Posted by u/abcd_z Rules-lite gamer 6 years ago

Time travel combat: Paradoxing your opponent out of existence. Generic rules for any system.

This is taken from the Continuum RPG, stripped of any setting. The best description I've read so far of Continuum is part "observer effect" and part "Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure".

If you're not familiar with the world history of your setting (or if it doesn't have one), I would suggest using the RPG system Microscope to create an entirely new world history to work with. Any events, periods, or scenes created this way can become "fixed points" that will cause frag to anybody trying to change them.
Or not, I guess. It's really your call.

Span card (optional, I guess)

By Continuum Rules As Written, you're supposed to record the following: every time you span, when and where you arrive, and your remaining span. I have no idea if any of this is truly necessary to enjoy a good game. Additionally, anything that you discover is in your Yet should also be recorded. That one seems a bit more important, but feel free to skip that too if it seems like too much paperwork.

Span limits (also optional)

Every time you travel through time, you use up span. Travelling through space does not use up span.

Span, Years traversable without one full day of rest, Miles traversable in one span, weight able to transport (in pounds), Title
0, 0, n/a, n/a, Leveller
1, 1, 1, 10, Novice
2, 10, 10, 100, Apprentice
3, 100, 100, 1,000, Mentor
4, 1,000, 1,000, 10,000 (5 tons), Master
5, 10,000, 10,000, 100,000 (50 tons), Exalted

Frag: This is caused by temporal paradox. Specifically, anything that changes your history from what you knows it was. On a technical level, it's caused by the spanning technology trying to split you between the main universe and a non-existent timeline. Symptoms can include deja vu, partial amnesia, nausea, and general disorientation. A spanner is never in doubt as to what his frag rating is. Once the paradox causing the frag is resolved, the frag is removed.

Frag penalties.

0: No frag, no problem.
1: Minor fragmentation, easily dealt with.
2: Serious fragmentation, should be handled right away.
3: At this point, minor penalties start accumulating on your rolls.
4: The spanner becomes slightly disoriented in most moments of stress.
5: The spanner is considered a Lost Cause to the continuum, and your friends are no longer allowed to help you fix your frag.
6: The spanner is very disoriented most of the time and should probably not be out in leveller public.
7: The spanner probably can't easily tell where or when he is, and his memory is seriously impaired. He doesn't recognize some important things in his life, and often insists that he witnessed events that never occurred. Few return from this brink.
8+: The character can no longer be played. At times it may still be encountered as a shadow or phantom, but without any meaningful powers, or even physical form.

Frag penalties should be decided on ahead of time by the players and the GM. Since it's different from system to system, here are some examples (the only two systems I'm familiar with). Suggestions for other system penalties are welcome, and corrections for these ones one are fine too.
FUDGE: -1 to every roll at 3 points of frag, with another -1 at 5 frag and again at 7 frag.
d20: 5-point penalty to each roll for every point of frag above 2.

Slipshanking
Your Elder places an item in a convenient location for you to find, with the resulting need to place the item going into your Yet, or your required future. You take one point of frag, to be cured once you fulfill the Yet of placing the item for your Junior to find. Think Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure.

Gemini incident

Gemini Incident

Meeting an older version of yourself (your "Elder"). The encounter is role-played twice. First with you as the Junior and the GM as the Elder, then again when you as the Elder and the GM as your Junior. Any major deviations between remembered encounters causes frag that can only be cured by altering one (or both) of your past self's memories, accounting for the discrepancy.

Time Combat

Time combat, once finished, cannot be revisited.
Span is not regained during time combat.

These seem to be the most important/most popular time combat stratagems. There are others, but I skipped them and/or merged them to keep things simple. Everybody involved in time combat gets to use one strategem per sweep (time combat turn).

TIME COMBAT STRATAGEMS:

Hit and run: frag the opponent then span away, all within 60 seconds. The fragging player must then declare (to the GM) his actions for the next sweep.

Gather information: Roll against the relevant skill (social, research, clairvoyance, etc.) If successful, you can get any one question answered.

Measure: Observe an opponent to gain bonuses you can pass onto other players through a successful Rendezvous, but not use yourself. These bonuses take effect any time an informed spanner makes or tries to stop a Hit and Run at that time period. The Measuring spanner cannot use the bonuses himself because he knows too much about what happens. To interfere directly is to risk fragging himself.

Rendezvous: Meet up at a specified time/place to share information and create plans.

Harbinger: After a successful attack (frag or physical), the player leaves proof of his opponent's failure with a Junior of the opponent. Now that the elder knows the threat has just been made good, he is penalized on all his rolls for the rest of combat due to hesitation and self-doubt. Harbingers are cumulative if evidence for separate successful attacks are presented to the target.

Time Combat ends when one of the following occurs:

1. Two otherwise successful attempts to Gather Information on the whereabouts of an attacker fails to result in catching him (he got away); or
2. Two attempts to Frag the same spanner by the same assailant succeed; or
3. If all of one side is brought down physically; or
4. If all of one side is hit to beyond Frag 7.

Definitions

Up: Towards the world's future.
Down: Towards the world's past.
Age: Your personal past.
Yet: Your required personal future.
Elder: The older instance of the spanner in a gemini incident.
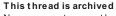Junior: The younger instance of the spanner in a gemini incident.
Leveller: Regular person unable to travel through time.
Spanner: A person able to teleport through time and space.

EDIT: I forgot to mention, the Hit and Run needs to be roleplayed. An example would be stealing a locket that becomes a large part of the opponent's childhood, or shutting down the projector to a movie the opponent was watching in his Age. Both examples will give your opponent frag.

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Draconius42 2 points · 6 years ago
This is amazing. And my head hurts.
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[deleted] 2 points · 6 years ago

I've owned Continuum and Further Information for twelve years. I also have an early preview of Narcissist that I bought from AetherCo at GenCon six years ago as well as a cd with the spanbook software on it.

I've always wanted to play but it's not for most people and it's difficult to find players. We did actually roll characters. I whip it out every couple of years and reread it. When is NRaRPGiPwhateveritis Day?

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TheMarquisDeSpace 1 point · 6 years ago

Does anyone know where I can find a copy of the Microscope rulebook?

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abcd_z Rules-lite gamer 🔧 3 points · 6 years ago · *edited 6 years ago*

You could probably find it online simply enough by googling for microscope rpg pdf, but I would recommend going to lame mage productions and buying the pdf legally. It's only $10 for the .pdf only, and it would help them continue creating the excellent products they do.

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TheMarquisDeSpace 1 point · 6 years ago

Thanks

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thomar 1 point · 6 years ago

I like it. What do you use to justify the inability to go back after a combat is finished? Space-time continuum instability? Any action taken after that point causes frag to the attacker with no guarantee of success?

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abcd_z Rules-lite gamer 🔧 3 points · 6 years ago

Attempting to go back to a finished time combat can frag any spanner who gave you assistance in the time combat, as well as anybody dependent on the events stemming from the outcome of the finished time combat. That's a lot of spanners (By the book, 1d10 x 1d10 Spanners of a Span the GM decides), and now they're all focused on turning that frag back on you.

I suppose *technically* you could try it, but the odds are overwhelmingly **not** in your favor.

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DaGreatJL 1 point · 6 years ago

i think you may have just come up with game mechanics for how homestuck ends

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iamjamazing 1 point · 6 years ago

Interesting

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