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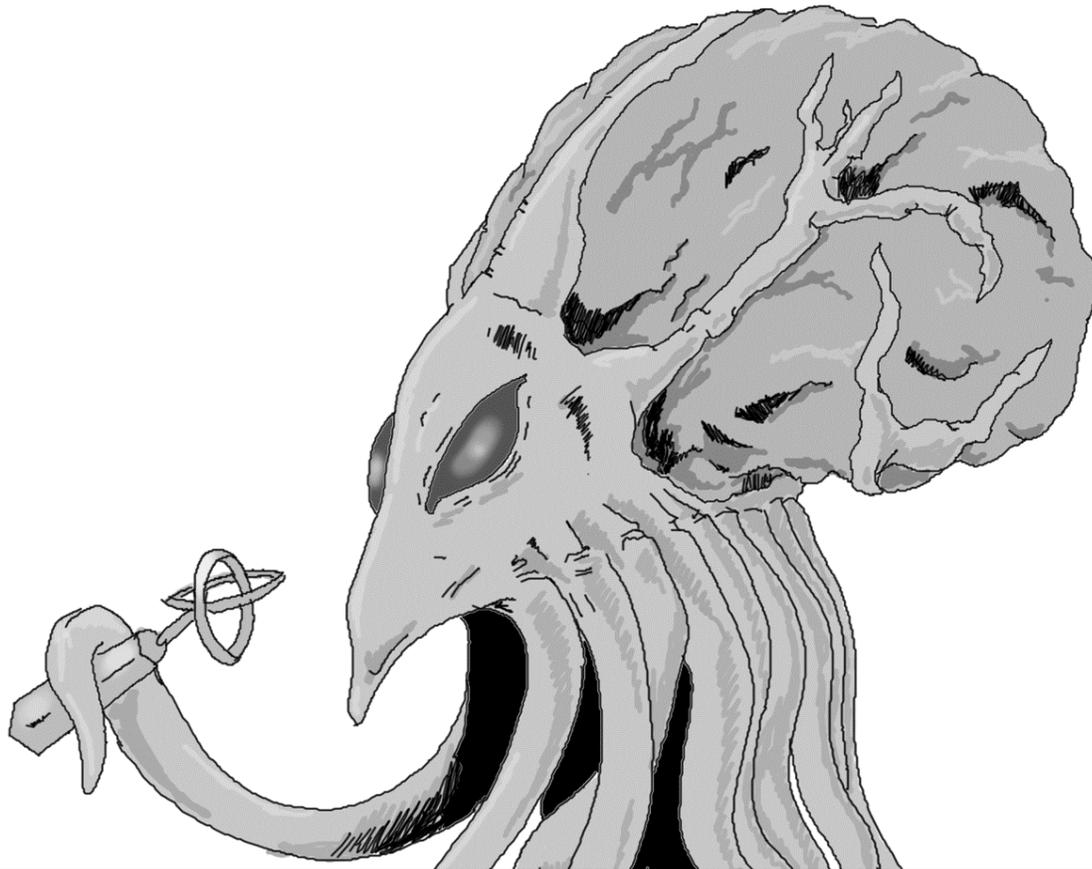
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Deconstructing STR

by Gary Mei

Rethinking Strength

One of the bigger problems many people have with the HERO System is that STR is too much of a bargain at 1 Point. It gives loads of Figured Characteristics, Damage, Lifting, Leap, a quasi-Constant aspect, and various miscellaneous benefits. Compared to Energy Blast for example, it is dirt cheap, although the fact that EB is a Power makes it easier to place in a Power Framework.

Consider +10 Strength gives the following:

- +2d6 Damage
- 4x Lifting capacity
- +2 PD
- +2 REC
- +5 STUN
- +2" Leap
- +1d6 free "Damage Shield" from Casual Strength limited to Grabs/Entangles
- Ability to use the environment for free Area Of Effect and Range if STR is high enough.
- A limited Constant aspect where Damage can be done Phase after Phase after a Grab.
- The first 10 Points are free.

The same 10 Points of Energy Blast gives:

- +2d6 Damage at Range
- Ability to Spread
- Ability to Bounce
- Easier access to Power Frameworks because EB is a Standard Power while STR is a Characteristic.

The Range and ability to Spread or Bounce are nice for an Energy Blast, but it hardly compares with all the benefits high STR provides. The one thing that historically has proven to be a big balancing factor is the easier access to Frameworks.

I dislike depending on two offsetting "unfair" factors to balance out. My proposal is to treat STR as a Power as well, where basic characters start with 10 Points for free. STR would no longer be considered a Characteristic. This would be analogous to the situation of Running which is treated as a Power that characters start with 6" for free. At the same time, STR would no longer add to Figured Characteristics.

This change provides the following benefits:

- It is fairer if the Powers are bought straight. Now 60 STR would provide roughly the same utility as a 12d6 Energy Blast.
- By treating STR as a Power, it now has the same easy access to Power Frameworks as everything else. It will be just as easy and just as legal to place STR in a Multipower or Elemental Control as EB without wrecking game balance.
- Be removing the artificial subsidy for STR, it becomes easier to unify STR, Hand Attack, and Martial Arts Damage Classes in a fair and uniform way.
- By treating STR as a Power, the same rules as any other Standard Power will apply, thus making the HERO System cleaner and more elegant.
- Because STR is no longer considered a Characteristic, many of the problems with Naked Advantages can be mitigated.

Strength

This Standard Constant Power in its basic form costs 5 Points per 1d6. Every 5 Points provides 2x Lifting Capability, +1d6 Damage, +1" Leap, and +1/2d6 of Casual Strength. Up to the same Active Points of STR can be added to Hand-to-Hand Killing Attacks. It has No Range and Costs END.

Example: Ogre is extremely strong, able to lift 100 tons. He purchases +50 STR (60 total) for 50 Points. He can lift 100 tons, does 12d6 damage in hand-to-hand combat, has 30 Casual STR, and 12" Leap.

Example: Flying Mammal Man is at peak human STR due to intense training. He purchases +15 STR (25 total) for 15 Points. He can lift 800 kg, does 5d6 damage in hand-to-hand combat, has 13 Casual STR, and 5" Leap.

NORMAL CHARACTERISTIC MAXIMA

In any campaign with Normal Characteristic Maxima, STR and Leap would still retain the same limits as under the current system despite being treated as a Power.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The contents of this article are *not* "official" HERO System rules, and are presented as an alternative for those wishing to experiment with the game system.

War of the Worlds: Champions

by John R. Ivicsek Jr.

“No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man’s and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinized and studied, perhaps almost as narrowly as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water...”

— H.G. Wells, *War of the Worlds*

In the end the invaders from the stars were defeated by our microbes. Powerful and brilliant, they had overlooked procedures that we take for granted today concerning quarantine procedures. With the benefit of hindsight, it might be enjoyable to figure out another way for humanity to overcome the Martians. Our technology was too far behind to even factor into the equation, even in the Grand Empire of the United Kingdom.

The Martians knew this world wasn’t totally suitable and had already begun to take the first steps towards terraforming earth into a more hospitable climate. The Black Dust and the Red Vegetation were the first steps towards making Earth a new home for the invaders. But suppose that this was in fact their undoing? In the seeds of their victory lay the possibility of their defeat.

The Black dust was exemplary at killing off terrestrial life left still barely clinging to existence in the wake of the Martian Heat rays. Drifting across the countryside, it indiscriminately brought a death more gruesome than anything mankind had ever imagined in even his darkest dreams.

Killing was only the first step. In its wake, everything that found its final rest in the Black Dust decomposed at an accelerated rate forming the rich soil that nourished the Red vines from the planet of war.

But another seed took root as well. Hope. Some precious few individuals were either immune to the Black Dust or changed by it instead of slain. One and all, they developed strange new abilities and powers well beyond even the wildest tales of Heroes and legends.

Humanity tottered on the edge of extinction, but from the brink a select few looked back and uttered in one voice, “This shall not pass. We will not go quietly into this dark night.”

And the War of the Worlds truly began....

Timeline of the War

Timeline of Events of the Martian Invasion

Late July/Early August, 1894 — During the Opposition of Mars, a great light is seen on the illuminated part of the Martian disk.

1896, 1898 — Strange marks are seen on the Martian disk during Opposition.

Midnight, August 12 1900 — First jet of green gas seen erupting from the surface of Mars.

Midnight, August 13-22 1900 — Jets of green gas spurt out from Mars at 24 hour intervals.

Midnight, December 12-22 1900 — The Jets of green gas again spurt from the surface of Mars, but this time they occur twice a night.

The Martian Invasion, June 1902

Day 1: Friday

Midnight — The first Martian cylinder lands in Surrey on the common between Horsell, Ottershaw, and Woking.

6 a.m. — The first cylinder is found.

9 a.m. — People begin to gather at the edge of the pit.

Afternoon — A small group attempts to excavate the cylinder.

Shortly before sunset — Approximately two to three hundred people are gathered at the pit when the cylinder opens. At the sight of the Martians the crowd retreats from the edge of the pit.

Sunset — Their confidence somewhat restored by the lack of visible activity in the Pit, the crowd begins to slowly advance upon the Pit once more.

8.30 p.m. — A small group of three attempts peaceful contact with the Martians. They advance on the pit waving a white flag. There is a flash of light and three puffs of greenish smoke rise into the air. The hissing noise that accompanies this activity slowly turns into a humming, then into a loud, droning noise. The Martians target the crowd with their Heat-Ray, and an invisible ray of heat flashes from man to man, and each bursts into flame, as if suddenly and momentarily turned to fire. The crowd flees in panic.

11.00 p.m. — A company of soldiers form a cordon around the edge of the common. A squadron of Hussars, two Maxim guns, and four hundred men of the Cardigan regiment depart for the common from Aldershot.