

WISDOM FROM THE WASTELANDS

Issue #4: New Races



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Even though some post-apocalyptic game worlds have only allowed Humans, mutants, mutant plants, and animals as characters, there has always been room to expand upon this. *Mutant Future* did an admirable job by introducing androids and other similarly "created" races but not enough to please many players and game masters. With that in mind, this issue of *Wisdom from the Wastelands* contains seven new "races" for players and GMs to use in their campaigns. Two are essentially mirror images of one another, while another brings in a group that was completely missed in the *Mutant Future* game.

These are general guidelines and are as such subject to the whims and moods of the GM. The GM can use as many or as few of the races presented here, as they stand or with his own modifications. Rules for dealing with robots are also included at the end of the article.

This publication is dedicated to providing useful information, game content, and ideas to players of modern, science fiction, and post-apocalyptic table-top and role-playing games in general and to fans of Goblinoid Games' *Mutant Future* RPG in particular. The rules contained herein are compatible with it and any others that use the "Basic" system introduced in the most popular role-playing games of the early 1970s and are easily adaptable to many other games (especially successor systems, to include those covered by the Open Game License).

Ancients

Whether through being caught in a bizarre time warp, being in suspended animation during the apocalypse, or dumb luck, there are members of the Ancient people who have found themselves in the mutant future. There are always players who want to play Ancients and this will give them a chance to do so.

Ancients are, for the most part, pure Humans. The pure Humans of the *Mutant Future* game, however, are the descendants of the Ancients and, even though they do not have mutations, benefit from the genetic modifications that made the Ancients the undisputed masters of the world before it came crashing down around them.

Ancients do have several advantages over pure Humans but also suffer from distinct drawbacks as well.

When a GM allows a player to use an Ancient, they should come up with a good background story as to why and how the character is now in the radioactive future. Depending on how well the background is written up, the GM may award the player with a couple of technological items (but should be careful when doing so!).

Also, there is no reason that a player should not have



knowledge of what the world was like before the apocalypse. The GM and player should work together in helping "flesh out" the world of the past. Just because the character has certain memories and knowledge of the way things were before, however, does not mean this has to have a major impact on the campaign world. While the character might know the layout of a city like the back of his hand, for example, it will not help him much if that same city is nothing more than a huge crater whose glow can be seen for hundreds of miles even during the daytime!

Appearance: Ancients are pure Humans. They are generally taller, fitter, and more attractive than even those who have come from a long line of pure Human descendants.

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Ancients never have to worry about AI recognition. If the GM allows, a player may opt to have an Exotic look for his Ancient (*see below*). If that is the case, the player is not allowed to take any extra “mutations” (*see below*).

Hit Dice: 1d8 per point of Constitution.

Mutations: Ancients are allowed to take 1d3 non-defect physical mutations, subject to approval by the GM. These are not actually mutations per se but are instead cyberware or “inserts” that give their users an edge. Radical mutations should not, in any event, be allowed. Ancients cannot gain mutations throughout the game, with the exception of certain drugs, technological devices, or parasite mutations.

Note that the cyberware or inserts can be harmed by certain types of attacks, such as EMP, electrical, or energy. The GM will have to decide if and when the enhancements are subject to attacks and if they can be repaired.

Statistic Modifiers: Like Pure Humans, Ancients are granted a bonus of +3 to Charisma, Intelligence and Constitution (although the Constitution score cannot exceed 18).

Bonuses/Drawbacks: Ancients do have several advantages that separate them from the rest of the world. First, they are familiar with technology and, when attempting to figure out an artifact, they gain a 30% bonus. Not every Ancient was a technician however, and they this do not gain any bonuses to repairing technology. Also, because medical healing drugs were tailor-made for them, they gain a +2 per dice bonus whenever they use any artifact drug or equipment that heals.

The downside is that, unlike their descendants, they have not grown up in a world that is filled with all manner of toxins and mutated diseases. As a result, they suffer a -4 to saving throws versus poisons and diseases and take +1 per dice extra damage from the effects of these.

Aquatics

An offshoot of Exotics (*see below*), Aquatics are Humans that have been genetically modified to thrive in watery environments. Unlike Exotics, who often have issues with AI recognition, robots, androids, and artificial intelligences recognize Aquatics as being Human and not as some strangely-shaped animals.



There are a couple of sub-varieties of the Aquatics, with several actually taking on a more bizarre or exotic appearance. The main two varieties, however, are those adapted to living and working in tropical and sub-tropical conditions, while a third variety was designed to live in temperate or even colder-water conditions.

Appearance: The only really visible differences in appearance between most Aquatics and normal Humans in their gills, which can be conveniently covered by a collar, and webbing between their fingers and toes.

In addition to gills, both the tropical and subtropical varieties have fingers and toes are slightly longer than most Humans, typically being about an inch lengthier, and these are fully webbed. Both these subspecies also have clear nictitating membranes that can cover the eyes and provide protection from the harsh water conditions that they encounter.

The third variety of Aquatics have a far more exotic appearance that can include blue skin or even scales, shark-like skin, or fur. Some even go as far as having natural weapons grafted into their genome, giving them deadly shark-like teeth or natural claws. This variety of Aquatic is subject to AI recognition, depending on just how obvious the change in appearance is.

Hit dice: 1d8 per point of Constitution. They are limited to a maximum of 18 Constitution.

Mutations: All variants gain *aberrant form (xenomorphism — webbed fingers and toes, nictitating membrane, gills)*. For those who choose to go exotic, the GM can allow up to two physical mutations that are for the most part cosmetic, *bizarre appearance* being the most common by far, with fur, *natural weapons* (although no toxic weapons), and *echolocation* being allowed. As usual, the GM has the final say in whatever mutations are taken by the player. Mental mutations are not allowed.

Movement: These mutants are natural-born swimmers and gain the swim movement trait 120' (40'). This is in addition to their regular movement rate.

Statistic modifiers: Physically, Aquatics are a little heartier than other Pure Humans and as such gain a +2 to their Constitution scores.

Body Masters

Mutants often outnumber the number of Humans and Pure Humans by a significant factor. With each generation that passes, some of these mutants further deviate from the human genome. Many of these mutants have begun specific breeding practices, trying to cull out drawbacks and undesirable traits.

Body Masters are an offshoot of the mutant Human race that has concentrated on breeding out mental mutations. They find that these mutations are a weakness and that only perfection of the body matters. The result is that they have far more physical mutations compared to mental mutations, and that their physical attributes tend to be higher than their mental attributes. Also, Body Masters are heartier when it comes to resisting physical damage, poisons, and disease.

Note that Body Masters are subject to AI recognition



Note that Body Masters are subject to AI recognition (see below), if that optional rule is used.

Appearance: Body Masters appear as Humans, but obvious physical mutations will set them apart from the rest of Humans and Pure Humans. Appearance varies greatly from individual-to-individual.

Hit Dice: 1d6 per point of Constitution.

Mutations: Body masters begin the game with 2d4 physical mutations and 1d4-2 mental mutations. Due to careful breeding, Body Masters have managed to do an admirable job of removing genetic drawbacks from their genome. As a result, when a drawback is rolled, the player is allowed a second roll, with a modifier equal to double the character's Constitution score subtracted from the roll, giving them a slight bonus to avoid gaining a defect.

For example, say a character has a Constitution score of 16. He rolls a 98 and thus would gain the *slow* mutant drawback. The GM has the character re-roll the mutation and this time he rolls a 68. The character subtracts 32 from the roll, making that 68 a 36 instead, giving the mutant *night vision* instead.

This reduces the number of drawback mutations the character will gain. This also applies when the character gains new mutations through game play. Note, however, that such characters still have an equal chance of gaining a mental mutation.

Statistic Modifiers: When the character is generated, the player is allowed to modify its physical attributes by up to 2 points each, but for whatever attributes they modify in this manner they must drop a mental statistic by the same amount. For example, say a character rolls 12 for strength, 9 for Constitution, and 14 for Dexterity. The player decides that he wishes to increase the character's Constitution and Dexterity by 2 points each, and must then reduce two of the three mental statistics.

Saving throws: Body Masters gain a +2 bonus to saves against poison, disease, and radiation, but suffer a -2 penalty to saves against death, stun and energy attacks.

Exotics

Before the final wars destroyed civilization, many of the richer nations' populations enjoyed the opportunity for body sculpting and a large subculture existed in which people would undergo permanent changes to their physical appearance (although they still retained their status as Pure Humans).

These exotics would often take the form of "furrries" or even fantasy creatures that were popular in the "pop culture" of the time.

Because these physical changes were done at a genetic level, and the genes were made to be dominant, they were passed down from parent to offspring. As a result, there are many "exotics" in the world that, even though they might appear to be mutants, are in fact Pure Humans.

Like Pure Humans, Exotics cannot gain mutations through gameplay.

The drawback is that they do have deal with robot recognition.

Appearance: The appearance of Exotics runs the entire gamut and can include anything from having deep blue skin, to fur, to scales, and even natural weapons or strange eyes. The physical appearance is entirely up to the player.

Hit Dice: 1d8 per point of Constitution, although they are limited to a maximum of 18 Constitution.

Mutations: Up to four physical mutations that are for the most part cosmetic, with *bizarre appearance* being the most common by far. Fur and *natural weapons* (although no toxic weapons), are allowed. The GM has the final say in whatever mutations are taken by the player. Mental mutations are not allowed.

Statistic modifiers: None.



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Humans, Regular

No one knows why or how — maybe they are missing some important genetic trait that was common in most pre-war humanity — but, if it was not for Regular Humans, mutated Humans would not exist.

Pure Humans were the “elite” of the human race. They had undergone extensive genetic modification to ensure that there was no chance of genetic mutation slipping into and corrupting the genome. This was done at the genetic level and, as such, the traits were passed down to their Pure Human offspring.

When the final wars nearly destroyed the planet, the majority of humanity in developed nations was of this Pure Human stock. Regular humans were still common in many of the poorer countries, however, and were still found doing menial labor and other such jobs in the richer countries.

Regular Humans function like Pure Humans in nearly every way and can benefit from medical equipment and drugs, as well as full AI recognition (*see below*). The difference is that they can be mutated when exposed to radiation or mutagenic toxins.

Appearance: Humans look like modern people.

Hit Dice: 1d8 per point of Constitution until a mutation is gained, then the hit dice drop to 1d6 (and a subsequent drop in hit points of 1 per point of Constitution occurs). Their Constitution score is limited to 18 as well.

Mutations: None (*but mutations can be gained through play; see above*).

Statistic modifiers: Regular Humans receive a +1 bonus to Charisma, Intelligence, and Constitution



Insectoids

Insects outnumber all life on Earth, other than plants, by an uncounted factor. Even though many species were wiped out during the apocalypse, many more survived and, due to the fact that most insects have a short lifespan (and short time between generations), many thrived and mutated in the radioactive and toxic wastes of the new world.

Because of the sheer number of insect life forms that cover the entire planet, there is no reason that they should not be used as player characters. When creating an Insectoid, the GM and the player need to work together to come up with the type of insect and any advantages or disadvantages it might have. This entry covers some generic advantages and disadvantages when it comes to playing a member of this “race” and covers other types of insects such as arachnids, centipedes, and the like. Essentially, anything that is creepy crawly.

An Insectoid is considered to be man-sized, although the GM can allow them to be bigger or smaller. Also take into account that the character should have a near-human lifespan (playing a bug that dies in 24 hours would not be all that much fun, after all).

Appearance: It’s a bug! The player should decide what type of insect he is playing. All insects are subject to AI recognition if this option is used (*see below*).

Hit Dice: 1d6 per point of Constitution.

Mutations: 1d3 physical mutations and 1d4 mental mutations. The GM and player can choose two mutations from the following list of mutations that they will gain automatically: *aberrant form (natural weapon)*, *chameleon epidermis*, *complete wing development*, *natural armor*, *toxic weapon*.

Statistic Modifiers: Insectoids are immensely strong, but their intellect is quite strange to most of the other life forms on the planet. As a result, they gain a +3 bonus to Strength and a +2 bonus to Willpower (as their minds tend to be very alien), but a -3 to intelligence and charisma.

Save Modifiers: All insects gain a +3 bonus on saving throws against radiation.

Mind Masters

Mind Masters are an offshoot of the mutant Human race that has concentrated on gaining as many mental mutations as possible through breeding (just as Body Masters have done with physical mutations). They often seek out those with powerful minds to potentially add to their gene pool, increasing the mental powers with each generation. The result is that they have achieved superior intellect but often have weakened physiques, something that many Mind Masters consider to be a fair tradeoff.

The result of all this is that Mind Masters have far more mental mutations than physical mutations, and their mental attributes tend to be higher than their physical attributes. The drawback is that they are not as physically sturdy as other mutants, and as a result have fewer hit points and tend to have more difficulty in defending against natural toxins and the like, but have better resistances against mental

attacks, stun, and the like.

Appearance: Because most mental mutations do not alter the mutant's physical appearance, a great many of Mind Masters appear as Human or Pure Human. Those who do possess obvious physical mutations, however, are clearly marked as mutants.

Hit Dice: 1d4 per point of Constitution.

Mutations: Mind Masters begin the game with 2d4+2 mental mutations and 1d4-2 physical mutations. Due to careful breeding, Mind Masters have managed to do an admirable job of removing genetic drawbacks from their genome. As a result, when a drawback is rolled, the player is allowed a second roll, with a modifier equal to the character's Willpower score subtracted from the roll, giving them a slight bonus to avoid gaining a defect.

For example, say a character has a Willpower score of 16. He rolls an 86 and thus would gain the *atrophied cerebellum* drawback. The GM has the character re-roll the mutation and this time he rolls a 68. The character subtracts 16 from the roll, making that 68 a 52 instead, giving him *mental barrier* instead.

This reduces the number of drawback mutations the character will gain and also applies when the character gains new mutations through game play. Note, however, that they still have an equal chance of gaining mental mutations.

Statistic Modifiers: When the character is generated, the player is allowed to modify its physical attributes by up to 2 points each, but for whatever attributes he modifies in this manner he must drop a mental statistic by the same amount. For example, if a character rolls 12 for Willpower, 9 for Intelligence, and 14 for Charisma, the player may decide that he wishes to increase their Willpower and Intelligence by 2 points each. The character then must reduce two of the three physical statistics.

Saving throws: Mind Masters gain a +2 bonus to saving throws against death, stun, and energy. They suffer, however, a -2 penalty to saves against poison, disease and radiation attacks.

Rules Option: AI Recognition

Programmed robots will generally speak to or acknowledge Humans. They will, however, ignore obvious non-Humans, considering them to be nothing more than pets, or possibly constructs, similar to themselves. This also applies to sentient plants and full animals.

Of course, unless a character is carrying ID that a robot will recognize and acknowledge, the robot will not follow any orders given to it, but may speak to the character (if capable of doing so), answer questions, etc.

Robots or installations with AI capability will be able to interact with mutant Humans, plants, animals, and the like and will be able to determine the sentience of such a creature. They might, however, treat mutants or other non-Humans with disdain, perhaps as if they are little more than curiosities. Of course, a mutant carrying a proper identification will be obeyed, no matter what the robot thinks.

To determine if a robotic unit will interact with a mutant



character, roll 2d6. A Pure Human will always be recognized, but each obvious mutation reduces the chance of recognition. The modifier is based on the mutation itself:

AI Recognition Table

Mutation	Modifier
<i>Aberrant Form</i>	+4
<i>Chameleon Epidermis</i>	+1
<i>Complete Wing Development</i>	+4
<i>Dermal Poison Slime</i>	+1
<i>Dual Headed</i>	+4
<i>Dwarfism</i>	+1
<i>Gigantism</i>	+2
<i>Natural Armor</i>	+3
<i>Prehensile Tail</i>	+1
<i>Spiny Growth</i>	+2
<i>Toxic Weapon</i>	+2
<i>Albinism (drawback)</i>	+1
<i>Bizarre Appearance</i>	+1 to +4
<i>Simian Deformity</i>	+4

If the roll is less than or equal to the robot recognition target number then the AI will respond to the character in a desirable way. For example, because a character with *albinism* has a +1 to the roll, it would have to roll an 11 or less for the robot to treat it as Human. And if a character has the *dual headed* mutation (+4) and a *prehensile tail* (+1), it would have to roll six or less on 2d6 to be treated as Human.

If the roll fails, the robot will ignore the character, unless the character attacks it, then the robot will defend itself or attempt to summon aid.

Note that a roll is not required if the character presents the correct identification card.

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