A Treatise on Classpecting

by **Ouroborista** (**ouroboros.cafe**)

With the indispensable help of **gentleAnachronist** and **ubiquitarianIdiodect**

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Why should I trust this document?

You shouldn't. I am but one voice in the canon, and while I have been singing this tune for a while now, the same is undoubtedly true for many of the other analysts. My aim is to offer you my toolbox, and you may take whatever instruments you please from it. There is no official truth, so the goal can't be being right. Rather, it is to assemble a system that satisfies you. Classpecting, as a typology, is unique in that it needs to be reverse-engineered as opposed to merely understood. What we have to go on are the known titles of known characters, as well as partially contradictory in-universe analyses by largely unreliable narrators. This presents an issue. Many have latched onto these description-fragments, because they tell rather simple, compelling stories, but in doing so, the system they construct often fails to actually explain the titles of known characters. In-universe there is disagreement as to whether Classpects constitute a description, an aspiration or a challenge to the wielder, so many have chosen the latter two and concluded that characters who do not seem to fit their Classpect have simply failed their quest or have yet to embark on the relevant character arc. This to me is unsatisfying. The title is almost certainly a combination of the three factors, but even a failed arc should be recognizable. We should see the path they did not take, or the scars of a challenge befitting of their title, even when the player does not embody it in their current state (as is often the case with inversions). If such hints aren't given, it seems like a cop-out in order to maintain a faulty analysis. A proper system of Classpecting should clearly identify every known character as a product of their title in one way or another. The in-universe interpretations and stories will often aid in this, but they are a secondary criterion. Oft-misinterpreted symbols. We should take a page out of Rose's book:

> *"Men have [crafted] many stories that are bullshit out of symbols risen from the abyss of [consciousness without necessarily] knowing [what the] fuck they were doing or saying, as they [floundered] around for some truth [but] in spite of [themselves] they would for [however] briefly cross through a ray of light [regardless]. [Because] of the [symbols]. Dave.. [.] The symbols [hold all] the power"* (p.5404)

What is an Aspect?

Aspects are odd in comparison to other typologies, because they tell us very little about the character of a character. Rather they tell us how someone sees reality, which parts they primarily interact with, and which parts they tend to affect. Aspects are the *topics* to which the *modes* of the Classes are applied.

The Trinity

There are three ways of understanding Aspects and ideally they should all be borne in mind simultaneously. They are:

- *An aesthetic domain of interconnected themes and symbols* **(Aspect as domain)**
- *(Figurative, not literal) eldritch nature gods* **(Aspect as force)**
- *The fundamental building blocks in terms of which someone understands reality* **(Aspect as material)**

Hey, look, it's exactly like the other thing:
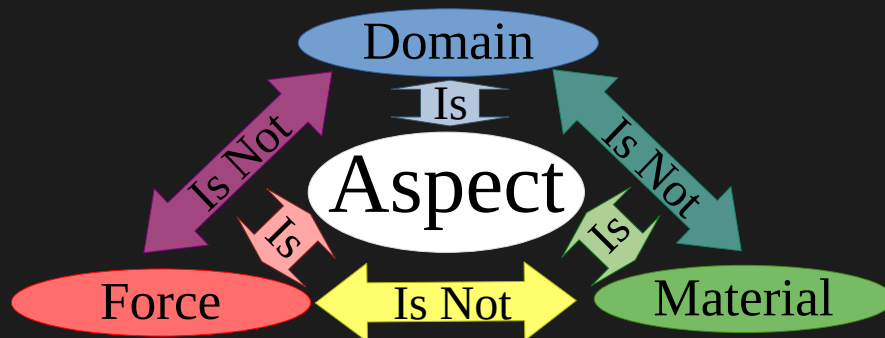
I will refer to people as *"[Aspect]-bound"* as opposed to *"[Aspect]-players"* or *"Heroes of [Aspect]"*, not just because these sound silly, but primarily because they only reflect one branch of the trinity respectively. *"Hero of"* frames the Aspect as entity/force in favour of which someone acts. *"Hero of [country]"* or such is invoked. *"Player"*, meanwhile, is the purely mechanistic framing of Material, someone who uses the Aspects and exploits its dynamics. "-bound" on the other hand is ambiguous. It can be the "bound by" of the Aspect-as-Force, the "bound to" of the Aspect-as-Domain and the "bound with" enmeshed cross-hatch of the Aspect-as-Material.

Domain

The domain is the game you are playing, the things you care about. Class determines how one interacts with the world, but the domain delineates which parts one primarily interacts with. People of the same Aspect often share interests and obsessions, stylistic markers and aesthetics, because they lie in their shared domain. The themes and activities around which they are at home and which they tend to gravitate toward. The symbolic and conceptual cohort which the Aspect keeps as its signifiers.

Force

In Homestuck, the Aspects may genuinely have wills of their own, but in reality they probably do not. Still, it is often useful to see them as active forces or gods of sorts, especially when it comes to phrasings like "serving [one's] Aspect". An understanding of cybernetics is useful but not required when it comes to the idea of *inorganic desire.* Aspects aren't sentient agents. They don't "want" anything, but neither does a plant "want" to be pollinated. Still we feel like the insect served the plant in some way when it carries its pollen, because it leads to the plant making more of itself. We anthropomorphise self-perpetuating, cybernetic processes as teleological. As an intentional act towards some goal which the thing in question doesn't really have. When something successfully makes more of itself then we think it wants to make more of itself. When a void-bound makes the world more void-y or a hope-bound makes the world more hope-y, we can read that too as them serving their master like the insects serve the plant, even though everything is happening entirely without external influence, simply because the parties involved are the way they are. Call it "ideals" if you want to make it sound more respectable, but that rings a bit too purely positive. The "ideals of the Aspect" (which it doesn't actually have of course) aren't necessarily the ideals of the player. This is most obvious with destroyer Classes, god-slayers of sorts, but even a Mage might see their force as a rather cruel entity and seek to curtail its influence. The concept of force is relevant whenever a person deliberately changes reality with regards to the themes associated with an Aspect. Aiding, cooperating with, struggling against or outright fighting a god that isn't there.

Material

Aspect as material is the currency of the mind, the universal equivalent, the coloured lens through which one sees the world. Even for subjects outside of the domain, your Aspect will be your go-to analytical tool. A heart-bound will see everything in terms of personalities and identities, emotions and authenticity at least to some degree. They can apply different approaches, and usually will to some extent, but they can't un-see this one, because every thought and sensation is already formulated in the thematic alphabet of their Aspect. Transliteration isn't too difficult for most functional people, but you will always have seen the original-language version first. When all you have is Doom, then every problem looks like a prophecy. As material, the Aspect constitutes the tools at our disposal, cognitive but often also as their physical manifestations.

The Aspects

Breath

Breath concerns itself with freedom and weightlessness, flexibility, spontaneity and intuition. It is hard to tie down or put in a box. While not opposed to "fighting for freedom", Breath is closer to a "living as though one were already free". Not necessarily smashing the cage, but rather slipping through the bars along with the breeze. Breath manifests in humour and teamwork, in all that is light and easy-going. On the flip-side however the Breath-bound can be evasive and aloof, detached, depersonalised and escapist. They might give too much way and their easy-going weightlessness might cause them to simply not deal with reality when things get rough. Their free-flowing nature might leave them fickle and unreliable. They might retreat into fantasy when the world is suffocating to them. But breath is good at recovering from even the most dire of blows, it is difficult to leave permanent dents in the air and few prisons are hermetically sealed. In and out, the world breathes its gentle stream of comings and goings.

Life

Life is the Aspect of growth, sprawl, accumulation, flourishing. Everything that was once a seed and will some day be a mighty tree. Any sapling slowly breaking through asphalt from beneath. It concerns itself with care, nurturing and literal life of course. At the core of Life lies an idea of naturalism, of a "way things are supposed to be", "a way that is natural". This might lead them to be cautious and conservative (not necessarily in the political sense). Hasty, drastic changes might kill the flower that has already grown so far. At their worst the Life-bound may be hesitant to the point of inertia, they might be hard-headed, overly protective and unwilling to take risks. The Life-bound may be confused when things don't go the way they consider to be natural, and they might try to restore order by any means necessary. Ideally though, they have solid roots anchoring them to the earth and strive towards the sun with every coming day. Perhaps slowly, but always upwards.

Light

Light deals in exploration, knowledge, luck and relevance. It is the electron-microscope prying secrets from any crevice it can find just as much as it is the spotlight drawing attention to that which cannot physically be ignored. The path of this Aspect is well lit and certain. "Luck" here is the state of being consistently lucky or consistently unlucky. Light introduces certainty even in the places where chance should govern. When led astray the hunger for knowledge or relevance can

quickly turn to unhealthy obsession. The idea that everything is meaningful, everything makes sense, can lead to crisis when the Light-bound finds no satisfying explanation behind their symbols. They may be entirely unable to deal with uncertainties, or the hunger for significance in the limelight might burn out their pupils. Curiosity may kill them like many a cat, or watering eyes which cannot close for even a second become their constant curse. At best though the light is a source of answers and a path towards genuine meaning.

Time

Time is change, production, evolution, iteration, speed, but also artefacts, mementos, destruction and death. It has always already passed and it does not slow for anyone. Time might not be running out, but it is certainly running. Better keep pace. Here lies the domain of all those around whom days shatter into hours, minutes, seconds and instants to be filled with something before they are gone forever. Stasis is impermissible, everything is in constant flux and there's always shit in need of doing, but that doesn't mean you can't keep souvenirs. Faded polaroids of what once was. Time houses those on the constant sprint forward just as much as the pensive nostalgics. A Time-bound is likely to fall to dysfunction when they lose touch with the present moment, becoming trapped in past or future. Their relentless pace may turn them into miserable workaholics and their constant metamorphoses may leave them unrecognizable to themselves or their friends. The next moment though always holds opportunities for radical reinvention. Time is a hot engine compressing reality to a pinpoint focus as it rushes towards it. Ideally the time-bound functions like clockwork, always one step ahead of what the world throws at them.

Heart

Heart's interest lies with the soul, with essence, the self and its reflection, identity and emotions. Authenticity as well as inauthenticity. It straddles the space of all that is internal and subjective, of feelings, relationships and sensations. Heart cares about the "why" more than the "what". Motivations and desires. Above all, the Aspect seeks to understand itself and others. It may find the answers it seeks in characters, in personas and role-play, in all the shoes it can put itself in. The heart-bound may detect imprints and out-sourcings of identity even in the inanimate or fictional. Essences too may not just be those of people, but the platonic ideals of objects and situations "that which makes them themselves". When troubled the Heart-bound might find themselves lost in their own head, unable to see the outside, falling through destructive cascades of self-hatred masquerading as self-reflection. They might mistake projecting their own feelings for empathy, and they might feel obligated to manage the emotions of everyone around them in addition to their own. When in their element however, the Heart-bound is in touch with themself and their friends, they know what role a certain situation calls for and play it flawlessly without ever confusing masks for their wearers.
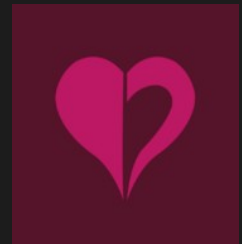
Rage

Rage gets a bad rep in part due to the emotion after which it is named, but there are valid grounds for fury. Rage is the sworn enemy of the intolerable, of any rotten foundation that needs to be razed to the ground before something better can be built. Here lies burning, single-minded purpose, willing to sacrifice whatever it takes. Both the religious fanatic and the calculated unflinching utilitarian find purchase with the Aspect as unstoppable forces of their own tracks. It deals in nothing short of absolutes; brutal honesty or endless lies, and isn't satisfied with anything less. Absolute freedom. Absolute purity. Absolute conviction. High contrasts and high intensities. Madness and crystalline sanity spiral around the ugly truths that Rage is obsessed with. It is unsurprising then that theatre is another theme of the Aspect. Exaggerations of reality. Emotions at boiling-point. As creatures of the extreme, Rage-bounds can violently switch between modalities. They will be uncompromising, unyielding and fanatically earth-scorching when they fly off the handle, but when kept in check they are a radiant flame of righteous fury to be put against whatever threatens to harm them or their friends, unwilling to delude themselves into complacency for even a second.
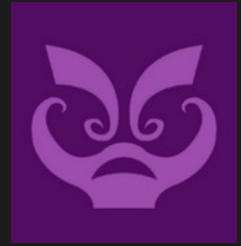
Blood

Blood concerns itself with groups, people, community, responsibility, hierarchy and equality, society and its structures. Connection, trust, bonds and charisma are themes of Blood. It manifests in struggle and sacrifice, in the deliberate organization of persons. Blood loathes bullshit, it would rather have a good fight about something than leave the matter unresolved. It is the most down-to-earth and pragmatic of the Aspects, dealing with people as they are in reality, turning strangers into friends and allies wherever they can. A warm and vital undercurrent pulsing through the organism of society, keeping it together. On the flip side, a blood-bound trying to strengthen their group might grow controlling. They may be self-sacrificing to the point of martyrdom when it is fully unnecessary, and they might be quick to see everything as a conflict, leading them to fight windmills. A healthy blood-bound however is soon dissuaded from such paths by those around them. They are phenomenal listeners and phenomenal leaders, capable of providing all the strength and warmth that is required of them, often simultaneously.

Doom

Doom is the Aspect of fate, prophecy, determinism and narrative certainty. "This too shall pass" reads the ancient engraving, already barely legible. The last line of the story has already been written, the ink dried, even if you haven't read it yet. The end is already in place, and all of our actions are no more than landmarks decorating the plummet towards it. Any dysfunctional apparatus or slowly decaying ruin is a monument to Doom as a physical manifestation of memory. Of all the pages that are already filled. When defeated by this monster at the end of the hallway, the Doom-bound may fall to

depression or anxiety. To existential defeatism. They may boggle vacantly at anyone waging futile battles in the face of heat-death, but despair won't stop the inevitable either, so why bother being miserable? At their best the Doom-bound are experts at coping in the best possible way. They never had any delusions that the tsunami would dissipate right before it hits them, so they already made their preparations or their peace. When they see that a battle is lost they will accept defeat and move on to a game they can win, instead of sacrificing even more in a useless struggle. They know it will all decay eventually; the good, the bad, the everything, so they might as well enjoy the ride and laugh at all the little jokes inevitability throws their way. With a sardonic smile, but a smile nonetheless, the Doom-bound steps into the sunset.

Void

Void deals in nothing. Well, that's a bit unsatisfying, isn't it? Void also deals in that, though it would never tell you so outright, but let's start over: Void deals in absence and mystery, in uncertainty, irrelevance, esoterica and secrets. In the forgotten, the unknown, the pointless, the ephemeral and the hidden. The Aspect feels that a truly good question is ruined when it is answered and that a beautiful code may be worth more than the message it encrypts. Losing yourself can be more interesting than finding yourself and solid ground is hard to come by in the vast nothingness between celestial specks of light, so the Void is for those who prefer floating, who distrust anything all too concrete in favour of a distant, anonymous whisper "Nothing is true. Everything is permitted". The Void-bound may be quick to chase oblivion in substances and distractions, taking the idea that nothing matters in the grand scheme of things as an individual prescription of numbness. Their fascination with the obscure may make their own pursuits inconsequential and leave them with none who share their interests, though ideally their answer to the question "does it matter?" could be "does it have to?". The Void-bound may comfortably engage with uncertainty where other's cant and a certain sense of insignificance may lend them an extraordinary capacity for stealth. Void can drift freely outside of relevance's gravity-well, exploring the hidden corners of experience.

Space

Space is breadth, diversity, creation and creativity, birth, motherhood and preservation, but also loneliness and isolation amidst the vast cosmos. It can go anywhere because it already is everywhere, and there is a tendency to get distracted or sidetracked by the sheer number of options at its disposal, but the journey is usually more important than the goal to them anyway. The canvas is literally endless; go ahead and draw something. Space has a penchant for lateral moves, for the random and unexpected, all the fascinating points of interest which dot its habitual all-the-way-zoomed-out bird's eye perspective. At their worst, the Space-bound are unfocused and ineffectual,

abandoning projects as soon as the next thing catches their eye. Their often strange or hyper-specific interests can make it difficult for them to relate to people, only deepening the Space-bound's characteristic isolation. At best though, the wide focus which their Aspect affords leads them to become brilliant multitaskers and masters of navigating the outside of the metaphorical box.

Mind

Mind's interest lies with probabilities, choices, connections, predictions. Causes and their effects, actions and their consequences, but also with games and the rules by which they operate as an artfully simplified case of the former. Lots of things will feel like games to the Mind-bound and they'll make sure to play them well, following the ever-splitting paths of causal relation into intractability and perhaps a bit further. They don't need to know why you do something, only how likely it is that you would. Rule-breaking can be quite troublesome to the Mind-Bound, since the card-counting stops to work once someone shuffles additional jokers into their hand. In general their greatest weakness can be over-generalization and simplification. They'll skilfully break a system down to its basic mechanics but fail to account for idiosyncrasy, or they might just grow too attached to their personally constructed rule-set and force others to play by it. Eventually though, they'll learn that these missteps just cause them to lose an unnecessary amount. Once their framework is reassessed the Mind-bound are phenomenal disentanglers of complexity and helmsmen of consequence.

Hope

Hope is the Aspect of belief, ideals and dreams. Of all that is fictional, utopian or aspirational. Of all the brilliant visions for what the world could be and all the ways in which it might yet get there. Hope is occasionally accused of naivete or excessive optimism, and it unflinchingly takes these as compliments. Once one loses hope that things might yet be salvaged, or abandons trust in their group's ability to make it so: What would even be the point? Lofty idealism might not get you anywhere by itself, but all is lost without it. The Hope-bound can easily descend to a state of shutting their eyes firmly and simply insisting that everything will turn out fine somehow. They might abandon reality or forsake pragmatism in pursuit of a gleaming vision, but in the end the strength of one's belief means nothing if one won't act on them. A well adjusted Hope-Bound will fake it till they make it, getting one step closer to the light with every step. Their outstretched hand isn't rose-tinted folly. It's a promise.

The Wheel and its Symmetries

You know the wheel if you have spent any time in these circles. It looks like this (==>) in case you need a refresher, and while I have my gripes with the Extended Zodiac *as a quiz* (It takes your relationship with your Aspect to be cooperative, resolved and permeating, which isn't the case for everyone, and especially not for *some Classes*), I believe in the wheel and I believe in much of what the EZ has to say about the Aspects. Making a Quiz for Classpecting is simply hard. I don't think I could do it, and I wouldn't want to if I could, because the goal is to understand, not to have some label assigned to you by an indifferent algorithm. If that's your thing, you can get more than enough of it literally everywhere else in this hell-world. Where was I? Right. Symmetries!

Opposites

Strangely enough, the Aspects often have quite a bit in common with their inverse, and for precisely that reason: They share a spectrum even though they stand on opposite sides of it. They have the same topic. "hot" and "apple" don't share much ground, but "hot" and "cold" do. They're talking about the same thing. This is usually most apparent in the domain, which often bears a significant overlap with that of its inverse. It is impossible to deal with the concept of justice without also dealing with the concept of injustice. Is the glass half-empty or half-full? Is Injustice merely the absence of justice or is justice merely the absence of injustice?

Light and Void will both cluster around mysteries and the unexplored. They share a significant chunk of domain, but at the end of the day the Void-bound cares about the question and the Light-bound about the answer. Light looks at the unknown in a Star Trek way and Void in a Lovecraft way.

Life and Doom are similarly cued into the way of the world and of nature, they intuitively understand that some things are much bigger than them, and they know how the story goes, but Life frames it in terms of the first few pages; the development, and Doom in terms of the last; the inevitable decay.

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Breath and Blood both care about people, about society, the social and the rules which bind us, but where Breath takes and gives space, always on the lookout for individual freedom, Blood locks hands firmly, draws others in and tries to build their own, better system.

Hope and Rage on the other hand distinctly don't know how the story goes, and they'd both take offence to the insinuation that there is such a thing. The future is what they make of it, it's just a question of whether the first and most important step is tearing down the bullshit or coming up with a utopian vision.

Mind and Heart are Aspects which deal with the behaviours and actions of people. Their impulse is to understand, but while Mind cares about what you'll do, about getting the model to work, Heart seeks to understand why you do it, tries to glimpse into people through their observable acts. It seeks the true nature at the core of something while Mind goes for all the optional bits which may be tweaked.

Space and Time are the fundamental Aspect pair. Their job is to *make shit take place*. To create novelty. Between them they span not only all of existence but also the inseparable twin approaches of any creative project. Space goes for breadth, for ideas, for expansive, holistic input, while Time goes for needlepoint focus and a rapid-turnover ability to pull through on the prompt. There's a reason why these are the two Aspects necessary for any successful session of SBURB.

But what if I'm actually a Destroyer-Class[1] of the opposite Aspect?!

This is a very common question among those who are new to Classpecting, and it's a confusion which is even briefly addressed in the comic itself. After all: Destruction of an Aspect looks a whole lot like creation of the opposite Aspect and vice-versa. The destruction of heat **is** the creation of cool, but this Class-wise ambiguity between opposites isn't actually as troubling as it may initially seem. All you need to resolve it are these two questions:

"Do you seem like one of the destroyer Classes?" Stop rolling your eyes. Yes this is obvious, but it's astounding how many people stumble at this ground-level hurdle. The characteristics of the two Destroyer Classes aren't limited to the fact that they destroy their Aspect in some way. First of all there's the additional verbiage of "destroys <u>through</u> their Aspect" and secondly the destroyer Classes, like all Classes, are character archetypes with their own distinctive personality traits and patterns of behaviour. Do you suit these?

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[1]   In case this is your first exposure to Classpecting, and you don't know what Destroyer Classes (or even Classes in general (we'll get to that)) are: I'm terribly sorry to additionally confuse you, but very briefly, there are Classes whose interaction with their Aspect is to destroy it and/or to destroy through it.

And:

"What's your usual internal framing?" which is another way of asking "What about the Material?". Destroyer-Class-Inversion pretty much exclusively affects Domain and Force ("Which aesthetics surround you?" and "which master do you appear to serve?"), so taking a closer look at Material is an excellent litmus-test. Yes, Eridan is immensely Rage-coded and destroys Hope at every step of the way, but if we take a look at his lens, the way in which he conceptualizes everything in the world, it practically reeks of Hope. All just dreams, hero-phantasies and gleaming visions for a better future (Which in his case is horrifying, genocidal and just generally despicable, but we're trying to look at the fascist disaster-twink from the inside here, so roll with it). Do you perceive Void as an absence of Light or Light as an absence of Void?

Horizontal Pairs

Do you still remember what The Wheel™ looks like? Good. Time and Space, as the two foundational, essential Aspects constitute its poles, and in a certain sense all of the other Aspects can be read as specific implementations of Time or Space in relation to a shared concept, depending on which hemisphere (or technically hemicycle) they occupy. A pair of horizontal twins will represent a Space-take and a Time-take on a common subject matter, the closer to the poles the stronger. The shared subject matter of Time and Space is "all of existence proper", which is why they are the basic case. Time-y Aspects are active, acting, seeking, confronting, specific and direct, while Space-y Aspects are passive, be-ing, analysing, compromising, holistic and indirect. This also means that the Aspects in a horizontal pair are similar to each other in terms of their material content due to their analogy to the Time-Space axis while being divergent in terms of aproach. Time is the most time-y and Space is the most space-y, but what do these specific themes look like?

Hope and Life share the theme of beginnings and growth. They both stand perpetually at the first day of a better world, but Hope takes the Space approach to this concept; planning, imagining inventing, hashing out the big picture first, while Life dives in by just planting a few seeds and seeing what becomes of them, instating the conditions of growth and charging ahead with their work as is the way of Time.

Mind and Light share the theme of knowledge and objectivity. They are disseminators of all the information reality has to offer, but Mind takes the Space approach of laterally reaching out into all the data which is already at their disposal, all the patterns they can analyse and simplify to reach probabilistic conclusions, while Light takes the active approach of Time; setting sail to discover all that which they don't already know, finding truth and meaning directly as opposed to inferring it. Light is fittingly frustrated with probabilities. Things are true or they are not.

Void and Heart share the theme of subjectivity and feeling. Void gets there via Space. It looks at the unfathomable complexity of reality, sees that it can't really know anything and asks "okay, but what does it feel like?" instead. It accepts fuzzy idiosyncratic ambiguity because it doesn't believe in a fact-of-the-matter. Space-y holistic subjectivity. Heart also arrives at a focus on the personal and subjective, but it gets there from the Time side. It seeks the pinpoint-focus, the awareness left over once you subtract everything peripheral: the self. The things which matter in any one moment do seem to relate to people and emotions a lot. Identity is the most immediate tool it can work with. Time-y specific subjectivity.

Doom and Rage share the theme of finality and decay. They are the twin crumbling pillars of an obsoleted paradigm, but Doom takes the indirect, passive and zoomed out view that it's all gonna come down either way. It makes preparations and watches reality take its course as foretold and as always. Rage on the other hand is active and confrontational. It will make itself an agent of the destruction to come. Rage asks what needs to end and gets to work ending it. Picking its specific project and lifting the sledgehammer.

Breath and Blood have no horizontal twins. They are exactly as space-y as they are time-y, which is interesting when you consider that Blood and Breath are the Team-Aspects. Who else could be more cut out to be the mediator in a world where every successful group has a Time-bound and a Space-bound.

Vertical Pairs

These are a bit more tenuous than the horizontal twins, which is to be expected, since Time and Space are the true poles around which the wheel is oriented. Still; Breath and Blood are strongly framed as pseudo-poles of sorts (The two most relevant sessions have a Breath-bound and a Blood-bound as their leader respectively, and the Aspects are positioned at the top and bottom of the wheel's official layout). The upper hemicycle handles the ideal, abstract, divine and optimistic, while the lower hemicycle handles the concrete, material, human and pessimistic. Aspects in a vertical pair are similar to each other in terms of their approach due to their analogy to the Breath-Blood axis while being divergent in terms of content. We can play the same game as last time, refer to these attribute-clusters as Breath-y and Blood-y, and look for common themes between vertical pairs such that one is a Breath-analogue and the other is a Blood-analogue:

Light and Heart share the theme of meaning. They both believe in teleological reasons and really-existing significances to the world they inhabit. For one these are the concrete, human motivations of people, the genuinely existing souls at the heart of reality, while for the other it's an abstract, (almost) divine true meaning and relevance in the external world. Symbols pointing towards genuine cosmic truths upon which light may be shone.

Life and Rage are both interested in the status quo, the present, the way things are, but while Life breathily, idealistically, optimistically tries to stabilize their little bubble of world, supply it with fertilizer and water and sees to it that it prospers, Rage takes one good bloody, concrete, pessimistic look at the way things are and says "well absolutely fuck this shit not-so-gently with a chainsaw".

Mind and Void share the theme of coincidence, chaotic attractors and lack of teleological meaning. Things aren't the result of a plan but the outcome of a complex uncaring rule-set. Mind uses this assumption to abstract an idealized system of rules from observable patterns and assigns probabilities, while Void takes this to mean that on a moment to moment level nothing is certain, that there is no concrete objective truth and that it therefore might as well build its own.

Hope and Doom share the theme of that which is to come, the future and the light (or lack thereof) at the end of the tunnel. For Hope these are abstract, idealistic and most of all optimistic visions for what the future might hold, whereas for Doom it is a bleak, concrete prophecy of material demise already etched into the structure of reality. Entropy always increases.

But is there more?

Like, surely by this point we can draw all the axes (all of them) and find parallels between the new pairs those produce. The answer is almost surely yes. Some people even theorize about three-Aspect symmetries and the likes, and while there are definitely a bunch of interesting patterns to be found there, they are almost certainly accidental. I have never found a satisfying, consistent pattern which links twins in relation to the other axes, even though there are perfunctory similarities aplenty. If you find something, feel free to tell me about it, but I do want to get to the Classes eventually, so I'll leave all additional Aspect-patterns as an exercise to the reader.

What is a Class?

Classes are two things. On the one hand they are character archetypes, figures plucked from the mythology of life, or to put it a different way: "Your Class is the role you play in the story". Where Aspect is deducible from interests, framings and ways of thinking about the world, Class relates to patterns of behaviour and personality clusters. "The sort of person you are". Wielders of the same Class will seem much more similar to each other than wielders of the same Aspect, they will however speak different languages and act upon different thematic fields. On the other hand, Class determines the way in which one relates to their Aspect. This relation is often referred to as the *verbiage* of the Class. Specifically, Class is the mode which is applied to the domain/force/material of the Aspect. One who *steals* Life is quite different from one who *serves* it. To simplify it even further: let's pretend that **fire** is an Aspect; an arsonist and a firefighter would both be fire-bound. The firefighter is antagonistic towards the force of their Aspect, but they are nonetheless enmeshed with the material and they occupy the domain. Other substances (water, CO_2, ammonium phosphate, etc.) are used pragmatically as means of dealing with fire, but they aren't themselves *the point*. Being bound by an Aspect doesn't mean that you need to like it. Hate is a strong bond, as the comic likes to remind us. All the different ways in which you could engage with these concepts are within the purview of Class.

Verbiage always comes in two flavours :

"One who [does x] to their Aspect" and *"One who [does x] through their Aspect"*

[does x] is a similar verb in both cases and every Class does both to some extent, though individual people might lean one way or another. Another way of putting it would be that they "Affect their Aspect in a certain way, using various tools to do so" and "Affect the world as a whole in a certain way using their Aspect as a tool to do so". The mode stays constant across both, which is to say that the archetype known as Class encompasses both.

There is an ongoing and deeply tedious debate about whether some Classes are gender-exclusive, which is at some point claimed by a character in-universe (who is also wrong about other game-mechanics). The problem is this: If Classes are archetypes and/or modes of interacting with the Aspect, which is widely agreed upon, then they can't be gender exclusive **because there are no gender exclusive personalities or patterns of behaviour**. If you think there are, then you're kind of a piece of shit.

If Class is assigned by the game in a restrictive manner, which is to say "not in accordance with actual personality" then it is a useless tool for analysis and we shouldn't even be talking about it. I prefer to believe that there is something actually useful here, so I won't tell people what modes of behaviour they can and can't exhibit based on how they identify. This isn't to say that there can't be gender-bias to the Classes. Some modes of interacting with reality are certainly gender-coded as a result of this dread fate called "living in a society", and we would thus expect unequal representation in many of them (a more in-depth look at that can be found in this wonderful essay by Arghus). All clear? Good. This is really all there is to say on the matter.

The Classes

Witch

The Witch *alters or bends their Aspect* and *alters or bends through their Aspect.*

They change their Aspect with the goal of breaking it, and finding strategic exploits, while simultaneously locating strategic exploits in the (social) world with the help of their Aspect. The Witch will find the most harmful facets of their force and neuter them for the sake of themselves and their friends. This tendency to simply mess with established structure often turns them into outsiders though. A lot of the things Witches end up breaking are social conventions. Note the historico-mysthological role of the Witch as an "appreciated Other", someone who lives outside of the village and its structure in the woods, but who is nonetheless vital to its existence as a source of curses and medicine. The Witch represents an escape path into the adjacent outside and a pressure valve at the periphery.

Examples of Witches from popular media are Howl Pendragon (Howl's Moving Castle), Misato Katsuragi (Neon Genesis Evangelion), Joelle van Dyne (Infinite Jest), Ramsey Murdoch (Epithet Erased) and Cayce Pollard (Pattern Recognition).

Sylph

The Sylph *heals or mends their Aspect* and *heals or mends through their Aspect.*

They seek to repair and restore that which they feel is broken in the world or in their Domain. Sylphs are exceptionally cerebral people, though they don't so much find detached interest in their observations as projects. Understanding the illness is to the Sylph only a pragmatic means of healing the patient. They have a good idea how things should be working, and if reality doesn't match their prescription, then a problem is diagnosed and they make it their quest to fix it, though Sylphs can have a hard time understanding or accepting that others might disagree with their assessment of brokenness. They are profoundly meddlesome by nature, born puppetmasters who prefer gentle encouragement over less elegant means, though that same tendency can lead them to be quite passive aggressive when they try to nudge matters in a certain direction which the nudge-ee does not wish to go in.

Examples of Sylphs from popular media are Jill Stingray (VA-11 Hall-A), Leon Stamatis (Greater Boston), Guinan (Star Trek), Albus Dumbledore (Harry Potter) and Avril Incandenza (Infinite Jest).

Knight

The Knight *protects and fights for their Aspect* and *protects and fights through their Aspect*.

They serve themselves and their team through its material and domain, weaponize it and wield it as a blade. A Knight, more than most other Classes, will see their work as a duty, rather than as something they greatly enjoy doing. They do it because it needs to be done and they're the best for the job. Or they at least carry themselves as though this were their reason, keeping a gooey core well concealed. Much like their namesake, the Knight tends to be protective, but also armoured, though moreso emotionally than literally. They are steadfast and reliable, in part because they understand their conduct as a duty. They can seem unapproachable, as they stand in their chain mail, though they rarely are. A Knight functions best when they know what to do, they need a task and impotent uncertainty will drive them insane.

Examples of Knights from popular media are Cassandra (Tangled), Shizuou Heiwajima (Durarara!!), Gideon Nav (The Locked Tomb), Bruce Wayne (Batman) and Bella Swan (Twilight).

Maid

The Maid *serves their Aspect* and *serves through their Aspect*.

Service can mean many things, and the Maid is certainly versatile, but they will often find themselves in a position to set up the playing field, pre-acting more than reacting. They attempt to bring facets of their Aspect into the world by any means necessary, and far from serving because they feel like they must, the Maid holds a great deal of adoration for their Aspect's force, even for the parts of it that others find off-putting. The Maid is fully bought-in or at least full of uneasy fascination which might occasionally make them seem strange. Socially they can be everymen of sorts, holding together heterogenous groups, reaching out a hand when the others are taken. The Maid does not need to be an example of their Aspect, though they often will become one in their service. They are merely in love with it.

Examples of Maids from popular media are Limpopo (Walkaway), Data (Star Trek), Daenerys Targaryen (Game of Thrones), Spike Spiegel (Cowboy Bebop) and Mabel Pines (Gravity Falls).

Page

The Page *becomes their Aspect* and *becomes a fully fledged person through their Aspect*.

They are not naturally attuned, nor are they born into their domain of power. They are a pupil, and their road to self actualization leads through many a failure. On the plus side, this means that they will be better mentors once they do figure out their calling. Native-speakers are often bad language teachers, and it's the same issue with those who never had to really learn their Aspect, but the Page did, so the power they wield at the end of their journey is enormous. The Page starts from zero, and the path of attainment is perhaps hardest for them. Pages get a bad rep, because this often means that they'll lag some ways behind their peers for a while, but they're picking up speed, and if they don't give up, Pages are bound to overtake them. The one thing Pages have in spades is potential.

Examples of Pages from popular media are Steven Universe (Steven Universe), Bobby Newmark (Neuromancer Trilogy), Usagi Tsukino (Sailor Moon), Christopher Moltisanti (The Sopranos) and Mamimi Samejima (FLCL).

Heir

The Heir *inherits their Aspect* and *ascends through their Aspect*.

They are the rightful heritor of its themes and therefore seem to have a sense of naturality about them. If one excludes the Master-Classes, The Heir is closest to being a perfect avatar for their Aspect. Fully cooperative and frictionless. An Heir rarely has to think about what they should do, to a point where they sometimes only realize that they went through a massive development after the fact. They rarely have an internal struggle with their Aspect (though this doesn't mean that the Heir doesn't struggle). This makes them reliable and quick-to-respond, but it also means that they might be completely lost if they are cut off from their Domain by external reality. Often their arc is about coming to terms with the power they are bestowed, or possibly realizing that they even have it to begin with.

Examples of Heirs from popular media are Luz Noceda (The Owl House), Paul Atreides (Dune), The Doctor (Doctor Who), Tiffany Aching (Discworld Saga) and Dimitri Stamatis (Greater Boston).

Mage

The Mage *understands their Aspect* and *understands through their Aspect*.

Understanding isn't knowing and neither is it awareness or even insight. It is the bone-deep comprehension you get when a concept is fused to your psyche. They are not obsessives, much less dispassionate researchers, but in many ways those who "learned the hard way". Mages tend to have been burnt by their Aspect. Their tale is often tragic, but in the wake of such tragedy they have grown (or will grow) wise. They often end up as mentors of the opaque, sagely variety. The Mage will teach when to let go, so that others won't repeat their mistakes, however they may well develop an "act as I say, not as I do"-mindset. Where the Heir has the least internal conflict with their Aspect, the Mage has the most, but a healthy Mage will use this tension for good. They may never truly make peace, but they might achieve zen-like acceptance.

Examples of Mages from popular media are Uncle Iro (Avatar the Last Airbender), Peri (The Far Meridian), Ivan Fyodorovich Karamazov (The Brothers Karamazov), Bea (Night in the Woods) and Anthony Soprano (The Sopranos).

Seer

The Seer *knows their Aspect* and *knows through their Aspect*.

They are its great oracles, the Aspect's analytic mouthpiece. Seers are prone to losing themself, their own personhood quite often fully eclipsed by their latest interest. The idea of an info-hazard is alien to a Seer and they are adept at bullshitting themselves in order to justify the price of certain knowledge. They are also adept at bullshitting others to seem far more put-together than they truly are. The aesthetic of wisdom can be a valuable shield to a Seer rapidly approaching the deep end. Though on the surface they understand more than most, Seers tend to be neurotic, always wanting to learn more and to learn at any cost. Once a Seer believes that they know something, it is quite difficult to convince them of the opposite, and they are prone to believe that the only reason one might disagree with them is that they haven't explained their position thoroughly enough.

Examples of Seers from popular media are Jonathan Sims (The Magnus Archives), Esme Weatherwax (Discworld Saga), Heinrich Faust (Faust), Harrowhark Nonagesimus (The Locked Tomb) and Hubert Etcetera (Walkaway).

Thief

The Thief *steals their Aspect* and *steals through their Aspect.*

While they are intense and often egocentric figures; Thieves do not believe themselves deserving of anything for merely being who they are. They want to earn it. Treasure means little to the Thief if getting it is too easy. They seek challenge. They seek rivals. The Thief is never satisfied, their avarice is boundless, because they don't actually care about the "having"-part of theft, just about the "taking". There is a constant hunger to the Thief's conduct, and their self-worth is almost entirely constructed upon their ability to succeed at their current goal, which can often result in social isolation for the Thief. The subtleties of manipulation are more-or-less lost on this Class. They will speak their mind and do as they please, even if doing so would obviously harm them, and they are unlikely to respect people who would not offer them that same treatment.

Examples of Thieves from popular media are Catra (She-Ra and the Princess of Power), Faye Valentine (Cowboy Bebop), Stan Pines (Gravity Falls), Cersei Lannister (Game of Thrones) and Charles Kinbote (Pale Fire).

Rogue

The Rogue *redistributes their Aspect* and *redistributes through their Aspect.*

They steal, but not for stealing's sake and not to prove something to themselves. The Rogue steals in order to give. They steal for the greater good, though this is less a deeply held moral philosophy and more a gut-feeling of what the right thing to do is at any given point is. Rogues tend to be social creatures due to how altruistically-minded they are and they tend to spread themself thin between all their little projects, sometimes losing track of their own needs. While they are excellent multi-takers, they may have trouble dedicating themselves to one big project and more naturally handle five small ones simultaneously. The Rogue is nothing if not sincere. There is rarely a motive deeper than genuine in-the-moment passion in sight, and they are profoundly allergic to boredom. The Rogue has to do something.

Examples of Rogues from popular media are Masaomi Kida (Durarara!!), Reki (Haibane Renmei), Sophie Hatter (Howl's Moving Castle), Lieutenant Columbo (Columbo) and Alice Cullen (Twilight).

Prince

The Prince *destroys their Aspect* and *destroys through their Aspect.*

They are, contrary to popular belief, not necessarily evil, though Princes tend to be difficult to handle due to their intensity. The Prince considers themself royalty and when reality does not bend to their will, then they believe this to be the gravest of crimes. An incompetent Prince will ineffectually seethe about the perceived injustice, but a competent Prince will learn to bend the world to get what they are owed. To the Prince there is no compromise, only complete failure and complete success. In between the earth lies scorched, and they will not rest until they get what they are after. No hobby is dearer to the Prince than picking hills to die on (though they would of course prefer if the other party did the dying). In terms of goals they tend to be rather big-picture, and there is little they are unwilling to sacrifice.

Examples of Princes from popular media are Gregory House (House M.D.), Regina George (Mean Girls), Maximilien Robespierre (French Revolutionary), Zhen (Psycholonials) and Hades (Hadestown).

Bard

The Bard *allows the destruction of their Aspect* and *invites destruction through their Aspect.*

Which is a strange and not at all intuitive verbiage, though the same sentiment can be expressed by saying that the Bard "fucks with" their Aspect and "fucks around" through their Aspect (no, this isn't a joke). The Bard builds on an unstable foundation and smiles serenely when it cracks. They can be spectators or they can be actors depending on what mood strikes them, because the Bard knows that fate is much bigger than them. The Bard is therefore free to fuck around and do as they please, generally occupying the role of the jester, because they are acutely aware that reality owes them nothing and they don't owe it anything either. As such, they are generally agents of chaos, scarcely invested in any of the commonly agreed upon goals and metrics of success, only predictable in their unpredictability.

Examples of Bards from popular media are Okabe Rintarou (Steins;Gate), Meursault (L'Étranger), Edalyn Clawthorne (The Owl House), William Foster (Falling Down) and Dirk Gently (Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency).

Master Classes

The Muse *facilitates their Aspect* and *facilitates through their Aspect.*

The Lord controls their Aspect and *controls through their Aspect.*

The master Classes are a bit of a special case with regards to this branch of Classpecting (the one that cares about the natural disposition of a person rather than their narrative function). They are a special case because unlike the other classes, which are believed to be either descriptions, goals or challenges to their referent, these two are explicitly claimed to be bestowed upon players in nigh-impossible sessions to even the odds. This is another way of saying that they have little to do with personality, as one is not necessarily responsible for the sort of situation one finds oneself in. I have previously argued that this makes them inutile with regards to a character-typology just like gender-locking, though I no longer believe this to be quite correct. While the sort of person you are does not strictly determine whether you find yourself in nigh-impossible situations or not, being in nigh-impossible situations does impact the sort of person you *get to be*. Specifically: It strips you of the privilege of being one at all.

Calliope would never choose the archetype of the Muse. She is not a person who *wants* to lock herself away in the folds of eternity. She never chooses to do so willingly – not in the session nor outside of it. She only ascends to god-tier in the world where she doesn't have a choice. Where she doesn't *get* to have friends. One could make the case that this complete lack of agency is actually essential for Muses. That, if they got to choose their paths, they wouldn't be the real deal. It is nothing inside of you that makes it so that you end up in a single player session, sometimes you just have a shit sibling.

Master classes are a power up in that –once the universe has decided that you must walk your path alone– inhumanity is quite simply *what it takes* to ascend. Anything less than a force of nature will not do. No one is the type to fight the universe alone eternally, but there are those who cruelly *must*, and in those who can bear this path of the eidolon, one will find power to almost match what was lost. Almost. Though, in becoming such a being, one might no longer be able to tell. master Classes, unsurprisingly are much less common in reality than they are in fiction. A complete, all-encompassing lack of agency is rare, and absolute, unconditional agency is even rarer. This framing does however still leave the option to type god- or force-of-nature like characters as a master Class depending on their activity/passivity to denote this very lack of conventional humanity. They may not have wanted to end up in this place, but they managed to persist despite it and so were stripped of all but purpose. If they ever possessed anything besides it in the first place, that is.

The other reason why master Classes are difficult to nail down with regards to a character typology is that they are descriptors with a sample-sizes of one. One cannot cross-reference examples to figure out which things are part of the Lord/Muse-Archetype and which are idiosyncratic to Caliborn or Calliope because Caliborn and Calliope are *all we have to go off*, unlike all the other classes for which we can look for shared invariants.

Class symmetries

This is the part where I truly get myself in hot water, but to some extent everyone does. From up high it is posited that there are pairs of one active and one passive Class who bear a similar verbiage. It is posited that the destroyer Classes (Prince and Bard), the bandit Classes (Thief and Rogue) and the master Classes (Lord and Muse) form such pairs, but beyond that it is anarchy. I will present my personal syzygies and explain why I believe them to be sensible, but be informed that we are departing from solid ground here. What is agreed upon is that these pairs do not in any way represent opposites of the type Aspect-pairs do. They are deeply similar, varying only along one axis, and their differences can be understood as a direct result of activity-passivity.

I posit these syzygies ==>
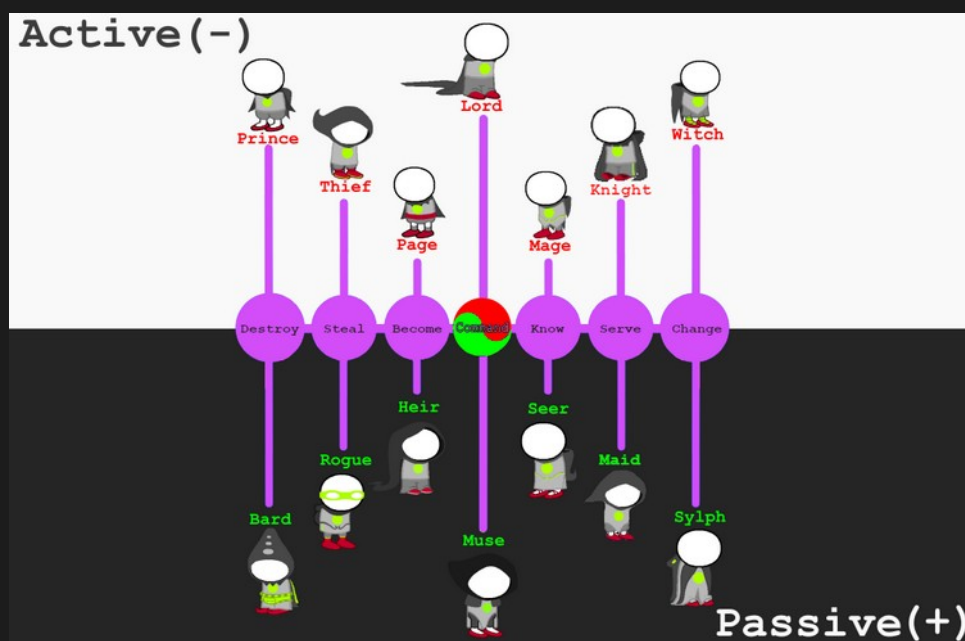
Other pairings which I have encountered, with decent reasoning to support them are:

Maid-Sylph Page-Knight Witch-Heir **Mage**-**Seer** , Maid-Heir **Knight**-**Page** **Witch**-**Sylph** **Mage**-**Seer**
Maid-Knight Page-Heir Sylph-Seer Witch-Mage , Maid-Seer **Knight**-**Page** **Witch**-**Sylph** Mage-Heir[2]

As you can see, the Mage-Seer and Witch-Sylph syzygies are quite uncontroversial, while Page-Heir is uncommon though not without precedent. My Knight-Maid on the other hand is deeply heterodox. If you wish to tether your opinion to consensus, take it with a grain of salt.

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[2]   Looking at Homestuck's obsession with symmetry, it feels like both kid-sessions should contain two active and two passive Classes without occupying both parts of a pair respectively, which is a criterion only two of these (and mine) meet. Going down this route of keen-eyed pattern seeking, one also finds that my class syzygies place identical numbers of active and passive players into the red and blue team, of which the troll-session originally consisted. Only one other common proposal meets this criterion and none besides mine meet both. Thank you to Zoneri for pointing that out to me. This is however still a mere footnote because it's a boring, typologically irrelevant meta-argument instead of an argument from shared traits, though it does lend elegance to the syzygies.

Activity

Activity (of Classes) is sometimes described as "doing x for yourself vs. doing x for others", though this doesn't even work for the known Prince-Bard pair and seems very much like a Thief-Rogue specific effect of applying activity to the "theft"-verbiage. The more useful shorthand is "swimming with or against the flow" or one given at another point in the comic, framing them as offensive/defensive classes in an RPG. A version I personally like is "passive Classes manipulate the battlefield while active Classes go to fight on it".

Engagement

Another pattern which may be found in the Class-chart comes into view when considering the Aspect trinity. Different Classes seem to have a habit of interfacing more strongly/consciously with one branch of the system, or even to conceptualize of the Aspect itself primarily in terms of only one branch amidst the Force-Material-Domain trinary. The mechanism appears to me as follows: Each Class syzygy engages with one trinity component consciously (*) (these are the terms in which they would naturally describe it), with one trinity component subconsciously (°) (this is a way in which the Aspect holds to-them-unnoticed sway over their actions) and with one component pragmatically (') (a tool which they are good at using, but which does not feel like a part of themselves). This yields six distinct combinations for the six pairs. It also just so happens that pairs with the same degree of activity/passivity have reverse component-orders.

Syzygy \ Mode	Conscious *	Subconscious °	Pragmatic '
Operators (Witch-Sylph)	Domain	Material	Force
Servants (Knight-Maid)	Force	Domain	Material
Prophets (Mage-Seer)	Material	Force	Domain
Proteges (Page-Heir)	Domain	Force	Material
Bandits (Thief-Rogue)	Material	Domain	Force
Destroyers (Prince-Bard)	Force	Material	Domain

Think of the way in which Prophets (M*) like Rose, Terezi, Sollux but also Kankri, insist upon the fact that their Aspect suffuses all that there is. "Everything is symbols and relevance", "everything is games and decisions", "everything is imminent demise", "everything is interlocking social hierarchies", whereas Proteges (D*) are much more likely to present their Aspect in terms of its actual aesthetic substance, the things encompassed by its domain. John/June focuses on the concrete markers of levity and freedom that are Breath, and Jake on the concrete markers of phantasy and optimism that are Hope, instead of so overtly jamming everything through the lens of their Aspects. Note that this is another instance of me leaving solid ground. The trinity is a novel framework and not Classpecting consensus. I do believe that the trifurcation itself is a relatively uncontroversial way of dividing up the different

things Aspects are used to describe, though others may use different terminology and/or add branches. At this point I'm just seeing what I can do with the idea. Engagement-hierarchies work with surprising elegance and reappear naturally in my friend urcoy's work on the class-wheel for instance.

Operators

Witches and Sylphs change, manipulate and transmute their Aspect. They consciously deal in its real aesthetic content, which they wrangle into shape. For the active Witch this is a distorting, bending and breaking. Think of Jade's literal breaking of space through the fourth wall or Fef's breaking of death via dream bubbles as well as plan to redefine the nature of culling. The passive Sylph on the other hand changes with the aim of healing or restoring something to the way it ought to be. They ally themselves with a perceived (cosmic-) plan instead of fighting it (Aranea trying to heal the dead timeline or reclaiming her rightful place of relevance as Mindfang or Kanaya's aupisticisms and matriorb-quest). A proclivity for or outside-imposed need of "being the adult" seems to be a theme among Operators. They are the Classes of exasperated sighs. Sylphs will usually accept this role and even get some joy out of it, while Witches tend to do it grudgingly, hoping that their charge will grow up at some point.

Servants

Knights and Maids serve, aid, protect and support their Aspect. They explicitly or implicitly perceive their Aspect as a force beyond them, be it a god or a set of principles and commitments, they perceive a direct alliance with their Aspect. The active Knight "does their fucking job" wielding the Material of their Aspect like a blade (Karkat's disgruntled leadership, Dave's responsible timeline management) while the passive Maid is more of nanny to the eldritch deity at their side, readying its path and excitedly anticipating its moves (Aradia's death-fangirldom, Jane's relation to Crockercorp). Servants are the bullshit-managers, the cavalry, the people who do what needs doing, as a Servant archetypally might. The Knight does so as a matter of course, while the Maid simply enjoys doing it.

Prophets

Mages and Seers know, understand and comprehend their Aspect. They glimpse through reality and recognize it as the motivating force behind literally everything, always to be found behind every curtain. The active Mage both incorporates this insight into their self-concept but also learns to oppose it to a certain degree (Sollux's acceptance of doom and subsequent new lease on life, Meulin's relationship guru-dom and advice to Horuss to avoid being himself) while the passive Seer conceptualizes the insight as external to themselves, inhabiting a more typical role of the scholar (Terezi testing the results of Egbert's forked choice, Rose acting as an oracle to the narrative). Prophets share a theme of "being in over their head". Like the blind oracles of old, insight into the ways of fate does not protect them from its designs. They tend to develop a crushing appreciation for how vast the thing they seek to understand is, and how little of it they can ever hope to see. Mages tend to spin this as a cautionary tale, while Seers perceive it as a call to dive deeper.

Proteges

Pages and Heirs become their Aspect, learn to direct it and grow familiar with the world through their Aspect. They get to know the symbolic cohort of the domain they consciously inhabit. For the active Page this is a process of acquisition, a gradual path towards mastery (Tavros' eventual gathering of the mental tools to stand up to Vriska and inspire the army, Jake developing a capacity for real heroics). For the passive Heir on the other hand it is a process of discovery, of unearthing and re-evaluating the contents of themselves and their environment (John/June experiencing Breath-y unshackled freedom through the retcon, Equius discovering his own ineffectuality). Proteges seem to share a theme of being… well, proteges. They tend to attract and move through mentors moreso than most. Pages here usually stick to a guide until they outgrow them, while Heirs cycle through influences much more rapidly and grow less attached to any given one.

Bandits

Thieves and Rogues steal from and through their Aspect. Like for the Prophets, everything shrinks into the purview of one variable to be tracked, a universal equivalent in terms of which everything can be measured. For the active Thief, the taking itself is relevant. It is relevant because it is a way of proving themselves and imposing themselves upon reality (Vriska's literally everything, Meenah's adoration of the Condesce and attempts to make her group more viscous). The passive Rogue is not swayed by challenge alone but rather by what they can do with the things they steal in order to give. (Roxy's conduct with the ring, Nepeta's RP-sessions stealing standard identity away from her friends in order to get them to play nice). Self worth appears to be a theme amongst Bandits, who are in the symbolic sense outlaws from the framework by whose metrics most derive validation. In Rogues this tends to be a more conventional lack of self worth often resulting in an impulse to please others in order to be validated externally, while Thieves tend to erect a rather shallow front of self-aggrandizement in its place and hope to fake it 'till they make it.

Destroyers

Princes and Bards destroy, corrupt and undo their Aspect. They perceive the Force at their side either as an eldritch beast to be annihilated or a cataclysmic tool to be aimed by them. The active Prince lays waste like a vengeful general dictating the blast-direction (Dirk's neurotic self-splintering, Eridan's quest against the angels and Feferi, Kurloz' messianic crusade). The passive Bard on the other hand opens the floodgates as a matter of course and carries themself unbothered by the consequences of their actions (Gamzee's worship of LE, Cronus' greaser-dom and shirking of his "destiny"). Destroyers seem to share a theme of frustration, of a nagging dissatisfaction at the base of their brainstem. Bards tend to reshuffle their posture, try to get out of the way of the discomfort's origin, while Princes lock their cross-hairs on it and keep firing even if the target does not budge.

Okay, but aren't there like Moons?

Well aren't you observant. Yes, Lunar Sway. There are indeed not just 144 types in this system, but a whopping 288, since we have one attribute yet to apply. People of any Classpect are either Derse (purple) or Prospit (yellow) aligned. While all the stuff we talked about before is a bit too subtle and complex for a quiz, this is a largely independent binary, and the Extended Zodiac is very good at accurately judging Lunar Sway. The alignment speaks to a sort of foundational disposition and way of viewing the world. Neutral or split sway does occur, though it is relatively rare. The leaning of a person may be subtle, and they do not have to match all criteria. It's a spectrum, and many prefer "Derse-leaning"/ "Prospit-leaning".

Prospit

Those swayed by Prospit tend to have their focus outside of themselves, paying attentive mind to the world around them and measuring themselves by its standards. They know where they stand and this allows them to take their steps with confidence, intuiting where they need to go and swerving if something's in their way. Their default position is to trust people, though most aren't so naive as to be burnt twice. This open and often easygoing approach tends to make them rather sociable. Their default temper tends to be relaxed, only reactively kicking into gear. While they are certainly capable of thinking things through all the way, they will usually consider this to be an unnecessary and often pointless effort. They would rather figure things out as they go, when they actually have all the facts to work with.

Derse

Those swayed by Derse tend to have their focus firmly inside of themselves, they are masters of second-guessing their own actions and may lose the world out of sight at times. This world, incidentally, is to be measured by their standards, and they may just judge it insufficient. The children of Derse are rebellious and hard-headed. They would rather break through the obstacle even if doing so is more effort. By default they are distrustful and sceptical of most anything and their faith must be hard won by those who seek it. Thus they are more likely to be introverted, which only gives them more time to stew with their thoughts, drawing out plans and stratagems for situations which might never arise. Pre-acting rather than reacting. Their default temper is to be ever so slightly on edge, and the things which happen to them tend to immediately be classified as either good or bad.

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Notes

Pattern Recognition

The best way to learn Classpecting is to look at characters with a common Aspect, but especially with a common Class and figuring out which vibes and affects they share. This is not a complete guide of what the Classes entail, but rather it is meant to provide anchors. Bright-spots to lock on to and aid in navigation until the difficult-to-put-into-words subtleties come into view. The additional examples provided (and there are more at the end) are supposed to make that transition easier and allow the mental pattern-matching to click into gear. The best way to get good at Classpecting (as with everything) is to do Classpecting, building upon your mental catalogue and honing your typological faculties. The true answer to "What is a Sylph" is and should be "I know one when I see one", so the purpose of this document is to give you a few lenses you might want to work with. You'll still have to look carefully, allow your focus to adjust, and at the start you might have to squint your eyes a little until the pattern resolves.

Gender Relics

There is a tendency in Classpecting circles to type female Princes as Thieves and vice versa as well as to type male Maids as Heirs and vice versa. Princes and Thieves both tend to be rather intense personalities, though Thieves are usually much more bombastic. They are both very active and have a shared, not-entirely-unwarranted reputation of being sort of dangerous. The difference between the two is vast though, once one picks up on it. Thieves seek rivals and challenges while Princes are annoyed by them. A Prince will take the helicopter ride up to the top of the mountain when it is offered because it is the pragmatic solution and they feel like they should be up there. They feel entitled to be up there. The Thief will refuse because they want to prove that they can climb the mountain.

Maids and Heirs aren't even all that similar apart from the fact that they are relatively passive and have highly cooperative relationships to their Aspect. I can't see the logic behind this one, so I have a hard time giving counter-tools. A good first step is to look at John/June and Jane again and realize that they fill very different archetypes beyond their gender presentation. Maids will usually have an active veneration for the force of their Aspect, Heirs will usually not. Heirs have a profound air (hah!) of naturality and made-for-this-ness about them when dealing in the domain of Aspect, Maids will usually not. Maids will seem like they have much more of a purpose driving them.

"Opposites"

If there are truly opposite Classes, then Classes with inverse activity-passivity and reserve engagement hierarchies seem like they best fit the bill. This would yield the following pairs:

Prince-Sylph	Thief-Maid	Page-Seer	Mage-Heir	Knight-Rogue	Witch-Bard

Pseudo-Classes

It is commonly believed that people occasionally act out a Class which is not their default. The most prevalent flavours of this are the unconscious imitation/role-playing of a childhood-influence (often a parent), the performance of a socially imposed role, and Class-Inversion, which occurs when a person interacts with the twin of their normal Aspect (which is relatively common for reasons we have previously discussed, but occurs especially in moments of intense emotional stress). The usual theory goes that they then also inhabit the active-passive twin-Class within their pair. This idea is occasionally useful, though I don't think it works for most characters.

I like the following explanation for this phenomenon: People have a mode of interaction with every Aspect, since in some situation they will have to interact with every Aspect. People are usually only well versed in one or two secondary Aspects, which lag far behind their default. When people are forced (due to intense emotional load or similar) into the regime of a non native Aspect, they may also assume a different Class, which is their designated mode of interaction with that Aspect. Which Class this is is idiosyncratic, and may or may not represent the twin of their default Class.

Does your will matter?

The universe of Homestuck is highly agentically deterministic. Things happen because they need to happen by the will of Sburb, a narrator or a deity. Because of this, the camp which sees Classpects as more strongly bound to one's narrative-role than one's personal disposition are not altogether unjustified. The canonical characters indeed only have their titles because those are the titles the narrative needed them to have. The universe is largely controlled by the rampantly misogynistic and gender-essentialist Lord English, so even the assumption that Classes are in-comic gender-exclusive is not without reason. I would merely add that the personal dispositions of characters are *also* bound by these same constraints. We do not live in Homestuck, so even if LE might not allow for the sort of personality profile that betokens a female Prince, reality might. There is no principled argument to be made about the way a system extends beyond the domain over which it is defined. Both approaches (the narratively-determinist and the character-driven one) are valid, and I have thrown my lot in with the latter simply because it is more interesting to talk about.

Stability

Classpects seem to be highly stable. They are not unalterable, and sufficiently incisive life-events (or very long timespans) can bring such a flip about. People are malleable, but Classpect seems to be astoundingly solid on the scale of a decade. If a change does occur, it usually does so by way of a Pseudo-Class, which had previously germinated in specific interactions, taking over.

Limitations

"Who the fuck are these people/characters?!", I hear you ask as you boggle vacantly at the Classpect-example chart on the following page of this document, and let me tell you: I tried. I really tried to limit myself to well known figures, but on the quest for 144 genuinely good examples anyone would have to scrape the bottom of the relevance-barrel eventually and I bear the additional handicap of simply not being super cued in to popular media. Still, all of them should at least have Wiki- or TV-tropes pages, so there's that. I would apologize for the inconvenience if you weren't so massively indebted to me.

Some of the chosen examples aren't exactly role-models of course, but sharing a Classpect with one of these figures does not mean that you can't be one. Any type has the potential for good and evil, for success and for failure. My primary goal was to showcase characters and people who are both *illustrative* and at the very least *interesting*. I would personally be much more upset if I were represented by a boring figure than by a morally dubious one, though if you feel differently and suffered this fate, I am very sorry.

Examples

	Breath	Life	Light	Time	Heart	Rage	Blood	Doom	Void	Space	Mind	Hope
Page	Mitya Karamazov *The Brothers Karamazov*	Earl Hickey *My Name is Earl*	Bobby Newmark *Neuromancer Trilogy*	Naota Nandaba *FLCL*	Steven Universe *Steven Universe*		Jacob Black *Twilight Saga*	George Lass *Dead like me*		Kyr Fiore *Thrilling Intent*	Scott Pilgrim *Scott Pilgrim*	Usagi Tsukino *Sailor Moon*
	Chise Hatori *The Ancient Magus' Bride*	Christopher Moltisanti *The Sopranos*	Hitori Gotou *Bocchi the Rock!*			Shinji Ikari *Neon Genesis Evangelion*	Nagata Kabi *Writer / Artist*	Mamimi Samejima *FLCL*	Michael Tate *Greater Boston*			Mae Borowski *Night in the Woods*
Heir	Theo *Celeste*	Phoenica Fleecity XV *Epithet Erased*		The Doctor *Doctor Who*	Serra Ashur *Of The Devil*		Giovanni Potage *Epithet Erased*		Dimitri Stamatis *Greater Boston*	Luz Noceda *The Owl House*	L *Death Note*	John Dorian *Scrubs*
	Gregg *Night in the Woods*	Ned Stark *Game of Thrones*	Tiffany Aching *Discworld Saga*	Jed Martin *La Carte et le Territoire*	Mikado Ryuugamine *Durarara!!*	Howard Beale *Network*	Paul Atreides *Dune*	Molly Blyndeff *Epithet Erased*	Owen *I saw the TV glow*	Will Navidson *House of Leaves*	Mars Mattias *The Honeys*	Orpheus *Hadestown*
Seer	Diogenes *Philosopher*	Jane Austen *Writer*	Ana Thurmond *Unsong*		R.D. Laing *Psychiatrist*	Jennifer Melfi *The Sopranos*		Anathema Device *Good Omens*		Heinrich Faust *Faust*	Harrier Du Bois *Disco Elysium*	Apollo Mojave *Terra Ignota*
			Jonathan Sims *The Magnus Archives*	Nick Land* *Philosopher*		Harrowhark Nonagesimus *The Locked Tomb*	Samuel Vimes *Discworld Saga*	Angus *Night in the Woods*	Raleigh *Lost at Sea*	Zampanò *House of Leaves*	Esme Weatherwax *Discworld Saga*	Hubert Etcetera *Walkaway*
Mage		Edward Cullen *Twilight Saga*	Hal Incandenza *Infinite Jest*		Kira Miki *VA-11 Hall-A*	Mycroft Canner *Terra Ignota*	Gala *Coffee Talk*	Jet Black *Cowboy Bebop*	Tom Navidson *House of Leaves*	Peri *The Far Meridian*	Tyrone Slothrop *Gravity's Rainbow*	Asgore *Undertale*
	Uncle Iro *Avatar the last Airbender*	Bea *Night in the Woods*		Mark Fisher *Cultural Theorist*	Kafka Tamura *Kafka on the Shore*	Thomas Ligotti *Writer*	Anthony Soprano *The Sopranos*	Vanya Karamazov *The Brothers Karamazov*	H.P. Lovecraft* *Writer*	The Pie-maker *Pushing Daisies*	Beth Harmon *The Queen's Gambit*	Alison Green *Strong Female Protagonist*
Sylph		Bryar Kosala *Terra Ignota*		Leon Stamatis *Greater Boston*	Breq Mianaai *Imperial Radch*		Joculine *Psycholonials*	Minarobe *Aniara*	Jill Stingray *VA-11 Hall-A*		Avril Incandenza *Infinite Jest*	Jean-Luc Picard *Star Trek*
	Michel Foucault *Philosopher*	Albus Dumbledore *Harry Potter*	Guinan *Star Trek*	Homura Akemi *Puella Magi Madoka Magica*	Nana Osaki *NANA*	Light Yagami *Death Note*	Saul D. Alinsky *Organizer*	Death *Discworld Saga*	Claude Sylvanshine *The Pale King*	Lain Iwakura *Serial Experiments Lain*	Mel Medrada *Arcane*	Taylor "Skitter" Hebert *Worm*
Witch	Howl Pendragon *Howl's Moving Castle*		Cayce Pollard *Pattern Recognition*	Toni Ware *The Pale King*	Disjointed *Walkaway*	Perry Cox *Scrubs*	Misato Katsuragi *Neon Genesis Evangelion*	Tara Lynn Cooper *Strong Female Protagonist*		Lexi Howard *Euphoria*	Kathryn Janeway *Star Trek*	Judy Hale *Dead to Me*
	Maddy *I saw the TV glow*	Persephone *Hadestown*	Haruhi Suzumiya *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya*	Case *Neuromancer Trilogy*		Pelafina *House of Leaves*	Cameron Poe *Con Air*	Kaworu *Neon Genesis Evangelion*	Joelle van Dyne *Infinite Jest*	Ramsey Murdoch *Epithet Erased*		Utena Tenjou *Revolutionary Girl Utena*
Maid		Toriel *Undertale*		Limpopo *Walkaway*	Data *Star Trek*	Daenerys Targaryen *Game of Thrones*	Adora *She-Ra and the Princess of Power*		Germ Warfare *Night in the Woods*	Gilles Deleuze *Philosopher*	Percy King *Epithet Erased*	Mabel Pines *Gravity Falls*
	Aesling *Thrilling Intent*	Byung-Chul Han *Philosopher*	Nica Stamatis *Greater Boston*	Palamedes Sextus *The Locked Tomb*	Felix Faust *Terra Ignota*	Rachel Goldberg *UnREAL*	David Jacobs *Newsies*	Franz Kafka *Writer*	Spike Spiegel *Cowboy Bebop*	David Ashur *Of The Devil*		Alyosha Karamazov *The Brothers Karamazov*
Knight	Eurydice *Hadestown*	Michael Bluth *Arrested Development*		Rei Hino *Sailor Moon*	Rei Ayanami *Neon Genesis Evangelion*	Shizuou Heiwajima *Durarara!!*	Undyne *Undertale*		Emerson Cod *Pushing Daisies*	Erika Karisawa *Durarara!!*	Keisha [The Narrator] *Alice isn't Dead*	Gideon Nav *The Locked Tomb*
		Cassandra *Tangled*	Dipper Pines *Gravity Falls*	Cal Jacobs *Euphoria*	Trixie Roughhouse *Epithet Erased*	Farah Reyes *Of The Devil*	Vander *Arcane*	Bella Swan *Twilight Saga*	Bruce Wayne *Batman*		"Irrelevant" Chris Fogle *The Pale King*	Madeline *Celeste*
Prince	Heinrich Heine *Poet*	Emily Bespin *Greater Boston*	Damian Adare *My Sweet Audrina*	Hades *Hadestown*		Raoul Duke *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*	Regina George *Mean Girls*	Jordan Peterson* *Psychologist*	Tatsuhiro Satou *Welcome to the NHK*	Lorelai Blyndeff *Epithet Erased*	Aaron Smith-Teller *Unsong*	Martha *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*
	Hyde *Coffee Talk*		Gregory House *House M.D.*	Seivarden Vendaai *Imperial Radch*	Dorian Gray *The Picture of Dorian Gray*	Zhen *Psycholonials*				James Incandenza *Infinite Jest*	Izaya Orihara *Durarara!!*	Maximilien Robespierre *French Revolutionary*
Bard	Rick Shades *Epithet Erased*	William Foster *Falling Down*	Okabe Rintarou *Steins;Gate*	The Dude *The Big Lebowski*		Fyodor Karamazov *The Brothers Karamazov*	Missy *Doctor Who*	Rue Bennett *Euphoria*	Markus Velafi *Thrilling Intent*	James Joyce *Writer*	Dirk Gently *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*	Lindsay Bluth Fünke *Arrested Development*
	Edalyn Clawthorne *The Owl House*	Tatsu *Gokushufudou*	Johnny Truant *House of Leaves*		Meursault *L'Étranger*	J.G. Ballard *Writer*	Aristophanes *Playwrite*	Sans *Undertale*	George *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*			Søren Kierkegaard *Philosopher*
Thief	Chloe Price *Life is Strange*	Cersei Lannister *Game of Thrones*	Asuka Langley Soryu *Neon Genesis Evangelion*		Charles Kinbote *Pale Fire*	Jinx *Arcane*	Madame *Terra Ignota*	Thistle *Alice isn't Dead*	Ianthe Tridentarius *The Locked Tomb*			Kamina *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*
	Faye Valentine *Cowboy Bebop*		Quinn King *UnREAL*	Diana Christensen *Network*	Haruhara Haruko *FLCL*	Princess Azula *Avatar the last Airbender*	Catra *She-Ra and the Princess of Power*	Evangeline Morgan *Of The Devil*	Stan Pines *Gravity Falls*	Neal Caffrey *White Collar*	Petyr Baelish *Game of Thrones*	
Rogue	Sissel *Ghost Trick*	9A *Terra Ignota*	Lisa "Tattletale" Wilbourn *Worm*	Sophie Hatter *Howl's Moving Castle*	William Riker *Star Trek*		Vi *Arcane*	Reki *Haibane Renmei*	Abby *Psycholonials*		Lieutenant Columbo *Columbo*	Gregor Heartway *Thrilling Intent*
	Iceweasel *Walkaway*	Celty Sturluson *Durarara!!*	Hunter S. Thompson *Writer*		Freya *Coffee Talk*	Mallory *Greater Boston*	Masaomi Kida *Durarara!!*	Max Caulfield *Life is Strange*	Audrina Adare *My Sweet Audrina*	Charlotte Linzer-Coolidge *Greater Boston*	Alice Cullen *Twilight Saga*	Jack Kelly *Newsies*

* I **explicitly do not** support, condone, or even tolerate this person's politics in any way.
Absolutely fuck every single one of these guys.

__Epilogue__

And so we find ourselves at the end of this journey, or at least at an exit. I hope that you (being still here) got something out of it, and that I (no longer being here) managed to put this little project to rest. If you have acquired an interest in my opinions about Homestuck along the road, why don't you watch this video-essay in which I defend everyone's favourite divisive heroine Vriska Serket or read my fanfic Deicide and its Consequences? Or not. Up to you, though I would be thankful.

Best of luck, however you wish to proceed from here,

Goodbye.

-Ouroborista