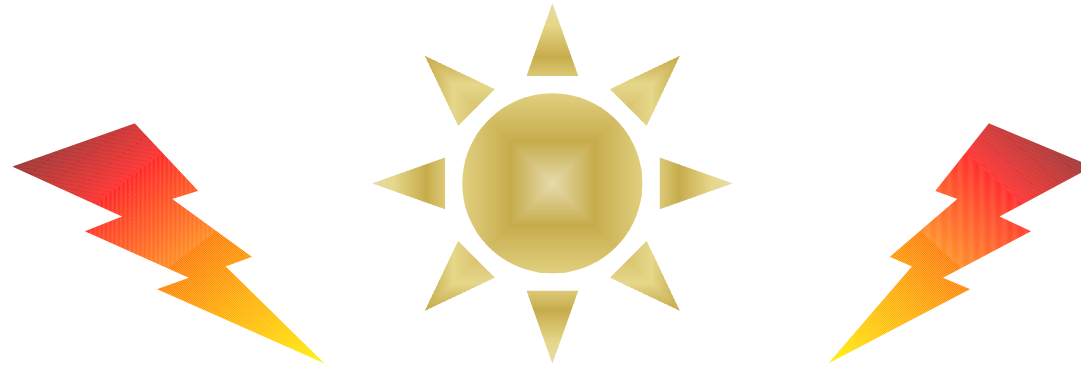# Sin /Zen

Experimental RPG System, Lite Rules

Sin /Zen

Overview

A game in 24 hours. Madness. But a challenge, and like a foolish young upstart, I see the gauntlet at my feet and cannot help but take it up. Now, somewhat more the wiser for this work, I cannot help but cry: Woot! Ha-Ha! Did it! Have I learned anything? Hmmm.

Ok, so it is not very polished. So this forward is a bit unprofessional. I am very tired. But what the heck, you haven't had to do more than put some time and bandwidth into looking at this work, so you are probably somewhat forgiving. I hope.

My name is Evan, and I am trying to make a go of producing some materials for games. And here, in order that I show off some of the strange things I have going on in my head, is an entire game built within 24 hours. See www.24hourrpg.com for info on this event and on why people like me are doing it. I hope you enjoy it.

When I began, I figured this was the perfect opportunity to try something experimental rather than classic. Experimental ideas do not get much of chance to be aired. The work needed to get them out there is usually too large to make them viable as a risk. There are long odds stacked against innovation.

So I decided to give a go to a few ideas that I am not sure will fly as full games concepts. I began by thinking of some of the more esoteric ideas I have come up with. Then I started mixing them up in my head.

First of all, I have always wanted to try to see what could be made of a game using the Seven Deadly Sins of Medieval Christian thought. Next, take a bit of inspiration from the White Wolf gaming system (in particular Wraith), and its fundamental simplicity of statistics. Take a helping of Nephilim concepts, and a dash of the GURPS points based character building. Add to the mix the concept of Enlightenment vs. Materialism and the Zen state. Toss in a gaming concept of my very own: the success of actions during a crisis are not governed by ability but are rather governed by motivation. Ability in turn governs results and the effectiveness of success. Then, turn on the mental blender.

I call this monstrosity Sin/Zen because of the primary driving forces of the system, and their philosophical origin. It is a system designed for games where abstracted motivational absolutes are the main thrust of game play. It is in no way focused upon material success, or even realism; but rather is designed to focus upon motivations and psychological flux of character development.

I intended to give at least a couple of full world sections at the end of this, but ran out of time after I had began only one. Have a look in the last section of this and you will see some of the ideas I came up with within the time allotted by the great event / challenge.

For anyone who is interested, here is the timeline for how this game evolved:

Thursday 22nd August: I first hear of the 24hour challenge on www.rpg.net. I spend some time considering the idea.

Friday 23rd August: I wake up mildly discouraged and go to work. I come up with a game idea for a Fusion system taking the Seven Deadly Sins as the primary factor. I spend some time think this through after work.

Saturday 24th August: After much running around to and shopping, I sit down at the end of the day and seriously consider the structure of the game system. At approximately 1:30am I write down some notes, and realize I have started the challenge. I put together the base plan, write a few sample tables and paragraphs and resolve to get some sleep.

Sunday 25th August: I wake up at 7am after 4 hours sleep, turn on the laptop and seriously begin. 9am my wife awakens: I do the house husband tasks, stealing half an hour to write some more notes, then we go out to lunch with my brother who is leaving for England. We get home at 5pm and I manage a couple hours before I make dinner. We watch the last episodes of the current season of 24, and go to bed at 10pm. I write

like a mad person to get to this stage. It is 1am, and I am feeling mighty tired. I have a short amount of time to write an index and format this, then convert it over to PDF. I will have to upload this tomorrow... dial up internet at home, and no convenient way to use it from the bedroom. Check of total words: 6992 (index not done). Almost there…

Some proofing and formatting done. File converted. Minutes to spare.

Index

(Didn't make it to 24 pages. Just cracked the 7000 word mark though, so I suppose that is something.)

THE PASSIONS

The center of the Zen/Sin game mechanic is the basic assumption that a character's Abilities determine what they are capable of, but their Motivations (or Passions) are what determine their base chance of success in a time of Crisis. As this is a highly abstract mechanic, the assumption is made that the characters might be of any kind of origin or background, so for the purpose of this section we shall refer to them as Entities.

The Seven Passions

Entities are driven by their motivations. The Sin/Zen system revolves around a dynamic interaction of several elements of motive, or Passion that might drive an entity to act. Passions are rated from 0 (lowest) to 6 (highest).

Table 1: The Passions

Passion	Active Ability	Passive Vulnerability
Envy	Sense	Fusion
Gluttony	Alter	Acquire
Greed	Acquire	Alter
Lust	Fusion	Coerce
Pride	Coerce	Resist
Sloth	Resist	Conflict
Wrath	Conflict	Sense

Envy

This Passion is the desire to know the nature or possessions of others, and the empty wish to have that other nature or thing as one's own.

Envy drives the senses; an entity that is envious always wants to know what others are doing and what they have. Envy is thus the active principle in all Sense Abilities.

Reciprocally, Envy is vulnerable to Fusion Abilities. An Entity that is envious is ineffective in resisting Abilities that involve sharing.

Gluttony

This Passion is the desire to consume, absorb or manipulate things. A Gluttonous Entity is not satisfied unless they can change things by their presence, action or desire.

Gluttony empowers abilities that absorb, devour or change. Gluttony is thus the active principle in all Alter Abilities.

In turn, Gluttony is vulnerable to Acquisition Abilities. An entity that is focused upon changing things by their presence is disinterested in holding onto things.

Greed

This Passion is the desire to own everything, and be as personally powerful as conceivable. A Greedy Entity desires all things to be theirs, all power to be theirs, all abilities to be theirs. Greed does not stop with owning things; it includes self-advancement.

Greed empowers abilities that steal, learn or own. Greed is thus the active principle in all Acquire Abilities.

Where Greed is weakest is against Alteration. A Greedy entity is focused upon owning things, and things that change or manipulate what they own are beneath their notice.

Lust

This Passion is physical desire, but more than this, it is the desire to procreate, to meld with another, to mix things in the world and blend them. A Lustful Entity desires interaction with all things.

Lust empowers abilities that mix things, amalgamating them or using them together. Lust is the active principle in all Fusion Abilities.

A Lustful entity is vulnerable to Coercion. They are more likely to listen to others and be swayed by them. They can be more easily persuaded because of their Lust.

Pride

This Passion is the assumption of pre-eminence. Prideful Entities are likely to believe in their own supremacy in all things. Sometimes this Pride is a self-fulfilling prophecy, but other times not.

Pride drives supremacy. An Entity that is proud will seek dominance over or affirmation from others. Pride is thus the active principle in all Coerce Abilities.

Proud individuals are not likely to have thought through that others might resist their desires. Thus Pride is vulnerable to Resist Abilities.

Sloth

This Passion (if it can be called that...) is the power of inertia. A Slothful Entity prefers not to act at all, or is resistant to action. Some see this as laziness, but the Slothful are not likely to be concerned what others think of them. Or in fact, concerned about anything at all.

Sloth empowers avoidance or resilience against action. Thus Sloth is the active principle in all Resist abilities.

A Slothful Entity is vulnerable to conflict. They are less likely to resist violence than others. Thus Sloth is weak against Conflict abilities.

Wrath

This Passion is anger, hate, and force of desire for triumph over others or revenge. A Wrathful Entity flies into a rage if provoked. Wrath is the most violent of passions and one of the more dangerous because of this.

Wrath empowers violence and force. Thus Wrath is the active principle in all Conflict abilities.

A Wrathful individual is less focused upon awareness. Wrath is thus particularly vulnerable to all Sense Abilities.

CRISIS

Normally an Entity can do everything they are capable of with a standard level of competence. This means that if the situation is not critical, a person will have a level of competence in any action that remains fairly static. No roll is necessary when a player wants their character to perform normal actions.

However, in any situation where there is a Crisis, that is, there is a critical element to the situation that will cause change dependant upon how successful a character's action might be in the time allotted, dice rolls are needed. This situation is referred to as a time of Crisis.

A time of Crisis is caused by time being short, range being long, the task being one that bears a consequence in failure, or opposition by another Entity. In all cases save the last, a Circumstantial Difficulty is assessed for any action attempted by an Entity.

In Crisis mode, all players and NPCs interested in acting roll 2d12 for initiative. Then count from the highest number down to the lowest, each player stating their character's action once their number is reached. Resolve the action immediately as per below. An action lasts roughly 2-8 seconds.

Rolling the Dice

Firstly, determine the Target needed by adding the Active Motivation of the person attempting the action to the Passive Vulnerability of the person resisting the action, or the Circumstantial Difficulty if unopposed (see table 2 next page). If the ability is aimed at a group, the Vulnerability is deemed to be the lowest number in that group, the least Vulnerable. If someone has an ability that can affect a group but chooses to specify that they will affect only the person who is least resistant, this is possible to do. (Example: Search Rank 2 allows an Entity to search for the least stealthy person if there are a group of people hiding).

Next, roll 2d12 and pick the lowest number. If the lower number is equal to or under the Target, the ability use is a success. If not, it is a fail.

A double 1 is a Superlative success. A double 12 is an Abysmal failure. Rolling the target number exactly in both dice is a Wild result.

The effect of success depends upon what Ability is being used. See the Ability descriptions.

A Superlative success ups the Rank of the character's ability by one Rank for the effects of this result.

An Abysmal Failure will generally mislead, wound, or greatly inconvenience an Entity. The GM is to assume that the worst-case scenario for the result is what happens. This is left to GM discretion.

A Wild result causes some unexpected event to occur, usually out of the context of whatever the action was about. This might be any thing, and is left to the GM to improvise the result. Examples might be that a sparrow flies in the way of an arrow, or that a character

trying to memorize a list of names might accidentally forget their own name. Whatever the result is, it neither hinders nor helps the character, but rather is just weird.

Table 2: Difficulty Level

Circumstantial	Difficulty
Easy	5
Moderate	4
Normal	3
Hard	2
Exacting	1
Life or Death	0

CHI

Chi is an Entity's life force and energy. It is a measure of how much an entity is invested in the world. Maximum Chi is determined by adding all the Passions that the character has together.

An Entity may use their Chi to manipulate events according to their desire. The more they do so, the more they are likely to be aligned towards the Passion they are favoring. This increases their power in that Passion, but lowers their purity of it. The struggle for purity or power is the essential flux that forms the core of the Zen/Sin game.

If the player of an Entity wants a particular result in an action that they are involved in, but the dice determine a different result, the player can choose to adjust the dice by spending points from their Chi pool. The character then accumulates these Chi points to their Distemper for the Active Passion of this action. The number of points spent equals the difference between the lowest dice in the roll and the Target of the action.

Chi is affected by wounds, and by rest. Rest allows an Entity to rejuvenate their Chi at a rate equal to their highest Passion in points per four hours rest. In some game universes, Chi can be returned in full by special circumstances (worship, home territory, etc). Wounds can be absorbed directly to Chi, point for point, up to the maximum per wound of one point per Rank of a character's Physical Sphere (see spheres below).

If Chi is reduced to zero, the character is considered tired, and cannot enhance their Passions. This has no specific effect save that the Entity that takes any more harm in this situation cannot soak damage to Chi, and cannot use chi to change events.

DISTEMPER

When an Entity has been more Passionate about something, it suffers a state of Distemper until the Passions are re-aligned with the Entity's new state. At the end of the gaming session, or when the character rests (at the discretion of the GM) count up the number of points of Distemper that a character has used in each Passion. If this number is under the current passion level, then the Distemper is automatically cancelled. If it is more than their current Passion level they must roll 2d12. If both dice rolls are under the number of distemper points, then the character gains one point in that passion. If not, there is no effect, and in either case the Distemper points are

cancelled off. If an Entity's Distemper ever reaches 12 in any one Passion, immediately subtract 12 from the Distemper, and add 1 to the Entity's relevant passion.

CALM

In any session where an Entity has not actively used any abilities that rely upon a Passion, there is a chance that the entity will lose a point in that Passion. Roll two d12, and if both dice are under or equal to the Passion, the character loses a point in that Passion.

THE ZEN STATE

An Entity in the Zen state feels no passion, and is one with the all.

When a Passion reaches 0 the Entity can no longer initiate any abilities that are dependant on that Passion, but they will automatically win any contest that that passion was vulnerable to.

Example: an Entity has the Envy Passion at 0. They can no longer use Sense Abilities, as they do not feel any requirement to know anything more than is obvious anymore. In turn, they automatically cause to Fail any Fusion action that is attempted upon them.

The player of an entity who has achieved Passion of 0 in any one area can choose to spend 12 Chi points and add one to the Passion in question, if they ever decide that they need to perform an action using that Passion.

If an Entity manages to reduce all its Passions to zero, it achieves the Zen state, and transcends. Some entities see this as their ultimate goal, but are drawn back by the material, and struggle with their desires.

ELEMENTALS

An entity that has reached the level of 6 in any one Passion is so involved in the material that they lose balance and integration completely, and become a creature of pure element. They come under control of the GM. Elementals are irrational powers that are the bane of powers and mortals alike, wether they be at the level of titans or of poltergeists.

Elementals retain all their abilities, including spheres of power, but act purely on their driving Passion. They can no longer accumulate any points of Distemper in this Passion; it is at maximum, but they can still spend Chi on any actions where this Passion is the Active power. An elemental that rolls double 1s on an ability that their paramount passion is dependant upon has a chance to have a reversion: roll 2d12 again. If both dice are 6 or under, their passion drops to 5, and they become a playable character again.

Note: Entities that interact intelligibly with the world are almost always somewhere in between the two extreme states. Some seek Zen; some few others are so involved in their passions that they seek the Elemental, usually getting there quickly. Most are somewhere in between. They may believe they are gods, or spirits, or something else, but in all cases are capable of interacting with the world as player characters.

ABILITIES AND SPHERES

Abilities determine the effect of any success or failure in a Crisis. If an Entity does not have an ability enabled, they cannot have an effect in that action type. Abilities have a rank that determines how comparatively effective that ability is.

Table 3: Rank and Power of Ability

Sphere Rank	Sphere Level	Range	Duration
1	Mortal	Personal	Seconds
2	Heroic	City	Minutes
3	Demigod	County	Hours
4	Divine	Continent	Days
5	Titanic	Planet	Seasons

Rank of Sphere

Abilities are limited to a maximum of the rank of the Sphere that the Entity is empowered to. Ranks range from 1 to 5, each level of which is 12 times the power of the level before. Thus, having rank 2 in Body means you have the strength of 12 men of rank 1.

Entities do not only have motivation; they have power. The total level of power of any game is to be determined by the GM. A game revolving around disembodied spirits in the modern latter day world may have only one or two Spheres of power possible, and may have only one or two ranks achievable in those Spheres. So, for example, a mundane game would only allow the Body Sphere at rank 1. Meanwhile a game centred on the gods of the Ancient Greeks could have as many as twelve or more different Spheres of power, each of which that might be available at rank 5.

Base Spheres are actualities that make up an Entity's interactions with the world. In the case of normal humans in a mundane game, they have two Base Spheres: Mind and Body. In general they would start with these at Rank 1. You may wish to include Supernatural at Rank 1 in some universes, or any other aspect of a character that has firmament in that existence. This is to say, that any Abilities that are always available to be purchased by an Entity is part of a Base Sphere. The Base Spheres come for free, but each of the abilities must still be purchased.

Purchasing Spheres and Abilities

There are two things that must be enabled to use an ability: Both the Sphere and the Ability must be purchased up to the Rank desired. Spheres cost 5 points per rank, and Abilities cost 1 point per rank. Points are given at the start of the game, but can be earned at a rate of 1 point per game session.

Other Spheres of Power might be owned or used by an Entity, consult the rules for the game in question for what ones are available. Spheres of Power are areas of ability and influence over which an Entity holds sway. Some examples are given at the end. Abilities always require a Passion to evoke. See the specific world information for what spheres are available.

Every Sphere that a character contains will have a list of seven Abilities that can be used. Table 4 on page 11 shows the Basic States, the Abilities, and the Passions needed to evoke them.

PHYSICAL ABILITIES

Hurt (Physical Conflict)

Hurt is the ability and willingness to hurt someone physically. If you succeed in a Hurt roll you do your Hurt Rank to the target as Wounds. Characters may choose to soak wounds to their Chi pool. If they have no more Chi left, or do not do so, they can take as many wounds as they have Ranks in their Physical Sphere before they are incapacitated.

Hold (Physical Resistance)

Hold is the ability to prevent someone from being able to move. Wrestling, judo and other such arts are all included in this ability. Success in this ability yields a hold of rank equal to the Hold Rank. The held entity is immobile and cannot act in any physical way, except for trying to break free using Hold themselves on the holder.

Intimidate (Physical Coercion)

Intimidate is the ability to physically coerce others to do as you desire. Rank determines how many people you can intimidate, and how strongly they will react. Rank 1 gives a lone enemy pause, all the way to Rank 5 where an entire planet might be paralyzed with fear, or fleeing about in mad, panicked terror. Such intimidation can be a very impressive thing to see, for friends and foes alike. Intimidate is not an exact science, sometimes people might act out of fear in a way that was not expected, but at the very least, the target will be off balance.

Ride/Drive (Physical Fusion)

This is the ability to control a vehicle or beast of burden. If the mount can be used as a weapon, it does Rank damage as Wounds. Otherwise, the rank determines the level of speed that the user is capable of maintaining if the mount is capable of it.

Sneak (Physical Acquisition)

Sneak covers all kinds of covert action, from picking pockets, stealth, hiding and burglary. Rank determines how well the entity is hidden during the actions, and how many items can be stolen from any one action.

Athletics (Physical Alteration)

This ability determines how well you succeed in any non-combat physical actions (lifting, running, swimming, climbing, etc). In some universes this is considered a very honorable art, and entities may receive reward and recognition for having high levels of this ability. Rank determines how great an action can be done.

Psychology (Physical Sensory)

This is the ability to determine what others are thinking or wanting via body language and reading their actions. The rank determines how many people and how accurate this sensory perception is. Rank 1 gives base impressions, Rank 5 is practically telepathy.

MENTAL ABILITIES

Warfare (Mental Conflict)

This ability covers all kinds of military action, equipment and siege weaponry. It is the ability to lead large groups of people, (size determined by rank) and win small unit actions, battles, seiges or entire wars.

Stun (Mental Resistance)

This is the ability to mentally incapacitate someone with wit, conversation and smarts. It is usable in crisis against an opponent. The rank determines the number of people and range at which the Entity can hold in place at once.

Persuade (Mental Coercion)

This is the ability to convince someone to do something for you. Rank determines number of people that can be affected, and length of time that the persuasion lasts.

Artifice (Mental Fusion)

This is ability to make things that can modify the abilities of others. Every item created has a Rank and an Ability. Anyone with the Ability lower rank than the Item can use the item to gain the benefit of the Rank that the item holds. An entity can create an item per days time unit.

Comprehend (Mental Acquisition)

This is the ability to grasp concepts, absorb them and retain them. Rank indicates how much information can be stored, and how long it takes for a character to forget the details.

Art / Music (Mental Alteration)

This ability is for creating and playing artistic pieces that impress. It is considered a prestige occupation, and use of the ability determines the success of the piece. Rank determines how many people were impressed, and for how long afterwards they, in turn, singing your praises.

Search (Mental Sensory)

This is the ability to inspect an area to determine if anything is untoward or hidden. The Rank of the ability determines the complexity of the situation that the Entity can search in one minute. E.G. Rank 1 Search can search a person in a minute, while Rank 3 can search a whole city in the same time.

Table 4: Base Spheres and Abilities

	Conflict	Resist	Coerce	Fusion	Acquire	Alter	Sense
Physical	Hurt	Hold	Intimidate	Ride/Drive	Sneak	Athletics	Psychology
Mental	Warfare	Stun	Persuade	Artifice	Comprehend	Art/Music	Search
Spiritual	Curse	Ward	Entrance	Bless	Call	Transmute	Augury

Spirit Abilities

Spirit abilities are usually genre specific. I am including this list as an example of what a sphere other than the base two might have. Any Spirit abilities require 1 Chi to evoke, but this one chi does not add to Distemper. It does, however, prevent the chance of Calm for that Passion for any game session in which the abilities are evoked.

Curse (Spirit Conflict)

This is the ability to inflict a curse upon anyone or anything. Requires 1 Chi to activate this ability above and beyond any chi used in the dice. Any curse must be written down, and must have GM approval. Rank determines the power of the curse. Curses last until rescinded or until cancelled. Curses can be almost any effect, but must be an extension of the natural world of the game, so for example, in a Greek Mythology game a level 2 Curse might be "all children of the house will die by monsters" and the result would be an attack on any child of the house by Rank 2 Monsters. Rescinding a curse takes 1 Chi by the caster.

Ward (Spirit Resistance)

This is the ability to create a barrier against harmful magic over a person or area, determined by Rank level. It lasts for Rank level time (rank 1 is enough to last for a combat, for example). Reduce the Rank of any Curses or Sphere effects on anyone within the Ward by the Rank of the Ward. If this reduces the Rank of the effect to 0, the effect is cancelled permanently. A Ward takes 1 Chi to evoke.

Entrance (Spirit Coercion)

This is the ability to convince the target(s) that something illusory is real. In some game universes, removing an Entity's free will is impossible, but it is very possible to deceive their senses. Rank determines the duration of the effect and the number of targets affected, and this Ability takes 1 Chi to evoke. Note that Rank 1 is enough to last one combat. There is no limit as to what illusion can be created, as it is all in the perceptions of the affected people.

Bless (Spirit Fusion)

This is the ability to increase Rank in one Ability of the target(s), to become equal to that of the Bless. Rank determines duration and number of targets that can be affected. This ability takes 1 Chi to evoke, but one only rolls to see if it works after it comes to a crisis point, and the target of the increased ability determines the vulnerability. Bless counteracts Curse of equal or lesser Rank, but has no effect on one of greater rank.

Call (Spirit Acquisition)

This is the ability to summon shades of the dead or other spiritual entities (Astral travelers, Gods). It takes 1 Chi to evoke this ability and it lasts for duration determined by Rank. The Target is only compelled to come if it has less Chi points than the rank of the active Call ability, but may choose to come otherwise. Call provides the ability to speak to the summoned spirit, and lasts for duration determined by Rank.

Transmute (Spirit Alteration)

A very common ability in some universes (Ancient Greek for example) this is the ability to change anything into anything else. In general, Rank 1 or 2 casters cannot change themselves, but can alter almost anything else dependant upon the Rank for number of targets and duration. Evoking this ability requires 1 Chi.

Augury (Spirit Sense)

This is the ability to tell the future. The ability is likely to be clouded or obscure, and is under the auspices of the GM to determine what is sensed. In Ancient Greece, for example, an Augury will usually come in the form of a double-edged ambiguous quote. Rank in reverse determines the magnitude of the foretold event, so for example, rank 1 would be able to foretell a world shaking event, rank 2 an event that affects a continent, rank 3 a city, rank 4 a family and rank 5 an individual. Certain events in the future are so powerful as to be sensed by lesser rank diviners, at the GMs' discretion. Evoking this ability requires 1 Chi.

Knowledge

There are many specific areas of knowledge that Entities may have. An Entity can spend 1 point at the start to have knowledge over any one knowledge area. There is no roll needed for this, since you either know something or you do not. Under critical circumstances,

Table 5: Skills active Ability and passive Vulnerability

Skill	Class	Passion	Vulnerability
Hurt	Physical Conflict	Wrath	Sloth
Hold	Physical Resistance	Sloth	Pride
Intimidate	Physical Coercion	Pride	Lust
Ride/Drive	Physical Fusion	Lust	Envy
Sneak	Physical Acquisition	Greed	Gluttony
Athletics	Physical Alteration	Gluttony	Greed
Psychology	Physical Sense	Envy	Wrath
Warfare	Mental Conflict	Wrath	Sloth
Stun	Mental Resistance	Sloth	Pride
Persuade	Mental Coercion	Pride	Lust
Artifice	Mental Fusion	Lust	Envy
Comprehend	Mental Acquisition	Greed	Gluttony
Art/Music	Mental Alteration	Gluttony	Greed
Search	Mental Sense	Envy	Wrath
Curse	Spiritual Conflict	Wrath	Sloth
Ward	Spiritual Resistance	Sloth	Pride
Entrance	Spiritual Coercion	Pride	Lust
Bless	Spiritual Fusion	Lust	Envy
Call	Spiritual Acquisition	Greed	Gluttony
Transmute	Spiritual Alteration	Gluttony	Greed
Augury	Spiritual Sense	Envy	Wrath

a Comprehend roll may be needed to recall something in time. The rank in Comprehend determines the specific information that is recalled, where a rank of 1 is enough for most general information, and rank 5 will give all details down to the most minute of details.

Example knowledge areas are: Medicine, Physics, History, Art history, Philosophy, Occult, the Underworld, Religion, etc. Feel free to make up your own areas of Knowledge that are relevant and specific to the world of your game.

CHARACTER CREATION

Creating a character depends greatly upon the universe in which the character will be made. Here are the basic steps:

1. Concept

Consider the kind of character that you want to play. You may want to write in a few of the character's primary psychological traits or historical events. What kind of person are they? Speak with the GM about the world and the characters place in it.

2. Choose your Passions

Write down the seven passions. Rate them each from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest), using as a guide the concept you have in mind. Remember that Passions are the guiding force that motivates the character, and keep in mind how you want to play the character.

3. Buy Spheres of Power, Knowledge and Abilities

Write down your Base Spheres (usually Body and Mind). These cost you nothing. Each game will have a number of points that you can spend on gaining abilities, spheres and knowledge. A normal human game will generally have 10 points to spend. A game of vast cosmic power will have 100, and there are varying degrees in between to be determined by the GM.

Buy Ranks in Spheres first, then add abilities in. This way you know your Entity's limits before you start picking specifics.

Each Rank in a Sphere of Power costs 5 points. Sphere ranks begin at zero, except for Base Spheres. Each Rank in an Ability costs 1 point. Abilities are limited to a maximum of the Rank of the Sphere that they are attributed to. All abilities begin at zero. Each area of Knowledge costs 1 point.

4. Finish Them

That's all. You may want to write up a background for the character and description. In some universes possessions are extremely important, and there may be a Sphere of Wealth, in others it is irrelevant to the game, though you may want to write down basic possessions that your character may own or carry around with them.

5. Play game!

Hope you have fun with this! It was a hoot to write, and now I need to sleep… I am running out of time badly here, and want to format this all a bit, but I have a bit of time left to outline a world / genre or two, so read on to the next section!

Γνοθη Σεαυτον

Gnothi Seafton: Know Thyself

Aponireftos rose with the dawn, and gave thanks to the Gods. Another day, the sun shining, fields to be plowed, work to be done. He ate, washed his face in the stream, and picked up his hoe. Much work to do, much indeed.

A voice came from behind him as he swung back with the hoe, and he almost dropped the implement in surprise.

"Excuse me, sir, what are you doing?" He spun about to see a youth dressed in simple white bearing a staff with serpents entwined on it. He nodded at the youth foolishly.

"Please forgive me, young man, I did not see you there. I am about to break the earth, to put in seeds, so that they might grow into plant, so that I might feed my family."

The youth looked perplexed. "Break the earth you say? I care not much for the Earth, though she is the mother of us all. I am much more aware of all that goes above her. But I say to you, that breaking the Earth strikes me as a foolish act. Why do you not hunt the living beasts as your forebears did? Surely such meats as they offer are sweeter and more sustaining than the fruits of the Earth, and much less work the same."

Aponireftos gawked at the youth. Something struck him as strange about the figure, but he was not one to speculate upon the nature of others uninvited. "Well," he answered after a careful minute, "I am not fleet of foot to chase the living beasts, and more so I am not skilled in the arts of the bow or axe. I would work harder getting food by hunting than by farming. And more than this, I am happy as I am." He nodded his agreement with himself. "But I am being impolite. I have not offered you to break bread or drink water in my house, as the law of hospitality requires. Please join me for a meal, and we may discuss my vocation for as long as you desire, to break your voyage. For I see you are a traveler, though I marvel at the lack of dirt on your feet or weariness in your eyes."

The youth looked pleased. "But the old laws still apply." He said to no one. "I have not time, but I give you a boon to guide you away from breaking the Earth of our Mother." And with a wave of his arm the youth changed into a falcon and flew off.

"What a strange thing." said Aponireftos, and turned back to his hoe. He spat on his hands, and went to swing his hoe once more. He was somewhat surprised to find that he was not in fact holding an implement, but rather a short tail. Attached to the back end of a bull. He found himself in the middle of a herd of cattle, the largest of which seemed somewhat irate as the man attempted to break the earth with his hindquarters.

"Gods save me!" he cried out, releasing the bull. In turn the animal afforded him no such simple consideration, turning upon him with much pointing of horns and snorting of breath.

A tall woman plucked him from the way of the bull's goring swipe. She swung a spear at the offending animal, and it fell over stone dead.

Before he had the chance to thank the strange woman, the original youth appeared. "What are you DOING Athena? Now how is this man supposed to become a cow farmer?"

"I have told you before Hermes, don't meddle with people near Athens! I am looking after them."

"But he was breaking the Earth. The last time we did anything like that, Gaia got pissed and released Typhoon! I almost got annihilated!"

"You imbecile! There is a big difference between opening up a volcano to have a shady afternoon and digging a field to feed your family." her tone didn't change from the clinical, tactless assertion, but her words were proud and she pointed her spear at the youth for emphasis. She failed to notice the herd of cows becoming more panicked with every wave of her mighty spear.

Aponireftos did not want to intrude on the argument, which continued to escalate. He eyed the two figures nervously, not paying attention to anything else.

The youth with the staff waved his hand into the air, and storm clouds appeared in the sky. "No one calls me a fool!" He shouted. Thunder rumbled in the background. The woman with the spear was unmoved. The cows were not. They panicked and ran in all directions. Two trampled the all to polite Aponireftos before he had the chance to cry out again.

The woman let out a deep sigh. "Fine. I apologize. You are not an imbecile."

The youth lowered his staff and grinned. "That's all I wanted to hear." The clouds parted. As the sun shone down on the trampled field, the crushed body of the farmer became obvious.

Athena's face became livid. "You are a complete MORON!"

"Hey, that's not nice! What are you…" the youth said, just before a spear landed where he had been standing. Hermes was fast. Very, very fast.

Athena looked over the body of the fallen mortal. She hung her head in shame. There was a lot of work to do before she would be called the Goddess of Wisdom.

Gnothi Seafton is a game world set in the early Golden age of Ancient Greek Mythology. I wanted to spend a bit more time devoted to covering this section, but I only have an hour or so left, and I want to do a bit of formatting to make this package a bit more appealing.

The principle of this world is that the gods have only just cast out the Titans, and are newly in charge of the Civilized World. They are accumulating abilities and spheres of power, and influence in the mortal realm. They are young gods, more driven by their passions than even the stories that came later remember. Because so few survive from those days…

Known Spheres in the Gnothi Seafton Universe:

Fire, Earth, Water, Air, Life, Home, Abundance, Sky, Earth, Law, Fate, Nature, War, Death, Oceans, Seasons, Hearth, and the Forge.

I am afraid I do not have time to define all the abilities for these. Contact me if you want me to develop this game world.

Some other possible universes using the Sin/Zen system:

Aqueous Vitriol: A fantasy world where the Great Flood never receded. Water spirits, left over remnants of the wrath of the Maker, move in the world, shaping the fate of mortality.

Plasm: A modern world where the supernatural manifests in ghost appearances, UFO sightings and mysterious phenomena. Groups of investigators and parapsychologists are hunting the spirits, who may be remnants of the living, or more likely are a separate class of creature with their own drives and motives. Seeking material reality, they have no forms, only minds and limited abilities to manifest in the world.

Golem Animus: Medieval Europe; in which elemental spirits are hunted by magicians who desire their essence. The church hunts the wizards, in turn, for sacrilege.

Circle Open Palm: Asian turn of the 20th Century. Western and Eastern spirits and spirit warriors conflict over the future of the East and West in a Japan clawing its way out of medievalism.

Mundane Gods: A modern world where the world still generates gods, but the things that people give thanks to are not what they once were. Gods of ordinary things, like Trash Collection, Public Transport and Ambulances congregate together to form pantheons of practicality, but some powerful destabilizing forces of older gods continues to threaten.

After word

If you have enjoyed this work, please come and take a look at http://www.plotdevice.com.au/ for what else I am doing. Please let me know via the current email address at that site if you enjoy this work, and if you have any suggestions or ideas about it.

I reserve all rights to publication of this work, but please feel free to enjoy this for personal use. Please contact me if you want to use this for any other purpose, and we will … talk…

Darn. Not enough time to write up a character sheet. Sorry, folks.

Warm Regards,
Evangelos Hugo Paliatseas
A Plot Device Game