caster's verbal commands for the duration of the ritual as long as it wears the charm. The magician can affect multiple targets with the normal modifiers.

Hasten Mount
Defaults to Path of Nature-5 or Path of Health-5

By performing this ritual for 10 minutes, the magician lends a single riding animal unusual fleetness. The mount gets +1 Move per 3 full points by which the ritual roll succeeds (minimum +1 Move).

Weatherworking
Defaults to Path of Nature-5

This one-hour ritual changes the weather to suit the caster's desires. The ritual affects an area, but does not use the area modifiers on p. 106. Instead, a successful ritual affects a radius of one-half mile. Every -1 to skill increases the radius by another half mile. For every point by which the ritual roll succeeds, add +1 to the chance of the desired weather. The GM should determine the chance on 3d of the desired weather occurring naturally; the chart on p. B45 is helpful here. Some guidelines: likely weather for the season and region (e.g., rain on the coast in the spring) occurs on 10 or less, rarer weather (e.g., drizzle in the desert) on 5 or less, and extraordinary weather (e.g., an inland hurricane, snow on the equator) only on a 3. The effects of the ritual occur within 12 hours; if the caster wants them to happen sooner, he is at -1 for each hour he wants to subtract from the total; when reduced to one hour, each minute subtracted increases the penalty by -1. Having the weather change occur one minute after the ritual is complete puts him at -70!

If the GM allows, this ritual can also improve the chances of other environmental phenomena, like earthquakes or even volcanic eruptions, but these events are usually *very* unlikely. The GM can require a certain degree of success (anywhere from 5 to 20 points or more) before there is any chance of such an event happening (depending on local conditions). Additional points of success then increase the chance normally.

Thunderbolt
Defaults to Path of Nature-7

One of the most physically spectacular rituals, Thunderbolt causes a bolt of lightning from the sky to strike a target designated by the magician. The ritual has two parts. The first is the hour-long preparation of a small charm that serves to "draw" the lightning down. This charm must be placed on or near the target of the strike (although it can be done without his knowledge or permission). The second part of the ritual takes only 10 minutes. If the caster is successful and the target fails to resist, a lightning bolt strikes the target, doing 1d damage for every point the ritual roll succeeded by (minimum 1d). The bolt cannot be dodged, since the charm "draws" it to the target. The lightning bolt destroys the charm if the ritual is successful. If the caster fails the second ritual roll, a similar lightning bolt strikes both him and the client. The bolt does 1d damage for every point the magician missed the ritual roll by (minimum 1d).

The Path of Protection

Protection ceremonies keep spiritual or physical threats away from the subject.

Curse Sanctum
Defaults to Path of Protection

This is a simple ritual of protection, cast to guard against curses. Most magicians cast it on themselves as a matter of course, as a first line of defense against magical attack.

The ritual takes an hour to conduct. On a successful roll, the first hostile ritual that tries to affect the subject must win a Contest of Skills with Curse Sanctum; roll every hour until one ritual or the other fails. Even if the Curse Sanctum fails to protect the subject, it delays hostile rituals for 1d-1 days, usually giving the subject time to take other preventative measures.

Endure Elements
Defaults to Path of Protection or Path of Nature

See *Path of Nature*.

Curse Mirror
Defaults to Path of Protection-3

This ritual can reflect a hostile ritual back on its caster. Two rolls are involved, one to "fix" the protection ritual on the subject and another to resist the first hostile ritual directed at him. If the Curse Mirror ritual wins a Quick Contest of skills using the second roll, the hostile ritual affects its caster as if he were the subject. Magicians sometimes cast this ritual on a charm carried by the subject. The ritual works as above, but if it loses the contest, the charm breaks, warning the recipient his defenses have been penetrated.

Cleansing
Defaults to Path of Protection-4

This ritual eliminates any ongoing curse (such as Malediction or Malaise) currently affecting the subject or area if it wins a Quick Contest of Skills with the hostile ritual. The sooner this ritual is conducted, the easier it is to defeat the curse. If conducted when the first symptoms appear, the Cleansing is at +3 in the Quick Contest of skills. On the other hand, if the curse is already close to its final stages, rolls to dispel it are at -3. Even if the Cleansing fails, the caster may (on a successful Occultism or Theology roll) find out something about the source of the curse.

Vitality
Defaults to Path of Protection-4 or Path of Health-3

See *Path of Health*.

Veil
Defaults to Path of Protection-4, Path of Knowledge-3, or Path of Cunning-4

See *Path of Knowledge*.
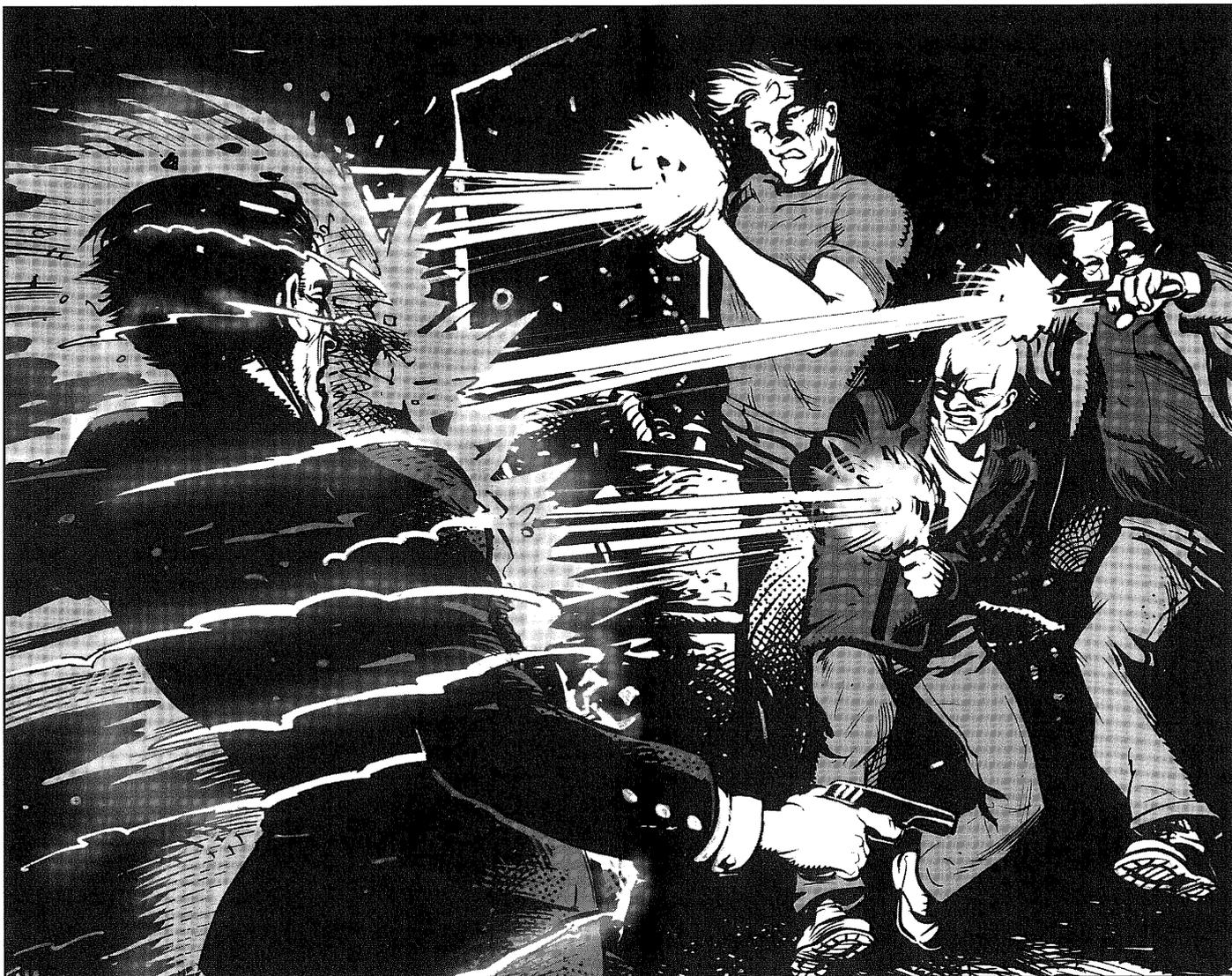
Ward   Defaults to Path of Protection-4

This ritual prevents hostile rituals or beings from entering a protected area. Like Curse Sanctum, magicians use Ward as a matter of course, often casting it before performing other rituals (to block out any forces that might try to interfere) or casting it on their working and living areas. The ritual takes an hour to perform.

The caster determines the Power of the ward. Subtract this Power from any hostile ritual roll directed across the ward's boundaries or from the Will of any supernatural being attempting to enter or leave the area (the being must roll against his modified Will to penetrate the barrier). Corporeal beings roll against their modified ST or Will, whichever is greater, to try to enter a warded area. The caster also determines if any rituals or beings are excluded from the ward. For example, the caster may make the ward effective only against hostile rituals and spirits, but not corporeal beings.

In addition to normal duration and area penalties, the ritual is at -1 per 2 Power levels the caster assigns to the ward. Wards can be as powerful as the magician is capable of making them; Powers of 30+ are not uncommon among areas important to a large group of magicians.

Wards are not impregnable, however. Hostile spirits can wear them down and eventually break through. For every (Power level) Fatigue a spirit spends, the spell's Power drops by 1, for that spirit only. If (Power level) spirits all manage to reduce a ward's Power by 1, then the overall level is reduced by 1 for every spirit or hostile ritual. If enough spirits attack a barrier, it will collapse in short order. Corporeal supernatural beings are even worse; they can inflict Thrust damage on the barrier once per second, reducing its power by 1 for every (Power level) points of damage they inflict on it. This reduction affects only that being, however, no others benefit from it.

Example: A Power 20 ward is reduced to Power 19 if a spirit spends 20 Fatigue to weaken it; this reduction affects only that individual spirit. If 20 spirits each spend 20 Fatigue, they can permanently reduce the overall power of the ward to 19; if they did this once a day, the ward would collapse in under three weeks, and drop to an ineffective Power level even sooner.

Hostile magicians can also weaken a ward with a Dispel ritual. Each point of success on the Dispel roll reduces the ward's Power by 1 (see column to the right).

Once a ward is set up, a new one cannot replace it unless the first is removed by another ritual (which takes 10 minutes and requires no roll). This means a group of magicians besieged by hostile spirits cannot keep recasting the Ward ritual to keep them out. The casters of the original ritual can check the state of the ward by making a Path of Protection roll: they perceive it as a translucent energy sphere and can sense any weakening in it.

Chaperone
Defaults to Path of Protection-5
or Path of Luck-3

See *Path of Luck.*

Exorcise   Defaults to Path of Protection-5
or Path of Spirit-2

See *Path of Spirit.*

Turn Spirit
Defaults to Path of Protection-5
or Path of Spirit-2

See *Path of Spirit.*

Dispel   Defaults to Path of Protection-6

This ritual counters the effects of other rituals. It takes an hour, and the caster must know exactly which ritual he is trying to counter; attempting to dispel a ritual the target isn't using has no effect. At the end of the ritual, roll a Quick Contest of Skills between the Dispel ritual and the better of the target ritual's skill or the target's Will. If the caster wins, the targeted ritual is dispelled. A failure means no effect, while a critical failure automatically alerts the subject that he's under attack.

Dream Sanctum
Defaults to Path of Protection-6
or Path of Dreams-3

See *Path of Dreams.*

Ghost Shirt
Defaults to Path of Protection-7

This blessing turns away bullets, arrows, and other ranged attacks. The ritual doesn't magically deflect attacks; instead, it reduces the chances they will hit. Since most combat injuries result from random events (shrapnel, attacks that are not aimed at a particular person, etc.), the ritual is very effective at keeping people from being hurt in battle, but does little in the way of defending against attacks deliberately aimed at them.

The ritual empowers a charm the subject must wear next to his skin. The charm works only for the person it was made for; anybody who steals it gets no benefit.

Creating New Rituals

The rituals described in this chapter cannot include all possible magical effects. GMs and players are encouraged to develop new rituals as needed. Use the rituals on pp. 92-105 as examples of the power and difficulty of various effects. Some "new" rituals may actually be combined or conditional versions of existing rituals (see *Combined Rituals* and *Conditional Rituals*, p. 89). You can also use spells from the *Basic Set* and *GURPS Magic* as examples of the effects rituals can have, although rituals have longer casting times.

When designing a ritual, determine its type, power, and effect. Each Path deals with an area of magic; the new ritual should fit into one (or more) existing Paths. A hostile ritual always requires two rolls to cast (see *Hostile Rituals*, p. 89) and must win against the target's Will. Powerful rituals impose penalties on the victim's resistance rolls but have a steeper default. The default penalty for rituals ranges from -0 (for very simple, basic rituals that are an integral part of the Path) to -10 (for the most powerful).

Improvising Rituals

By definition, any ritual rolled from a default is improvised; the caster is using his knowledge of Ritual Magic and the basic Path skill to perform the ritual. The magician may also try to use defaults to create effects not described in the examples here. The GM should follow the guidelines on creating new rituals (see above) to set the default level for the improvised ritual.

The ritual protects the subject from random attacks completely: no attack that wasn't specifically intended to hit *him* will ever hurt him (he will never be an "innocent bystander" or hit by "friendly fire"). Even deliberate ranged attacks are at -3 to hit the subject.

Hand-to-hand attacks, which require a deliberation and effort of will rituals cannot easily deflect, are not affected by this ritual.

The Path of Spirit

This Path deals with rituals relating to all sorts of spirits, as well as souls, both living and dead. The GM may allow optional specialization in this Path (p. B43) for a particular type of spirit (see Chapters 1 and 4 for spirit types). In some campaigns, the Path of Spirit may have a *required* specialization, with different specializations defaulting to each other at -4.

Lay to Rest   Defaults to Path of Spirit

This ritual guides the spirit of a newly deceased person to the afterlife (whatever that may mean for that individual). Cast on the deceased's remains, it resists the next attempt to summon the spirit of the deceased. The summoner must win a Contest of Skills with the Lay to Rest ritual in order to summon the spirit at all.

Summon   Defaults to Path of Spirit

This ritual summons spirits (see Chapter 3). The caster must know the name of the spirit being summoned (or its type to summon a generic spirit of that type). Willing spirits appear on a successful roll, but reluctant ones (and most are) resist with their Will-3. The spirit appears in the area and may or may not be communicative or helpful. Very powerful spirits take a dim view of being summoned against their will. The GM may apply a Reaction Roll modifier of -1 to as much as -5 depending on the spirit and the conditions. A spirit can be summoned to appear within a warded area (see p. 103), provided the caster is one of the ward's creators. This is a common precaution to keep the spirit from escaping or attacking the summoner.

Exorcise   Defaults to Path of Spirit-2
or Path of Protection-5

The ritual makes it painful and difficult for spirits to approach the protected area or person. The spirit must win a Quick Contest between the ritual level and its Will-5, or it finds it too painful to face the person or enter the protected area. Even if the spirit overcomes the ritual it is at -1 DX and IQ as long as it remains within the ritual's area of effect. The area protecting an individual is equal to (subject's Will/3) yards; area-effect rituals use the rules on p. 91. When successfully cast on a person possessed by a spirit, this ritual expels the spirit from its victim.
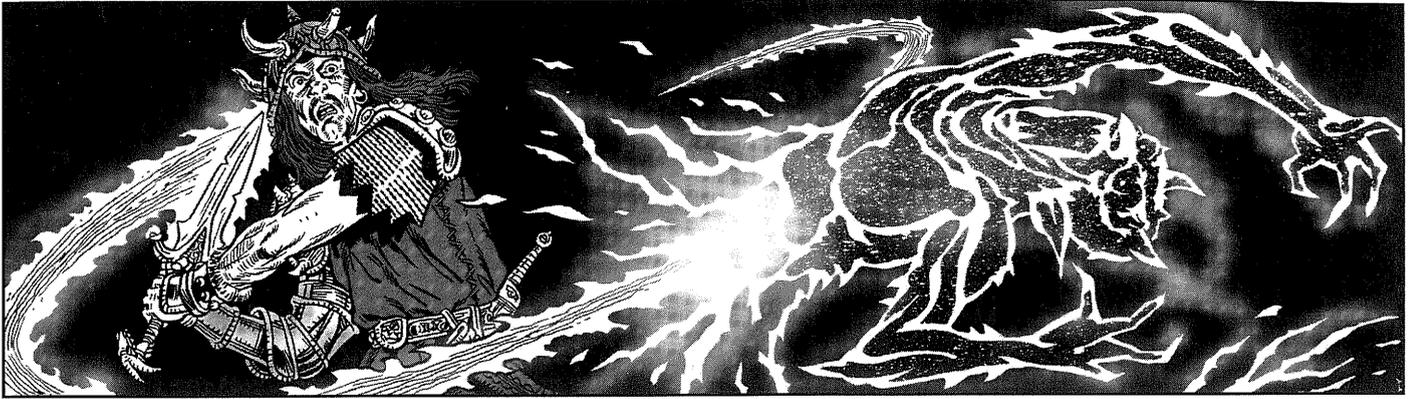
Bind — Defaults to Path of Spirit-3

This ritual is usually combined with a summoning ritual to make sure the spirit being brought into the caster's presence follows his orders. The caster can command the spirit to perform one task for every point he wins the resisted ritual roll by (see p. 88). A task can be any short action in a combat situation, or one long action otherwise. The caster must specify what spirit powers the entity must use to accomplish the task. If the spirit is unable to comply (for example, if the caster asks it to do some feat it doesn't have enough Fatigue to accomplish), the ritual fails automatically.

"Instant" versions of this ritual allow magicians to direct spirits for effects like a sword-and-sorcery "spell" – for example, commanding a spirit to throw objects at a target, or having several spirits lift him so he can "fly" through the air. The limits depend entirely on the spirits available within the campaign.

Banish — Defaults to Path of Spirit-4

This ritual can damage and destroy spirits. The ritual has a penalty equal to the total ST and HT of the spirit. This means only a group of magicians has any hope of destroying a powerful spirit. Also, the spirit must be present for the ritual to work at all; unless the ritual is quick, the spirit must be restrained in some way. In addition to these penalties, the ritual is resisted normally (see p. 88). Roll 1d for every point by which the ritual roll beats the resistance roll (minimum damage 1d). The spirit takes this much damage. If this roll exceeds HT (even if it doesn't reduce hit points to 0), the spirit is utterly destroyed.

Ghost Sword — Defaults to Path of Spirit-4

Ghost Sword empowers a single weapon with the ability to injure and kill incorporeal spirits. Despite the name, it does affect ranged weapons, but must be used on their *ammunition*, not the weapon itself. Thus it can enchant a bullet or arrow, but not a gun or bow. The ritual takes 30 minutes and requires a successful ritual roll, -1 per pound of the weapon's weight. The caster can prepare multiple weapons by taking a Multiple Target penalty (see p. 89). If successful, the weapon inflicts its normal damage on spirits. It also ignores the effects of protective rituals like Ghost Shirt if the Ghost Sword ritual wins a Quick Contest of Skills against the protective ritual.

The weapon functions only for its intended wielder; anyone else who picks it up gains no benefit from it. The ritual does not grant the wielder any increased ability to see or detect spirits; he suffers a -10 to attack skill if the spirit remains invisible.

Spirit Trap — Defaults to Path of Spirit-4

This ritual traps a spirit inside a container chosen by the magician. It can be combined with a summoning ritual. The spirit resists with the higher of its Will or ST. If the magician wins the Quick Contest of Skills, the spirit is imprisoned for the ritual's duration (see p. 91). If the container is broken, the spirit is free and will likely seek vengeance on its jailer. Likewise, if the ritual fails, the spirit is likely to attack or flee (if the magician is especially powerful).

Spirit Slave — Defaults to Path of Spirit-6

This ritual captures the soul of a living target, making him vulnerable to the magician's influence. Magicians often prepare targets of this ritual using other rituals like Night Terrors, or things intended to wear down the victim's resistance. Voodoo practitioners, for example, use a special poison that induces a deathlike trance, so the victim is buried alive. Such preparations impose a penalty of -1 to -5 to the victim's Will roll.

If the ritual is successful, the victim gains High Pain Threshold, along with 10 levels of Weak Will with regard to the magician (including resisting any other rituals he may cast). The magician imprisons the victim's soul in a bottle, jar, gemstone, or similar container; breaking the "bottle" releases the soul and eliminates the resistance penalty. Additionally, rituals and spells intended to affect the victim's soul or spirit automatically fail unless the caster has the victim's soul jar (in which case the victim is at -10 to resist).

If a victim of this ritual is killed, his ghost remains in the physical world, under the magician's control, until the magician releases the soul.

Fetish — Defaults to Path of Spirit-8

This ritual places the essence of a spirit into an object to create a fetish (p. 92). The spirit must be present for the ritual and obedient to the caster, either willingly or via coercion like Bind or spirit combat (p. 69). The ritual has a penalty equal to half the spirit's Fatigue (not ST), rounded up. If successful, the spirit is bound and the fetish empowered. If it fails, the spirit is free of any compulsion to obey the caster, and further attempts to bind that spirit into a fetish are at -1. On a critical failure, the caster can *never* cast Fetish on that spirit again.

Ritual Modifiers Table

Ritual Elements

Element	Modifier
Time	
Reducing time to 1d+2 minutes	-2
Reducing time to 1d seconds	-5
Taking normal amount of time	0
Repeating ritual daily for several days	+1 for every 2 days
Extending ritual (3 times required time)	+2
Auspicious time	+1 to +3
Inauspicious time	-1 to -3
Sacred Space	
No sacred space	-5
Makeshift consecration (1d-minute ceremony)	-1
Sacred space	0
Old mystic area (20 years or more)	+1
Traditional worship site (50 years or more)	+2
Historical ritual place (100 years or more)	+3
Timeworn religious center (500 years or more)	+4
Truly ancient ritual space (over 1,000 years old)	+5

Material Components
Symbolic Representations

None	-6
Minimal (drawing)	-2
Small belonging/piece of clothing	0
Hair or fingernail clippings	+1
Photographs or blood samples	+2
DNA sample or video of target	+3
Target is present at the ritual	+4

Spiritual Symbols

No symbols	-3
Amulet, talisman, or drawing	0
Detailed symbols (engraved drawings, sculptures, idols)	+1 to +3

Sacrifices

No sacrifice	0
Food, drink, or stimulants	+1 to +2
Animal sacrifices	+2 to +4
Human sacrifices	
– to evil spirits	+1 to +5
– to all other spirits	-5
Self-sacrifice	+1/2 hit points lost

Multiple Targets Modifiers

Size of Group	Penalty
2-5	-4
6-10	-8
11-20	-12
21-50	-14
51-100	-18
101-200	-22
201-500	-26
501-1,000	-30
1,001-5,000	-34
5,001-20,000	-38
20,001-50,000	-42
50,001-100,000	-44
+ every doubling	an additional -4

Area Modifiers

Radius	Modifier
Under 5 yards	0
5-10 yards	-1
11-100 yards	-1 per 10-yd. increase (-10 for 100-yd. rad.)
101-200 yards	-1 per 25-yd. increase (-14 for 200-yd. rad.)
Over 200 yards	-4 per 100-yd. increase

Duration Modifiers

Length of Time	Modifier
Up to 12 hours	0
Up to 1 day	-2
Up to 1 week	-4
Up to 1 month	-8
Additional months (to 1 year)	-4 per month (-52 for a full year!)
Each additional year	-4 per year

Spirit Spells

A number of spells let those with Magery or Power Investiture summon and control spirits. Spirits' vulnerability to these spells is considered a 0-point "taboo trait" (p. 45). All of the following spells are Necromantic. Some are reprinted or updated from *GURPS Magic*, *GURPS Grimoire*, or *GURPS Undead*. The Magic Resistance of the spirit works normally against these spells.

Banish   Special; Resisted by ST + IQ

Sends any spirit back to its world of origin. To succeed, the caster must win a contest of Banish skill + Will versus the spirit's ST + IQ. If the caster does not know at least the general type of spirit being banished (e.g., angel, demon, faerie, etc.), he is at -5. If the caster knows the spirit's individual name, he is at +4 to banish it. If the spirit loses, it immediately vanishes back to its place of origin and may not return for a month. Anything it brought with it when it appeared vanishes with it (e.g., weapons). Other things it may be carrying (e.g., screaming victims) stay behind.
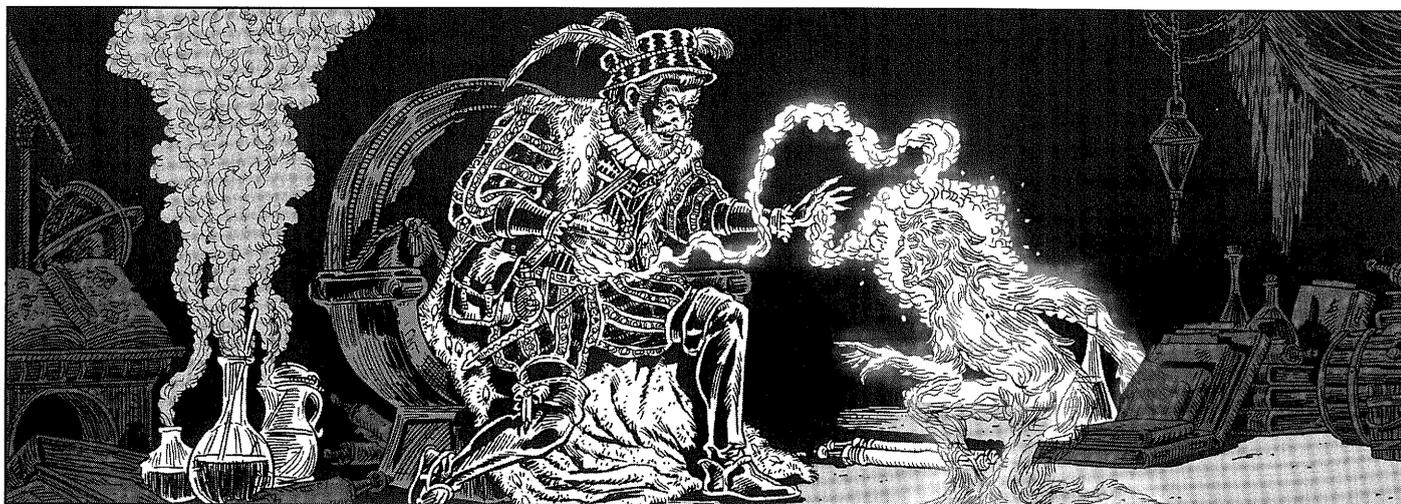
This spell can be cast only if the caster is in his home dimension. On another plane, you could not "banish" yourself back home, but a native of that plane could banish you. This spell obviously does not work on a creature already in its home dimension.

Cost: Equal to the subject's ST + IQ, divided by 2. The caster doesn't know the cost until the spell is cast, and may exhaust or even wound himself in the effort.

Time to cast: 5 seconds.

Prerequisites: Magery and at least one spell from each of ten different colleges.

Summon Spirit
Information; Resisted by IQ

Lets the caster talk to the spirit of someone who has died. The subject resists at -5 if he was a friend of the caster. If the spell succeeds, the subject will answer one question, to the best of his knowledge (as of the time he died), and one more for every minute he remains.

Skill modifiers: -5 if you don't know the subject's full name. -1 if it has been more than a week since the subject's death, -2 if it has been more than a month, -3 if more than a year, -4 if more than 10 years, -5 if more than 50 years, -6 if more than 500 years.

If the spell fails, the caster (and helpers) may not summon that spirit again for a year. A critical failure means the spell summons a malign spirit which lies deliberately.

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: 20 to cast, 10 to maintain. Halve these costs if the spell is cast at the site of death.

Time to Cast: 5 minutes.

Prerequisites: Death Vision, Magery 2.

Materialize   Special; Resisted by ST or IQ

This spell causes a spirit to become visible and audible, as if it had materialized (see *Materialization*, p. 34). Unwilling spirits resist with the better of their ST or IQ. Spirits can learn and use this spell on themselves to make it easier to materialize.

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: 5 to cast, 5 to maintain.

Prerequisite: Summon Spirit.

Solidify   Special; Resisted by ST or IQ

This spell causes a spirit to become tangible, as if it had fully materialized (see *Materialization*, p. 34). The spirit has its normal physical attributes. Unwilling spirits resist with the better of their ST or IQ. Spirits can learn and use this spell on themselves.

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: 50 to cast, 10 to maintain.

Prerequisite: Materialize.

Turn Spirit   Regular; Resisted by IQ

Causes a single spirit, including ghosts, djinn, skull-spirits, vampires in mist form, possessed beings, and similar entities (but not elementals or demons), to retreat from the caster. The caster must be able to see the subject. The subject moves away from the caster at its current maximum Move until the spell ends or the caster loses sight of it. The subject cannot attack the caster in any way during this time; this includes the use of special powers and spells.

If the spirit is possessing a living entity, Turn Spirit will *not* force it out of its host. Instead, the spirit will flee using the host's body.

Duration: 10 seconds.

Cost: 4 to cast, 2 to maintain.

Prerequisites: Either Fear and Sense Spirit *or* Power Investiture (p. CI42).

Command Spirit (type)
Regular; Resisted by IQ

Like Charm (p. M68), but affects only spirits. Each class of spirit (spectral undead, faeries, spirits of place, etc.) requires its own spell. No version exists for demons (use Summon Demon) or elementals (use Control Elemental). Unlike the subject of a Charm spell, the spirit may try to pervert the caster's orders, as a demon does (see *Summon Demon*, p. M74).

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: 1/8 the total of the spirit's four attributes (round up) to cast, half that (round up) to maintain.

Time to cast: 2 seconds.

Prerequisites: Summon Spirit, Turn Spirit.
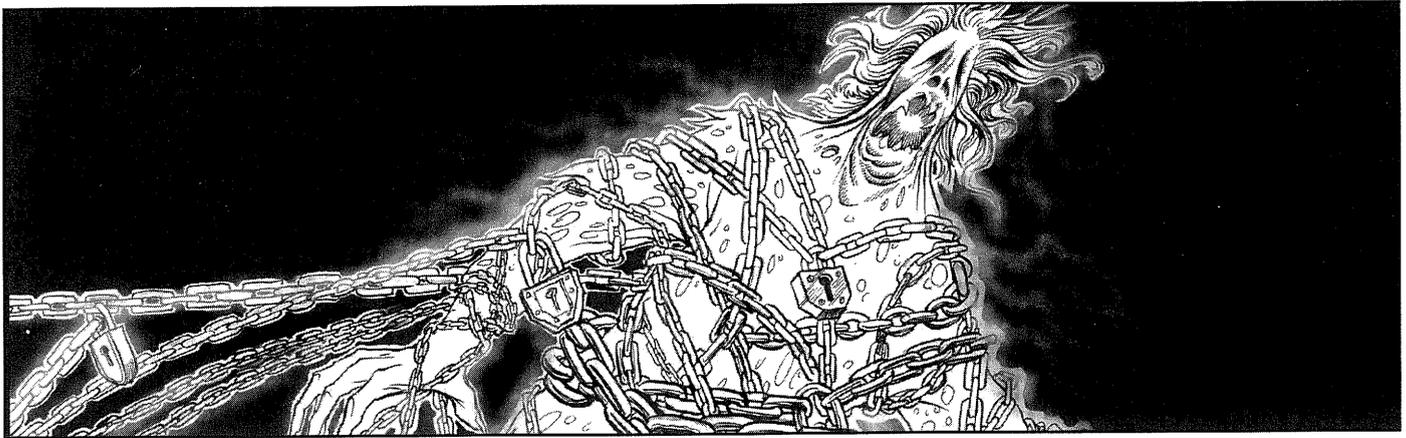
Bind Spirit (type) (VH)
Regular; Resisted by IQ

Similar to Enslave (p. M68), but for spirits. Like Enslave, it allows mental contact with a turn of concentration. There is a separate Bind Spirit spell for each Command Spirit spell. The spirit may interpret its orders creatively, as per Command Spirit.

Duration: Permanent.

Cost: 1/3 the character point value of the spirit (round up). Minimum cost 30.

Time to cast: 5 minutes.

Prerequisites: Command Spirit (same type), Soul Jar.

Item: A spirit may be bound to an item or place. Bound spirits serve the owner of the item or create a fetish (see p. 92). Energy cost to create: 4 times the cost above, halved if the spirit is willing.

Entrap Spirit
Special

Enables the caster to seal a container or chamber so that a spirit within cannot get out for the duration of the spell. Getting the spirit into the trap in the first place is a separate question; usually Command Spirit (above) is required, but trickery can be just as effective.

The container can be any size, from a small bottle up to an entire building, but it must be *fully*, tightly closed (watertight is good enough), and the mage must touch it while casting the spell. The spirit cannot resist the spell, but the casting cost is directly proportional to its power. The total is the spirit's ST + IQ, divided by 5 to cast, by 10 to maintain. It takes a true effort to restrain a powerful spirit! The caster is informed by the GM of the energy cost when the spell takes effect and loses the Fatigue then; if he cannot meet it, the spirit is unaffected, or takes one turn to break out if the caster spends half the energy requirement. If multiple spirits are trapped in one container, add half the others' total ST and IQ to the full ST and IQ of the most powerful spirit before calculating cost.

The spirit cannot damage the container or affect anything outside of it, nor can it use shape-shifting powers to help it escape in any way. It can communicate with anyone within a yard or so of the container normally (see *Communication,* p. 33).

Duration: 5 minutes.

Cost: Spirit's (ST + IQ) divided by 5 to cast, by 10 to maintain.

Prerequisites: Magery, Soul Jar, Turn Spirit.

Repel Spirits
Area; Resisted by IQ

Repels spirits from an area. The spell resists attempts by spirits (as well as other insubstantial beings, such as those subject to an Ethereal Body or Planar Visit spell) to enter the area or to stay in it.

Each spirit may try to enter the area once per hour, rolling a Contest between its IQ and the caster's effective skill (each contest lasts a turn). Once inside, the invader resists with its IQ and is expelled from the area on its first failure.

Duration: 1 hour.

Cost: 4 to cast, 2 to maintain.

Time to Cast: 10 seconds.

Prerequisites: Banish, Turn Spirit.

Astral Block
Area

No spirit or insubstantial being may cross an astral block's boundaries for the duration of the spell. In addition, insubstantial creatures within an astral block cannot become substantial, and vice versa. Thus, a sorcerer could not cast Ethereal Body within the area of an astral block, while a spirit would be unable to fully materialize. A spirit *already* in physical form could not become insubstantial, either.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Cost: 4 to cast, 2 to maintain. 15 per cubic yard if cast on a container, half cost to maintain.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds.

Prerequisites: Summon Spirit, Repel Spirits.

Affect Spirits
Regular

When cast on a person or object, this spells allows the subject to interact with incorporeal spirits as if they were solid. A weapon with this spell on it can harm an insubstantial spirit.

Duration: 1 minute.

Cost: 4 to cast; 2 to maintain.

Time to Cast: 2 seconds.

Prerequisite: Solidify.

Item: A weapon enchanted with this spell will affect ghosts (and other insubstantial being and spirits) as if they were tangible. If the weapon itself is made intangible (through whatever means the GM deems feasible), the weapon will still affect the physical world at the whim of its wielder. Energy cost to create: 250 per pound of weapon weight (minimum 250 energy).

Examples of Rituals In Play

Adolphus

Adolphus completed the incantation. "By the power of Earth, by the power of Air, by the power of Fire eternal and the Waters of the Deep, I conjure and charge thee, arise! Arise at my command and truly do my will. Arise!"

The flames of the brazier flared and sweet, heady smoke from the incense filled the chamber with the scent of frankincense and myrrh. The smell was replaced with brimstone and sulfur as a form appeared in the triangle drawn on the floor in front of Adolphus' magic circle. It was tall and thin, with curling horns and eyes that burned like hot coals. Batlike wings were tightly folded against its body and its legs were like those of a goat, hairy, with cloven hooves. A forked tail thrashed in the air as the demon snorted smoke from its nostrils. It roared in an unearthly voice and hurled itself at Adolphus, who forced himself not to flinch as the demon struck the invisible barrier that stood between them.

"Now," the magician intoned, "you are bound to me to do my will. Listen carefully, creature of the Pit, and obey . . ."

Adolphus is a sorcerer with Path of Spirit-17, Summon-17, and Bind-16. His target is a modestly powerful demon with a Will of 14.

Adolphus casts the ritual over a period of an hour (no modifiers). He is in sacred space, the secret temple beneath his home. He has learned the demon's true name from researching grimoires and he has a necklace that serves as a Mystic Symbol (+1). He carefully prepared the magical diagrams required, giving him a +3 bonus. No other modifiers apply.

Adolphus calls upon the elemental lords and demon princes to summon the demon to him, and upon the archangels to protect him. He rolls against his modified Summon skill (a 21) and makes the roll by 9 points. The demon resists using Will-3 (a total of 11); it rolls an 8 and loses. The demon appears in Adolphus' presence.

The magician then completes the Bind ritual he combined with the summoning. His modified skill is 20, against the demon's Will of 14. Adolphus rolls a 10; the demon rolls an 11: the magician wins the contest by 7 points, meaning the demon must perform seven services for him. Adolphus plans to make sure that one of them is an oath never to cause him harm once it is released from his service.

Little Chango

Little Chango smiled bitterly as he walked toward Senator Doherty's podium. The man would pay for his crimes, the houngan swore to himself. He had prepared himself, called upon himself the darker aspects of his namesake, Chango, to power the deadly ritual. All he had to do was lock eyes with the senator, and revenge would be his.

Reporters and well-wishers crowded around the senator. Little Chango plowed relentlessly through them. Almost there . . . one of the Secret Service men noticed something wrong in the purposeful approach and started to react to it. Too late. Little Chango's glance met Doherty's. Death leaped toward the Senator . . .

. . . and coiled back upon Little Chango! Pain exploded in his chest as his aging heart collapsed. He fell to his knees. How? Why? Then, too late to help him, he sensed the invisible presence hovering over Doherty, who stood unharmed, feigning concern for the dying black man at his feet. The American had his own spirits, and they had protected him. Little Chango's last moments were filled with pain, bitterness, and surprise . . .

Little Chango is a magician with a Will of 16, Path of Health-18, and Evil Eye-17. He prepared his killing ritual on consecrated ground, with proper ritual tools, taking the required time, and using the senator's picture to symbolize his target (good for a +2 bonus). His modified skill roll is a 19. On making eye contact with the senator, he would have entered into a Quick Contest of Wills to carry out the Evil Eye (see p. 96). Instead he runs afoul of the Curse Mirror charm protecting the senator, who is a pawn of a secret lodge of magicians. The lodge pooled its efforts on the Curse Mirror; their average skill with the ritual was 16 and there were seven of them, for a total ritual strength of 22.

A Quick Contest between Little Chango's Evil Eye-19 and the Lodge circle's Curse Mirror-22 follows. Little Chango's player rolls a 14; the GM rolls a 12. The houngan loses and his own ritual affects him. He made his first roll against Evil Eye by 5 points; now he must make a HT-5 roll to resist its effects. Needing a 4 or less, he rolls a 16 – a critical failure. The GM rules that the Evil Eye will kill Little Chango in HT/2 minutes instead of hours.

Psionics and Ritual Magic

Psi abilities *may* interact with the spirit world, depending on decisions made by the GM (see *Psionics*, p. 76). The default assumption is that psi and ritual magic interact as little as possible; a Mind Shield does not protect against mind-affecting rituals, nor does a Dream Sanctum protect against telepathic invasion. If the GM decides psi and ritual magic are simply two facets of the same thing, they can interact and oppose each other (see *Magic and Ritual Magic* above).

In a campaign with both psi and ritual magic, characters may be able to have and use both. Psi skills grant magicians a source of quick, generally short-range powers that nicely complement their slower, long-range rituals. This is particularly appropriate in campaigns where spirits and spiritual phenomena are considered psionic in nature.
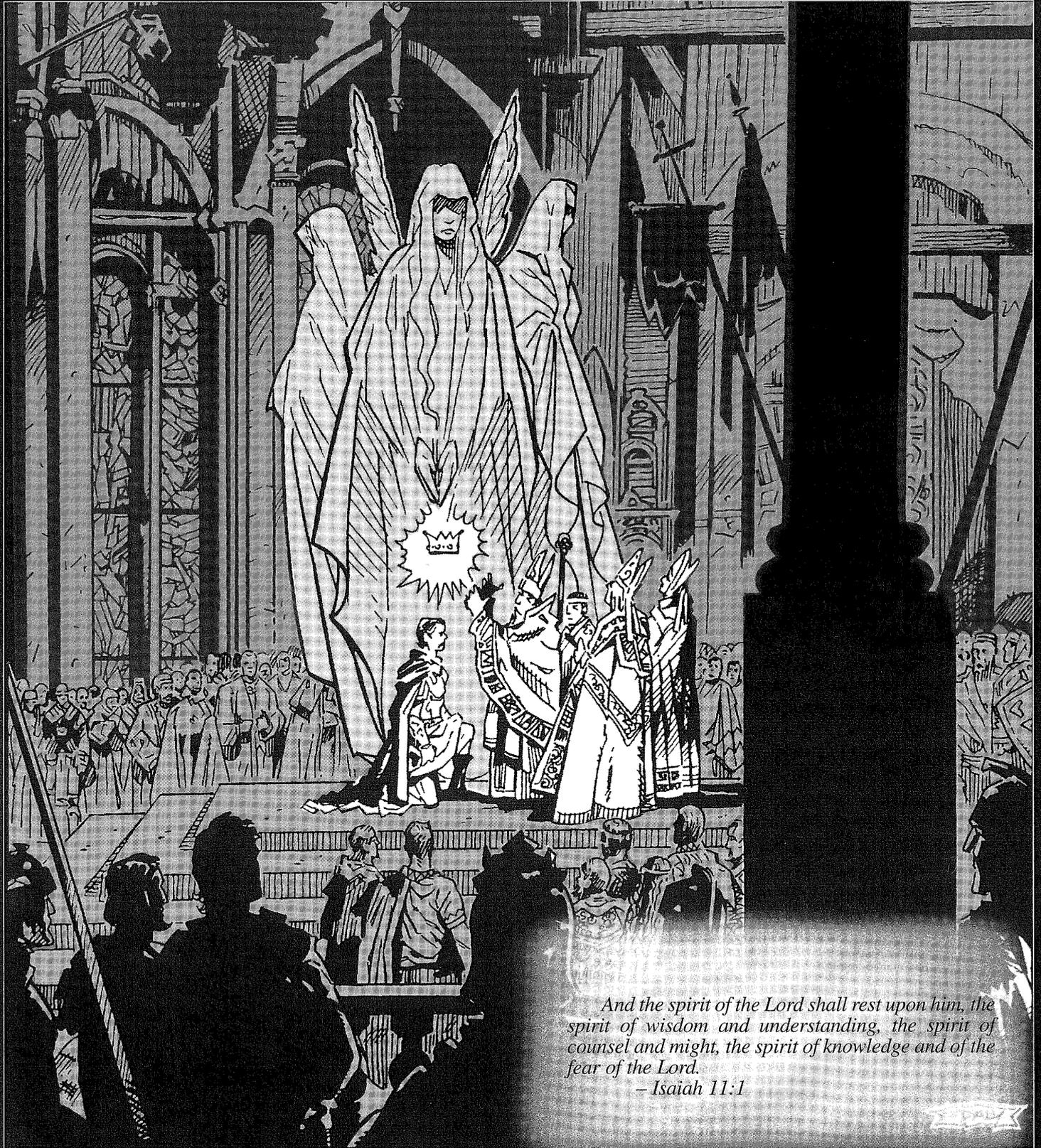
And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.
– Isaiah 11:1

Spirits are a unique resource, and a potentially unique problem, for *GURPS* campaigns. Their special nature adds an air of mystery, magic, fear, and wonder to the setting, but their special powers can be difficult to handle at times, and GMs should be careful not to let them proliferate out of control.

This chapter provides hints and tips for GMs on integrating spirits into a *GURPS* campaign, some decisions that should be made in advance regarding them, and some potential problems to watch out for and how to solve them.

Campaign Style

A campaign's "style" defines its overall power level and the kinds of events and characters that best suit it. Some genres are given to certain styles while others can vary greatly, from gritty, realistic "low fantasy" to highly cinematic or even superhuman "high fantasy." The major styles are outlined here.

Realistic

A "realistic" campaign with spirits may seem like a contradiction in terms, but in game terms a "realistic" campaign means one where things are generally similar to the real world, at least on the surface. More importantly, it means that characters tend to react in realistic ways to things and events have realistic consequences.

Spirits in a realistic campaign tend to have little power over the physical world. The basic abilities described in the Spirit Form advantage should be the maximum for most spirits, and the Physical Form enhancement should be restricted or banned altogether. Spirits rarely materialize and exercise their influence through the Poltergeist Effect and Probability Alteration. Spirits as psychic entities (p. 44) suit a realistic campaign well. Ritual magic is likewise rare, and the GM may require an Unusual Background cost to have Ritual Aptitude or the Ritual Magic skill. The Ritual Adept advantage should be extremely rare or banned.

For realistic campaigns, adventurers should be built on 100 points, with up to 40 points in disadvantages and 5 quirks. This will limit the power of spirit characters and makes most spirit templates unavailable as PCs. Of course, higher point totals can still be realistic in some cases!

Cinematic

A cinematic campaign tries to simulate the freewheeling feel of action movies and adventure fiction. Heroes are capable of great deeds and often have special powers or advantages. Spirits are merely one more fantastic element of a cinematic setting, particularly a fantasy or martial arts game. *GURPS* has a number of optional cinematic rules to simulate fast-paced action and more capable heroes.

Cinematic spirits can come from nearly any of the types described in Chapters 1 and 4, depending on the campaign. Spirits make effective PCs in a cinematic campaign and their ability to materialize is common, so many of them have the Physical Form enhancement on their Spirit Forms. Powerful villains may have spirit minions, while PC magicians may be able to summon and command spirits of their own. Special abilities like Magery, psionics, and Ritual Aptitude are relatively common (at least for the PCs).

Cinematic characters are built on at least 150 points, often as much as 250 or more, with up to 40 points in disadvantages and 5 quirks. This allows for more powerful spirits and special abilities like Magery, psionic power, Ritual Adept, Trained by a Master, or Weapon Master (along with appropriate cinematic skills). Mundane foes become less of a concern, which is one of the things that make spirit minions so useful!

Superhuman

Protagonists in superhuman campaigns have abilities far beyond those of mere mortals, perfect for a group of powerful spirits, or mortals like adepts and mages who have achieved great spiritual power. Any kind of spirit can be found in a superhuman setting, and the player characters may be able to confront and overcome some of the most powerful. Mortal matters barely concern PCs at this level, although circumstances may sometimes require them to restrain their power. Mighty spirits and magicians operating behind the scenes may prefer subtlety in some settings, particularly Illuminated ones (see *Genre*, below).

Superhuman characters are built on 500 to 1,000 points or more. Almost any of the spirit templates from Chapter 4 are suitable for this type of campaign, and the GM can run games where PC spirits are angels, demons, Sidhe from Celtic myth, and so forth. The mortals may be powerful spirit warriors (p. 70), high-level adepts, powerful mages, or people with superhuman powers (see *GURPS Supers* for more information).

Silly

In a silly campaign anything goes, as long as it's funny (or just plain goofy). Ghosts are more like *Casper the Friendly Ghost* or the hapless haunters in the movie *Beetlejuice*. Faeries are more likely to worry about people "tryin' to steal their lucky charms" than anything else. Genies transform into comical shapes and sound a great deal like Robin Williams from *Aladdin*, and everything is played for laughs. Characters can be based on almost any amount of points, since their power isn't really good for anything except getting them into trouble and finding interesting ways out of it. Spirit characters are suited to silly games simply because they're not subject to a lot of the limitations people are. They can walk through walls, change shape, create funny appearances and voices, etc. A spirit student (or professor) would fit in just fine on the campus of *GURPS IOU*.

Genre

The *genre* of a campaign defines the ground rules of its setting and the kinds of characters and stories found in that setting. Spirits are found in a wide range of genres. The more common ones are described here.

Fantasy

Spirits are a staple of the fantasy genre, from elementals and demons summoned by powerful wizards, to clashes between the spiritual forces of good and evil, to ghosts, specters, and spirits from beyond the grave. Spirits in fantasy settings are often magical in nature (see *Magical Spirits*, p. 44) rather than spiritual. Magical special powers also exist in fantasy settings, although they may or may not be available to player characters.

In *low fantasy* the more fantastic elements are downplayed, with spirits primarily remaining incorporeal and few, if any, spirits having the Physical Form enhancement on their Spirit Forms. Spirits use abilities like the Poltergeist Effect and Possession to influence the physical world, manifesting only rarely. Special powers tend to be limited to supernatural beings, although ritual magic works well in a low-fantasy setting, with an enforcement of the age limit on skills to restrict initial skill in Ritual Magic and Paths, and no use of Ritual Adept.

High fantasy is the opposite; the fantastic is commonplace, spirits abound, and many special powers are available to the PCs, who are likely built on 150-250 points and may even be spirits themselves. In this genre the GM should allow cinematic abilities and advantages, and multiple forms of magic may exist, although the GM should decide in advance how they interact. Campaigns where the second and third levels of Ritual Adept are available can be considered high fantasy, since high-level adepts can command amazing powers.

Historical fantasy takes place in Earth's real history, with the addition of things like magic and spirits. It can remain fairly close to reality, with spiritual and magical forces at work behind the scenes, or it can be quite different from the history we know, with fantasy elements radically changing how things happened. The potential range of settings for historical fantasy are quite broad, but popular ones include **Ancient Greece**, **Ancient Rome**, **Arabian Nights**, **Celtic Myth**, **Egypt**, **Old West**, and **Swashbucklers** (detailed in the appropriate **GURPS** sourcebooks).

Urban fantasy is generally set in the present or near future and tends to be low fantasy for the most part, with things like magic and spirits existing behind the façade of normalcy the rest of the world takes for granted. Spirits are invisible presences, dismissed as superstition by most people, and magic is a secret jealously guarded by those who know it. **GURPS Voodoo: The Shadow War** describes such a setting. On the other hand, **GURPS Technomancer** describes a modern world much like our own except that magic is commonplace and an accepted part of everyday life. It offers a world where spirits form labor unions and join political causes, while people debate the morality of using servitor spirits as "slave labor."

Horror

Spirits in horror are usually antagonists, feared for their mysterious powers and their strange motivations. Horror tends to focus on malevolent spirits like ghosts, demons, and strange ultraterrestrial beings that Man Was Not Meant to Know. Benevolent spirits are either nonexistent or powerless to intervene and help the victims of evil spirits. They may be capable of acting as Allies or Patrons of mortal player characters, or even as PCs in a campaign of good spirits working to protect the world from a vast array of evil spirits.

Occult advantages like Awareness and True Faith may be available to player characters as a means of sensing and protecting themselves against spirits. Ritual magic is well suited to horror due to its overall complexity and ceremonial requirements. The Ritual Adept advantage should be restricted, unless the GM is looking for a "ghostbusters" campaign, where the player characters greatly outpower most spirits.

See *GURPS Horror*. The Cabal (p. H32) is an excellent example of a group featuring spirits, suited for a horror or Illuminated campaign (see below).

Illuminati

They're invisible, undetectable, and capable of walking through walls. They could be watching you right now and you'd never know it. They're immortal and capable of subtly manipulating probabilities over the course of centuries. They're disembodied voices speaking in the minds of the world's leaders, inspiring the prophets, damning the rebels. A conspiracy of spirits could be one of the most powerful and effective conspiracies in history. Perhaps it is.

Spirits have many potential roles in a campaign of conspiracy like *GURPS Illuminati*. Spirits are the perfect spies, invisible, intangible, able to go anywhere and see and hear anything they want. That alone makes them invaluable to the Secret Masters, but spirits also have other abilities, not the least of which is their power to influence probability. Who's going to question a series of mysterious "accidents" or "strokes of luck"? Even if someone discovers the truth, who'll believe a secret cabal of spirits is behind it all?

Many groups throughout history have claimed to command spirits or to have spirits as their guides and leaders. From the Mahatmas of the Theosophical Society to the "Secret Chiefs" of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (said to communicate with the highest-ranking members of the order only in astral form), spirits have influenced organizations. And let's not forget the effects of angels and the messages they have carried to Earth, assuming they really *were* angels and their words really *did* come from God . . .

Spirits in an *Illuminati* campaign should be mysterious forces. They rarely materialize, and never in exactly the same way twice. They're formidable enemies, even if the player characters are spirits themselves, or people with the unique ability to sense and influence them like ritual magicians or psychics. Perhaps they were members of the Conspiracy once, now fighting a lone battle against the secret forces that rule the world to prevent the inevitable Apocalypse they have planned for us.

Supers

Powerful spirits are a perfect fit for a *GURPS Supers* campaign where everyone has special powers of some sort. Spirits make great minions for evil sorcerers and other super bad guys, particularly since they can affect the heroes while being largely immune to their powers. Spirits in physical form can range from tough goons for the heroes to mow through to opponents with abilities to rival those of the heroes'. More powerful spirits may be supervillains in their own rights.

Spirits can be superheroes as well – spirits of the dead returned to fight for justice, nature spirits seeking to protect the natural world, celestial spirits like angels (or reformed demons) fighting the forces of evil. Comic book spirits tend to show up in two ways: in spirit form or possessing a living host to create a kind of gestalt form. Examples of the former include ghosts like DC Comics' Deadman and the Specter, or elementals like the Swamp Thing, while the latter include characters like Captain Triumph (who communicated with the ghost of his brother) and Marvel Comics' Ghost Rider, a motorcyclist possessed by the demon spirit of vengeance.

GMs may wish to build spirits in a supers campaign using the super-advantages from *GURPS Supers* rather than the Spirit Form advantage in this book. Generally, super-spirits should have Insubstantiality and Invisibility with the special effect that they are spirit powers. Spirits in a supers campaign with the Spirit Form advantage either operate through Possession or have the Physical Form enhancement (or a *lot* of Fatigue). Spirits can have superpowers based on their types. Ghosts are likely to have "spooky" powers like Animate Shadow, Illusion, Smoke (Fog), and Telekinesis. Nature spirits may have powers like Control Animal, Control Plant, and Control Weather.
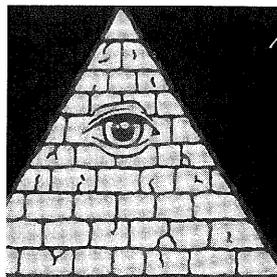
A conspiracy of spirits could be one of the most powerful and effective conspiracies in history. Perhaps it is.

Steampunk

The steampunk genre of weird science and invention in the Victorian era (described in *GURPS Steampunk*) may or may not feature paranormal powers and beings like spirits. Certainly, belief in spirits was not uncommon in the Steam Age, which featured, among other things, the spiritualist movement, the first scientific research into psychic abilities, and the growth of occult organizations like the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

GMs may wish to go with a "psychic" interpretation of spirits and spiritual phenomena to better suit the pseudoscientific bent of the age (see *Psionic Spirits*, p. 44, and *GURPS Psionics* for more information). Alternatively, a steampunk fantasy setting is possible, with fantastic magical spirits and lodges of magicians like the *GURPS Castle Falkenstein* setting.

Spirit Tech

These are some examples of spirit-affecting technology. Some of these are reproduced from *GURPS Technomancer*. GMs looking for a complete treatment of technomagic should consult it.

By default, depleted necronium and ectoweave are TL7, ECUs and necrolasers are TL8, and spirit disruptors are TL9. However, these are only suggestions; someone with the Gadgeteer advantage (p. CI25) could create these at almost any TL!

Depleted Necronium (DN): A very dense, mana-dead metal, DN cannot be directly affected by Regular spells or penetrated by insubstantial entities. Anything normally made from steel can be made from DN for 100 times cost, allowing for weapons, cages, walls, etc. that work normally against immaterial spirits.

Ectoplasmic Containment Unit (ECU): A small, hinged box about 1' long, 5" wide, and 3" thick, weighing 3 lbs. It can contain spirit entities with Fatigue scores totaling up to 40 points. The ECU must be opened in the same hex as the spirit(s), which get a ST roll to resist being pulled in (stunned or unconscious spirits don't get a roll). Once inside, the spirits are contained as long as power is supplied to the unit. An ECU runs for up to 12 hours on a C cell. Larger containment units, running off the local power grid or their own generators, can contain a larger number of spirits (or a smaller number of more powerful spirits).

Ectoweave: A special fabric woven from stabilized ectoplasm. An ectoweave lining provides DR 1 vs. necrolasers (below) and ghostly touch attacks that ignore normal DR (see *Spectral Touch*, p. 35). $1,000 for a vest (torso only) or pants, $1,200 for a jacket (torso and arms), $2,000 for a full suit.

Necrolaser: A laser beam channeled through an ectoplasm-fluorine mix. It's ghostly violet in color and cold to the touch. Necrolasers do only 1 point of damage per die of damage of a normal laser of the same power, but they ignore nonmagical PD and DR.

Spirit Disruptor: An exotic particle beam that disrupts the ectoplasmic structure of spirits. A portable disruptor is a heavy weapon with a backpack power source. It inflicts 1d impaling damage against spirits (ignoring DR) and has SS 12, Acc 10, 1/2D 130, Max 260, RoF 1, and unlimited shots. Some disruptors can be set to "stun," doing Fatigue damage rather than HT.

Cyberpunk

Spirits in a cyberpunk setting? It seems crazy, but it just might work. Disembodied artificial intelligences in the Net may be considered "spirits" of a sort. In William Gibson's *Count Zero* and *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, AIs take on many of the qualities of spirits, including the ability to possess certain people. There are also ghostcomps (see *GURPS Cyberpunk* and *GURPS Ultra-Tech*), computer programs that record the personalities of living people, allowing them to survive physical death as disembodied entities existing inside computers. Are they spirits? Some might say so.

In settings where cyberspace has begun to merge with the physical world, cybernetic "spirits" become even more common. Imagine a world where everyone is plugged into a worldwide computer net via neural implant and wireless communication systems. Software agents become more like servitor spirits, and antipersonnel programs can be true "demons." They may exist only in the mind, but that makes them no less deadly.

There's always the possibility of a cyberpunk-fantasy fusion like FASA's *Shadowrun* or *GURPS Cthulhu Punk*, where the forces of the spirit world coexist alongside the urban sprawl. Certainly there are likely to be ghosts aplenty from plagues and urban violence. How do nature spirits react to the rape and poisoning of the natural environment? Are ultraterrestrials behind the strange disappearances going on in the sprawl? Do angels walk the dirty streets? – if they do, are they quick enough on the draw to make a difference?

Space

Spirits as such are not commonly encountered in science-fiction space settings, although similar beings may show up from time to time. The most common are incorporeal aliens with psionic abilities, able to duplicate many of the feats of spirits. These are best handled as Beings of Pure Thought (p. CI34) rather than as spirits per se. Likewise, psionic abilities and advanced alien technology are often used as pseudoscience explanations for spiritual phenomena in a space setting. See *GURPS Psionics* for some ideas.
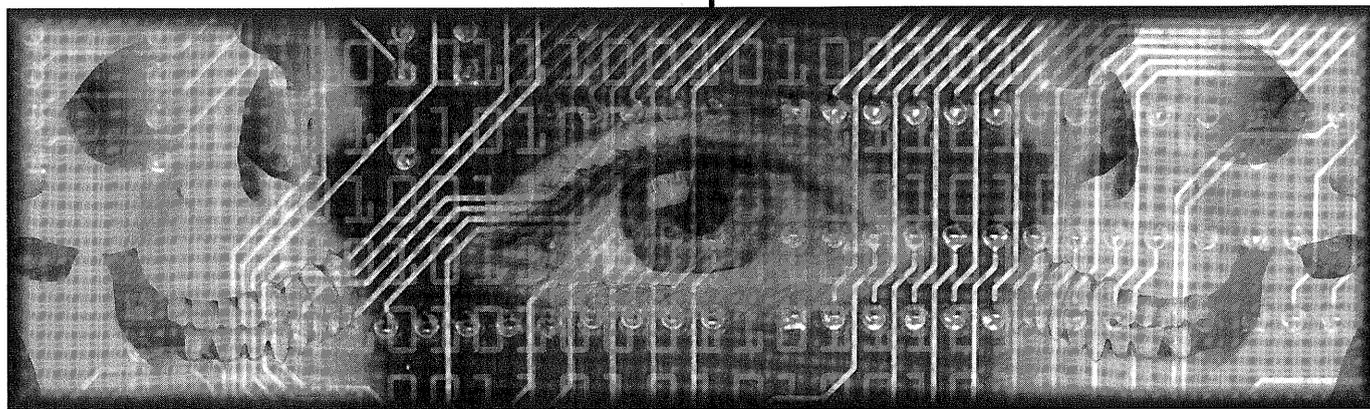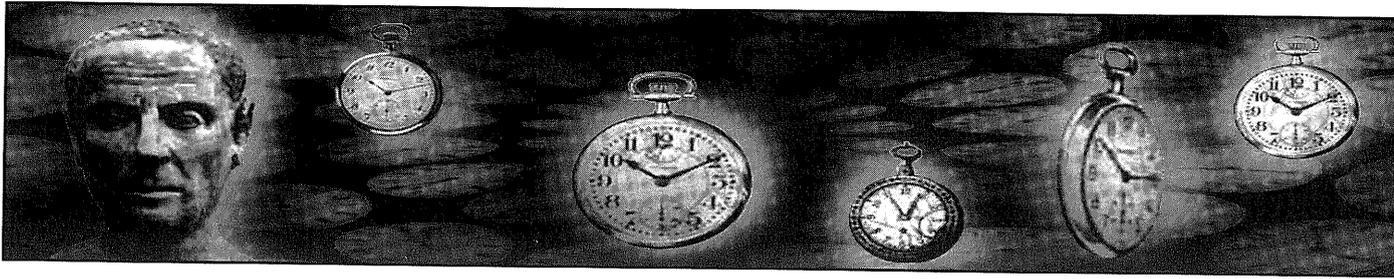
Time Travel

As mentioned in *Spiritual Time Travel* (p. 27), the spirit world might serve as a gateway to different time periods, or spirits might naturally have the Time-Jumper advantage (p. CI46), freed from the constraints of time to go anywhen they want. Certainly some spirits and apparitions are like views into the past, "recordings" of events that happened long ago.

A time-travel campaign with spirits is likely to feature the Retrogression advantage (see *GURPS Time Travel* for details). The spirits travel back (or perhaps forward) in time and possess host bodies there, allowing them to interact with the physical world in that time. Spirits might also be able to travel through time in their incorporeal forms. Perhaps physical beings who travel through time *become* spirits in other time periods, invisible and intangible, but able to influence events through force of will. Perhaps the various "spirits" are actually time travelers from other eras visiting us!

Mixed or Multigenre

Spirit campaigns also offer the possibility of mixing and matching the above genres to create a unique setting. The various spirit worlds and the ability of spirits to travel between them offer the most possibilities for this sort of campaign. The dream world (p. 26) can literally be anything the dreamers imagine it to be, allowing GMs to run adventures ranging from high fantasy to horror to science fiction there, with the setting (and possibly the characters) changing as needed to suit the backdrop of the story.

Defining Spirits

In any campaign that includes spirits it is necessary to define the nature of spirits and their roles in the campaign. A horror campaign with a few powerful, mysterious spirits is quite different from a fantasy campaign with many types of spirits ranging from tiny nature sprites to powerful deities, or an Illuminated campaign centered around a war between heaven and hell. GMs planning on including spirits in their campaigns should consider the following issues.

Types

What types of spirits exist? The GM should read through Chapters 1 and 4 and decide which types of spirits exist in the campaign and which do not. For example, the GM may decide all the sprits in the campaign setting are celestial spirits; spirits all come from "somewhere else" and visit Earth for a variety of reasons. Or the GM may decide that only human spirits exist in the campaign and that all other spirits are merely creations of the human psyche (see *Thought Forms*, p. 62) or don't exist at all.

The types of spirits chosen depend on the needs of the campaign and the genre. Fantasy games tend to feature more and different types of spirits, while modern-day or horror games may have fewer types of spirits, and ultra-tech or science fiction campaigns may have only one type. The range of available spirit types also affects the powers of ritual magicians, if they exist in the campaign. A ritual magician with many different types of spirits to summon has a wider range of abilities than one with only a few (see Chapter 6 for more on ritual magic).

The Spirit World

Where do spirits in the campaign come from? This has some bearing on the types of spirits that may exist in the campaign. The GM should read through Chapter 2 and decide what model of the spirit world best suits the campaign world. Is there one spirit world or many? Does the spirit world have different "layers" or "regions" where different spirits are from? How strong are these "borders"? Can spirits pass between them at will or not?

The GM should also consider the spirit world's relationship with the physical world. Do humans have access to the spirit world, and, if so, what types of access work? (See *Entering and Leaving Spirit Worlds*, p. 22.) If the PCs have access to the spirit world, it becomes less mysterious. If they don't, then spirits always have a safe haven to flee to, which can frustrate the players at times.

Spirits or Races?

Many of the beings in this book (particularly the faerie; see p. 8) may be corporeal fantasy races in some campaigns rather than spirits. They may have the ability to assume incorporeal form via abilities like magic, Body of Air, or Insubstantiality, but they're primarily solid denizens of the physical world (or equally solid denizens of another dimension that visit the physical world; see below). The GM should decide which legendary beings in the campaign are true spirits and which are physical races. For the latter, see the racial creation rules in *GURPS Compendium I* and the advice in *GURPS Fantasy Folk*. For an example of the Sidhe (faerie) as a fantasy race, see *GURPS Celtic Myth*.

Keeping It Mysterious

One of the difficulties of introducing any sort of "arcane" knowledge in an RPG is that players tend to read (and memorize) all the books themselves, so the arcane is actually common knowledge for them. They know the secret weaknesses of all the spirits. They know the true names of the Lords of the Nine Hells. This takes away the mystique of having such elements in the game.

One way of dealing with this is to use the players' preconceptions against them. Perhaps some of the folklore surrounding spirits is true, but parts of it aren't, and the players don't necessarily know which ones. Change some of the spirit templates from Chapter 4 to suit your campaign. Perhaps faeries in your game aren't affected by iron but only by religious symbols. Perhaps spirits with a Dread of religious symbols are affected only by True Faith in your game; it's not the symbol that has the power, but the person wielding it.

Another way of keeping things mysterious is not to tip your hand too soon. Spirits are largely the same until one materializes: invisible and intangible. Even when they appear it doesn't have to be a dead giveaway, since many spirits can change shape or create illusions. Rather than telling the players "a local nature spirit appears," describe the spirit's appearance and manner but don't tell them what it is. If they don't see it appear before their eyes, they may not even know it's a spirit!

Forms

Can incorporeal spirits materialize (see p. 34) and assume solid form? Does it cost them a lot of Fatigue to do so, or is the Physical Form enhancement of Spirit Form fairly common? Spirits with the ability to manifest easily lead to a more "fantastic" campaign, where evidence of spirits as real beings is difficult to deny and spirits are more likely to be accepted as real. If spirits are limited to incorporeal form, or manifestation is difficult or costly in terms of Fatigue, skeptics may doubt the existence of spirits and their actual appearances are more likely to be rare and questionable.

Spirit forms also affect how difficult spirits are for humans to deal with. Materialized spirits can be fought much like any creature. Although they may have various special abilities, they are conventional opponents. Incorporeal spirits can cause a great deal of mischief and trouble without any fear of retaliation, except from those with the appropriate magical or special abilities, like mages, psis, or magicians. This makes spirits more dangerous and tends to encourage players to run characters with the necessary abilities, especially if they're likely to encounter spirits often. For example, in a "modern occult" game (like the world of *GURPS Voodoo*) it's likely most of the characters will be ritual magicians, since they have to deal with the forces of the spirit world almost constantly.

Power Level

The GM must decide how powerful spirits can be and what range of power levels exists in the campaign world. There may be spirits from the fairly weak all the way up to gods. While GMs don't generally have to worry about the stats for a god (or God), there is the question of where the dividing line between "enormously powerful" and "virtually omnipotent" lies. The most powerful spirits can easily cost *thousands* of character points!

In addition to limiting materialization (above), another key to controlling spirit power levels is the amount of Fatigue a spirit has available to fuel its special powers. If spirits are limited to roughly human levels of Fatigue or less, they can create some interesting effects, but their power has a definite limit. Spirits with higher levels of Fatigue can use their powers for longer periods of time and pull off much more impressive feats (like powerful manifestations and uses of the Poltergeist Effect). Even relatively weak spirits can be difficult to deal with if the characters don't have any means of affecting them (magic, psionics, etc.). A weak poltergeist can still be a terror for normal people in a modern-day horror campaign.

As a general rule, spirits in horror campaigns should be more powerful than the PCs, or have abilities the PCs cannot easily counter. Fantasy campaigns have a mix of types – weaker spirits as minions of more powerful spirits and wizards, with very powerful spirits as epic foes or lofty patrons. In highly cinematic games, spirits may be as or less powerful than the PCs. This includes campaigns where the PCs *are* spirits, as well as genres like supers and ghost-fighting martial artists.

Interactions

How much do spirits know about each other and do they cooperate? This depends on the number and type of spirits in the campaign and the campaign's cosmology.

1. Every spirit is an island. Spirits have little, if anything, to do with each other. They might be very rare, jealously guard their own domains, or dependent enough on human worshippers or allies that they view all other spirits as potential rivals. Spirits might all be in service to various masters, limiting their ability to interact to a few rare free-willed spirits.

2. They know their own kind. Spirits of the same "species" know and associate with each other, although not always on a friendly basis. All the demons of hell know each other and cooperate when it suits them, even though they have their own agendas. Nature spirits know of others of their kind in the surrounding environment and cooperate when necessary to protect their environment from harm.

3. Associations. Spirits of different types gather together in loose alliances to further their goals. They typically have something in common beyond just their type, such as being the ancestral or patron spirits of a particular human civilization, devoted to protecting the world from other alliances of spirits, or seeking a greater spiritual truth about the nature of the cosmos.

4. The Great Chain of Being. The universe has a strictly organized hierarchy of spirits, usually with more powerful spirits (perhaps even gods) at the top of the chain and weaker spirits (typically nature spirits or human spirits) near the bottom. Humanity may be located at the very bottom of the chain, with all spirits set above them, or somewhere in the middle (or even at the top in a campaign where all spirits are subservient to humans).

5. All of the Above. More than one of the above options can exist at the same time in the campaign. Celestial spirits might be highly organized with a complex hierarchy, while nature spirits are fairly loose, although they know of each other and cooperate if it suits them, and undead spirits like ghosts tend to be loners and hostile toward any other spirit encroaching on their domains. This can be more complicated but also tends toward a more realistic and "organic" feel to the spirits in the campaign.

Special Powers

Related to the presence of spirits is the power latent in the human spirit. Can embodied spirits (that is to say, humans and other intelligent races) possess special abilities of their own? This includes different styles of magic and occult advantages along with abilities like psionics and various superpowers (and related advantages).

The availability of such powers depends on the style and genre of the campaign. In general, more cinematic campaigns allow for more special powers, and all bets are off in superhuman and silly campaigns. Realistic campaigns tend to limit the special powers available to the player characters, often aiming for a setting where such powers are unreliable or must be concealed from the world at large (a "secret powers" campaign).

The GM must decide which powers exist in the campaign and which are available to player characters. The GM of a modern "psychic investigators" campaign may decide that spirits are all psi-based (see *Psionic Spirits*, p. 44). Psi abilities exist in the campaign, but only ESP and Telepathy are available to player characters, and only at Power 5 or less. Higher Power levels and powers like Psychic Vampirism and Psychokinesis are limited to NPCs (mostly the psychic entities the investigators combat).

For more on adding special powers to a spirits campaign, see *Genre* (p. 111) and *Campaign Style* (p. 111).

Using Spirits

Once you've decided what sort of campaign you want to run and what spirits will be like, there are other matters to consider: how many spirits there are, how often people encounter them, where they can be found, and what society as a whole thinks about them. These decisions affect the roles of spirits in the campaign and are influenced by the type of campaign you want to run.

Quantity and Rarity

In folklore and myth, spirits are rarely seen. That's not to say that they don't appear, or that people didn't often believe there were spirits behind every rock and tree, only that people didn't often interact with them. It might be that every household has a friendly brownie or other hearth spirit, but most of the time people never see them; they just believe that they are around. Likewise, while people may attend church and pray to angels and saints, only a blessed few ever actually encounter one of these heavenly messengers. Naturally the player characters, being who they are, are likely to be among this fortunate number.

Keeping spirits relatively rare helps maintain an air of mystery and makes their appearances truly significant events. Spirits are also capable of great subtlety when they wish, using abilities like Probability Alteration and the Poltergeist Effect to influence events in the physical world. And people who believe in spirits are likely to attribute things to them even when they're not responsible. It's always easier to blame a run of bad luck on a curse or evil spirits than it is to blame blind chance or, worse yet, a personal failing.

On the other hand, high-fantasy campaigns tend to have spirits everywhere. Any wizard worth his salt has at least a few servitor spirits, while powerful sorcerors have legions of them to do their bidding. Ghosts and other undead haunt graveyards and ruins, while primeval forests are filled with nature spirits, nymphs, and faeries. Temples are raised to a diverse pantheon of gods, with their own spiritual servants and messengers sent to aid their mortal worshippers. Cinematic horror games can feature a new spiritual "menace of the week" to overcome and banish from the physical world, each with its own unique weakness for the monster-hunters to discover.

Overall, the more spirits are used in the campaign, the less mysterious they will become.

Spirit Servitors

In some spirit campaigns, player characters have a virtual army of spirit minions and servants. It becomes all too tempting to allow the spirits to do all the work while the "heroes" sit back and reap the benefits. While spirit servants should be useful (that's what they're there for, after all) they shouldn't be allowed to take the challenge out of the game. There are several ways to address this issue:

1. *Keep Them Busy.* The adversaries probably have spirit servants, too. The player characters' spirits can be kept busy countering the opposition's spirits, leaving the heroes and their adversaries to face each other alone.

2. *Promote Them.* Spirits that spend a great deal of time doing a lot of tasks may become more and more independent, especially if they're left unsupervised. Characters may find their spirit servants becoming more aware and more independent in their attitude. If they don't take a more active role in things, they may find that their spirits don't really need them and that they've started to realize it.

3. *If You Want Something Done Right . . .* Do it yourself. Servitor spirits often miss certain nuances of material existence, so they may have problems or make mistakes if left unsupervised. This can take the form of minor gaffes and annoyances for more intelligent servitors to serious problems for mindless spirits. Consider the animated brooms in Disney's "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," endlessly filling a basin and creating a flood because Mickey didn't know how to tell them to stop.

God Does Not Play at Dice . . . but Spirits Do
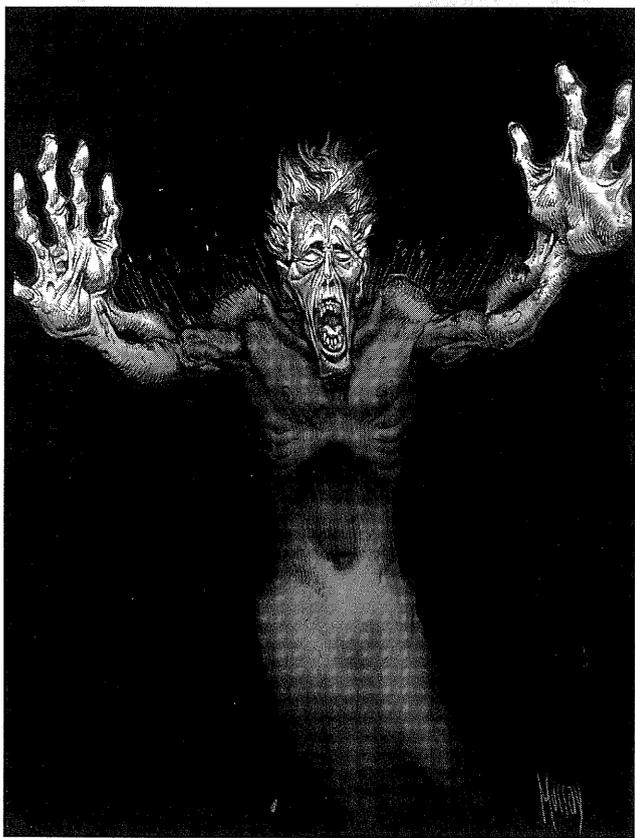
Many spirits have the ability to manipulate probability through the power of their wills (see p. 34). This allows the GM to apply bonuses or penalties to nearly any die roll based on the intervention of a particular spirit or spirits. Most of the time, spirits have better things to do than bother with mortal affairs, but player characters are usually not typical mortals and are more likely to draw the attention of spirits, both for good and ill. To keep games from becoming a constant tug-of-war between good spirits trying to grant the heroes luck and bad spirits trying to curse them, consider some of the following options:

1. *It All Evens Out.* For the most part the influences of good and bad spirits cancel each other out, leaving the heroes masters of their own fates. Only significant interventions (such as those by PC and NPC spirits active in the game) affect events in the campaign.

2. *Maintaining the Cosmic Balance.* There is a limit to how much spirits can affect the whims of fate. While a spirit might intervene in a particular instance, spirits aren't likely to be affecting every small event. Too much interference on the part of one spirit is likely to draw the attention of other spirits that seek to redress the imbalance.

3. *Curses!* Someone plagued by a difficult spirit can always turn to the same resources as everyone else to deal with the problem: a local shaman, priest, or magician to lift the curse and get the spirit to leave. Seeking an authority to help solve the problem can be an adventure itself.

Location

Consider if spirits appear in or near places of habitation, whether summoned by someone or of their own accord. The more often this happens, the more fantastic the campaign and the more common spirits become. That doesn't mean spirits can't be around civilization in a "secret spirits" campaign. After all, spirits are invisible and undetectable to most people, so a city could be awash in spirits with most people none the wiser. It's more a matter of how openly spirits use abilities like Materialization and the Poltergeist Effect. Other spirit powers are subtle enough to be passed off as coincidence or hallucinations in a society that doesn't believe in spirits (in one that does, ordinary coincidences and hallucinations may be blamed on spirits, even if they aren't responsible).

Also consider how common it is for mortals to summon spirits. Can spirits appear of their own accord or must they be summoned (or even created) by people? Are mortals incapable of summoning or commanding spirits? This is likely the case in campaigns with no magic or psionic abilities; although some mortals might be able to use thing like Exorcism and True Faith to keep malevolent spirits at bay, they have little power over spirits' comings and goings. This is suitable for a horror campaign where spirits are largely immune to mortal influence. Fantasy campaigns tend to make it possible for mortals to summon and command spirits using magic and allow for the possibility of free-willed spirits roaming about.

Spirits and Society

Consider how spirits interact with the rest of society. For the most part, spirits are outside normal society. This may be because they are worshipped and treated with reverence, or because they are met with fear and suspicion. What do people in the campaign know about spirits and what do they think of them?

The first thing to determine is the cultural folklore about spirits. For campaigns that aren't in modern or historical settings, you'll have to do a bit more work to decide what the myths and folklore of the campaign's cultures says about spirits. Do people believe in the existence of spirits in general? Are some kinds of spirits believed to exist while others are considered myths, or unknown altogether? Are some spirits considered benevolent while others are evil or dangerous? What is known about spirits' powers and abilities? What's known about the magical arts for summoning and controlling them?

Once the folklore is worked out, decide what of it is true in the campaign. Perhaps *none* of it is, and spirits don't really exist! Or perhaps spirits and magic are simply psi cloaked in mythology and superstition (see *Psionic Spirits*, p. 44). Perhaps some folklore is true while other elements of it are exaggerated or simply incorrect.

Generally speaking, the more common spirits are, the more likely it is that people have correct information about them. In campaigns where spirits are real and show up relatively often, knowledge about them is as common and accurate as knowledge about any animal species (or nonhuman race, for that matter). In campaigns where spirits appear only rarely and their existence is a secret, true knowledge about them may be hard to come by. Scholars may have to sift through libraries of myth, folklore, and faulty research to turn up any useful information. The former situation is best suited to fantasy campaigns, while the latter is better suited to horror and conspiracy games. Of course, there's also the possibility of combining the two: spirits may be relatively unknown to the culture at large, with accurate information about them correspondingly hard to come by, but a hidden subculture may know the truth and have a great deal of accurate information. This is the case in "secret magic" campaigns like *GURPS Voodoo*.
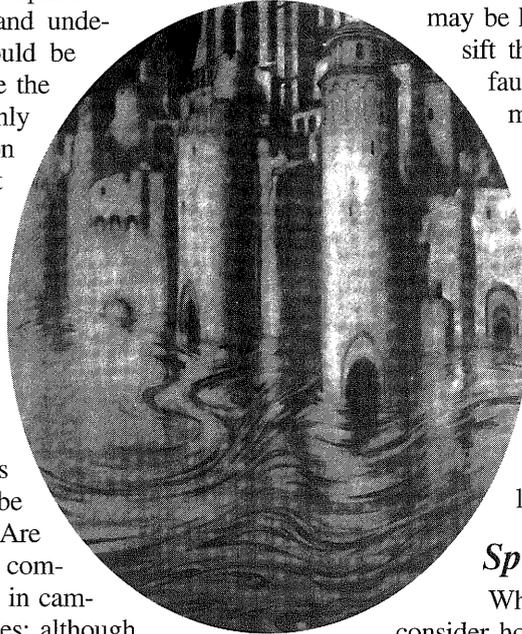
Spirits and the Law

When looking at spirits' relation to society, consider how society's laws will deal with spirits and their abilities. If society doesn't acknowledge the existence of spirits, there will be no laws dealing with them (something free-willed spirits might try to do something about, if they can). If society does acknowledge spirits, however, there will have to be laws to deal with them.

Is summoning and binding a spirit considered a form of slavery? Are spirits accorded the same rights as material beings? Are some spirits treated better than others? Free-willed spirits might be considered equal to humans while other spirits are treated as pets or valuable property. This might lead to Social Stigmas for some spirits.

Is a summoner responsible for the actions of the spirits he conjured or created? What if a spirit goes "rogue" and escapes the summoner's control? Is summoning spirits tolerated at all, or is it considered a dangerous (even evil) practice and legally banned? In some societies certain spirits may be considered good, while others are considered evil, and trafficking with evil ones is a crime.

How does the law regard spirits who use their invisibility and intangibility to spy on mortals? Spirits who haunt private property or hitch free rides on vehicles? In settings where spirits are common and known to exist, wards against spirits might be as mundane as fences, locks, and window blinds.

How does society deal with hostile, dangerous, or criminal spirits? In primitive cultures this may be the role of a shaman or priest. In other societies there may be a means of imprisoning spirits (in containers like djinn bottles and lamps) or banishing them back to the spirit world for a certain time. Spirits that threaten society may simply be destroyed for the greater good. And don't forget the possibility that at least some of the society's laws may have been inspired or dictated by powerful spirits and their servants!

Spirits and Magic

If spirits exist, do mortals have access to magic? If so, what kind? Campaigns that feature spirits and little or no magic leave mortals largely at the spirits' mercy, since there's little they can do to affect them. Mortals seek to placate the spirits, and some may have abilities granted by spirit patrons (represented by advantages like Spirit Warrior and Divine Favor).

If some form of spirit magic exists, the GM must decide how rare it is and who can use it. Magic gives mortals a more even chance of dealing with spirits, and even controlling some of them. See Chapter 6 for details on spirit magic.

Spirits and Technology

Is there technology that affects spirits, perhaps a fusion of science and sorcery? Perhaps spirits are vulnerable to certain exotic energies or ectoplasm can be captured and contained in a special storage device (like the traps used in the movie *Ghostbusters*). Such technology may be "weird science" limited to a few eccentric inventors, or it might be relatively mainstream if the existence of spirits is a well known fact. *GURPS Technomancer* presents a setting where magic and technology combine and provides examples of technology that affects spirits.

Spirit Foes

Spirits are powerful adversaries, able to affect the physical world without being affected in return. Heroes must often rely on their wits to overcome foes immune to physical attacks.

Monsters

Spirits can simply be an exotic sort of monster to fight. Spirits are more difficult to deal with than most creatures, since they are largely invulnerable to physical harm and can be affected only by special abilities like magic. Characters can try to kill a spirit in material form, of course, but most spirits are smart enough either not to materialize or to retreat back into spirit form when they're hurt. With their various powers, spirits can make things very difficult for the heroes, particularly those with no ability to strike back at them.

Such encounters force the PCs to be innovative in dealing with their opponents. Perhaps the spirit has a psychology they can exploit. This is effective against free-willed spirits, although not against servitors or mindless spirits. They can also use their knowledge of spirit lore to figure out what the spirit wants or what its weaknesses are. For a novel change of pace, they can simply *talk* to the spirit and find out what it wants or negotiate with it in some way. It may turn out that many "monster" spirits are misunderstood or want something the party can provide.

Minions

Spirits can turn up as servants of other opponents, from more powerful spirits to magicians and evil cults. Spirits are perfect spies and agents: invisible, virtually undetectable, able to go almost anywhere. With the ability to influence the physical world and control probability, they can make the person or organization that controls them quite powerful. In many settings the other side has spirits of its own and experts in dealing with them, perhaps the heroes.

These sorts of spirits are common in fantasy settings with evil wizards and horror campaigns with magicians, evil priests, and cults commanding the forces of the spirit world.

Villains

An intelligent spirit makes a particularly formidable villain, particularly against characters with little ability to affect the spirit world. Spirit villains have all the advantages mentioned above and can make intelligent use of their special abilities. With its powers of gathering information, influencing events, and possession, a dedicated spirit villain can make the PCs' lives a living hell. A spirit villain is also fond of placing heroes in moral quandaries by doing things like possessing an innocent person and forcing them to decide between stopping the spirit and saving the person's life. These sorts of villains are well suited for fantasy and horror campaigns. But spirit villains can also show up in other campaigns, such as a malevolent disembodied being in a space campaign, or a powerful ghost or demon in a supers setting.

More powerful spirit villains like deities or cosmic entities (see p. 62) may simply lurk in the background, served in the material world by hordes of dedicated cultists and lesser spirits. Defeating such a powerful enemy may be the focus of an epic campaign.

Antagonists

A spirit doesn't necessarily have to be "evil" to be opposed to the player characters; it simply has to have goals that conflict with theirs. A guardian spirit protecting a sacred site or ancient relic is only doing its duty – it may be the PCs who are thieves and trespassers! Likewise, spirits often have particular obsessions, duties, or goals that may put them at odds with mortals. Nature spirits may try to protect a wilderness area from the encroachment of modern civilization (from clearing for farmland to building condominiums). A ghost can irrationally seek vengeance or try to protect its loved ones by lashing out at any potential threat to them, no matter how small.

Spirits with well rounded personalities and goals can serve as regular characters in a campaign setting and present more of a challenge than ordinary "monsters." The fact that spirits are largely immune to brute-force solutions helps encourage players to think along other lines.

Spirit Heroes

The racial templates in this book allow you to build spirit player characters. Whether or not you *want* spirit PCs in a particular campaign is a matter to consider, since they pose some particular challenges.

No Spirit PCs

This is the simplest option for a campaign. Spirits exist, but they are not allowed as player characters. PCs may be able to summon and control spirits (see Chapter 6); they may even be able to channel them or project their own spirits out into the spirit world; but they cannot actually *be* spirits. They are still tied to the limits of mortal flesh.

This is the best approach for a campaign where spirits and their abilities are intended to remain mysterious. It suits a horror campaign where the PCs are likely to encounter spirit foes, as well as most types of fantasy campaigns, including modern urban fantasy. Since spirits tend to be quite expensive, it's also suited to most low-powered campaigns.

Passing Beyond

In this type of campaign, PCs have the potential to *become* spirits of some kind, usually human spirits like ghosts or ascended spirits. If reincarnation is a reality in the campaign, nearly any kind of spirit becomes a possibility. Generally this involves the mortal death of the player character, freeing the spirit to move on to a new form of existence, but that doesn't have to be the case. Heroes might simply "ascend" to a spiritual existence as a reward from a patron deity, or as the result of powerful magic, the use of unknown occult rituals or technology, or some sort of "cosmic accident." Or perhaps they were *stranded* as spirits by having their physical bodies killed while astrally projecting (see p. P11), a critical failure on a powerful Gate spell (pp. G44-51), or similar disaster.

This approach has the advantage of allowing the characters to learn more about the nature of spirits at the same time as the players, since the characters start out as relatively ordinary people and "graduate" to spiritual existence. It also serves as a good way of changing a stale campaign into an altogether different sort of game. You should make sure in advance that players would be interested in this kind of game before taking the plunge. If only some characters become spirits while others remain mortal, see *Mixed Groups*.

All-Spirit Campaigns

Perhaps the player characters are all spirits of various sorts. This is suited for fairly high-powered campaigns; the GM should set a basic point level somewhere between 250 and 750 points (depending on the types of spirits being played). Decide in advance what types of spirits are allowed as PCs, based on the theme of the campaign. Are the PCs all angels fighting a war against hell? Are demon player characters allowed as rivals (or even potential allies) of heavenly forces? Are there nature spirits and human spirits in the mix? Or are they ghosts, possibly with an ascended spirit or two among them?

This sort of campaign poses challenges for the GM, who has to take the abilities of spirits into account when creating adventures. Physical barriers don't limit spirits as they do mortals. They can go virtually anywhere they want, unseen and unstoppable, except by magic. On the other hand, spirits have serious limitations when it comes to interacting with the physical world, especially if they have low Fatigue scores and don't have abilities like the Physical Form enhancement of Spirit Form. The GM can play up these limitations to create challenges. The characters may be able to access information easily, but if they can't get a mortal to *believe* them, they may not be able to put that information to use.

Mixed Groups

Campaigns featuring mixed groups of spirits and mortals present special issues, since the GM has to play to the strengths of both types of characters. Fortunately they tend to complement each other; unfortunately that makes it all the more difficult for the GM to pose challenges. A mixed group is best suited to high-power campaigns, so the spirits don't completely overshadow the mortals while still having some useful powers and abilities of their own. Some common issues in a mixed group campaign:

"Just let the spirit do it." There's a temptation to treat the spirits in the party merely as useful minions, sending them off to do scouting, gather information, and so forth. To a degree this is to be expected; spirits are quite good at these things, after all. But the GM shouldn't allow the rest of the group to sit back while the spirits do all the work, nor allow the spirits to hog the limelight. Have something crop up while the spirits are away, or have them run afoul of other spirits or some kind of mystical protection they can't easily overcome. Don't forget that the spirits may need mortal aid just as much when it comes to getting things done in the physical world.

"Let me introduce my invisible friend." Depending on the culture's views on spirits, spirit PCs may be accepted, or people might look with suspicion on those who associate freely with them. Alternatively, the heroes might be considered cursed or mentally unbalanced for talking to invisible beings and thinking that they traffic with spirits. It can get them burned as witches in some settings, committed to an institution in others.

"The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Spirits are immune to many of the concerns of mortal beings: they don't eat, sleep, age, or suffer from heat, cold, or weather. This allows spirits to blithely ignore hazards mortals have to struggle to overcome. Encourage the spirit PCs to help out their mortal friends and don't forget that spirits have their own unique drawbacks to overcome (see *Spirit Weaknesses*, p. 35).

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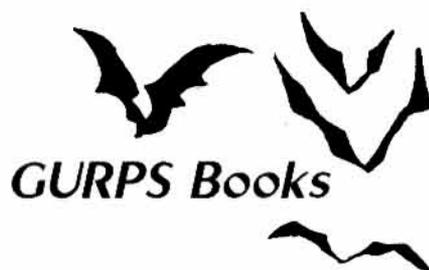
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The creatures of the Other World are all around us. Some were once alive. Some were created by human imagination. And some are completely inhuman but thirst for our souls. *GURPS Spirits* is a complete guide to the spirit realm and its inhabitants. It includes a catalog of spirits from around the world: angels, demons, djinn, dryads, ghosts, loas, manitou, raksasha, and many, many more. It is also a campaign guide for characters who see spirits, serve them, use them . . . or fight them!

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GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition, Revised and Compendium I: Character Creation are required to use this supplement in a GURPS campaign. The material in GURPS Spirits can be used with any rules system.

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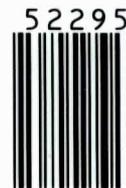and Sean Murray
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