

Department of Destandardization

Purpose: the neutralization of dangerous metaphysical concepts, procedures, and paradigms via the process of imposing collective cognitive decoherence.

Scope: possibly worldwide. No permanent offices.

Personnel: unclear, but probably less than 500 total. It is unclear how many members of the Department of Destandardization are fully human, in more than the strictest legal sense.

The great secret of our world is that there is no actual unified, universal system of rules and physical laws that define 'reality.' It's ad hoc consensus all the way down; and pretty much anything can be added to the mix, given enough willpower and force. Unfortunately, just because something can be jammed *into* reality's operating system doesn't mean it's going to *stay* there. Most of the really esoteric stuff can't, in fact. That's why magic and psionics and super-powers and Mad Science and the rest of it aren't universally practiced; it just takes too much energy

to make all of those things work everywhere, so Those Who Handle These Sorts Of Situations keep the usefully weird stuff bubbled off away from the rest of 'reality' so as to still get what benefits can be gotten.

All of this is not the problem, mind. The real problem is when a particular reality paradigm or even item cannot fit in with the rest of 'reality,' **and damages 'reality' in the process.** It's exceedingly rare that a damaging paradigm is worth taking apart and reassembling 'reality' around it (the last new paradigm that was deemed ultimately worth the effort was Newtonian physics), which means that the offending metaphysical interloper has to be excised and neutralized.

Thus, the Department of Destandardization. Their job, as noted above, is to make it impossible for dangerously incongruent ideas or paradigms to interact with 'reality' in any way (very much including any way that damages 'reality'). It's a little complicated to explain, but how the Department does this is by making anything associated with the incongruent items effectively imperceptible, insubstantial, and indescribable to anything else. If regular users of 'reality' can't perceive it, interact with it, or even articulate their past impressions of it, well: 'reality'

doesn't get damaged further, and that solves the problem nicely for the Department of Destandardization.

The horrific implications of this should be obvious, particularly for people who are inextricably linked with the offending paradigm being targeted. The Department does not casually decohere sapient lifeforms while neutralizing bad paradigms, for very sound ethical and pragmatic reasons. But it can happen, and if it does? Well, that's where the pragmatic reasons come into play. What one entity can esoterically do, another can esoterically undo -- particularly if the other entity has just been effectively condemned to become a sort of living ghost, cut off from all meaningful contact with the rest of the universe. And entities condemned to that sort of thing tend to be quite understandably aggrieved at what's happened to them.

Which means that straightening that out often requires an entire team. Preferably, one that can handle odd situations well, of course. Specialists won't really be helpful, here.

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