The Lie

OF ASPECTS AND TRUTHS

Controlling the story with aspects and truths can feel overwhelming, and you may find it hard to define and regulate their effects on the game. Astro Inferno works best without clear definitions and rules, and actually shines when you are ready to incinerate all clear conceptions surrounding the narrative – aspects and truths included. There are some things about them that can be further clarified, though.

The scale of Aspects and Truths

Aspects should be able to be changed by other aspects – becoming soaked in water could stop someone from being on fire, a word of kindness could disperse a lingering irritation, and one or two shots at the sky could be enough to disperse a gathering crowd.

Truths are more permanent and shouldn't be as easily changed – a burnt down house must be rebuilt, pure hatred can't be dispersed in a heartbeat, and a weekly festival will need loads of bureaucracy, convincing and maybe even some less conventional methods to completely liquidate.

Aspect		Truths
ON FIRE ⟶	ABLAZE ⟶	BURNT DOWN
IRRITATION ⟶	ANGER ⟶	HATRED
GATHERING ⟶	EVENT ⟶	FESTIVAL
RAIN ⟶	FLOOD ⟶	MARSHLAND
IN PAIN ⟶	BLEEDING ⟶	WOUNDED

In between

Between aspects and truths there are lots of nuances, and something being one or the other is up to you to evaluate as the GM. The main rule is that if an aspect is so considerable that it will leave long-lasting consequences, it is considered a truth, even if it would normally be an aspect.

When the consequences are likely but uncertain, however, you have that in-between zone – someone ablaze by a raging fire might burn to ashes if nothing is done about it, anger that is provoked could become hatred if not apologized for, and a market that is thriving will probably become a regular thing if no one intervenes.

As these are somewhat foggy definitions, it is up to you to tweak the cost of an aspect when it feels right, having the player pay 2 ✚ or even 3 depending on how sure you are that it will bring long-lasting consequences.

Still, something that permanently affects the world doesn't necessarily permanently affect the narrative, so if you know that a big consequence won't really affect the direction the story is heading, let it happen for the usual 1 ✚. Just make it clear to the players that the cost of a specific aspect may vary depending on the circumstance.

Power management

This very same logic applies to any aspect or truth that is overpowered for any other reasons. In the same way that the base rules predict modifiers for supernatural and universal, there are various other situations that could make something more impactful than usual, and you are free to tweak costs or even deny aspects or truths at will – a nuclear explosion taking place should cost a lot more than a grenade explosion, if even approved at all.

The Baseline

As you play the game, a baseline of how powerful aspects and truths usually are will be defined. Testing and balancing this baseline will become commonplace for both you and the players alike.

As the GM, your task is to keep the players on their toes. Approve crazy stuff from time to time, totally breaking your common baseline. Make them guess what they can and cannot do. If a particular addition doesn't completely break your narrative, who knows, maybe it will enhance it! The players will enjoy having influence over the story, and the sessions will surely become better if they do.

Player: (Jokingly.) *Ha ha, 1 ✚ on my Pantheon check, what can I do with that? Well... the Prince is actually naked when we enter... jerking off Games of Thrones style!! He is a total pervert! Hahaha!*

GM: [Dead serious.] *Yeah he is, it's actually pretty awkward as you enter the hall and the servants around him are staring intensely into the ceiling, and you notice your guards around you are doing the same. What do you do?*

Repetitive tactics

Fact is, players have a tendency of repeating stuff that work, even though humans have a tendency of growing bored of stuff that repeat. Therefore, to help them from sabotaging their own fun, if you notice a tendency taking form in aspect or truth creation, you can simply raise the cost whenever the repeating situation arises, or even just deny it.

Still, don't fall into the trap of getting into arguments or punishing players for trying to win. Remember that you are the rules, who decides what is possible or not, and it's better to rule something out, instead of trying to come up with counter measures over and over.