

# Fate of Cthulhu

## Book of Rules

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## 1 Introduction

Fate of Cthulhu is an adaption of FATE CORE for 1920ies Call of Cthulhu. Basic Roleplaying—the rule system of COC—has its charms but is surprisingly rules heavy and has always suffered—regardless of genre—from that characters cannot do things they ought to be able to perform considering their background. A simple example is the farmer’s daughter that cannot tell a sheep from a cow but knows everything about guns, sneaking and reading ancient tomes. Chaosium’s Call of Cthulhu handles part of that through EDU but the system is broken at the foundation, in this regard.

The second reason for the adaption is that Basic Roleplaying doesn’t work well with how our group play and how I run the games. Preliminary experiments has shown that FATE might address these issues and there is great hope that this will work well for our upcoming *Horror on the Orient Express* campaign, scheduled to leave London for Istanbul in second half of 2015.

The adoption has been done from the perspective that the character shall be able to do things that the player thinks is reasonable that the character can do based on the character’s background. The important part is that this is not Errol Flynn or pulp adventure heroes that gasps as they traverse the musty catacombs; but realistic, everyday individuals that cannot perform spectacular feats. They are more of anti-heroes than Heroes.

Four different areas needed to be changed, each one will be described in the following chapters:

1. Core rules
2. Skills
3. Education
4. Sanity

## 2 Changes to the core rules

A few changes has been introduced to the rules to try to tone down the pulp hero theme of the FATE CORE rules and to get a more Mythos feeling of the game:

*Maximum level in the skill pyramid* The maximum level in the skill pyramid for a newly created character is reduced from Great (+4) to Good (+3). A character can still raise to Great (+4) using experience in the game.

*Number of skills are increased* The amount of skills a character starts will be quite few, as the maximum level has been reduced, but characters are allowed to have two skills at the Good (+3) level in the pyramid. A character therefor starts with nine skills instead of the usual ten skills. This is also mitigated somewhat by the fact that the number of skills are reduced (see section 5).

*Number of dF is reduced* The number of dF rolled is reduced from 4dF to 3dF. The probability curve still has the same shape but the maximum and minimum values are removed, see Table 1.

*Some Stunts are for free* Just like Crafts in the core rules, several of the skills in Fate of Cthulhu consists of several subcategories, e.g. Drive. As the list of skills is pretty short, an additional rule has been introduced to encourage the characters to take Stunts and differentiate.

For skills that has many subcategories, i.e. Drive, Language and Shoot, the character may take one language, weapon or vehicle type (see respective skill) as a *Stunt* without penalty towards the *Refresh Pool* for each skill rank the character has in the skill. This *Stunt* is free, but there is nothing that prevents the characters from taking additional languages etc. but then as a cost towards the *Refresh Pool* as usual.

#### *Example I*

Fredrik is Average (+1) at Language but Greta is Fair (+2) (both are investigators from Germany). Fredrik can then have one language as a *Stunt* without penalty, and selects Spanish. Greta on the other hand can have two languages as *Stunts*, but only wants to be able to speak Danish apart from her mother tongue, German. This means that Fredrik is Average (+1) at Spanish while Greta is Fair (+2) at Danish.

If they decide, during creation, that they both want to be able too speak Turkish (after a slight hint from the Keeper), then Fredrik would need to buy Turkish as a ordinary *Stunt* and reduce his *Refresh Pool* by one and he would then be Average (+1) at Turkish. Greta on the other hand can speak Turkish for free and will be Fair (+2) at both Danish and Turkish.

### **Rationale**

A bit of an explanation of what the reduction of the number of dF archives might be needed. First of all, it won't be possible to reach Epic (+7) and Legendary (+8) without *Aspects* and *Fate Points*, which is in line with the attempt to reduce the power level of the characters.

A friend of mine made an important point that by rolling four dice it was a higher possibility to get a negative end result, which would make the players to use *Fate Points* to reroll, something that might be needed so the points are used. I am not quite sure this is a valid point though. Considering the probabilities in Table 1 we can see that -4 is only rolled in 1 % of the cases and the probability of rolling -3 or lower is in case of 4dF 6 % versus 4 % in the case of 3dF. The probability of rolling a negative result decreases from 38 % to 37 %. The decrease in probability is so small that it I doubt any would notice it during play.

The end result (skill level plus dice result) varies in the core rules between Catastrophic (-3) and Legendary (+8) and between Terrible (-2) and Fantastic (+6) in Fate of Cthulhu. *Fate Points* are meant to be spent and the likelihood of someone needing to spend points for rerolls is quite equal, so the mitigation of hoarding of *Fate Points* is not really needed. If a player hoards points then that player either doesn't invoke *Aspects* or she is constantly *compelled*, neither situation should be handled by the number of dice used.

### **3 How to create a character**

Create a character according to the core rules, with the following changes:

- ◆ Each character has an *Extra* called Sanity, see section 4.
- ◆ Note that no skill can be at Great (+4) level, see section 2.
- ◆ Note that some *Stunts* are free, see section 2.

### **4 Sanity**

What is life as an investigator without a touch of Sanity? Sanity is, according to Chaosium's Call of Cthulhu seventh edition:

Result	3dF				3dF vs 4dF	4dF			
	Count	$P(n)$	Least*	Most†		Count	$P(n)$	Least*	Most†
+4					-1 %	1	1 %	1 %	100 %
+3	1	4 %	4 %	100 %	-1 %	4	5 %	6 %	99 %
+2	3	11 %	15 %	96 %	-1 %	10	12 %	19 %	94 %
+1	6	22 %	37 %	85 %	+2 %	16	20 %	38 %	81 %
0	7	26 %	63 %	63 %	+3 %	19	23 %	62 %	62 %
-1	6	22 %	85 %	37 %	+2 %	16	20 %	81 %	38 %
-2	3	11 %	96 %	15 %	-1 %	10	12 %	94 %	19 %
-3	1	4 %	100 %	4 %	-1 %	4	5 %	99 %	6 %
-4					-1 %	1	1 %	100 %	1 %
Total:	27	100 %				81	100 %		

\* “Least” means the probability that the dice shows at least this result.

† “Most” means the probability that the dice shows at most this result.

Table 1: 3dF vs 4dF

*Sanity gauges a person's hold on what we term “reality,” which is not reality at all but only a consensual human delusion or limited understanding that protects the mind from that which it cannot fully comprehend: the Cthulhu Mythos. Mythos magic is antithetical and corrosive to human sanity; the casting of spells will eat away at sanity, gradually disintegrating the caster's link to the human world until the day comes when the Mythos is all that remains. A cultist's ultimate aim is to relinquish all trace of human sanity and replace it with an understanding of the true nature of the universe.*

COC 7<sup>th</sup> ed, quoted from <http://www.yog-sothoth.com/topic/28137-deeper-and-deeper-the-magic-goes/?p=292831>

## Comparison with Call of Cthulhu

To fail at a SAN roll in Call of Cthulhu the investigator needs to roll 1d100 above current SAN and then fail an IDEA roll. SAN is  $POW \times 5$  and IDEA is  $INT \times 5$ , the expected value of each is  $11 \times 5 = 55$  and  $13 \times 5 = 65$  respectively as POW is 3d6 and INT is 2d6 + 6. This means that the expected probability of loosing SAN for an average investigator on the first exposure to the Mythos is  $(1 - 0.55) \times 0.65 = 0.2925$  or 29 %.

## New rules for Sanity

Sanity is a new trait (an *Extra*) that models the stability of the world view of the character. Everyone starts with Good (+3) but a good background or other circumstances at the Keeper's discretion might raise or lower that by one. Sanity is the amount of grasp the character has on the mundane reality and the main defence against the creatures of the Mythos (see the quote above). If the character sees a mangled corpse, then that is an attack on the psyche and not on the sanity of the character, as a dead person is definitely a mundane reality. It might be upsetting and the character might be devastated by the experience but the mind isn't shattered as if Cthulhu itself would have appeared (i.e. use *mental stress* instead of *Sanity*).

Once the character is confronted with the Mythos, Sanity is used to be able to withstand this attack on the sane mind. The occurrence from the Mythos has a Sanity value from Average (+1) to far beyond Legendary (+8) and the character has to compare its Sanity value to the Sanity value of the Mythos entity in a passive opposition to keep his wits about him. No dice are rolled for this, but the characters can create advantages using e.g. the Will or Mythos skills to create situation aspects that helps.

Rather simple and believable spells that can be rationalised are Fair (+2), while spells that are harder to ignore like summoning spells (and the arrival of the entity) are Good (+3) or Great (+4). Hideous objects like carvings on the portal door to the ancient, ritual caves or daggers can have a

Sanity loss in COC	Sanity value in FOC
1d3	Average (+1)
1d4	Fair (+2)
1d6	Good (+3)
1d8	Great (+4)
1d10	Superb (+5)
1d12	Fantastic (+6)
1d20	Epic (+7)
1d100	Legendary (+8)

Table 2: Conversion of Sanity loss from COC to FOC.

Sanity value of Poor (-1) up to Fair (+2) (carvings in themselves are not something that is strange, humans has decorated things for all time, but it is when a investigator looks on the carvings and realizes what they depict that the mind is shattered). Creatures has Average (+1) and up—the more mind shattering the creature the higher the value, all depending on the situation and how much the character sees or understands. N.B. There is a point in having sub-zero Sanity values for the test as there might be Psychoses, compels or other aspects that affects the situations.

For reference, the Mythos creatures in Call of Cthulhu have a Sanity loss of between 1d3 and 1d100, with only a few that uses more then one die. To convert the Sanity loss from Call of Cthulhu to Fate of Cthulhu use Table 2. For entities that gives a Sanity loss even for a successful Sanity roll in COC, increase the Sanity value by one level. E.g. a Byahkee has a Sanity loss in COC of 1/1d6, which would translate to Good (+3) according to Table 2 and this is then increased one step to Great (+4). For entities that have a “successful” Sanity loss above 1, e.g. Dark Young that has 1d3/1d10, increase the Sanity level with two or more or require more frequent Sanity tests. The two Sanity systems aren’t designed around the same kind of mechanics so there is no one-to-one conversion.

If the character succeeds the character’s sanity and world view held for the onslaught and if he succeeded with style he might gain one step in the Mythos skill if the situation warrants it, regardless a *boost* would be appropriate.

A character cannot have higher Sanity then Superb (+5) minus the rating in the Mythos skill, if the Mythos skill is increased the Sanity is immediately decreased to the new maximum.

Each character have two Sanity stress boxes, that works as the ordinary stress boxes, worth 1 and 2 respectively, and three slots for Psychosis, which are similar to *Consequences*, worth 2, 4 and 6. It is possible to have several psychoses at the same value, e.g. three 2 Psychoses and two 6 Psychoses. It is up to the Keeper to decide if and when a character might take a second Psychoses at a certain level, but it should be restricted.

#### *Example II*

The two investigators Ellen, played by Daniel, and Patricia, played by Anne, returns to their hotel after some fruitless search for clues at the city’s police department. As they enter the lobby Ellen is attacked by a Nightgaunt, summoned by their antagonist that is wise about their investigations, and calls out in horror. Patricia realises it is a Mythos beast that attacks them and tries to create an advantage ***I won’t look at it***, rolling for Will and succeeds with a free invocation.

The Nightgaunt has a Sanity value of Good (+3) and Patricia has a Fair (+2) Sanity level. The Nightgaunt started its attack with casting a spell which creates a Sanity affecting situation aspect “Nauseous Lights”, which it invokes. Patricia’s Sanity test is then the Nightgaunt’s Sanity value plus the spell’s situation aspect versus her Sanity level plus her situation aspects. The test result is  $3 + 2 - (2 + 2) = 1$ , a slim defeat but Anne decided that she will use a Sanity stress box of 1 to counter this.

It is now time for Patricia’s counterattack and she whips out her not-very-ladylike .45 Colt and let it roar.

A few notes on creating advantages to help against the Mythos: It is easy to allow someone to use Will to create advantages to resist but the target for such a test should be higher than normal to creating advantages depending on what the advantage. Remember the quote in the beginning of this chapter, where sanity was explained. It is sanity that keeps our world together and if the character creates the aspect *I won't look at it*, then that character also has acknowledged that there *is* something there... It should then become really hard (e.g. Superb (+5)) to create such an aspect that really adds an advantage. The Mythos skill on the other hand is a better choice when creating advantages to keep ones Sanity, the target to a create an advantage should be on a "normal" level (usually Fair (+2)).

### Optional rule for randomness

If the group would like to have a bit of the unknown randomness when resisting Mythos a Sanity roll could be introduced. A suggestion then is to roll just one dF instead of the ordinary three for an overcome action on the Sanity test. It won't help against Cthulhu but it will help against Nightgaunts.

### Psychosis and the effect of the Mythos

When the character encounters the Mythos they have to overcome a passive opposition, equal to the Sanity value of the encounter, with their Sanity. Failure has the same affect as in a conflict, mitigating minor effects with Sanity stress. Otherwise the character might take a Psychosis, just in the same way as the character could have taken a consequence in combat. If the Psychoses aren't enough the character succumb to the nightmarish onslaught on the vary fabric of reality and accept that this is too much for the brain to accept, and become *temporarily insane* (which is like to *being taken out*).

A Psychosis can only be treated with therapy and requires three times as many weeks of relative full time therapy as the value of the Psychosis slot to remove a Psychosis, e.g. 18 weeks of therapy is needed to remove a severe Psychosis. (Note, this is a difference to how *Consequences* are healed, gaming groups that would prefer a more FATE ish rule should of course use the same healing rules as for *Consequences*.) A Psychosis functions as a negative Aspect and will decrease any rolls by -2 where it is applicable, but without the bonus of a *Fate Point*. (Kind Keepers might allow for the *Fate Point* reward.) The higher the value of the Psychosis the more frequent it will be invoked and the broader the interpretation of applicable situations should be, at the Keeper's discretion. That means, that a mild *The Shadows Hides Evil Enemies* Psychosis will be invoked in dark basements and creepy places like the forest at night, but a severe Psychosis will affect the character as soon as there is some darker shadows cast in a lit room. A level six Psychosis is crippling, just as a level six consequence should be.

#### Example III

The investigator Ellen has a level four *The Shadows Hides Evil Enemies* Psychosis and enters a dark hotel room where the cultist the investigators are looking for lives. As far as Ellen knows, the cultist is out of town on some errand. The Keeper asks Daniel for a Notice roll to listen if anyone is in there, in a room full of dark shadows. . . Daniel is told it is a Fair (+2) obstacle and he then rolls Notice, which is Average (+1), and nets 0 on the dice. The result is +1, but this is reduced by two by the Psychosis to a total of minus one, a failure. Ellen does not notice that the cultist is at home, until he attacks..

Exactly in which situations the Psychosis is triggered is up to the Keeper and the group, some might affect every roll in combat, others might not. It all depends on the Psychosis, the tone of the game and the group's decision.

### Sanity stress

Each character has Sanity stress boxes the same way as there are Mental and Physical Stress, see Table 3.

Sanity	Stress boxes
≤ Fair (+2)	+1, +2
Good (+3)	+1, +2, +3
Great (+4)	+1, +2, +3, +4

Table 3: Sanity and the number of stress boxes.

## Insane

Should the character fail at a Sanity test and cannot, or do not want to, use stress or accept a Psychosis, then that character is taken out, which means that he becomes *temporarily insane* (there is no real equivalent to *Conceding the Conflict*). This will last for at least the current scene and/or as long as the Keeper decides. A failure of one shift should render the character insane for at least one scene and at least a few hours, two shifts for at least a day and so on. A spectacular failure when the investigators faces a Great Old One or Outer God should make the characters brain shut down for months or even years. An insane character should be handled as under the control of whoever controls the Mythos side in the conflict, that means that the character might end up dead in some way or the other, or in some other dimension without a map to find the way back.

An additional effect of becoming insane is that the Sanity of the character is reduced by at least one. The character might lose more Sanity at the Keeper's discretion, e.g. if the character failed spectacular or if the encounter had a Sanity value of more then five. The character might also gain some insight in the Mythos and have the Mythos skill increased by as much as the Sanity has been reduced.

### Example IV

Ellen is attacked by the cultist, who casts a spell that transforms the air in the room into a dark vortex that tries to engulf Ellen. The Keeper thinks that a Sanity test is called for, which isn't is so good as the spell has a Sanity value of Good (+3), Ellen's Sanity is Good (+3) and *The Shadows did hide evil enemies* (-2), a total of 3 - 2 which gives a Average (+1) result and is a failure with two shifts. Ellen could take Sanity Stress and move on, but an recent encounter down in the lobby has filled the stress boxes. Daniel is considering to take another Psychosis, but both Daniel and the Keeper think that it suits the story much better if Ellen is so overwhelmed by the sight that she succumbs to insanity and her friends see her engulfed in the dark vortex and the last thing they hear of her is her terrified scream, cut short as she is, unknown to them, teleported to the terrifying Plateau of Leng.

## 5 Skills

The skill list in the FATE core rules needs to be updated and some minor changes needs to be performed. One major change is that we think that a number of skills should be combined into one, we have some trouble seeing the difference between Provoke, Deceive, Interrogation and Rapport. As we see it, the difference is the manner of how the character gets the information and that can be covered by a *Stunt*. It is marked in the title which skills has been combined into a new skill below.

A side effect of the reduced skill list and the introduction of the Education Pyramid (q.v.) is that there are fewer skills to select from, which is another reason to reduce the maximum level in the skill pyramid, see section 2.

### Free stunts for "bundle" skills

For skills that is a bundle of skills, e.g. Drive for a various number of vehicles, is one skill but each sub-skill is a *Stunt*. If the character has the *stunt* then the character can roll to see if the endeavour is successful or not. If the *stunt* gives a bonus or not depends on the skill and also if the character can use the skill even if the sub-skill/*stunt* isn't available. For Language it doesn't make sense to try to roll

Skill	Färdighet
Athletics	Akrobatik
Burglary	Stöld
Crafts	Hantverk
Drive	Köra fordon
Education	Utbildning
Fight	Närstrid
Influence	Påverka
Investigate	Undersöka
Language	Språk
Mythos	Mythos
Notice	Upptäcka
Physique	Fysik
Shoot	Skjuta
Stealth	Lönndom
Will	Vilja

Table 4: Translation of the FOC skills to Swedish.

for Spanish if the character only knows Turkish and English, but if the character knows French then a roll makes sense with a bit higher difficulty level.

The following skills are all “bundle skills” and the character has one free *stunt* per level in the skill (i.e. a skill level of Fair (+2) gives the character two free *stunts* in that skill).

- ◆ Crafts
- ◆ Drive
- ◆ Fight
- ◆ Language
- ◆ Shoot

*Example V*

Anne has Drive at Fair (+2) level, this means that she can drive two different kinds of vehicles, e.g. Automobile and Aircraft, but if she would like to learn a third kind of vehicle, like Motorcycle, then she either has to raise her level i Drive or take this as an ordinary *Stunt* and lower her *Refresh Pool*.

Lets assume that she only can drive Automobiles and Air planes and she ends up in a situation where she need to drive a motorcycle. It is quite reasonable that someone that can drive a car can drive a motorcycle, so she can drive the motorcycle with  $-2$ , that is at Mediocre ( $\pm 0$ ) level.

Bernice on the other hand is as good as Anne but cannot handle an air plane, so when she tries to rescue the plane from crashing when the pilot has been abducted by a Byahkee, then she simply don't know what to do as there are too many levers to pull.

## List of Skills

### Athletics

Same skill as in FATE .

### Burglary

Same skill as in FATE .



	Spends <i>Fate Point</i>	Doesn't spend <i>Fate Point</i>
Has applicable weapon <i>Stunt</i>	+2	±0
Doesn't has applicable weapon <i>Stunt</i>	±0	-2

Table 5: Bonus for combinations of weapon *Stunt* and spending *Fate Point*

## Crafts

Same skill as in FATE . N.B. that there is one free *stunt* per skill level as per section 5.

## Drive

Same skill as in FATE . Each kind of vehicle is one stunt and there is one free *stunt* per skill level as per section 5.

## Education

A special skill that replaces Lore and introduces the *Education Pyramid*. The character never rolls for Education but for the applicable discipline as if that was a skill. See section 6 for further details.

## Fight

The skill for all close-quarters combat, the same as in FATE , with some additions. Each kind of weapon is a *Stunt* (swords, axes, knives, ...) and an individual that is trained for the weapon, i.e. has the relevant *Stunt*, can spend one *Fate Point* to get +2 on an action. Someone that doesn't have the *Stunt* for the used weapon get -2, but can still pay a *Fate Point* to get a total of ±0. This means that someone with the applicable *Stunt*, but who doesn't pay the *Fate Point*, get ±0. See also Table 5.

## Fight Stunts

- ◆ Swords
- ◆ Clubs
- ◆ Axes
- ◆ Spears
- ◆ Knives
- ◆ and so on...

## Influence (Deceive, Provoke, Interrogation, Rapport)

Almost all interaction where you try to influence someone else and tries to make that part impart you with (potentially secret) information or to share your point of view.



**Overcome:** *The same as for the four skills in the FATE CORE*



**Create an advantage:** *The same as for the four skills in the FATE CORE*



**Attack:** *The same as for the four skills in the FATE CORE*



**Defend:** *The same as for the four skills in the FATE CORE*

## Influence Stunts


◆ *The same as for the four skills in the FATE CORE*


## Investigate


Same skill as in FATE .


## Language

The skill to speak—and usually read and write—a language other than your character's native tongue. Each language is a *Stunt* and the character may take one language free for each skill level, as outlined in section 5. If the character doesn't know a certain language, then the character cannot use the skill unless a sufficiently similar language is known (which might affect the threshold to succeed). The *Stunt* gives the character the ability to understand the language, i.e. the possibility to use the skill to understand or convey the message.

 **Overcome:** Use Language to be able to understand what someone else is saying or a what is written on the handwritten note that slipped from the old tome.


 **Create an advantage:** The most common usage of Language is to create an *Advantage* when you are about to Influence someone, e.g. ***High-strung Language*** or ***Complex Vocabulary in Use***.


 **Attack:** To be able to speak a language cannot be used to harm someone in itself, you need to Influence someone for that.


 **Defend:** To be able to understand a language cannot be used to prevent harm—on the contrary it makes you understand the verbal attack! You need Will or maybe Influence to defend yourself.


## Magic

The ability to cast spells, each spell is a stunt that does not count towards the *refresh pool*. See also section 7.

 **Overcome:** Cast a spell that the caster has learned as a *stunt* or, at the Keeper's discretion, has an instruction of how to cast (e.g. in a tome).

 **Create an advantage:** The skill allows the character to create a magical advantage that aids any to resist the effect of a spell.

 **Attack:** Not used for attacks apart from what the spell is used for.

 **Defend:** The character may use the skill to try to resist the effect of the spell, as described in section 7.

## Mythos

The Mythos skill is designed by Jeremy Ware, see [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LvL-6jETHS9gkfy2SJe8PuSGi3OFjB3qsYLxF0aaPa4/edit?usp=doclist\\_api](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LvL-6jETHS9gkfy2SJe8PuSGi3OFjB3qsYLxF0aaPa4/edit?usp=doclist_api) and the message to the Fate mailing list <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/FateRPG/conversations/messages/27745>. The *Special* and *Advancement* rules has not been included here as it is covered by other rules in Fate of Cthulhu.

Mythos is a new Skill representing a character's knowledge of and exposure to the horrible realities of Thing That Mankind Was Not Meant to Know. Unlike other skills, characters without the Mythos skill are not assumed to have any significant knowledge of the Unthinkable at all, and thus this skill cannot be defaulted to or used in any way until it has been raised to at least Average (+1). Further, no character may begin play with this skill, nor may it be intentionally advanced at Milestones. Mythos is only advanced through confrontations with the Unknowable or through the careful study of a few, specific books.



**Overcome:** You can use the Mythos skill when forced to face the Unimaginable. When presented with a non-Euclidean stairwell the seemingly goes on forever, or an unnatural fog that rises up to conceal the terrors of the night, you call upon your experience with the Mythos to see through the illusions of the mind and see what is really confronting you.



**Create an advantage:** You can use Mythos to draw upon your knowledge of the Impossible and to help deduce whatever vulnerabilities it may have. To do this you can create aspects on on yourself that indicate your ability to see past the horror of each aberration or to identify some weakness in the Unfathomable thing that you are confronting.



**Attack:** Mythos is not usually used to Attack.



**Defend:** Mythos is not usually used to Defend.

### Mythos Stunts

- ◆ Don't look at it!: With the expenditure of a Fate Point, use Mythos to Create an Advantage to help another character to see the Impossible without damaging their sanity.
- ◆ Elder Sign: Given time to inscribe the proper runes and sigils the character may use Mythos to make a Defend action to stop the supernatural agents of the Inconceivable from taking conflict actions against himself or a zone that he has protected. Inscribing such a sign is difficult however, and doing so properly costs a Fate point.

### Notice (Notice, Empathy)

The two skills in FATE Notice and Empathy are combined into one skill; Notice which covers both. We didn't think that Empathy warranted a skill of its own.

### Physique

Same skill as in FATE .

### Shoot

The art of killing and inflict damage at a distance. Each kind of weapon is a *Stunt* (rifles, bows, revolvers, ...) and an individual that is trained for the weapon, i.e. has the relevant *Stunt*, can spend one *Fate Point* to get +2 on an action. Someone that doesn't have the *Stunt* for the used weapon get -2, but can still pay a *Fate Point* to get a total of  $\pm 0$ . This means that someone with the applicable *Stunt*, but who doesn't pay the *Fate Point*, get  $\pm 0$ . See also Table 5.

### Shoot Stunts

- ◆ Pistol and revolver
- ◆ Rifle
- ◆ Assault rifle
- ◆ Bow

- ◆ Crossbow
- ◆ Machine gun
- ◆ Hand grenade (anyone can throw, but the *Stunt* is used to be able to aim and time the explosion)
- ◆ Canon

### Stealth

Same skill as in FATE .

### Will

Same skill as in FATE .

## 6 Education – or the Lore in Modern Times

There is one difference between Call of Cthulhu and many other games; the importance of knowledge based skills. Mythos is one of few gaming worlds where a skill like Library Use plays an important role, even more important than weapon skills. This makes a skill like Lore in FATE somewhat limited. It is very much easier to make a professor like Indiana Jones rather than Professor Armitage. In an attempt to remedy this the *Education Pyramid* is introduced.<sup>1</sup>

The problem with using Lore as it is is the versatility, there are more or less no limits to what it can include; everything from Medicine and Psychology to Philosophy and Quantum Physics. It makes sense in a fantasy setting where the various fields are by far fewer and more limited, but not in a post-Industrialisation world.

The Lore skill is replaced with Education, which is placed in the skill pyramid as any other skill. The character also as an *Extra*, the *Education Pyramid*. The second pyramid is exactly as the skill pyramid and in this all the disciplines the character has studied is listed, each “skill” is generically called a *field*. The highest level of the *Education Pyramid* is the same as the level of the Education skill.

There is one main difference though; for an Education at Average (+1) level, there are three fields in the *Education pyramid*; all at Average (+1) level. For an Education at Fair (+2) level there are two fields at Fair (+2) (and three for the Average (+1) level). At an Education of Good (+3) there is one at Good (+3). This means that the difference between the Fair (+2) and the Good (+3) level is just one field instead of the normal three fields. This is to give an advantage to those that has just a little Education.

#### *Example VI*

Linda has Good (+3) Education and can have one Good (+3) field, two Fair (+2) and three Average (+1) fields. Carl on the other hand has a Fair (+2) Education and has two Fair (+2) and three Average (+1) fields.

A few definitions used in this text:

**Field** A specific skill in the *Education Pyramid*, either an Discipline or a Subdiscipline.

**Discipline** A major educational discipline like Botany, Zoology, Medicine, Music etc.

**Subdiscipline** A subdiscipline within a discipline, e.g. Surgery is a subdiscipline within the discipline Medicine.

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<sup>1</sup>These rules are based on an idea by a friend of mine, Olof, that suggested that the Bronze Rule could be applied.

N.B. A discipline should not be too broad, i.e. Music is a discipline while Arts (which is any outlet of human expression, e.g. visual arts, performing arts, literary arts etc.) is not as the latter is simply too broad. Think of a discipline as an ordinary skill in FATE and a subdiscipline as a stunt to an ordinary skill. If Shoot was an Educational Field, then it would be a discipline as it covers every kind of trying to hit something at a distance, while handling a revolver and being good at it would be a subdiscipline. If the appropriate subdiscipline should be “handgun” or “revolver” is up to the Keeper to decide.

The following is suggested to be used for interpreting the Education level, using 21<sup>st</sup> Century Western world education system:

- ◆ Great (+4): Professor of some reputation
- ◆ Good (+3): PhD student or Postdoc
- ◆ Fair (+2): University degree
- ◆ Average (+1): College
- ◆ Mediocre ( $\pm 0$ ): A few years in school, school drop out, should be able to recognise the continents on a world map or how much to tip at a restaurant.
- ◆ Poor ( $-1$ ) or below: Don't bother. Might not be able to read and write (up to Keeper if this is possible and how to handle the skill pyramid with sub-zero skill levels).

Examples of educational discipline are very much the same as the department you would find in an university:

- ◆ Psychology (Personal, Recruitment, Management, Social/Group, Psychoanalysis)
- ◆ Medicine (Trauma, Surgery, Psychiatry, Disease)
- ◆ Computer Science (Software development, System Architecture, Intrusion Detection & Prevention, Embedded Systems)
- ◆ Computer Engineering (Electronics Design, Electric Design, Embedded Systems)
- ◆ Economics (Accounting, Tax law, Management)
- ◆ And so on . . .

The suggestion is also that the areas (e.g. Psychology) only can be placed at maximum Fair (+2) level, after that the character needs to specialise in one of the fields in parenthesis. It is possible to specialise before the field is at Fair (+2), with the discipline at Average (+1) (see example VII). An area always need to be defined, a character cannot specialise at once and not take the Psychology area, only the Psychology (Psychoanalysis) specialisation. A special background might make the Keeper accept such a specialisation, without the general knowledge about the field, but it doesn't makes much sense in the general case. How many universities today accepts a student at master level courses without first passing the general courses?

*Example VII*

Linda wants to know everything that is to know about Psychoanalysis and have some ideas about medicine, so her *Education Pyramid* becomes as follows.

- ◆ Psychoanalysis – Good (+3)
- ◆ Psychology – Fair (+2)
- ◆ Psychiatry – Fair (+2)
- ◆ Statistics – Average (+1) (to be able to do some research and analyse the results)
- ◆ Medicine – Average (+1) (to be able to specialise in Psychiatry)
- ◆ Mathematics – Average (+1) (to be able to specialise in Statistics)

## Advancing the Education Pyramid

Advancing a field in the *Education Pyramid* works the same way as an ordinary skill in the *Skill Pyramid*; one *skill point* advances one field up one step, with the exception that the maximum level of a discipline is still Fair (+2). A subdiscipline does not advance in case the discipline advances, they are separate in that regard. N.B. The maximum level of the pyramid is the level of the Education skill in the *Skill Pyramid*.

## 7 Magic

*Please note that this section is still under the pen; it is not finished.*

Magic is a core component of the Mythos and in Fate of Cthulhu this is an *Extra* that includes the skill Magic and each spell is a *stunt* that does not count towards the *Refresh pool*.

How to cast a spell depends on the spell; if the spell doesn't harm anything (like *Create Gate*), then it is an *Overcome* action for the Magic skill against a passive opposition determined by the spell's description. If it on the other hand affects someone or something, then it is an *Attack* action for the Magic skill against an active opposition determined by the spell's description, e.g. the victim can do a *Defend* action. The spells in Call of Cthulhu usually cost *Sanity* and *Power* (POW), the sanity loss is the same as usual but the loss of *Power* is a mental attack resisted by Will where the target to overcome is POW/2 (rounded up).

The sequence to cast a spell is thus as follows. First determined if it is an *Attack* or an *Overcome* action.

### *Overcome spells*

1. The caster declares which spell to cast and rolls for an *Overcome* action for the Magic skill.
2. The Keeper determines the passive opposition according to the spell's description.
3. The outcome is determined according to the ordinary outcomes (see FATE rules section "The Four Outcomes," page 132).
4. Any *Sanity* or *Power* loss is determined by the spell's description.
5. Resolve any effects of the spell.

### *Attack spells*

1. The caster declares which spell to cast and rolls for an *Attack* action for the Magic skill.
2. The Keeper rolls the victim's *Defend* action, which usually is Will or Physique.
3. The attack is then resolved according to the ordinary rules for conflicts (see FATE rules section "Resolving Attacks," page 160).
4. Any *Sanity* or *Power* loss is determined by the spell's description.
5. Resolve any effects of the spell.

#### *Example VIII*

The investigators Caroline (Magic: Fair (+2), Will: Good (+3), *Sanity*: Average (+1)) and Mark (doesn't know Magic, Will: Fair (+2), *Sanity*: Fair (+2)) are exploring the basements of an abandoned barn when they are ambushed by the local cult's leader Thomas. The Keeper asks the investigators to roll for Notice, requesting at least a Average (+1) result (they more or less have to look in the right direction and make a logical conclusion in this situation). Mark fails but Caroline *Succeeds with style* and the Keeper tells her player that Thomas is casting some kind of spell and allows her to take some action.

Reacting quickly she tries to create a magical advantage, to protect them from the effects of whichever spell the cultist's leaders casts, by casting a spell she knows called *Blessing of the Black Pharaoh*. The spell makes it harder for other spells to succeed if successfully cast and she has to overcome a passive opposition of Good (+3) to do that. Caroline rolls 2 and gets a Great (+4) result ( $2 + 2 = 4$ ). The *Sanity* loss is Average (+1) for this spell but she can handle it with a Average (+1) in *Sanity*. The spell's description for Call of Cthulhu states that other spell casters get -5% on their spell casting roll per *Power* the caster spends on *Blessing of the Black Pharaoh*. Caroline's player and the Keeper has previously agreed (with the help of Table 1) that this translates in Fate of Cthulhu into that an *situational aspect* with one free invocation is created and that the caster has to resist a *Power* drain of Fair (+2) with Will. Caroline rolls for Will and rolls -1 ( $-1 + 3 = 2$ , Fair (+2)), which is a *Success with a minor cost* and she creates the situation aspect ***Nyarlahotep doesn't approve of the use of magic here*** and invokes it.

The Keeper doesn't tell the player what the cost is, but saves it for later.

Thomas (Magic: Average (+1)) casts the *Curse of Yig's servants*, which calls forth snakes from the ground, but gets -2 from the situational aspect. He rolls for an ordinary *Overcome* action and gets +3 and the result is  $3 + 1 - 2 = 2$ , a Fair (+2) result! As Thomas already is insane, a prerequisite to become a cult leader, he doesn't roll for *Sanity* but rolls to *Defend* the spell's *Power* drain of Fair (+2) with his Good (+3) Will. As he rolls -2 he needs to take one *Mental stress* to shrug it off ( $-2 + 3 = 1 < 2$ ).

Caroline and Mark scrambles up on some furniture when hissing snakes crawls out from holes in the walls and floor..

## Resisting magic

A victim of a spell might try to resist it in a contest, usually by a roll for Will in an active opposition. The victim might use a *Mental stress box* to add the value of that box to the result and hence reduce and potentially negate the spell's result. *Consequences* cannot be used for this, but the result of a successful spell might have *Consequences*... The contest is only of one roll, it is not fought out like combat or similar unless the spell's description explicitly states that the spell requires a roll on the *Resistance Table* (COC), in which case it might be played out just like physical combat.

## Long example

### Example IX

A few days later, the investigators Caroline (Magic: Fair (+2), Will: Good (+3), *Sanity*: Average (+1)) and Mark (doesn't know Magic, Will: Fair (+2), *Sanity*: Fair (+2)) are still chasing the cultist leader Thomas (Magic: Average (+1), Will: Good (+3)). Caroline has a tome with the advantage ***Great magic tome***, which contains a lot of information about magic and spells. Thomas has run back to a old barn where he has built a temple, it has no magic effect but it is ***A terrifying temple to the Mythos gods***.

When the two investigators draws near the temple they both succeeds at sneaking in (both *Overcome* the obstacle with their *Stealth*) and sees that Thomas has started a ritual in the temple. As the temple is so mind-shattering decorated they both needs to *Overcome* the sight with their *Sanity*. The *Sanity* value of the temple is Fair (+2), which Mark succeeds with, having a *Sanity* of Fair (+2), but Caroline is in worse luck (the temple's aspect has not been invoked at this time). She only has Average (+1) *Sanity* and needs to take on *Sanity stress*, and crosses out he first *Sanity stress box*. This sets the scene, the Keeper decides that it is appropriate to use combat rounds of about five seconds. The order of action is Caroline, Mark and then Thomas (primarily because the investigators has the element of surprise).

**Round 1:** Caroline starts with casting the spell *Agony of Leng*, which is a spell that give the victims intense pains (i.e. it is a pure combat spell and is essentially a ranged weapon). She uses her book, and pays one *Fate point*, to gain +2 in her roll and she rolls +2. Together with her Fair (+2) Magic she get a Fantastic (+6) result ( $2 + 2 + 2 = 6$ )!

Thomas is unaware of their activity and doesn't have the chance of creating any advantages and hence only opposes her spell with his Will. Thomas has a Good (+3) Will, but that doesn't help when he rolls -2, or a Average (+1) result ( $3 - 2 = 1$ )! He takes 2 *Physical stress* and then has to take on a *mild consequence*, **Aching all over**.

Mark sees the cultist leader in momentarily spasm and realizes what Caroline has done and takes this opportunity to draw a knife and run forward to attack Thomas. As the barn consists of three zones, two on the lower floor and one being the loft, Mark does not reach Thomas this round. Thomas on the other hand is fully aware of the investigators and panting and with hatred in his eyes he rises.

The first thought that comes to his mind is to cast *Curse of Yig's servants*, as it has served him well before. He now rolls 3 on the dice, and with a Magic of Average (+1), he gets Great (+4) result ( $3 + 1 = 4$ ). Hissing the snakes starts to emerge from behind corners, to the despair of the investigators. (To see these snakes is a Average (+1) Sanity in this situation, which both investigators pass as the Keeper does not invoke **A terrifying temple to the Mythos gods** at this time either.)

**Round 2:** Caroline once again casts *Agony of Leng*, but she doesn't want to use her book this time so her roll of -1 only gives a Average (+1) result ( $2 - 1 = 1$ ).

Thomas rolls for Will and the dice shows -1, but Fair (+2) ( $3 - 1 = 2$ ) is enough to win against Caroline (the Keeper couldn't come up with some plausible *Advantage* to create at this time and decides against to use one, but he didn't need one either).

Mark runs towards Thomas with his knife and makes an attack, rolling for his Good (+3) Fight skill; with a Good (+3) result with  $\pm 0$  on the dice ( $3 + 0 = 3$ ). Thomas gets to try to dodge this using his Average (+1) Fight and the *stunt Dodge*, which gives him +2 when dodging. He gets a Average (+1) result as he rolls -2 ( $1 + 2 - 2 = 1$ ) and he fills his last *Physical stress* box (the first one). Thomas is far from happy with this development, and attacks Mark with a spell called *The Poison of a Viper*, another spell Yig has taught him.

The spell gives as successful caster (if he *Overcomes* a Good (+3) difficulty) the option of inducing poison in a victim's veins if the caster succeeds with a unarmed *attack* using Fight (the forefinger and the long finger becomes like the teeth of a viper). The Keeper rules that Caroline gets the chance to understand that Thomas is about to cast a spell, if she succeeds to *Overcome* a Great (+4) difficulty with Magic. She rolls 2 and a Great (+4) ( $2 + 2 = 4$ ) result is sufficient with a minor cost<sup>2</sup>. She then can try to dispel that spell by creating an *advantage* for Mark with her Magic; and gets a Good (+3) result with a roll of 1 ( $2 + 1 = 3$ ). It is a success and she creates the temporary *advantage* **Magic powers disrupted** and uses the free invoke against Thomas.

Now it is Thomas' time to cast the spell and he rolls 3, which would give him a Fair (+2) result ( $3 + 1 - 2 = 2$ ), but the Keeper decides that he this time uses a *Fate point*, via the Keeper, and invokes **A terrifying temple to the Mythos gods** to unsettle the investigators and draw power. Thomas now has a Great (+4) result ( $3 + 1 - 2 + 2 = 4$ ) which *overcomes* the Good (+3) difficulty, he lashes out with his now deadly fingers. Thomas rolls 3 for his Average (+1) Fight skill and Mark uses Fight to defend himself but rolls -2. As Thomas Great (+4) result ( $3 + 1 = 4$ ) is three shifts higher than Mark's Average (+1) ( $3 - 2 = 1$ ), Thomas *succeeds with style* and the magic poison enters Mark's blood. *As this is an example of magic and not poisons, Mark is left out of the rest of the example. Shouldn't have messed with warlocks...* The servants of Yig attack Caroline but she succeeds in avoiding their fangs with a successful Fight manoeuvre<sup>3</sup>.

**Round 3:** Caroline is now in a bit of trouble, ...

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<sup>2</sup>What that minor cost entails is left out of this example.

<sup>3</sup>The roll here is omitted for brevity.



Skill level in COC	Skill level in FOC	Probability of success*
> 120%	Legendary (+8)	
101% – 120%	Epic (+7)	100%
91% – 100%	Fantastic (+6)	100%
76% – 90%	Superb (+5)	100%
61% – 75%	Great (+4)	96%
41% – 60%	Good (+3)	85%
31% – 40%	Fair (+2)	63%
21% – 30%	Average (+1)	37%
11% – 20%	Mediocre ( $\pm 0$ )	15%
6% – 10%	Poor ( $-1$ ) <sup>†</sup>	4%
1% – 5%	Terrible ( $-2$ ) <sup>†</sup>	0%

\* That is, getting a net result of Fair (+2) or better on 3dF, see Table Table 1

<sup>†</sup> If this skill level even could be considered valid, otherwise treat as Mediocre ( $\pm 0$ )

Table 6: Conversion of skill levels from COC to FOC.

## 8 Conversion from Basic Roleplaying

It will of course be so that some scenarios' NPC needs to be converted to Fate of Cthulhu and that can be achieved with the following rules. The attributes are hard to convert to FATE 's system, the Keeper need to map them to appropriate skills. The skill levels in relevant skills can be converted according to Table 6.

## 9 Some final notes

I would like mention that I have little objections if anyone would like to modify these rules, just remember to credit where credits are due. The document was prepared using L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X and I can send the source should anyone need it.



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