

TRINITY CONTINUUM:

AEON



EVERY AGE HAS ITS HEROES

TRINITY CONTINUUM:

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UNITY: A TALE OF THE AËON TRINITY

By Leath Sheales

The room beyond the open door was minimalist, but spoke volumes about Nippon. The desk to the left appeared to be molded from a single piece of unknown material. Its writing surface was washed gently with images of waves against the shores of the Home Islands. To the right was a couch and two single lounges, all arranged around a low coffee table that appeared to be a younger sibling of the desk. The desk and the lounge setting were arranged facing each other, with the entrance on one side and window on the other. The man who inhabited the office could easily turn his head to see the UN building's inspiring view of Olympus and upward to the sky where Earth glittered like a multi-hued jewel. He could stare straight ahead, ordering the wall to transform into a single massive vidscreen to show whatever he wanted. Or he could see who was entering his sanctum, as he was doing now.

Amina, rather than entering, was staring at his personal assistant who was standing beside the doorway, gesturing her through. She studied the assistant's face carefully, leaning in close for detail. The assistant stared back at Amina with a pleasantly neutral expression. She took no offense at the scrutiny; part of her purpose was to invite it. The man in the office also took no offense but did shift slightly with impatience. Amina saw this from the corner of her eye and took the hint. She walked through the doorway, moving to the lounges; the man gestured for her to sit and stood from his desk to join her.

"Nakamura-san, my name is Amina Buhari," she introduced herself as they both sat. Her voice was smooth, her expression and body language indicating appreciation but not subservience. This was a meeting of equals, and Nakamura was slightly taken aback, though he quickly covered his surprise. "May I compliment you on the quality of your servant?" she said, steering the conversation into compliments and pleasantries, aiming to settle Nakamura but also keep him off balance at the shifting conversation. "I've rarely seen a robot so lifelike, especially the skin texture. The artificial pores and fine hairs are incredible."

"Thank you, Ms. Buhari," Nakamura replied, unsure exactly what was the purpose of their meeting. He stopped after this short sentence, letting the quiet of the office envelop them, aiming to take control of the conversation by forcing her to fill the silence.

Amina smiled, undeterred, as she prepared to completely unbalance him. "I'm from Æon, and I'm here to help."

•••••

Yamashita Sachi threw herself around the corridor's corner so quickly that she tracked wide and bounced off the opposite wall. The collision twisted her balance, forcing her to make several quick shuffling steps to keep from falling over. Her shoulder ached from the impact. Sachi grinned at the thudding pain down her arm and the increasing burning from her lungs. Pain meant life. She was still alive, despite the seemingly endless run of bad luck she'd experienced on this job.

Catching her balance had slowed her momentum. She didn't have time to rest — the clock ticked onward despite her success or failure — so she turned the scrabbling steps into purposeful bounds, driving her legs like pistons against the cold metal floor, forcing herself on.

Sachi had a small but powerful build. The combination of dense muscle and short limbs gave her natural leverage that she used mercilessly whenever opponents underestimated her. It also meant that she had to push twice as hard to outpace larger, leaner opponents.

Though she was physically fit — beyond fit — she panted as she ran. Her fitness came from growing up in the officially unpopulated sections of the Nippon arcology. She did what was needed to survive and avoided the authorities when they deigned to acknowledge these areas of the city existed at all. Her natural aptitude was greatly magnified after she escaped Nippon and was found by the Vitakinetic Order. The Prometheus Chamber transformed gifted humans into perfection.

The shoulder ache persisted, which told her she'd incurred a heavier injury than simple bruising. It would have been a moment's effort to know exactly how she was damaged, and probably not much more to repair it, but she didn't want to waste the time. Even before her training she would never bow to pain, refused to let it be her master.

She found the location she was searching for deep within the abandoned sections of Nippon. With her senses pushed beyond normal human limits, her keen eyes picked up traces of booted feet on the floor. She smelled faint traces of antiseptic chemicals and human sweat. The corridor ended in a hatchway guarded by a crablike, many-armed drone.

Sachi increased her speed and tackled the robot, using her momentum to tumble both and forcing a moment of confusion too difficult for the machine's

mind to calculate. Her right arm kept her body tight to the robot while her left grabbed a retractable cable protruding from the pocket on her thigh. She worked to shove the plug into the bot's hardware I/O port before it worked out enough to send a wireless distress call. She'd been trained in physical guerrilla hacking by some of the best Nihonjin outcasts food could bribe, and had practiced the art more times than anyone should. The crab kicked out, trying to regain control and knocking her hand out of the way, but she twisted and brought it down again, altering her grip and position to avoid being crushed under its chassis. She jammed the plug into the socket on the third try and slapped at the minicomputer in her pocket. The scramble code was uploaded in microseconds and the maintenance drone twitched and scabbled in pathetic machine distress as its brain dumped into an endless loop executing meaningless commands.

Sachi lay on the ground for a moment longer, allowing herself to breathe and smile at her success. Celebration was short lived; time was wasting and she heard the staccato march of reinforcements. Either the drone had managed a distress call or she hadn't lost her earlier pursuers as she'd thought. She rolled into a seated position and grabbed a miniature pry bar from another pocket. The bar made short work of the door's access panel and she had the minicomp's cable into the port before the panel clattered to the floor.



Amina waited patiently while the robotic assistant served tea. Nakamura wore an expression of forced calm, though flashes of extreme worry and anger crept through. Though she didn't make a show of it, Amina watched every micro-expression carefully. She was developing an understanding of the man, even in the silence.

Finally, the servant finished pouring and left, closing the door behind her. Nakamura couldn't completely mask the slight tremble as he took a sip from his cup.

"As I said, Ms. Buhari, I have no need of your assistance," he said. She heard the lie, and even the hint of desperation in his voice. He wanted her help, but he needed to be persuaded.

"Let us speak frankly, Mr. Nakamura," she said, her voice confident and reassuring, "We know that your daughter, Yuna, was kidnapped while vacationing in Makaro-Shima. We know that the

kidnappers told you not to contact anyone, and we know they forced you to use your position to pass hardtech designs to them." She paused and sipped at her tea.

Nakamura appeared dumbstruck, all stoicism and pretense of ignorance gone. "But," he said, "How?"

Amina shook her head slightly. "The how isn't important, Mr. Nakamura. What is important is that we also know that the kidnappers haven't honored their end of the deal, and have demanded more." Tears welled up in the man's eyes and he lowered his head, avoiding her gaze. Amina's expression showed sympathy and understanding. "I believe they've sent one of her hands as proof of their seriousness, yes?" She pushed at his emotional triggers. "That can be reattached, of course," she said. Nakamura looked up into her eyes, elements of anger mixed with his grief. "I understand your nation distrusts psions," she continued, "But Nipponese medicine is quite advanced. I assume your doctors have preserved it? If not, you also have other options that are remarkably lifelike." Amina kept watching Nakamura; his eyes strayed to the door where the robotic servant had retreated. "As I said, Æon wants to help. We will find your daughter, and return her to safety."

A tiny signal of hope penetrated the cocktail of confusing emotions Nakamura struggled to keep under control. "What do you need from me?" he asked. Amina smiled and nodded her head encouragingly. Everything about her said that they were partners in this, and that she and Nakamura had bridged the distrust for the greater good.

"First, tell me everything you can about the people who took Yuna."



Jack cast a critical eye over the room. This work was normally Sarah's job, but she had tasks elsewhere. Obtaining the information they needed had fallen to Jack, and he was doing what he did best — improvising.

He looked at the hooded man bound to the old-fashioned chair in the center of the basement room, and to the semicircle of holodisplays a few feet beyond. Jack kept the room dimly lit for his own benefit. His captive wore a blindfold that looked like a pair of antique aviator goggles. The biotech kept a firm seal around the eyes, to keep moisture out while wicking away tears that could

lead to condensation on the inner lens. Though originally made to help neutrals visualize the myriad energy wavelengths that suffused the world, they had another setting that Jack was using now. Complete blackout. Not even a stray photon could pierce the biotech/skin bond until Jack allowed it. When possible, Jack preferred to work in darkness. Bright lights just added a jumble of chaotic wavelengths that he had to filter out and ignore.

Jack moved around the room, adjusting the positions and angles of several screens once more. He went back to the man, pivoting left and right to check that the screens were precisely where he wanted them. Finally, Jack nodded his head, satisfied.

With the tiniest flicker of concentration, Jack tapped into the ever-present wireless signals and checked the time. He sighed. He needed the man to be awake for this. For a moment, Jack toyed with the idea of sparking tiny pulses into his amygdala to increase the chance of provoking weird, terrifying dreamscapes. He decided against it. He wasn't a torturer, although the man didn't need to know that.

The man jerked awake, moving his head in blind confusion and unconsciously testing his bonds before he even realized he was restrained. He tried to yell his distress, but only muffled grunts made it past the gag across his mouth. More biotech. Almost complete silence, and it monitored the captive's vitals to ensure he received enough oxygen.

"Hey, Mr. Williams, good morning," Jack said, though it was just past eight in the evening. Jack wanted to increase the man's confusion, the worry over what had happened in the lost hours would help cut his resistance. "Here's what's going to happen. I'm going to show you images, ask some questions, and you're going to do your best to answer them." More muffled attempts at speech. "No need to talk," Jack continued.

He stood close to Williams and placed his hand on the man's head. Williams tried to shake Jack's hand away, but his bonds held tight. Jack pursed his lips and frowned in concentration. "That's it," he murmured, "Just relax and this won't hurt a bit." Crawling sparks played across Jack's hand, jumping excitedly to Williams' scalp. Williams' hair stood from his head as it charged with static electricity.

Jack shifted his fingers and narrowed his eyes as he psionically pushed. He felt some resistance — unexpected, intriguing — and shoved. Williams grunted against the sudden alien feeling.

"Fighting makes it worse," Jack murmured. He gestured to the surrounding screens with his free hand and several flared to life. Garbled, static-filled signals filled them. They may have been people or places, but were too broken to tell. Jack saved them anyway for later analysis.

Jack tapped the biotech lenses, commanded them to project images. "Now," he said, "Recognize that place?" Williams saw a picture of his home, and several of the screens flared in recognition. Neural networks fired tiny electrical fireworks, racing across the brain. Jack's fingers picked up the faint pulses. He couldn't understand them — he wasn't a telepath — but he could translate mental impulse into electronic signal through his psi. Jack noted the positive response and adjusted his fingers for a clearer signal. "How about this?" The image changed to Williams' wife and children. Another positive, with more of the peripheral screens flashing with what Jack recognized as stress. "Good. Cooperate, and they'll be fine. If not," the images vanished from the lenses. More stress response.

"You and your associates like to kidnap people for money." Jack fed images through the lenses, too fast for Williams' conscious mind to register them all, but his subconscious surged with a mix of signals. He recognized some, but not all. "One of those people was a young woman from Makaro-Shima." Another image and recognition response.

"I want to know where she is," Jack said. The lenses rapid-flashed images of different cities. Jack watched for positive responses and homed in on suburbs and locales.

Williams struggled, trying to avoid giving away what he knew. The biotech lenses revealed Williams had closed his eyes. Jack curled his fingers and held Williams' hair uncomfortably tight. He resisted the urge to hurt the man. Though Jack hated Williams for what he did, kidnapping was as close as Jack would come to emulating him.

"I'm not in the mood for games, Williams," Jack hissed into his ear. With his free hand, he touched the lenses and surged a pulse through them. Williams' eyelids spasmed open and stayed that way. Painless, and temporary, but terrifying to someone whose knowledge of psions came from sensationalized OpNet dramas. "You've lost your blinking privileges," Jack whispered menacingly, "When your eyes dry out they'll itch so much you'll want to claw them from your sockets. Eventually, they'll shrivel and die from lack of moisture. If you're very, very good, I'll let you have eye drops when we're done."



Jack touched Williams' stomach and another pulse triggered intestinal contractions; Williams barely managed to stop from soiling himself. "If you're not good, you're really not going to enjoy the rest of your short life."

"Now, let's continue with location."

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"What did they want, Mr. Nakamura?" Amina asked, "What was so important that they kidnapped your daughter to force your compliance?"

Nakamura looked increasingly wretched. His façade of control had crumbled. He shook his head. "I don't know," he said. A lie, and one that Amina spotted easily.

"We often know more than we think," she said, not directly calling him on his deception, but pushing him nonetheless. "When you accessed the files, you must have seen something. Some clue, however small, of what they took."

"Maybe," he said, "Maybe it involved medical research, a device that worked at the cellular level, some kind of genetic induction therapy?"



Amina nodded, “That’s good, Mr. Nakamura, thank you.” She knew there was more information to be had, but she was patient. As upset as Nakamura was, he wasn’t a stupid man. He knew more than he was willing to say. Amina had time to work on him, to painstakingly draw the details out until she had the full picture.



Olivia stood at the computer terminal, mentally ticking through the instructions Sachi had provided, to access the command structures and take the

corrupted files she’d provided. Olivia had a basic knowledge of hardtech operating systems, but she lacked Sachi’s expertise. The display changed, as Sachi had said it would, and Olivia slotted the storage device into its socket. Though she faced the terminal, she wasn’t looking at it. Her head was cocked slightly to one side and her eyes were glazed with a faraway look. She straightened and backed away from the terminal.

A security guard opens the door, considering the control room. He thinks he heard something, and as far as he is aware, no one is scheduled to be working in here now. He can see most of the room from the doorway, and he can see one of the displays is active, running activity. He scans to the left of the room first, leaving his right side exposed.

Olivia pounced from the guard’s blind spot, grabbing his arm and dragging him into the room in a spinning motion designed to keep him off balance. As he stumbled, she hooked her leg behind his and pushed his chest, sending him crashing to the floor. She quickly turned and shut the door to muffle any noise that could warn others.

The guard lands heavily, still unsure what’s happening. Scrambling backwards, he grabs at the holstered pistol on his hip, drawing it and shooting at his unknown assailant’s back.

Olivia stepped to the right and ducked as the laser’s beam burned a small, circular hole into the door. She dropped her left knee and rolled back in the opposite direction. The rapid changes were quicker than the still-shocked guard could track. He burned two more holes in the walls before Olivia was on top of him, striking quickly at his throat. He dropped the gun and gasped for air as she slid around behind him, locking him in a choke hold and pushing his head forward with her body to increase the pressure. He fell unconscious within moments.

Four minutes and 38 seconds after the scuffle, a routine patrol discovers an unconscious body on the floor of the control room. The guards quickly place the facility on alert and corner the intruder. She’s injured, but captured alive. Eventually she breaks under interrogation and reveals what she knows. By the time anyone comes looking, the illegal aspects of the operation have moved to a different location.

The terminal chimed in completion as the files finished installing. Olivia grabbed the storage device and tucked it back into her pocket. She frowned and concentrated, sifting through the myriad potential futures, searching for the best outcome.

In four minutes and 38 seconds, a two-person patrol checks the control room. They miss the young woman who left the room minutes before, struggling to carry an unconscious guard in a fireman's lift. They continue their patrol. Though they give the nearby washroom a cursory glance, they don't think to check the cubicle farthest from the door where the woman holds the unconscious guard propped up on the toilet. They close the door and continue their circuit. The woman cuffs the guard with his own equipment and makes an impromptu gag from the torn sleeve of his shirt. When he is found an hour later, the woman has already escaped the building using the ceiling crawl space. The changes to the computer system aren't discovered until it is far too late.

Olivia sighed and grabbed the guard's arm, hoisting him up and lowering her shoulder to carry his heavy form. It was time to leave.

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Amina took a minicomputer from her bag and gestured to the wall. "May I?" she asked politely. Nakamura nodded, and her Agent connected to the display. She sent several images across, some showing an illicit hardtech production facility, others showing a young woman missing her right hand being helped into an ambulance.

"I don't understand," Nakamura said, tears welling in his eyes.

Amina brought up other photographs. "We believe you do, Mr. Nakamura. These show you meeting with the people who 'stole' your data. They were your business partners, were they not?" Nakamura shifted uncomfortably in his seat. He called for his assistant via cybernetic implant and was dismayed that she didn't respond.

"The Nippon police picked up on your scheme and started hunting for you, didn't they, Mr. Nakamura?" Amina continued. "You got cold feet, but your partners weren't willing to let you back out of the deal. They took Yuna, but it wasn't enough. How many body parts were you willing to let them take before you'd admit your fault and seek help?"

Amina stood as the door opened and UN police entered, arresting Nakamura for his part in the criminal conspiracy. His expression turned from shock to fury.

"You witch," he spat, "you read my mind, implanted information." He snarled, "Illegal search, nothing will stand up in court."

"I'm not a psion, Mr. Nakamura," Amina said with a sigh, "Not even a hint of latency. I took the test three times, to be sure. I'm as baseline as you, but I have been told I have a trustworthy face."

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"Come on, come on," Sachi muttered as the door resisted her hacking. The door had its own minor Satisfactory Intelligence that didn't want outsiders getting in — or insiders escaping. The SI's firewall and countermeasures pushed back hard. Sachi pumped everything she had at the command systems, peeling back layers of control code, smashing the sides of peripheral awareness subroutines, searching for some way in.

Frustrated, she grabbed her pry bar again and wedged it into the side of the door. She pushed hard, leveraging her entire body against it. She knew whatever additional security Nippon was going to throw at her would arrive soon. Metal screeched in protest and the door budged a fraction.

Sachi released the tension, took a breath, and flooded psi throughout her body. Bone density and muscle mass grew in seconds. Her skin rippled and bulged with the sudden increase. The fabric of her smart clothing resisted for a moment before relaxing fibers to meet new requirements.

She grabbed the pry bar and pushed again, this time her efforts reinforced by the subquantum universe. The door moved further, opening a small gap between hatch and frame. The pry bar snapped. Sachi dropped the useless metal and drove both her hands into the gap, grinding her teeth together and pushing herself beyond her known limits.

The first droid rounded the corner. It was an old police interface model and looked mostly human, except for the perfect neutrality of its facial expression and the cold, dead eyes that saw Sachi. The lighter unit was slightly faster than bulkier models, and it blocked the path of the two clearance-and-destruction units that tried to round the corner behind it. Its original programming could barely have taken this situation into account, and the modifications made by the criminals who acquired it had slowed its processes. It sought additional instructions and that bought Sachi a few valuable seconds.

The door finally gave, snapping open and surprising Sachi. Her additional force threw it open so hard that it slammed back against the wall, denting it and twisting its hinges.

Sachi ducked inside and saw the combination hospital/laboratory/prison beyond. Dozens of malnourished, mistreated people lay strapped on wheeled beds. Some were barely conscious from whatever drugs the IV lines attached to the beds flooded into them. Others were barely alive, having been repeatedly subjected to hideous experiments. Two android nurses patrolled the room, ensuring none of the test subjects died before every scrap of data had been gleaned. Every victim wore a psi-inhibiting collar, keeping them from using their abilities except as their captors demanded.

Rather than immediately rushing to help the victims, Sachi scanned the room carefully, trying to ignore the noise of the security robots as they reached the twisted doorway with lethal intent.

I'm here, do you have what you need? She shouted silently with her thoughts.

Incoming, Sarah's reply echoed inside Sachi's head.

With a sharp buzz, a glowing circle flared to life to her left, and through it another room became visible. Five people hurried through it. Sachi felt Sarah's mental link take hold and her brain processed the room from multiple angles, mingling her sensory input with the rest of her team's.

As soon as the team arrived, Sachi ignored everything else and rushed to the teleporter. Rahmat knew what she wanted through the psionic link and held his hands outstretched to take hers. Their subquantum signatures mingled as the two psions

combined their powers. To the Vitakinetic, each living template was distinct. To the teleporter, all space was one. Sachi pushed her healing through Rahmat and out into each victim at once. The effort was immensely draining, compounded by the reserves Sachi had spent opening the door. She slumped as her power faded, satisfied at the increased strength of life she could now feel within the room. Rahmat still held her hands — he needed the continued strength and sense of life — and steeled himself as he prepared to teleport everyone out and to safety.

The robots tried to react to the new situation, but Jack worked faster. Lightning exploded from his hands, forking and jumping from robot to robot, overheating and melting their circuits. The lighter units simply stopped, their servos locked up. Instant emulated rigor mortis. The combat models seized for a moment, but they were built to withstand such attacks and their artificial brains kicked in redundant pathways while they rebooted their primary functions. The backup functions couldn't keep Olivia at bay as she pressed the attack with pistol and taser in hand, not waiting to see the outcome of Jack's assault. She already knew.

Standing back from the violence, Amina reached out and took the hand of the nearest "patient."

"Who are you?" he asked, feeling stronger than he had in weeks. The air shimmered as Rahmat phased everyone out of the physical universe and translated them into subquantum particles.

"We're from Æon," Amina said as the room faded from view, "we're here to help."





INTRODUCTION

We are on a journey to keep an appointment with whatever we are.

— Gene Roddenberry

Trinity Continuum: Æon is a game of psychic, cinematic science-fiction adventure set in the vastness of the **Trinity Continuum**. It covers multiple timelines and accommodates many different genres of play. The one unifying feature is that in **Trinity Continuum: Æon** humanity has discovered a way to awaken certain individuals' latent psionic powers, transforming them into powerful psions.

This game requires the **Trinity Continuum Corebook** to play and builds on the Storypath system by adding rules for impressive psionic powers and advanced technology, including exotic noetic biotech that can bond with and enhance characters' powers. The **Trinity Continuum Corebook** allows you to play characters and craft heroic science-fiction adventures set in the present day. **Trinity Continuum: Æon** expands these possibilities — both into the future, and onto strange and distant worlds orbiting other suns, sometimes inhabited by alien intelligences.

The game is set in 2123, almost 20 years after a group of eight people learned to unlock their vast psychic potential. These individuals, known as proxies, employed the same technology to grant thousands of others these powers. The newly empowered individuals, called psions, now use their powers to protect Earth from the return of hostile superhumans, known as Aberrants, and to help humanity expand outward to the stars. Most psions work for one of the psi orders created by the proxies, while others either work for the powerful international organization known as the Æon Trinity or eschew any allegiances and hire themselves out as freelancers.

From this starting point, almost anything is possible. Psionic teleporters, and more recently, living Leviathan jump ships allow humanity to take its first steps towards exploring and colonizing the galaxy. **Trinity Continuum: Æon** is designed for

interstellar play styles ranging from awe-inspiring space opera where characters solve intergalactic mysteries that extend back hundreds of thousands of years, to military science fiction where humanity battles horrific and deadly creatures, to more localized, but equally exciting stories of settling alien worlds or making first contact with aliens who could become close allies or bitter foes, depending upon the characters' actions.

Trinity Continuum: Æon is also ideal for adventures on Earth and in the warrens of the vast lunar city of Olympus. The range of possibilities here is endless, with tones ranging from grim to idealistic. Opportunities for dystopian cyberpunk campaigns can be found in the United States, which is now the openly fascist FSA. Similarly, the corridors of the lower levels of Olympus are a perfect setting for futuristic crime dramas, and the Aberrant-destroyed ruins of France are ideal for post-apocalyptic adventures.

Players and Storyguides seeking more optimistic adventures also have many Earthly options. Storyguides can set social science-fiction campaigns focused on issues of freedom and power in China's prosperous, humane, but carefully controlled cities. They can also create scenarios involving transhumanist intrigue amidst the thriving arcologies and living cities of Sudamérica, or campaigns that mix social science fiction and space opera in the flourishing cities of a united Africa known as the UAN. Setting a campaign on Earth even offers the possibility of political science-fiction campaigns on and under Earth's oceans as floating and undersea cities struggle to cast off their prior allegiances and join Oceania, Earth's newest nation. While the potential scope of a **Trinity Continuum: Æon** campaign is vast, it's also possible to set an entire campaign in a single city or on one sparsely populated colony world.

HOPE, SACRIFICE, UNITY

Like all of the games set in the **Trinity Continuum**, the themes of Hope, Sacrifice, and Unity are an important part of the setting, with unity being the most important in this particular game. This is a setting

where humanity faces deadly threats, including horrific Aberrants, the hostile aliens known as Chromatics, and other less obvious but equally terrible dangers. To overcome these menaces, psions, Talents, and

unpowered neutrals must work with each other and seek alliances with the alien Qin and other species. A single psion possesses impressive psychic powers, but

a group of psions working together can expand and multiply their powers in ways impossible for even the most powerful individual to replicate.

HEROISM

Just as **Trinity Continuum: Æon** can be used to tell a wealth of different stories, it also allows for a multitude of different heroes. It is a setting where characters fight to defend their world from external threats, while also working to make it even better. You can play valiant explorers on Leviathan jump ships, heavily armored

infantry using psionic powers and futuristic weapons to fight Aberrant monsters, or tireless first responders who assist with disasters both on and off Earth. All of these characters and many more work to protect and defend their worlds from both external dangers and internal threats and injustices.

OPTIMISM

The overall assumption in **Trinity Continuum: Æon** is that humanity can triumph over obstacles and the future can be a better place than the past. In this setting, many problems that threaten our own world, like global climate change, energy shortages, and famine, are distant memories for almost everyone, but other problems remain, and new ones have arisen. Part of the optimism inherent in this era is the knowledge that while the world of the early 22nd century is far from perfect, dedicated heroes can improve it. Characters can fight the obvious threats of hostile aliens and returning Aberrants, and also attempt to solve more familiar menaces such as crime, official corruption, economic inequality, and natural disasters.

COMPETENCE

While players are free to play highly able Talents (see the **Trinity Continuum Corebook**, pp. 151-158), most characters are psions — individuals with latent psychic powers who gained active psychic powers

with the help of powerful devices called Prometheus Chambers. These powers in and of themselves do not define a character, but they give psions abilities that others lack — permitting them to fly, heal their own and others' wounds in an instant, read someone's deepest thoughts, or even alter their physical shape.

Psychic powers have a long history in science fiction. In most cases, these powers are used as evidence that humanity has untapped potential that individuals can learn to unleash. They permit humans to transcend the need for technology and to overcome the barriers separating them from one another, not merely barriers of language and culture, but even the barriers separating one mind from another. Perhaps most importantly of all, in **Trinity Continuum: Æon**, psions and their powers represent the future of humanity. Although only a small percentage of humans are latent psions whose powers can be unlocked in a Prometheus Chamber, humanity continues to evolve, and in time such powers may belong to everyone.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Welcome to the **Trinity Continuum: Æon**. This book is a supplement for the **Trinity Continuum Corebook** and requires it to use. **Trinity Continuum: Æon** provides complete information on the world of 2123 and all of the wonders it contains. It also includes rules for creating and playing psions, as well as a variety of advanced weapons and other devices.

CHAPTERS

Chapter One: History & Background provides a rough timeline extending from the present day to 2123, with a discussion of how and why the world changed during this time.

Chapter Two: Earth & Luna explains the current status of the various nations of this era, as well as

information on the new nation of Oceania and the huge lunar metropolis of Olympus.

Chapter Three: Space provides information about worlds beyond Earth and Luna that humanity has visited or colonized. This chapter includes information about human settlements within the solar system, and also descriptions of eight extrasolar colonies and settlements.

Chapter Four: Character Creation explains everything you need to create psions, neutrals, or Talents in **Trinity Continuum: Æon**. This chapter includes new Edges and six new Paths.

Chapter Five: Organizations gives detailed information about the major organizations available to characters in this setting, including the eight psi orders and the Æon Trinity. Paths for each of these organizations are also included here.

Chapter Six: New Rules provides rules for dealing with dangerous Quantum Flux, new rules for hostile environments, and information on handling hacking, surveillance, and counter surveillance in this high-tech era.

Chapter Seven: Psi Rules provides complete rules for the eight psionic Aptitudes that psions

have access to, as well as rules for psions working together to combine their Aptitudes.

Chapter Eight: Technology & Equipment describes the wondrous new technologies available in the early 22nd century, from advanced weapons, spacecraft, and robots, to exotic noetic biotech.

Chapter Nine: Storyguiding gives detailed suggestions for designing and running **Trinity Continuum: Æon** campaigns, including information about how style, mood, and location can work together and for using psions and Talents in the same campaign.

Chapter Ten: Opponents & Allies provides rules for using the various alien species as well as extensive rules for creating and using Aberrants, and examples of psion and neutral supporting characters.

Chapter Eleven: Setting Secrets reveals much of the secret history of the setting up to 2123, including the origin of the Prometheus Chambers and the truth about the Chitra Bhanu purge. This chapter also provides a rough history of the near future of the setting — if the characters don't decide to alter the course of these events, which they almost certainly will. If you are not a Storyguide planning to run this game, you might want to skip this chapter.

INSPIRATIONAL MEDIA

The following are suggestions for media that can help give Storyguides and players ideas for characters, stories, and the feel of various powers and aspects of the setting.

TELEVISION

Babylon 5: This five-season series is an excellent cinematic space opera that nicely balances gritty realism with a grandiose scale and galaxy changing events. Also, Earth's Psi Corps has a fair amount in common with the Ministry.

The Dead Zone: Based on a very different novel, the protagonist of this series is a powerful Clairsentient who learns both the advantages and problems of this particular ability.

The Tomorrow People (2013 version): Although it's set in the modern day with psychics who must hide their powers, this show does an excellent job of showing the potential of psychic powers.

NOVELS

Blue Remembered Earth, *On the Steel Breeze*, and *Poseidon's Wake* by Alastair Reynolds form an excellent trilogy about a highly advanced Earth that is utopian by modern standards, but still has important conflicts, and where humans are dealing with both ubiquitous surveillance and contact with advanced and potentially dangerous aliens.

Forerunner Foray by Andre Norton: Norton wrote many excellent novels involving psychic powers and space travel, but this is one of the best and one that foregrounds psychic powers the most.

The Touchstone Trilogy by Andrea K. Host: An excellent YA series where a young woman from Earth finds herself on a high-tech planet working with powerful psychics to defend their people from deadly monsters, some of whom may have once been human.

Change by Ann Maxwell: Maxwell wrote many wonderful novels about psychic powers, but this one is about humanity developing them, while being aided by psychic aliens.

The Pegasus series by Anne McCaffrey (*To Ride Pegasus*, *Pegasus in Flight*, and *Pegasus in Space*) and the subsequent The Tower and the Hive series (*The Rowan*, *Damia*, *Damia's Children*, *Lyon's Pride*, and *The Tower and the Hive*) are in many ways very similar to **Trinity Continuum: Æon**. In these novels, humanity learns about psychic powers, and eventually powerful teleporters allow humanity to travel to the stars and eventually make contact with aliens.

Childhood's End by Arthur C. Clarke: A brilliant classic involving aliens, psychic powers, and the future of humanity.

Psion, *Catspaw*, and *Dreamfall* by Joan D. Vinge: An excellent trilogy about psychics living in a high-tech, somewhat cyberpunk, interstellar setting where they must keep their powers hidden.

The Eclipse trilogy by John Shirley (*Eclipse*, *Eclipse Penumbra*, and *Eclipse Corona*) is more than 20 years old but remains a classic about revolution and fascism in a cyberpunk future.

Julian May's Galactic Milieu series (*Intervention*, *Jack the Bodiless*, *Diamond Mask*, and *Magnificat*) is all about humanity learning about psychic powers,

traveling to the stars, and joining a psychic confederation of aliens.

Stoneskin by K. B. Spengler: A wonderful novel about an interstellar setting tied together by people with a gift for teleportation.

Newton's Wake by Ken Macleod: Characters from a variety of cultures that came about in the wake of a horrific post-human disaster explore a network of teleport gates and discover a long-isolated colony world.

The Bohr Maker, *Deception Well*, and *Vast* by Linda Nagata: An excellent series set in a cosmos full of strange human colonies and unfathomable aliens.

Angel Station by Walter Jon Williams: Far future, schemes, deceptions, and adventure amidst first contact with biotech-using aliens.

VIDEO GAMES

Mass Effect 1, 2, 3, and **Andromeda**: This trilogy of games has a lot in common with **Trinity Continuum: Æon**, from ancient alien threats to biotic powers that are fairly similar to many psion powers.

GLOSSARY

Although many terms and jargon specific to this setting are defined elsewhere in this book; for ease of reference they are also included here.

Aberrant: Once-human creatures with unstable quantum powers who left the solar system in 2067 and returned to the solar system as hideously inhuman monsters in 2105. Prior to the Aberrant War, these beings were known as novas. See also: nova.

Aberrant War: The end of the Nova Age (see below), when a growing number of Aberrants began attacking humanity or fighting among themselves before departing for the stars after the Chinese Ultimatum (see below). This war lasted from 2056-2067.

Æon Trinity: A large and powerful worldwide aid and development organization that gained much of its renown and power when it helped humanity rebuild from the Aberrant War.

Æsculapian Order: An international emergency services organization focusing on disaster relief, search and rescue, and emergency medical services. They are also the psi order that controls the Vitakinesis Prometheus Chamber (see below) and

are based in both Zurich-Geneva, Switzerland and Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Aptitude: One of the eight different categories of psionic powers: biokinesis, clairsentience, electrokinesis, psychokinesis, quantakinesis, telepathy, teleportation, and vitakinesis. Every psion can only master a single Aptitude, depending upon which Prometheus Chamber they used.

aqua: A human who has been modified for living underwater. There are two types of aquas, amphibious humans known as “phibs” and fully aquatic humans that can breathe both air and water, known as “selkies.” See also: Oceania

Auxiliary Mode: Psions can gain a small amount of skill at Modes outside their psionic Aptitude.

Bharati Commonwealth: The official name of the Indian bloc, but used rarely by foreigners; “India” is still preferred. Includes present-day Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

Belt, the: Spacers’ slang for the Asteroid Belt.

biotech: Biological appliances; biotechnological devices, also called bioware and bioapps.

biokinesis: One of the eight psionic Aptitudes. It allows the psion to reshape their body in profound ways and to manipulate noetic biotechnology in powerful ways. Slang: Shifters

Blessure, la: French for “the wound,” the popular name for the portions of France and Belgium destroyed and poisoned by the Esperanza disaster (see below).

Chinese Ultimatum: The decree issued by China in 2067 that all Aberrants must immediately leave Earth or China’s orbital nuclear weapons platforms would begin bombarding Earth.

Chitra Bhanu: Originally a Vishnavi messianic term used to refer to the eradicated Bombay-based quantakinetic order that controlled the Quantakinesis Prometheus Chamber.

Chromatics: Mysterious and hostile aliens that first attacked Karroo Station and recently attacked Earth.

clairsentience: One of the eight psionic Aptitudes. It allows the psion to see the past, the future, and distant locations. Slang: Clears, seers.

Coalition Ark: A vast hardtech alien spacecraft more than 70 kilometers long, which is traveling near the speed of light and is on a course for the solar system. This ship seems to be inhabited by hostile aliens.

Corruption: The subatomic degradation of both living beings and inanimate objects caused by Aberrants misusing or possessing inherently warped Quantum powers. Often mistaken for and used as a slang term for Quantum Flux (see Quantum Flux).

electrokinesis: One of the eight psionic Aptitudes. It allows the psion to control bioelectricity, light, and technological devices. Slang: EK, zapper

Esperanza Disaster: In 2120, Aberrants attacked the large EU space station *Esperanza* and caused it to crash near Paris, turning much of France and Belgium into radioactive disaster areas and Quantum Flux Zones (see below) which remain mostly lawless.

FSA: The Federated States of America, a repressive regime consisting of the former nations of Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Created by a military and corporate takeover of the United States during the Aberrant War, the FSA then conquered Mexico and then Canada.

FSM: The Federated States Military, the FSA’s well-armed and politically powerful military. The FSA spends a greater percentage of its national wealth on the military than any other nation.

grav crystals: Nova age technology that can create stable artificial gravity over large areas.

holodisplay: Holographic 3D displays where the images appear to float in the air. Holodisplays have replaced vidscreens in many applications, and almost all minicomps have small holodisplays.

holosim: Games where the player or players are immersed in a holographic environment. Home holosim rooms are a common sign of middle-class affluence.

ISRA: The Interplanetary School of Research and Advancement. ISRA is both the psi order based in Olympus on Luna, which controls the Clairsentience Prometheus Chamber and also a growing religious movement with more than half a million members.

Joe Hologram: An everyday person — the average citizen. While the slang term survives, the computer agent from which it originated has long since fallen into obscurity.

jump rings: A small but growing network of expensive and complex bioware devices that can teleport people between major cities anywhere on Earth and Luna. There are jump rings in Beijing, Chicago, Jomo Kenyatta, Mumbai Sao Paulo, Sydney, and Olympus on Luna.

Khantze Lu Ge: “Castle in the Sky;” China’s Alpha Centauri Colony (the Chinese refer to it as Kongzhong Lou Ge).

latent: A human with the potential to become a psion. Fewer than one in 10,000 people are believed to be latents. Most latents can become any of the more common types of psion — biokinetics, clairsentients, electrokinetics, psychokinetics, telepaths, or vitakinetics. However, both quantakinesis and teleportation require a more powerful latency that is relatively rare. See also: Prometheus Chamber.

Legions, the: A semi-independent division of the UN military force dedicated to protecting humanity from external threats, including Aberrants. Consisting of seven brigades, the Legions are also the psi order based in Australia, which controls the Psychokinesis Prometheus Chamber.

Leviathan Jump Ship: The kilometer-and-a-half-long biotech starships built to return humanity to the stars after all teleporters left Earth. There is growing evidence that these starships are conscious, intelligent creatures.

LP: Pronounced “lep,” a common slang for “less prosperous nation,” referring to nations like Russia, Ukraine, and the FSA.

maker: 3D printers that produce most consumer goods.

matrix: The living vats used to produce biotech devices.

metacorporation: Term for large international (and occasionally interplanetary) corporations in the 22nd century. The status of metacorporations varies wildly between nations.

minicomp: The smartphone and mobile OpNet terminal that also serves as means of both identification and payment for most humans. A biocomp is a biotech minicomp.

Ministry of Noetic Affairs (MNA): A division of the Chinese government that handles noetic research, advises diplomats and alien contact personnel, and performs covert intelligence. Popularly known as “The Ministry,” this organization is also the psi order based in China, which controls the Telepathy Prometheus Chamber.

Mode: Every psionic Aptitude is divided into three Modes. Each Mode represents a different aspect of that particular Aptitude.

neutral: A human who is not a latent psion and thus cannot gain psion powers. Pejoratively called “blanks” by a few psions.

Nippon: “Japan.” Includes the “Kuril” (Chishima) Islands.

Nihonjin: “Japanese.” Used as both a cultural and ethnic adjective.

noetics: The study of psionic energies and phenomena.

nova: Powerful superhumans who first appeared in 2018, and who were initially regarded as heroes and saviors, but who turned on humanity, leading to the Aberrant Wars (see above). Since then, they have been called Aberrants.

Nova Age: The era between 2018 and 2067, when hundreds of superbeings with unstable quantum powers first transformed the world in many wondrous ways and then turned on humanity (see Aberrant War).

Nova Força Nacional: The New National Force, shortened to Norça. The psi order based

in Sudamérica, which controls the Biokinesis Prometheus Chamber.

Oceania: Earth’s newest nation, a confederation of floating and underwater cities, many of which are home to large populations of aquas.

Olympus: The vast international lunar settlement built near the lunar south pole. Olympus has a population of almost 50 million.

Orgotek: Originally a consumer electronics corporation, it then became the first major producer of commercial bioware. Today it produces everything from biotech vehicles to biotech augmentations. It is also a psi order based in the FSA, which controls the Electrokinetics Prometheus Chamber.

PN: Pronounced “pin,” a common slang abbreviation for “prosperous nation,” referring to nations like Australia, China, Nippon, Sudamérica, and the UAN.

Prometheus Chamber: A powerful piece of bioware that transforms latent psychics into psions. Each psi order has a single Prometheus Chamber and each chamber gives psions a single different psionic Aptitude. Psions can only survive a single use of a Prometheus Chamber.

proxy: One of the first eight original psions. Each proxy possesses a single psionic Aptitude and controls the Prometheus Chamber that produced that Aptitude in latents.

Psi Nippon: The Nihonjin youth culture that embraces biotechnology and psions. Most either live outside Nippon or wish they could. They’re considered delinquents by proper Nihonjin society, but not yet viewed as a threat to Nippon’s cultural stability.

psi order: One of eight original and seven surviving organizations founded by one of the psionic proxies. Each psi order controls one of the Prometheus Chambers and roughly half of the members of each psi order’s members possess the psionic Aptitude provided by that chamber.

psiad: Rumored psions who gained their powers without the use of a Prometheus Chamber. Their existence is a popular but unproven urban legend.

psion: A latent psychic whose powers have been activated using one of the Prometheus Chambers.

psiware: Slang term for noetically active bioware.

psychokinesis: One of the eight psionic Aptitudes. It allows the psion to move objects and create fire and force fields. Slang: Psychs, TKs.

Qin: The Mandarin character for “elegant” or “pleasingly artificial.” Also a Cantonese term for the

“painted” class of Chinese opera characters. Name given to the first alien race humans contacted.

Qinri: Mandarin for “sun of the Qin.”

Qinshui: Mandarin for “ocean of the Qin;” designation for the Qin homeworld.

quantakinesis: The rarest of the eight psionic Aptitudes. It allows the psion to alter matter and energy and manipulate others’ noetic and quantum powers. The Quantakinesis Prometheus Chamber was destroyed and all quantakinetics were supposedly killed. Slang: Chibs See also: Chitra Bhanu

Quantum Flux: The unique and inexplicable variations to physical laws that permit humans to erupt into novas and novas’ Quantum powers to function. Popularly, but mistakenly referred to as Corruption.

Quantum Flux diseases: Serious, but mostly non-contagious diseases that are usually both progressive and incurable. They are caused by too much exposure to Corruption.

Quantum Flux Zones: Regions containing high levels of Corruption, where soil fertility is low and most plants and animals that live there exhibit significant genetic damage. Creatures that live there for too long often develop Quantum Flux illnesses.

Quarantine, the: Nippon’s “closed-door policy,” 2053–2105, when no outsider could visit the Nihonjin mainland.

Rock, the: Earth; orbital-station slang.

SI: Short for satisfactory intelligence. This is the term used for the standard comm and network software that is capable of speaking and understanding colloquial speech. SIs are not conscious or intelligent, but many people react to them like they are.

subquantum field: The subtle but pervasive psionic energies that permeate the entire universe and are concentrated in intelligent living beings. Psionic powers operate by affecting the subquantum field. Also called the implicate order.

Superior: The Nihonjin government is rumored to create enhanced individuals who lack noetic powers, but are still exceptionally impressive. These individuals are known as Superiors. In addition to their innate abilities, Superiors are always believed to possess extensive Nihonjin cyberware.

telepathy: One of the eight psionic Aptitudes. It allows the psion to read and control minds and emotions. Slang: Teep, tel

teleportation: One of the rarest of the eight psionic Aptitudes. It allows the psion to move themselves and others instantly from one location to another and to warp space. Slang: Jumpers, porters.

terraforming: Manipulating a planetary environment artificially to make it more like Earth.

Tesser: The bio-organic computer that performs calculations for the Leviathan-class jump ships.

Total Allergy Syndrome: A psychogenic disorder with which the sufferer becomes oversensitive to such a degree that contact with just about anything can be deadly. Sufferers live in plastic-bubble environments.

UAN: United African Nations, the prosperous coalition of African nations.

Upeo Wa Macho: Swahili for “the horizon,” the psi order based in the UAN, which controls the Teleportation Prometheus Chamber.

VARG: Short for Vacuum Assault and Reconnaissance Gear. Small VARGs, like the BioVARG (p. 271) and the MiniVARG (p. 272) are suits of powered armor, but full-sized VARGs are large devices that straddle the line between powered armor and vehicles. Rules for full-sized VARGs will appear in an upcoming supplement.

Vatican Reforms of 2084: The conciliatory bull that updated the Vatican to the 21st century. It permits women to join the priesthood, and instructs the clergy to take a more active role in charity work.

vitakinesis: One of the eight psionic Aptitudes. It allows the psion to heal and enhance both themselves and others. Slang: Boosters, docs.

Wanjing: “City of Endurance;” designation for the Chinese colony on Mars.

Yi: Mandarin for “one;” Chinese designation for Alpha Centauri A.

Yuan: The Chinese unit of currency that is now the dominant currency of the world in much the same way that the US dollar was in the late 20th century.

Yutu Yinchan: “The Rabbit in the Moon;” Chinese section of Olympus.



CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

A time of trouble approaches. We must not reject the hidden when they reveal themselves nor mistake one twisted branch for the entire tree. It's also vital that we fight the masters and not the slaves or the deceived. Only through unity can we prevail.

— Otha Herzog, 2123

In the first half of the 21st century, the world was transformed and then almost destroyed when a few humans became powerful superhuman beings who were first called novas and then Aberrants. The Chinese government forced the Aberrants off Earth with the threat of nuclear destruction and over the next 40 years, humanity rebuilt and took their first independent steps to the stars. Then, the Aberrants returned more monstrous than before, but a new type of artificially enhanced human known as psions arose to protect humanity. In addition to fighting Aberrants, the psions gave humanity easy access to new worlds in other star systems and produced advanced biotechnology that is transforming life on Earth. In this new era of amazing wonders and terrible dangers, humanity has encountered both friendly and hostile alien species and is beginning to take its place in the galaxy.

ÆON TIMELINE

The following is a brief timeline of the Nova Age, the Crash, and the rise of the psions.

2020s - 2050s — Novas invent hyperfusion and superconducting batteries, giving humanity unlimited cheap energy, reversing global climate change, and causing much of the Sahara Desert to bloom. During the height of the Nova Age, novas also built research bases on several asteroids and planets within the solar system and explored the stars. Novas led an exploration team to Khantze Lu Ge in 2030 and founded several other extrasolar colonies. In addition, several groups of humans paid space-traveling novas to help them establish colonies on habitable extrasolar planets. A few of these colonies were founded in secret and records of most others were lost during the OpNet Crash.

2053 — Japan closes its borders and changes its name to match the one it uses internally — Nippon. Until 2105, no outsiders are allowed to step onto Nihonjin soil, and all contact with the outside world comes through the large offshore floating settlement of Makaro-Shima.

2054 — While attempting to redirect a hurricane, water-controlling nova Felice Taylor accidentally creates a series of megatsunamis that sweep across the entire width of Florida, killing millions and transforming the state into a series of islands. Taylor appears to have died attempting to prevent the disaster.

2056 — A group of Aberrants calling themselves the Space Brigade take over the Olympus lunar base, controlling it and cutting it off from Earth until the end of the Aberrant War.

2056 — After a decade of increasing nova violence and destruction, the United Nations condemns nova violence and urges member governments to create an international registry of novas. By this time, most people regard novas as inhuman threats and deadly monsters rather than as wondrously gifted humans.

2056 - 2067 — This era is later known as the Aberrant War. Aberrants attack, and in many cases conquer or destroy large cities in regions across the globe.

2061 — Aberrant Calvert Wycoff explodes in Hastings Nebraska, in a huge plasma explosion that obliterates everything within 200 kilometers, and seriously damages soil fertility for more than 1,000 kilometers.

2062 — Facing famine, the United States invades Canada and Mexico to acquire their farmland, beginning the formation of the FSA.

2066 - 2067 — The Possession Crisis: The Aberrant Mungu "Backlash" Kuwasha uses his powers to take control of networked devices all across the world in an attempt to create a society of perfect machines. When humans thwart his efforts, Backlash crashes the OpNet and destroys the majority of its servers. Although most data can be salvaged, some is lost and fully restoring the network takes almost five years.

2067 — China takes control of all of the orbital nuclear weapons platforms and delivers the



"Earth Strike Ultimatum" where it threatens to destroy Earth unless all Aberrants immediately depart. All remaining Aberrants leave Earth, ending the Aberrant War. Then, China gives up control of the Earth's fate and humanity begins to rebuild. The Inhuman Technology Protocols pass the UN with strong support by the Æon Trinity. Many Nova Age technologies are banned or heavily restricted. Project ReWrite begins deleting or restricting information about these technologies.

2067 - 2075 — The Crash, the world slowly begins to recover, but the devastation of the Aberrant War leaves most nations in chaos and the world economy in shambles. The Urban Schism Begins.

2070 - 2086 — Computer enhancement and other mind-computer interfaces become increasingly common as people seek to escape from memories of the Aberrant War and the difficulties of rebuilding.

2086 — After several serious incidents, the UN passes the Shanghai Accords. This treaty bans computer enhancement and other technology that allows electronic access to thoughts and memories except under special license. The

Shanghai Accords also prohibit all but the most carefully controlled and monitored uses of AS (artificial sentience). This ruling has no effect on Nippon, but elsewhere, public opinion turns against cyberware and hardtech in general.

2090 - 2103 — With completion of the Mount Kenya Space Elevator in 2090, space travel becomes even cheaper and easier than before. Humanity begins a major push outward into the solar system. The Sudamérican space elevator is completed in 2102.

2104 — Most small Corrupted zones suddenly vanish, both Wycoff's Blight and the Venezuelan Plaguelands shrink, and the Plaguelands become considerably less dangerous.

2105 — Aberrants destroy the asteroid mining station on Vesta and other asteroid stations. Nippon ends the Quarantine and opens its borders.

2106 — Aberrants attack Sydney, Australia. Video transmissions from Vesta and Sydney reveal that these Aberrants were far less human-looking than most of those who left after the Chinese Ultimatum and seem to care about



nothing except destruction and murder. In Sydney, a force of almost 500 psions defeats the Aberrants. These psions then announce their presence to the world.

2108 — First contact with the alien Qin by a Chinese expedition.

2109 — The Qin establish an embassy on Luna.

2111 — The other psion proxies declare Chitra Bhanu to have been corrupted by Aberrants. Most quantakinetics are killed in the ensuing battle. Dr. S.K. Bhurano and her closest associates seemingly destroy themselves in a mysterious blast.

2115 — First contact with the alien Chromatics, when they attack Karroo Station.

Upeo wa Macho explorers contact the human-nova colony of Eden.

2116 — The Upeo wa Macho mysteriously vanishes, cutting humanity off from the stars.

2118 — Oceania becomes an independent nation that is recognized by the UN.

2119 — An Aberrant attack on the Mazat research station orbiting Luna destroys one of the Leviathan jump ship prototypes, setting the jump ship project back by many months.

2120 — The Esperanza space station crashes near Paris, devastating France.

2121 — Telepathic messages from the Khantze Lu Ge colony around Alpha Centauri report that Aberrants have attacked and overrun almost half the planet.

2122 — The first Leviathan jump ships are completed, humanity returns to the stars.

First contact with the Coalition Ark ends in the damaged jump ship fleeing from the Coalition.

Chromatics attack Earth and are discovered to be using captured teleporters to transport their ships.

Upeo wa Macho returns from the stars.

Teleporters locate and observe the war-torn Nova Age human colony of Marfisa.

2123 — Present day

THE NOVA AGE

The 30-year period from the 2020s to the 2050s was an era of wonder and unbounded optimism. Inhumanly brilliant novas created new energy sources like hyperfusion reactors and inexpensive, room-temperature superconducting batteries. These superhumans used their powers and the new technologies they invented to abolish hunger, reverse global climate change, make deserts bloom, and banish famine. Novas also invented technologies that provided cheap energy and continuous access to the OpNet to the vast majority of humanity. Novas and the technologies they created also helped humanity build a colony on Mars, greatly expand humanity's Lunar colony, and travel to the stars.

Technology advanced in leaps and bounds as novas worked with humans to cure cancer and diabetes, repair damaged or severed spines, and allow humans and novas to connect their minds to computers in ways that allowed them to share thoughts and navigate the OpNet with their minds. Eventually, nova genetic engineers went far beyond healing and began altering humans, creating a new species of humans adapted for life in the oceans. A team of novas even began attempting to terraform Mars.

THE ABERRANT WAR

The Nova Age was one of wonders, but also terrors. While many novas helped humanity save Earth from climactic disaster, enhance themselves, and

travel to the stars, others sought to rule nations, slay their enemies, or use their newfound powers to bend people to their will. Some novas who sought to advance science cared little if human experimental subjects died and others performed reckless experiments that occasionally failed catastrophically.

For three decades, peaceful and productive novas greatly outnumbered violent and destructive ones, but nova mercenaries, terrorists, and criminals posed a serious threat that was initially handled by other novas. However, in 2049 a lengthy battle between a nova anti-terrorism unit and a group of nova criminals killed more than 4,000 residents of Sao Paulo, Brazil, when the fight destroyed several large apartment complexes. In 2054, Felice Taylor, a water-controlling nova, destroyed southern Florida with a series of megatsunamis, when her attempt to redirect a hurricane disastrously backfired. This event killed more than seven million people, setting off a wave of anti-nova sentiment.

Tensions between humans and novas continued to escalate. In 2053, Japan expelled all novas and cut off all contact with the outside world. Japan remained closed until 2105. Until that time, the only contact it had with the outside world was via the floating city of Makaro-Shima, where outsiders were only allowed to visit for a few weeks.

AN INTRODUCTION TO QUANTUM FLUX

By Jenisha Ngomo

From: *Aberrants: The Twisted Legacy*

Among the most enduring remains of the Aberrant War are the zones of Quantum Flux, popularly known as "Corrupted zones" or, less commonly, "tainted land." The largest is Wycoff's Blight, which covers much of the central portion of North America. The latest research indicates that the uncontrolled release of dangerous quantum energies damaged the land's subquantum field. The soil and rocks in these areas appear chemically identical to similar soil and rocks, but most psions and sensitive noetic equipment can tell that these materials are in some ill-defined manner damaged and warped. As a result, prolonged exposure to these materials is harmful to all life.

All life forms from soil bacteria to humans are significantly less fertile in zones of Quantum Flux, and birth defects and other mutations are more than an order of magnitude more common. In adult organisms, sterility, cancers, and Corruption diseases increase to a similar degree. Tests reveal that the effects extend down at least one kilometer below the surface. Soil and rock removed from a Corrupted zone return to normal within two years. Living things removed from Corrupted zones test positive for exposure to Quantum Flux for at least a year. Side effects like Corruption diseases or genetic damage are usually permanent.



During the first three decades of the Nova Era, the Lunar colony known as Olympus grew from a dozen people to more than 50,000, but in 2056 a group of novas known as the Space Brigade took control of the Lunar colony. Their threats of killing everyone in the colony and the ease with which they destroyed spacecraft sent to free the colonists forced the world to watch as this group of renegade novas turned humanity's first off-world colony into a brutally authoritarian dictatorship.

In response to novas taking control of Olympus, the United Nations denounced nova violence and called for the creation of a global registry of novas, who most people now called Aberrants. Many Aberrants saw this message as a declaration of war between humans and Aberrants and increased their attacks on humans. A growing number of Aberrants considered humanity to be either a threat or a mass of worthless beings wasting valuable resources.

In 2061, Calvert Wycoff, a nova who was also an apocalyptic fundamentalist, destroyed himself in a vast explosion when officials attempted to free his disciples from his thrall. His explosion instantly killed more than half a million people and ruined the fertility of most US farmland. At this point, US policy went from attempting to register and contain

Aberrants to killing all Aberrants on sight. US troops killed more than a dozen low-power Aberrants and all but the most powerful Aberrants left the US. By 2062, the world was engulfed in war. Humans battled Aberrants while rival groups of Aberrants fought one another.

THE OPNET CRASH

By 2065, the war between humans and Aberrants was nearly continuous, with new attacks occurring several times a week. Aberrants ruled the island of Bahrain, turning the human residents into slaves, and the Aberrant Dragon's Eye forcibly uploaded most of the inhabitants of Kuala Lumpur, transferring their edited minds into her army of mechanical warriors.

By 2066, household robots were common, and most large devices, from cars to refrigerators were connected to the OpNet. That year, the Aberrant Mungu "Backlash" Kuwasha initiated what became known as The Possessions Crisis, taking control of more than 30 million household robots, cars, and other devices. Backlash announced that he was seeking to create a perfect society of machines living independently from humanity and used many of these devices to kill their owners.

In this same era, almost 10 million people were using implanted neural interfaces. These devices allowed users to control electronics and navigate the OpNet by thought. These devices also allowed people to share memories with other neural interface users, creating a form of electronic telepathy that many predicted would transform humanity. When the authorities attempted to end Backlash's control of networked devices, Backlash responded by inducing seizures and hallucinations in more than two million neural interface users. Battlefield EMP weapons ended Backlash's reign of terror, but at that point he retaliated by crashing the entire OpNet.

The devastation of the last few years of the Aberrant War killed millions, but the OpNet Crash affected everyone on the planet. In an instant, the entire OpNet ceased to function, leaving many people without easy access to data and communications for the first time in their lives. In a few cities and towns, phone service was sufficiently separate that it continued to function, but in the rest of the world, all

electronic communication failed. The result was total chaos. Automated shipments of food, raw materials, and manufactured goods ceased. In nations that had adopted mandatory networking for automobiles, even cars and buses stopped working.

Between the riots and the food shortages, estimates place the total death toll from accidents, violence, disease, and in some cases, starvation directly caused by the OpNet Crash at more than 12 million people. Fortunately, Backlash had only destroyed the optical servers that controlled traffic on the OpNet. The broadcast towers and fiber-optic cables that formed the OpNet's physical infrastructure remained intact. Many cities were able to restore their own portion of the OpNet within three months, and almost half of the total OpNet was restored within two years.

THE CHINESE ULTIMATUM AND THE EXODUS

During the Nova Age, China became one of the major space powers, launching crewed spacecraft

RADIO COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE LIGHT OF WISDOM LIN HUAN AND ORBITAL COMMANDER HAN FENG — DATE: 9:7:2067

• **Han (16:51:09):** Madame Premier, our latest orbital scan indicates that the Aberrants have all departed. We have won. I give thanks that your wise policy succeeded and saved our world.

• **Light of Wisdom (16:52:31):** Congratulations, commander. Issue the order to stand down and prepare to return to Earth. In three days, there will be a celebration to honor this day, and I desire your presence.

• **Han (16:53:23):** Madame Premier, the world is in chaos. Sensors and radio traffic indicates that there are at least seven ongoing wars at the moment. Might I humbly suggest that we could do much good if we used our present might to help bring the rest of the planet to its senses? Without your wise leadership, backed by the power of our orbital armada, it could be many decades before the world is again at peace. With one word, you could end this madness.

• **Light of Wisdom (16:55:40):** Stand down, my brave commander. I have given this matter much thought — I mourn for much of the world, but for now China is safe. How long would that safety continue if we attempt to rule the world? The Aberrants have just departed; people will be looking for a new enemy to blame for their many troubles. If I announce that China is their new liege, we become that enemy. We could destroy any town, village, or city, or even the entire world. However, what shall we do about suicide bombers or military leaders with Aberrant-made weapons?

If we had not acted as we did, the world would have perished. That danger is over, and China's safety is dearer to me than even the lives of my own children. We shall not risk that safety when there are other options. The barbarians shall fight and die, and eventually they shall find peace. Until then, we shall be safe and prosperous.

• **Han (16:56:58):** Yes, Madame Premier.

to Mars, sending a starship containing colonists in suspended animation to Alpha Centauri, and building a network of space stations around the Earth. Hours after Backlash took down the OpNet, China announced that several hundred of these spacecraft and space stations were armed with fusion missiles that were now aimed at Earth. One of the stations launched six nuclear missiles at Aberrant-controlled Bahrain, destroying the island. Next, the Chinese government announced that if all Aberrant attacks did not immediately cease, these stations would launch all of their missiles at Earth. Chinese officials also revealed that this attack would happen automatically unless periodic signals were sent to each of the spacecraft and space stations. The Chinese government offered Aberrants two options, surrender and face human justice or move to Luna, where

China promised they could live independently. The Aberrants spurned these options and instead departed from the solar system en masse. Minutes after the rest of the Aberrants departed, Aberrant leader Divis Mal appeared in the UN General Assembly chamber, vaporized the Secretary General, announced, “Your legacy is our future,” and vanished along with all of the rest of his kind. Humanity encountered no trace of Aberrants for the next 38 years.

The Aberrants’ departure left China in control of the Earth, a power they swiftly relinquished when the Chinese Premier ordered the satellites and space stations to all stand down. A year after their Ultimatum, China began decommissioning or disarming the vast majority of these satellites and space stations. After the Aberrant Exodus, humanity began to rebuild.

THE POST-EXODUS WORLD

After the Chinese Ultimatum, the world changed. The era of miracles and terrors was over. This new world had much in common with the previous era, but there were many changes. The world now struggled with two lasting legacies of the Aberrants: Corrupted zones and dangerous technologies created by Aberrants.

PROJECT REWRITE

The results of the OpNet Crash were twofold. As they were restoring the OpNet, the Æon Trinity worked with the United Nations to delete information about the construction of the most advanced and least understood pieces of technology developed by Aberrants. The effort was known as Project ReWrite and was openly supported by all of the world’s most powerful nations. Possession of unregistered Aberrant technology or details of its creation became a serious crime under the UN Inhuman Technologies Treaty. In addition, everyone wished to make certain that a disaster of the scale of the Crash could never happen again. The result was a significant expansion of the OpNet. Previously, the wired and the wireless OpNet were both part of the same integrated system, and crashing one crashed both. After the OpNet was rebuilt, the wireless and wired OpNet were each capable of operating fully independently. In addition, most of the nations of the world build in multiple redundancies in their portions of the OpNet.

THE NEW OPNET

The rebuilt OpNet functioned much like the previous one, but in 2086, after the dangers of neural interfaces were made horribly clear, the United Nations made them illegal. Since that time, the only people who use neural interfaces are the very wealthy, especially daring criminals, and a few carefully monitored spies and special agents. Even in 2123, the vast majority of users access the OpNet via display glasses or contacts, or in some cases implants that tie into sensory nerves. The dreams of humanity becoming a mentally connected supermind died. However, the appearance of the psions rekindled some of these dreams, using psionic power rather than advanced technology.

Wireless OpNet access is now available anywhere on Earth. The only exceptions are specially shielded buildings and other secure locations, deep caverns, and some older tunnels and basements. Although many nations monitor their citizen’s OpNet traffic, few try to restrict it, because almost everyone now understands that doing so is impossible and attempting to do so would result in widespread civil unrest. For almost everyone on Earth, OpNet access is as much of a basic human right as access to medical care or working plumbing.

Augmented reality is an integral part of OpNet use. Almost everyone uses augmented reality to access the wealth of data all around them. Publicly accessible information is instantly and easily available,

CALLING A BLANK

After the Aberrant War, ubiquitous surveillance became the norm. The details of who could access this surveillance and how it could legally be used differed from one nation to the next, but everyone expected to be watched in any public space in any urban area on the planet, and also in many rural areas. However, some people are sufficiently wealthy and powerful that they can declare a location temporarily exempt from all surveillance, and can even prevent any minicomps or other devices connected to the OpNet from recording anything in this location during this time.

Doing this is referred to as “calling a blank” and can only be done for short periods of time, typically no more than a few hours, and in an area no larger than a city block. However, in this area, nothing will be recorded and cameras outside this area are prohibited from recording anything they can see inside this area, instead recording neutral gray boxes that delineate the borders of the “blank space.” Calling a blank is especially difficult in the UAN and Australia, and is most commonly used by wealthy and powerful full citizens in the FSA and by government officials and their close allies in China.

and most children now grow up with their agents answering their questions and keeping them safe. In addition to wireless access, the OpNet also supports a wealth of wireless monitoring. For most residents of cities in wealthy nations like China, Brazil, or the UAN, street crime is largely a thing of the past, as is police brutality. Only spies and organized crime syndicates can effectively avoid this surveillance. However, in less wealthy nations like the FSA, Russia, or Ukraine, and in rural regions or disaster areas, surveillance is erratic or nonexistent and old patterns of violence and brutality remain.

When humanity left Earth, they took the OpNet with them. Wireless broadcast towers and satellites exist on Luna, Mars, and every settled extrasolar colony. However, away from Earth, the OpNet can be noticeably less useful. One of the biggest surprises that many immigrants to Mars or the extrasolar colonies face is that that some information is simply unknown. Residents of extrasolar colonies are often surprised when they examine a strange creature while wearing their OpNet contacts and receive the response “*This life-form is not listed in any known database.*”

RECOVERY & THE URBAN SCHISM

By 2075, the world had recovered from the worst of the Crash. Humanity had also resumed regular

contact with the colonies on both Luna and Mars and radio signals indicated that the colony on Khantze Lu Ge was thriving. Earth began moving forward, and at the same time many people began moving outward. Until the Crash, humanity had been moving into cities for several centuries. In the early 21st century, more than half of humanity lived in cities, and by the time of the Chinese Ultimatum, this number had increased to almost 80 percent. However, a combination of economic troubles, the fact that cities had been the primary targets during the Aberrant War, and the easy availability of technologies like makers, high-efficiency solar cells, and portable hyperfusion reactors, caused this movement

into cities to reverse. With sufficient raw materials, a hyperfusion reactor, and a maker, a community of several dozen people could supply 90 percent of its needs, including food, if they were willing to eat maker-produced protein paste.

Between 2075 and 2105, millions of people moved to remote locations and set up small towns, outposts, and compounds housing between one and several hundred people. Some sought to isolate themselves from a world they found to be corrupt and spiritually impure. However, most people sought the freedom to live and express themselves as they wished and were happy to trade with anyone who was willing to respect them and their way of life. The majority of the Urban Schism occurred in North and South America, Siberia, and Australia. Western Europe, China, India, and Southeast Asia were all far too populous to offer the large areas of wild land necessary for people set up hundreds of small settlements.

Despite not being worldwide, the Urban Schism caused the percentage of the population living in cities to decline by almost 10 percent. Most of these small settlements are located in remote regions, including the Andes and the Rockies, as well as the Amazon Jungle, Siberia, the Australian Outback, and the edges of Wycoff’s Blight. In the FSA, many of these settlers fled the government’s repression and brutality, moving to regions too sparsely populated for the FSA

Almost all office work, like almost all factory work, is automated, with SI (Satisfactory Intelligence, see p. 285) software and robots taking the place of human workers. In 2123, 25 hours a week is normal for full-time work, and the majority of jobs still done by humans involve overseeing automation, working outdoors in partially automated jobs like construction, and various scientific, technical, and creative pursuits. Many humans also perform high-end service work, where human cooks, waiters, tailors, and butlers provide prestige service to the wealthy. However, more than a third of all humans on Earth lack paid employment. As a result, all but the poorest and most desperate nations provide some form of guaranteed income to citizens who are not able to find jobs in this largely automated world. These payments range from a meager pittance paid for with mindless labor in the FSA or Russia to a modest income in more egalitarian nations like Australia, China, Sudamérica, or the UAN. In these nations, almost all of the unemployed have passionate hobbies, which range from intense VR or augmented reality games, to volunteer work, to many forms of creative expression.

to bother patrolling. However, even in liberal democracies like Australia and Brazil some people wished to live in isolated, largely self-sufficient communities. Almost all of these communities are connected by the OpNet. Residents regularly share maker templates for various devices, as well as warnings about bandits and similar sorts of news.

While millions moved from cities to small communities in wilderness areas, other urbanites retreated into arcologies. Immediately after the Crash, widespread violence, starvation, and banditry made arcologies popular. In these new arcologies, people, manufacturing facilities, parks, and vertical farms all existed inside a large access-controlled building complex. By the mid-2080s, the world had recovered sufficiently for most nations to cease worrying about riots, hunger, or banditry, but many people continued to crave the convenience of living in an arcology and so the construction of new arcologies continued.

In between the two extremes of small, self-sufficient rural compounds and vast, largely self-sufficient arcologies are traditional cities. They survived the Crash, but now 30 percent of people live in rural areas, 20 percent of people live in arcologies, and only half of Earth's population still lives in traditional cities. Of course, despite claims by advocates of isolated communities or arcologies, cities are not dying or even continuing to shrink. Instead, all three lifestyles are thriving, with roughly equal numbers of people moving to and leaving each type of location. However, since the return of the Aberrants, the number of people moving into rural areas is slightly down, since many people worry about the risks of being isolated from emergency services in the event of an Aberrant attack.

CRIME & VIOLENCE

Except for France and Belgium, which are now violent disaster areas, the majority of the world has a rate of crime and overall violence similar to the developed world shortly before the dawn of the Nova Age. However, the nature of this crime and violence has changed. The presence of ubiquitous surveillance means that most petty criminals and

people who commit casual violence are swiftly apprehended, at least in cities and arcologies that have well-maintained surveillance equipment.

In Beijing, Sydney, Sao Paulo, Mumbai, Lagos, and many similar cities and arcologies, most crime that isn't committed by minors or people who are intoxicated is organized crime. Sophisticated criminal gangs armed with the latest anti-surveillance measures steal cars and break into houses and shops. Most of these thefts and burglaries are simply to acquire valuable goods that can be resold, but criminal gangs can also be paid to steal specific objects, ranging from art to data files containing valuable research. The most violent and brutal gangs and syndicates have standing rates to threaten, beat up, or kill a target. Except for immediate and unplanned crimes of passion, almost all murders in cities and arcologies with high-quality surveillance are contract killings. More than a few jealous spouses, business rivals, and people with grudges are willing to pay large amounts of money to have the object of their enmity killed in a manner that's almost impossible to trace back to them.

In poorer nations like Turkey or Russia or almost all of the less-prosperous regions of the FSA, aging infrastructure, civil unrest, and poverty combine to mean that many security cameras have broken due to age and neglect, while others are frequently stolen or destroyed, leaving large regions with little or no

effective surveillance. The portions of poorer cities with the least surveillance are also the most crime ridden.

Cities with the most surveillance usually respond swiftly and effectively to crime. If someone trips an alarm at a high-security Orgotek lab or a vault in Beijing, drones are launched immediately, and up to a dozen police or guards often arrive in less than two minutes. However, police response to a break in at a jewelry store in a town in Iowa or the offices of a small corporation in Rio will be both slower and less extensive. Typically, the local police dispatch several officers who send up one or two observation drones. Usually the officers take between five and 20 minutes to arrive, with the drones arriving slightly earlier. However, even this sort of response, combined with

other officers & advanced software watching the criminals' movements on local surveillance cameras allows the police to easily catch anyone who isn't a skilled professional or a psion.

Although most psions work for one of the psi orders or the Æon Trinity, and the vast majority of the rest are law-abiding citizens, several dozen psions are known criminals and there are a fair number of other crimes where psion involvement is suspected. Of course, sometimes police suspect psions helped commit a crime if they don't know how a crime was committed. Unconfirmed rumors of psiads who developed psi powers without the use of a Prometheus Chamber have caused a few overly suspicious or imaginative police officers to assume psi powers were used in any remotely mysterious crime.

THE RETURN OF THE ABERRANTS AND RISE OF THE PSIONS

Researchers across the world were surprised in 2104 when several Corrupted zones vanished overnight, and most of the larger Corrupted zones, including Wycoff's Blight, shrank by as much as a third. No one could explain this phenomenon. Then in 2105, a group of Aberrants appeared in the solar system and destroyed a mining station on the asteroid Vesta. Less than a year later, these Aberrants attacked the spaceport in Sydney, Australia. Video transmissions from Vesta and Sydney revealed that these Aberrants were far less human looking than most of those who left after the Chinese Ultimatum. They also seemed to have no motive except killing as many humans as possible.

Within minutes of their attack on Sydney, all of the attacking Aberrants were driven off by several hundred super-powered beings who flew, teleported, created laser beams and bolts of fire, and used other impressive powers to defeat the Aberrants. Immediately after this attack, the leaders of these new super-powered individuals appeared on the OpNet to answer questions and reassure humanity. Their primary spokesperson was Alex Cassel, the head of Orgotek, a large and prosperous corporation in the FSA that specialized in high-end consumer electronics.

Cassel said that he had worked with renowned physician Dr. Matthieu Zweidler and bio-physicist Dr. S.K. Bhurano to find ways of enhancing human potential in a safe and controlled fashion. He mentioned that the recent shrinking of several Corrupted zones was

a result of their early research. He went on to say that Otha Herzog, a mystic and philosopher who claimed to occasionally have visions of important upcoming events, contacted him and revealed that the Aberrants were returning and that Alex Cassel's research was essential to safeguarding humanity.

Herzog also identified four other people who needed to be part of this effort — astronaut Bolade Atwan, UN General Solveig Larssen, environmental activist Giuseppe del Fuego, and Chinese official Rebecca Bue Li. Bhurano, Cassel, and Zweidler then created eight miracles of biotechnology that they called the Prometheus Chambers. Each chamber was designed to develop and enhance a particular noetic power, and each one was specifically created to work with one of the eight people Alex Cassel assembled. All eight individuals used their Prometheus Chamber and gained impressive powers. Cassel referred to himself and the other seven individuals who first used the Prometheus Chambers as proxies, because they each drew their powers from the wondrous subquantum realm.

All eight efforts at enhancement were a resounding success, and for the next year, each of those eight people used genetic tests developed by Cassel and Bhurano to identify other latent psions who could be enhanced in one of the Prometheus Chambers. Working together, the proxies assembled a force of more than 500 psions. Alex Cassel's natural charisma, combined with the fact that the psions had saved Sydney from the Aberrants,



helped shape public opinion so that shock and suspicion soon became awe and gratitude.

A few months after revealing the existence of the psions, Cassel's company Orgotek began releasing the first noetic bioware. These devices included everything from living vehicles and weapons to devices that enhanced human capabilities or gave psions additional powers. While ordinary humans, called

neutrals by psions, could not use the most advanced biotech, ordinary biotech revolutionized fields from construction to medicine.

In the 17 years since 2106, psions have defended the solar system against Aberrant attacks, taken humanity to the stars, and made contact with alien species. Almost all nations openly embraced the psions and the noetic biotech that Cassel and the other proxies produced.

THE PROMETHEUS EFFECT: AN ANALYTICAL PRESENTATION

— Excerpt: The third Noetic Conference, Olympus, 6.10.2111

The Prometheus Effect, labeled such by the Æsculapian Proxy Dr. Matthieu Zweidler, remains a mystery even to most psions. The actual mechanics of the process involve the latent psion imbibing biofluid, then being immersed in a gel-filled psiware chamber. The subject falls into a fugue state while her body is infused with nano-organisms. A psion monitors the subject through a biolink and follows a very precise process to trigger the latent to a full psion. In the orders' early days, proxies were present for each latent's awakening. Most have passed on the responsibility to a few key underlings. From what we are told, only Giuseppe del Fuego, the Norça Proxy, still monitors his psions' transformations personally. New psions describe their emergence from the fugue state, as their bodies rise dripping from the chambers, as being re-born. Powers are typically uncontrollable but weak for the first few days after being "triggered." Control and strength derive from familiarity with and training in the psions' new abilities.

The only exception was Nippon. Immediately after the Aberrant attack on Vesta, Nippon ended its 52-year Quarantine. However, less than two months after the Battle of Sydney, the Nihonjin government enacted strict laws prohibiting all noetic biotechnology from entering Nippon and carefully regulating all visits by

psions. This decision triggered pro-psi protests from groups in Nippon that came to be known as Psi Nippon. In an effort to satisfy protestors, the Nihonjin government allowed the floating city of Makaro-Shima to become independent and allowed Psi Nippon supporters to freely emigrate there.

THE AGE OF THE PSIONS

Psions gave humanity the stars, as well as their first contacts with alien species. However, not all of these contacts were peaceful. The 17 years since the psions revealed themselves to the public have been a time of troubles both on Earth and out among the stars.

THE QIN CONTACT

In 2108, a Chinese spacecraft in a previously unvisited star system received alien radio signals. Upon locating their source, the ship's teleporter jumped the ship into orbit above a world they called Qinshui. Contact with the Qin proved to be exceedingly easy, since the Qin were both peaceful and naturally telepathic. In 2109, a human embassy was established on Qinshui, and a Qin embassy was established on Luna. Although the Qin lacked faster-than-light travel, they possessed exceptionally advanced biotechnology. They are unwilling to trade the secrets of manufacturing this biotechnology, but were happy to provide humanity with a wide range of biotech creations. Their living airships are now used by both Brazil and the UAN, and their terraforming microbes have greatly speeded up the process of terraforming Mars. Current estimates indicate Mars will become fully habitable in 75 years, rather than the 1,100 years predicted for the previous terraforming process. Also, unlike human biotechnology, most Qin biotechnology consists of organisms capable of independent feeding and reproduction.

Qinshui is a miracle of biotechnology, and researchers believe that the Qin heavily modified their entire ecosystem. The Qin are not remotely humanoid and only appear in public wearing humanoid biotech suits. After Upeo wa Macho vanished in early 2116, the Qin on Luna worked with Orgotek and the Æon Trinity to create the Leviathan jump ships

THE CHITRA BHANU PURGE

In 2110, OpNet rumors claimed that Dr. S.K. Bhurano and the entire quantakinetic order, Chitra Bhanu, was working with Aberrants, rather than merely researching cures for Aberrant-caused

Corruption diseases. Further allegations surfaced in 2111. When the other proxies asked to inspect the headquarters of Chitra Bhanu, Dr. Bhurano called the other quantakinetics to her headquarters, and a tense inspection soon became a pitched battle that ended with most quantakinetics being killed. Dr. Bhurano and her closest associates in the psi order all perished in a powerful energetic event that was either suicide or a botched attack. Since that time, there have been only seven psi orders, and humanity now must consider that Aberrants are even able to corrupt psions.

CHROMATICS ATTACK KARROO STATION

Humanity's second contact with aliens went far less well than the first. In 2115, unknown aliens piloting biotech spacecraft attacked asteroid miners at Karroo Station in the Crab Nebula. A few days later, the aliens began direct attacks on the space station itself. These attackers were driven off, and the defenders were able to recover several badly damaged Chromatic fighters as well as the bodies of almost half a dozen dead Chromatics. The Chromatics were discovered to be semi-reptilian aliens with powerful photokinesis and thermokinesis and more limited abilities in the other electrokinesis and psychokinesis Modes. Even during their voluntary exile from Earth, members of Upeo wa Macho helped protect Karroo Station from further attacks and in one memorable incident destroyed an entire Chromatic fleet.

UPEO WA MACHO VANISHES

In 2116, tensions between the Upeo wa Macho and the other psi orders increased. Publicly, the disputes were about the other psi orders asking too much of the teleporters and treating them more like a valuable commodity than fellow psions. In actuality, the dispute also involved the recent discovery of the peaceful

nova ruled world of Eden by a Upeo wa Macho exploration team. Bolade Atwan, the Upeo wa Macho proxy, and several of the other proxies feared a repeat of the events surrounding the Chitra Bhanu purge. As tensions began to rise, the other proxies summoned Ms. Atwan to an emergency meeting. Less than half an hour before the meeting, Atwan sent word to all teleporters, including those in other psi orders. They all vanished, departing for the stars. Publicly, the other psi orders and the Æon Trinity released no information about the vanished teleporters.

Suddenly, humanity was cut off from the stars. Telepaths working with clairsentients were able to keep in telepathic contact with Khantze Lu Ge, but all of the other extrasolar colonies were too far away for such contact. In early 2121, reports that Aberrants had overrun much of that world horrified the people of Earth. This news also redoubled efforts by the remaining psi orders and the Qin trapped in the solar system to build noetic starships that could duplicate the teleporters' ability to jump to other star systems. The first Leviathan jump ships (see p. 307) departed for the stars in late 2122. Their first missions contacted all of the colonies cut off from Earth and helped humanity contact the Upeo wa Macho. Since that time, Leviathans have also begun exploring other worlds, including several discovered by the teleporters during their long absence from Earth.

THE ESPERANZA CRASH

Aberrant attacks on Earth continued after the teleporters' departure. However, most were easily repelled by psions and national militaries. Although fear of Aberrant attacks remained high, a growing number of people became convinced that the psions were able to prevent Aberrants from causing anything more than relatively localized harm. This feeling of complacency ended with the Esperanza disaster.

In 2120, a large group of powerful Aberrants attacked the recently completed Esperanza space station. This large space station was funded by the EU in an attempt to revive its weak economy. The station was built in two parts; one section was a luxury orbital hotel and the other was a facility for creating expensive industrial radioisotopes and researching new transuranic elements.

The Aberrants didn't just destroy the Esperanza; a powerful Aberrant, now called Zeus, aimed it like a missile toward Earth. Because it was in high-Earth orbit, its descent took several minutes. During this time, telepaths and clairsentients worked together to

attempt to contact Bolade Atwan and the other teleporters for immediate aid, but no help arrived. The Esperanza struck Paris at high velocity, vaporizing a third of the city and spreading the radiation from the station's manufacturing facilities across most of France.

The battle against the Aberrant attackers continued on the ground. Before it was over, the Aberrant Zeus created a large Corrupted zone around the impact zone — Earth's first new Corrupted zone since the end of the Aberrant War. The impact caused more than 12 million casualties, most of them in Paris. Radioactive fragments of the Esperanza fell all across France and in Belgium.

More than a third of France's population died within the first week after the Esperanza crash, and the majority of the survivors soon fled. However, some were too stubborn to leave. Others were refused entry into other nations due to sufficient levels of Corruption or criminal convictions. Evidence of membership in radical nationalist fronts, Aberrant cults, or other unpopular organizations kept even more people from leaving France.

For the past two and a half years, relief workers have attempted to bring aid and restore order to this devastated region. While life in much of eastern France is improving, most residents still live in refugee camps. At the same time, banditry remains common throughout western France and Belgium, and in some locations Aberrant cults operate openly. Currently, the population of France is roughly 10 million and falling, and the population of Belgium is predicted to soon fall below one million.

THE CHROMATICS ATTACK EARTH & THE TELEPORTERS RETURN

The most recent and alarming contact with the Chromatics happened six months ago, when a Chromatic mothership appeared above the Earth and released several dozen fighters and transports that attacked Olympus, several space stations, and a handful of targets on Earth. This attack was repelled with only minor losses, and psions captured several Chromatic prisoners as well as two fighter craft that had suffered only minor damage. Since this attack, researchers have established limited communication with these Chromatic prisoners. The researchers learned that all Chromatic captives hate humanity and believe humans are murderous monsters devoid



of honor or compassion. Also, none of the captives understand how their technology functions or is created. Studies of the Chromatic spacecraft also revealed them to be based on old human designs, but with the additions of Chromatic genetic material.

Attackers also discovered that the Chromatic mothership used a restrained and heavily drugged Upeo wa Macho teleporter as their method of interstellar transport. One of the two teleporters rescued from that vessel reported that she was captured by the Chromatics when another teleporter led her into a trap. Both teleporters also reported that when they were not forcibly connected to a Chromatic mothership, they and other captive teleporters were heavily drugged and kept in a facility fitted with a psionic dampening field that prevented them from teleporting.

This revelation, combined with the discovery from the Leviathan that visited Karroo station that a pair of teleporters used an unknown weapon to destroy most of a Chromatic fleet that was about to attack the station, revitalized public interest in and support for Upeo wa Macho. Within a week of the Chromatic attack on Earth, Teleportation Proxy Bolade Atwan returned to Earth, along with many

of her teleporters. Ms. Atwan is now convinced that most of the 90 teleporters who mysteriously vanished are now Chromatic captives. She is currently working with the Æon Trinity, the UN, and the other psi orders to locate both these teleporters and the Chromatic homeworld. Most researchers now believe that someone or something supplied the Chromatics with spacecraft and captured teleporters.

THE COALITION ARK

The most recent contact with an alien species occurred during the last year. In 2122, deep space probes reported a huge object 12 light years away headed toward our solar system at almost the speed of light. Fearful that this was part of some new Aberrant attack, a Leviathan jump ship visited the object later that year. The expedition reported that the object was a huge starship more than 70 kilometers long that was inhabited by more than a dozen species, including the humanoid Envoyos who seemed in charge of negotiating with visitors.

The first expedition ended in tragedy, when a quarter of the personnel were killed, and the remainder

fled back to Earth. The next expedition arrived even more heavily armed than the first and was warmly greeted in several Earth languages. The Envoys explained that the members of the previous expedition were killed because one of the members accidentally triggered their warrior caste's defense protocols, and that the deaths were a terrible mistake. Negotiations went smoothly until a biokinetic on the contact team realized that the Envoys were manipulating the emotions of the human contact team using exceptionally powerful pheromones. After the contact team began using filter masks, a clairsentient survey discovered vats containing young Envoys with obviously

human features that appeared to have been created using the previous contact team's genetic material. Further exploration revealed that a distant section of the Coalition Ark radiated Corruption signatures consistent with at least one moderately powerful Aberrant. The second contact team then hastily, but peacefully departed. However, their Tesser drive malfunctioned, leading them to suspect some form of sabotage by the Coalition. Their last contact with Earth was that the Leviathan was headed away from the Coalition Ark using conventional drives and that they were asking for rescue.





**WORLD
MAP**
circa 2123

FSA
**Wycoff's
Blight**

Greenland

Iceland

United Kingdom
Ireland
Denmark
Netherlands
Germany
Belgium
Switzerland
France

Portugal
Spain

Cuba
Dominican Rep.
Haiti
Puerto Rico
Jamaica
Belize
Honduras
Guatemala
El Salvador
Nicaragua
Costa Rica
Panama

Venezuela
Trinidad and Tobago
Guyana
French Guiana
Suriname

Colombia
Ecuador
Peru
Brazil

Bolivia
Paraguay
Uruguay
Argentina

Chile
Falkland Is.



CHAPTER TWO

EARTH & LUNA

Look again at that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us... The aggregate of our joy and suffering, thousands of confident religions, ideologies, and economic doctrines, every hunter and forager, every hero and coward, every creator and destroyer of civilization, every king and peasant, every young couple in love, every mother and father, hopeful child, inventor and explorer, every teacher of morals, every corrupt politician, every "superstar," every "supreme leader," every saint and sinner in the history of our species lived there—on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.

— Pale Blue Dot by Dr. Carl Sagan

The total human population is roughly eight billion people, and almost 99 percent of them live on Earth. While humanity now has permanent bases all across the solar system as well as a handful of growing extrasolar colonies, Earth is humanity's home and Olympus on Luna houses the vast majority of people who live off Earth. Because Olympus is so large and well established and jump rings now permit instantaneous transport between Earth and Luna, many people now consider Olympus as much as part of Earth as the undersea cities of Oceania.

On both Earth and Luna, most people live in cities or arcologies, but almost a third of Earth's population lives in towns, villages, or high-tech wilderness

compounds. Jump rings, high speed trains, and various air and space vehicles allow residents to travel anywhere on either world in less than half a day. Also, the OpNet allows easy two-way communication between anyone almost anywhere on either world.

The OpNet is filled with stories of brave pioneers seeking their fortunes among the stars, but the vast majority of humanity prefers living on Earth. Every year, millions of people travel to different cities or even different nations on Earth or Luna, seeking to improve their lives or leave the past behind. Even if offered the chance to do so, only a fraction of them would consider moving elsewhere in the solar system or to an extrasolar planet.

AUSTRALIA

Down Under. The Lucky Country. The Great Southern Land. Oz. Gafaland. Terra Australis Incognita. Australia has 100 names, each

associated with a culture more distinct and vibrant than the next. Harnessing and melding this diversity is the nation's greatest strength, and the conflicts

LIFESTYLES ACROSS EARTH AND LUNA

Earth and Luna are unofficially divided into prosperous nations (PNs or "Pins") like Australia, China, Nippon, Sudamérica, and the UAN and less prosperous nations (LPs or "Leps"), like the FSA, Russia, and Ukraine. For most citizens, life in the PNs is remarkably easy. Advanced automation handles the vast majority of work that humans performed in the 20th and early 21st centuries, makers create customized good for low prices, and energy is relatively cheap. Most people have houses or apartments containing robots and automation that perform almost all of the cleaning and, if desired, most of the cooking and shopping for necessities. Fewer than two thirds of the residents of PNs have jobs, but everyone has access to a moderately generous basic minimum income.

The situation is very different for individuals living in one of the LPs. Average work hours are longer, especially for the poor. While all of these nations possess some sort of basic minimum income, it is barely sufficient for survival and in most, the unemployed must "earn" it by working long hours performing mindless, and occasionally dangerous, labor. Also, most home automation is restricted to middle class and wealthy residents.

emerging from that unification are its greatest source of trouble.

HISTORY

Geographic isolation and minimal involvement in Nova Age geopolitics spared Australia from the Aberrant War's worst ravages. Afterwards, the nation recovered with characteristic aplomb, which positioned it as a key regional provider of relief and reconstruction aid. Relatively intact infrastructure, reversal of the previous century's anti-immigration laws, and reconstruction-related job growth attracted immigrants from devastated regions around the globe. While many remained in the coastal cities, thousands of enterprising (or desperate) newcomers struck out to settle the Outback. The luckiest and most capable prospered, establishing communities that still flourish. The unlucky and the unprepared met tragic ends.

With their traditional trading partners in shambles, Australian economic strategy shifted toward self-reliance. Booms in mining, heavy manufacturing, and agriculture began in the 2070s. The hidden key to the nation's postwar success, though, was large-scale relocation of another industry: mass media. With North American and Asian production hubs in ruins and the rise of FSA government censorship, studios and talent flocked to Australian shores. An entire generation grew up to images of Australian prosperity and opportunity. Although these recordings and vids glossed over problems like class inequalities and immigrant slums, the positive public relations more than offset those inaccuracies.

As the FSA and UK shifted their foreign policies in the war's wake, a wary Australia distanced itself from both, asserted more regional leadership, and expanded its arms industry. Grateful aid recipients sought alliance in the face of a formidable China and a militant FSA. Australia found itself the unplanned keystone of a regional defense coalition and in 2081 founded the Australasian Regional Defense Pact (ARDEP). The 2090s brought belated attention to space. A focus on domestic and regional issues caused Australia to neglect the high frontier and the country found itself playing catch up. Rather than build its own space industry from nothing, Australia invited foreign investment, redeveloping old missile ranges and tracking stations to support the space renaissance. This strategy's linchpin was the audacious Sydney Spaceport, planned as the world's

first intermodal port for air, sea, and space cargo. Opening in 2103 to international acclaim, SSX rapidly became the South Pacific's spaceflight hub.

2106's Aberrant attack shocked a country that had been slouching toward wealthy complacency. Australia was one of the first nations to recognize the psi orders and to expand government relations with the Æon Trinity. The unexpected boon of the Legions' local basing gave ARDEP member militaries a potent ally against Aberrant incursions.

AUSTRALIA TODAY

To describe Australia — well, which Australia?

The global view starts with a wide-angle orbital shot, watching the terminator sweep west as dawn breaks over the Tasman Sea. Coastal jewel boxes glitter in the sun: studio city Sydney, Melbourne's painstakingly preserved vintage charm, the cutting-edge cutthroat think tanks of Brisbane, Darwin's exploding melting-pot arcology, and Perth's heavy industrial muscle. Inland, the trackless Outback is home to the underdog Aussie Battler, teeth gleaming, hat cocked rakishly, Outback dust coating his boots, devil-may-care gleam in his eye. Carefully packaged images, cut, mixed, retouched, and then exported, show oiled bodies frolicking in the surf, the slam and blaze of Legions' live-fire exercises, the nightclubs' age-old mating displays.

The regional perspective spans the South Pacific: New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. The Austronesian Union's island nations revolve around Australia. Mutual security and prosperity flow from this alliance but also draw people away from the islands. Small businesses and educated citizens are leaving their birthplaces for Australian job markets and tax incentives. Eager to halt the slide, AU members now seek foreign investors and widen their economic exclusion zones, ratcheting up tensions with China and Oceania.

Australia is inextricably linked to the sea, a sea full of Australian ships and Australian cities. Like England before, Australia's wealth and power have deep maritime roots. Between coastal communities and offshore arcologies, 90% of Australians live within 50 kilometers of the sea. Half the nation's jobs depend on the water. Simple energy efficiency keeps maritime shipping the most cost-effective means of moving goods across the planet. The world's largest merchant fleet flies the Red Ensign.

Down on the streets, reality more sharply diverges from the vids, most noticeably in the abundance



of Australians who are not blond-and-bronzed. Fewer than half of Australians are Anglos now, even after last century's American flight and this one's European diaspora. Australia is one of the few nations to see steady population growth between the war and today, largely thanks to immigration. Generations of East and Southeast Asians have stirred that melting pot. Pacific Islanders, too, and not just from the rest of the AU. The western shores are home to a few Africans, and Sudamericans similarly call the east home. But there still aren't many Aboriginal Australians in the port cities. Their history at newcomers' hands isn't a source of pride.

Sydney is best known to outsiders, particularly the off-world travelers who route through the spaceport and its jump ring to Olympus. The world knows this city's tangled expressways, arching skyline and overflowing harbor from 1,000 crime dramas' establishing shots. Operatica, The Vault, Off-Port, 910 — these celebrity hangouts are familiar from paparazzi reports and world premieres. The sprawling industrial sectors and gang turf are vid-familiar, too. Then there's SSX, unwitting venue for the psions' debut, its main concourse still flaunting defiantly unrepaired scars.

Melbourne clings to the look and feel of prewar Europe, preserving its colonial architecture and

expanding outward rather than building on top of its history. It's the nation's cultural heart, educated and understatedly trendy, birthplace of uniquely Australian sports, performance, and street art. Old money dwells here, and plays here, too, in world-famous casinos and deliberately obscure private clubs. Much of that cash flows into the discreet, well-spoken underworld whose invisible taxes keep this one of the world's most expensive cities.

Something's missing from most city streets, though: recent immigrants. The Aberrants' return and the Legions' shield brought new refugees to Australia, seeking perceived safety. Esperanza's fall forced the tide higher. Unprepared for the sheer numbers, the urban majority is defensive. Even longstanding pro-immigration ethnic communities feel unfairly pressured to absorb the new arrivals. State and local governments "encourage" newcomers to settle in the Outback rather than assimilating into already-overcrowded coastal cities. Ethnic, cultural, and generational tensions are ready to boil over. Scarcely a night goes by without civil disorder making headlines.

The Outback is another Australia in cultural, economic, and geographic senses. It doesn't quite live up to the popular image of pristine arid wilderness

OUTBACK ENCLAVES

Modern tech lets you bring your own infrastructure, pick a spot, and tell the world to root itself. If you're foolish enough, you can declare sovereignty over that soil. Congratulations, you now rule your own micronation!

The legal difference between a normal nation and a micronation is lack of international recognition. Most are taken seriously by no one, including themselves, though a few residents wind up in trouble for tax evasion or weapons violations. Visit enough and you'll see micro-national currency, citizenship papers, flags, and armies. Currently, there are about 90. The Outback's the traditional location, but some are offshore and one's on a tethered aerostat.

The oldest is Hutt River, 80 square clicks that "seceded" in 1970 over a farm law dispute. Recent high-profile declarations include North Windjana Gorge (2103, critically acclaimed wine "exporter"), the Tiwi Littoral Republic (2108, Aboriginal aquas "at war" with Oceania), the Empire of Buckley (2118, ex-Legionnaire commune and gun club), and Nouveau Lyon (2122, French refugees protesting immigration policies).

— Professor Kelly Maitland, Political Dynamics Department, Monash University

and breeding ground for hardy Aussies. Rather, it's a national icon most urbanites would rather keep at a vidscreen's safe distance, and it's not all undeveloped. Nova-Era intervention still keeps huge swaths green, making Australia a net agricultural exporter. Recent immigrants outnumber native-born Outback residents even as isolation keeps them unintegrated. The Aboriginals aren't happy about the growing influx of outsiders.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Australia's foreign policy centers on economic stability, with its allies' welfare taking precedence. It's not expansionist or bent on exporting its philosophy, although some nations charge the media corporations with cultural imperialism. In more peaceful times, it would be content to maintain prosperity and otherwise be left alone.

China is Australia's biggest rival. Both nations call the western Pacific home and compete for nearby natural resources. China and the Ministry resent their typecasting as villains or, at best, morally ambiguous foils in Australian entertainment exports. To the regular protests in the UN, Australia replies that its studios wouldn't make such fare if the world didn't want to watch it. Still, discourse stays civil and the two nations have extensive trade. Maritime trade and resource extraction also bring Australian corporations into conflict with Oceanian

member-states. Several major disputes over territorial claims are slowly making their way through the World Court. Cooling relations have led Oceanian firms to break off contracts and partnerships, harming their Australian business partners.

Recent administrations have grown complacent with the Legions' presence and defense cuts have hollowed out Australia's land and aerospace forces. However, the Australian Navy remains among the world's top "wet" navies due to its border security and commerce-protection responsibilities. It falls short of the FSM's power projection and China's sheer numbers, but its personnel and tech are first-rate. Outside the ARDEP, Nippon is Australia's closest defense partner.

Psi-ions of all Aptitudes are common enough in the Legions' media coverage that few Modes raise eyebrows (though the lethal ones do fall under weapon laws). The Legions are Australia's unequivocal favorites, but most psi orders have general acceptance. The Ministry has official recognition but a public cold shoulder thanks to its media image.

THREATS AND FEATURES OF INTEREST

Australia is a land of opportunity for those willing to take control of their futures. By modern standards, it's a safe and secure place — for the most part. Australia's most pressing social problem remains immigration. As rapid urban overcrowding

strains the infrastructure and local economy in every port city, class tensions and anti-immigrant violence are boiling over. National media coverage isn't helping the citizenry's political polarization, either. Protests and rallies are common, though police have been able to break up any mob violence before it gets underway.

Sydney is a vortex of wealth, power, and privilege, which leads to a sensation of consequences evaded. Due to their rarity and unique gifts, persons are persons of interest to the rich and carefree even if they aren't celebrities in their own right. However, most are more like pets than true equals. A seemingly safe invitation can suck characters into a scandal or cover up that can leave them disgraced or blackmailed. Melbourne's just as bad but the celebrities there are well-heeled corporate moguls and semi-legal crime bosses from three continents who are always on the lookout for a new edge on the competition. Job offers are common but flow through so many cutouts that characters may never know their real employer or how dirty her money is.

A half century of settlement hasn't appreciably reduced the size of the Outback. There's plenty of space in which to get lost and the climate and native life are among the planet's most lethal. Millions of years of isolated evolution have created native species that make Australia second only to Sudamérica in untapped biotech potential. In a few places,

mutations stemming from Aberrant Corruption make the wildlife even more dangerous (and, in certain circles, more profitable).

Many Outback communities are off the map and the grid because they don't want to be bothered. Most micronations and immigrant enclaves are harmless, but some are festering and predatory social anomalies. Garden-variety cults and illicit enterprises make enough trouble, but the rare Aberrant-worshippers are far worse. There's also trouble brewing in the form of ecoterrorism directed at new settlements. So far, it's been confined to vandalism and sabotage, but some immigrants are starting to push back and bloodshed is imminent. Any incident here, away from urban law enforcement's ability to rapidly contain it, has the potential to escalate into something that sparks nationwide riots or worse.

Aberrants have to be stupid or powerful to challenge the Legions on their home turf, but there's no shortage of the former and an occasional example of the latter. A few lair in the Outback or under the Pacific to avoid detection, awaiting unwary travelers. Authorities attribute most mysterious disappearances to this predation. Overt attacks are rare and well-planned, with targets chosen for maximum psychological impact. There's no evidence of Aberrant involvement in Australia's social problems but that very lack of evidence makes some analysts nervous.

CHINA

China's greatest problem is that it has always been big. Too big. Since the beginning of history, China has struggled with its own enormity and managing the responsibilities of governing such an expansive nation. It wasn't until the arrival of a Chinese nova, a preternaturally wise child with amber eyes, that a solution of sorts was discovered.

The nova, nicknamed the Bodhisattva as she would answer to no name, introduced a mass of seemingly simple legislations. Employees who worked the mandated eight hours a day, for example, were granted rebates with local groceries within a three-kilometer radius. The companies who respected the rebates, in turn, were granted discounts with their own suppliers and so on.

Though initially rudimentary seeming, the complexity of the interlocking benefits made for an interesting predicament for those looking to take

advantage of the system. Any misstep, no matter how small, cultivated a domino effect that few were willing to risk. The result was a child's world, with a child's understanding for ethics, superimposed on an autocratic government with fantastic military power. It seemed ludicrous from without, but it worked well enough to allow China to remain stable and even to thrive both before and after the Crash. However, no one truly understands how or why the system works and all attempts to duplicate it elsewhere have failed.

HISTORY

For all of his faults, Chairman Mao Zedong was a revolutionary leader who completely transfigured the face of China. His rule, while autocratic and deeply flawed, allowed the country to rapidly become the world's largest economy and a key figure in international politics. China grew even more influential in the early decades

THE AUTONOMOUS REGIONS

The horrors and devastation of the Aberrant War produced profound political changes in Asia. The nationalist independence movements of the 20th century crumbled as residents of many small nations realized that only states that could defend themselves or obtain the services of a powerful defender could be considered truly safe and free. Many small Asian nations sought China's protection, either from mad Aberrants or from the bloody conflicts that followed the end of the Aberrant War. Since the Aberrants returned before renewed nationalist feelings could grow, there is currently little protest against China's paternalism. The residents of most of China's Autonomous Regions realize that they and their nations would be far more vulnerable without China's aid and protection.

Today, Korea, The Malay Republic, Mongolia, Taiwan, Tibet, and the Philippines are all Autonomous Regions under China's control. These nations are largely independent. They can all set the majority of their own laws, and several, including both Taiwan and the Philippines, have democratically elected governments. However, all Autonomous Regions must allow China to determine their foreign policy and to monitor and control external trade. Also, while the governments are largely independent, to maintain peace, order, and harmony the Ministry's telepaths and behavioral intervention agents have just as much authority in these nations as they do in China.

of the 21st century, as novas began transforming and then almost destroying the world.

China quickly became a major force in the international space race. After sending its first astronauts up to Mars, a secondary team, replete with building material and supplies to construct long-term extraterrestrial settlements, soon followed. Eventually, these efforts led to launching the starships that would later found the colony on Khantze Lu Ge. Unknown to the public, these projects also included the creation of several hundred orbital nuclear satellites, China's insurance against the burgeoning risk of Aberrants.

The decision proved wise. When the Aberrants attacked humanity, more than 500 Chinese spacecraft aimed their missiles at Earth. An ultimatum was given: the Aberrants would depart or they would die, along with the entire planet. China was in a position to unleash full-scale nuclear holocaust, a fact they were happy to demonstrate when Aberrants in Bahrain attempted to stage an assault.

The Aberrants departed en masse, leaving China to deal with the repercussions of its actions. Some world leaders praised China's courage, others were enraged by China's willingness to sacrifice the entire world, and the wisest were pleased and surprised that China did not use this opportunity to conquer the planet. Even today, politicians in the FSA, and to a lesser extent in Australia, still talk about the Chinese willingness to sacrifice others — the phrase "Chinese callousness" remains popular in the FSA.

Rebuilding China proved less complicated than managing international politics. During the restoration process, China incorporated a stunning array of new technologies into its infrastructure and architectural design. Many remnants of its ancient civilization — houses, public buildings, and monuments — were swept aside. Like the phoenix rising from its own ashes, the nation emerged glittering and awe-inspiring, cold steel and smooth asphalt as far as the eye could see.

It was only several years later that the populace realized that China wasn't quite the utopian society it appeared to be. A series of seemingly random arrests, coupled with the efforts of suspicious journalists, revealed that surveillance technology had been deployed everywhere. From immunization shots to billboards, to the roads themselves, every aspect of China was now carefully monitored, cross-referenced, managed, and metered for maximum happiness.

CULTURE

Despite what Australian popular media would have people believe, life in China is better than it has ever been before. Following the rebuilding of the country, the entire nation now enjoys state-of-the-art infrastructure, a far cry from its cramped, dystopian state in the 1900s. Coupled with the fact that the country's population is now distributed among its many arcologies, Chinese citizens now benefit from better living environments, an unparalleled education system, and state benefits unmatched by any other nation in the world.

The government practices strict censorship of foreign media, ostensibly to protect against the transmission of dangerous technologies or mind-warping

messages sent by Aberrants. Naturally, the populace, especially the younger generation, bristles under the strict control. Hackers, many of whom call themselves Creative Commoner Activists, work around the clock to access and disseminate overseas entertainment and news to the public. Few succeed, and those who do rarely enjoy their victory for long. The cryptographic algorithms utilized by the government alter with surprising speed, as do the variety of custom-designed security programs. Some theorize that an artificial intelligence might be behind it, although no one knows for sure.

Still, the citizens of China remain content. What little unfiltered information from the outside world that bleeds into China is taken for granted, brushed off as the fanciful imaginings of jealous outsiders. And for good reason. The population enjoys considerable freedom, outside of matters pertinent to other countries. Women are accorded equal rights. Men are given paternity leaves matching those of their spouses. Working hours are government regulated and an excellent basic citizen's income ensures that no one ever lacks necessities. In comparison to all that the state provides, the things required of its denizens seem almost inconsequential.

Every resident of China, regardless of whether they were birthed in the country or are immigrants,

is required to undergo mandatory minor surgery in order to install a variety of biomechanical hardware, including a simple identification tag, health-monitoring systems, and devices that monitor everything from location to emotional state. The procedure, of course, is free. But the repercussions are long-lasting. Once implanted, the machinery cannot be removed in China — at least not without first traversing a kaleidoscope of court cases. Given the phenomenal price tag involved, few choose that option. Even individuals who emigrate usually continue to maintain their hardware, an easy feat given that China has licensed the knowledge to a variety of foreign companies. While the implants restrict freedom, they also largely eliminate the possibility of identity theft and the need for passwords or physical keys. The biomonitors are also responsible for the Chinese population's impressive health and longevity. Even before the spread of noetic medicine and vitakinetic healing, the average lifespan in China was nearly a decade longer than in most other prosperous nations and rivaled Nippon's.

CRIME

Crime is virtually nonexistent in China. At least, on a superficial level. It is widely known that criminal organizations entered mutually beneficial agreements with the government during the



Aberrant War. Chinese officials approached the heads of the local crime gangs, offering an alliance that would allow the organizations to continue profiting while reducing their personal costs. The crime lords, starved for stability and already ragged from defending their territories, said yes.

As a result of this partnership, prostitution, drug dealing, gambling, and other such pursuits have all been legalized, although they are strictly monitored. Discreet personnel swiftly remove anyone of an inappropriate age or lacking the correct licenses and send them for rehabilitation or probationary action. Naturally, all of these conditions are volatile. A bribe of sufficient size can make virtually any sin disappear. Crimes of a more malevolent nature are also handled by this joint partnership between the governments and the Triads. Contract killing is permitted, for example, but only if the victim also belongs to a criminal gang, the relevant parties survive the gauntlet of red tape, and are not outbid by their would-be victim.

This is not to say that China is completely free of lawless behavior. While organized crime is now, albeit somewhat secretly, cooperating with the government, independent ne'er-do-wells still attempt to profit from a growingly complacent society. In a curious twist, unaffiliated miscreants enjoy a greater freedom than they ever have before, as long as they avoid violence. Most citizens are aware of this unique cooperation and, as such, are far less likely to report anomalous incidents and nonviolent crimes than they normally would, leaving the daring to do as they will. People also understand that government operatives and people who pay sufficiently large bribes can ensure that their actions leave no records and have no consequences and that anyone who looks too closely into such events invites trouble.

On the flip side, discovery and retribution are swifter than ever before. A pickpocket who does so only sporadically or stops after a few days may never be noticed, but one who continues committing crimes is certain to be caught. Also, all but the subtlest violent crimes instantly alert police SIs, leaving anyone foolish enough to commit assault, armed robbery, or any similar offense facing dozens of armed drones backed by well-trained police.

DAILY LIFE

With China having shed many of its traditions, the country is still groping for an entirely new

identity, divorced from its millennia-old history. Today, China brims with artists, hackers, philosophers, and creatives of every other denomination imaginable — each eager to make their mark, and to take advantage of the many benefits provided by the government.

The Neo-Beijing arcology practically shimmers with color. With the help of Brunei's bio-architectural technology, this metropolis is constantly being altered, remodeled, and otherwise rewritten to suit the needs of its general populace. Art festivals take place virtually every other week, many of which have achieved international acclaim. Unlike in the past, officials make no attempt to censor creative work, even allowing blatant political criticism. In order to acquire significant funding, however, individuals must make art pertinent to the country, something many are happy to do.

These freedoms make for many genuinely happy citizens, something that outsiders are often stunned to witness. Especially in Australian media, China is often misrepresented as a walled-up society, where thoughts are heavily policed. The truth is otherwise. The country has more individual liberty now than ever before. Though the Office of Noetic Security possesses a strong influence in the Chinese cities, it is a subtle organization, less concerned with flashing the hypothetical badge and more about maintaining harmony. Some Chinese people point out that while they would prefer to be without the Office, its presence helps guarantee that their doors can be left unlocked and wide open to receive strangers. Others freely admit to the help an ONS agent provided to them or suspect that at least one lucky coincidence in their life may have been due to the ONS.

Internal movement in China is unrestricted outside of high-security facilities and travel to and from China is exceedingly easy, depending on where you're coming from. Visa rules have long since slackened. The country now features the speediest processing time for international travelers. The arduous part of the journey takes place after landing, when visitors are sprayed down with antibacterial spray and checked for Corruption. Entering China without a visa requires the visitor to either belong to one of its 35 allies, or to have a sufficient explanation. Visa-facilitated travel requires nothing save an official ID from a UN-recognized nation.

The passage of a century has left most of Europe almost unrecognizable. The European Union clings on as a fraying, tenuous web, while nations that were once economic powerhouses lie in shambles. The ugly politics of isolationism, xenophobia, and paranoia have found solid footholds here. It currently has much in common with the age of shattered states and utter devastation following the first World War.

WESTERN EUROPE

Western Europe suffered terribly during the excesses of the Aberrant War. Empowered lunatics unleashed a horrific death toll amidst densely populated, highly developed nations. The first-world infrastructure and heavy investment into the technological, service, and finance industries were just as vulnerable to the less physical depredations of the Aberrants — the OpNet Crash and the economic depression that followed the war.

A new era of social and political unrest washed through the European states as they struggled to cope. Borders shifted and tensions flared. The European Union, sitting atop a powder keg, struck upon a solution — the *Esperanza*. This project would put an orbital platform into space, setting Europe's foot firmly back onto the ladder of space development. It would forge a fresh sense of communal purpose among member states and provide an opportunity for investment and economic revitalization.

Europe's hope was shattered when the Aberrants returned from their exile. Almost three years ago, an Aberrant aimed the orbital station like a meteorite at the world below, riding the radioactive ruin down as an apocalyptic steed. The impact devastated much of France, the Netherlands, and Belgium; huge fragments struck surrounding regions in a hail of fire and death. Ten million died immediately in a moment of Corrupted flame and nuclear light.

The *Esperanza* atrocity stabbed into the heart of western Europe like a spear and the wound still bleeds fresh. Refugees pouring from the ruined regions found little welcome in the hard-pressed nations all around. Haphazard camps and grim processing centers sprang up where borders meet. Shattered economies struggled to recover. There is hope to be found in the aftermath of *Esperanza's* fall: The Æsculapian Order gleams bright amidst the

devastation, and the once-great powers of Europe haul themselves up from the depths of despair. The world, though, has moved on, and western Europe has a long way to go to catch up.

WESTERN EUROPE AT A GLANCE

Western Europe is a place defined by borders and boundaries, suspicion and vigilance. Nations gird themselves in barbed wire and concrete; refugee-processing camps play host to an endless parade of displaced civilians under the glare of bright searchlights, guards, and automated weapons emplacements. The media plays up the stereotypes and fears of Corruption, disease, and crime coming from the devastation known as *la Blessure* (French for “wound”). Politicians ask why their hard-pressed people should shoulder the burden of caring for the poor, huddled masses at the gate.

The situation is slowly improving. Aid to refugees and victims of *la Blessure* is growing more efficient in its administration and deployment, as the wider world realizes that this disaster will not be solved by a quick fix. The utter confusion, finger pointing, and blame games that followed the impact are subsiding, revealing the long road to recovery that lies ahead.

THE ESPERANZA BLESSURE — FRANCE, BELGIUM & THE NETHERLANDS

The *Esperanza* tore an immense scar across western Europe. The earthquakes and tidal waves that accompanied the apocalyptic impact reduced the Netherlands to a sinking morass. Paris was incinerated. The rolling landscape of most of the rest of France and half of Belgium was utterly ruined, becoming a wasteland of Quantum Flux, radioactivity, and wreckage.

Much of the surviving population of these once-great nations dwells in shanty towns and camps along *la Blessure's* border. They are impoverished and dependent on international aid for their continued survival. Apart from a few resilient enclaves, France's agriculture and industry lie in ruins. What little recovery the region has seen is confined to ports and towns on the western coast, gateways into the dark interior for scavengers, criminals, and relief teams.

More than a million inhabitants live in *la Blessure* itself, scraping by in areas of low radioactivity that are mostly clear of Corruption. No one wants these last few survivors, often not even their own kin in the processing

ESPERANZA'S BREATH

Foreigners coming to western Europe are surprised by the ubiquitous nature of air filters and breather masks. The impact of the orbital platform hurled immense amounts of detritus up into the atmosphere that dimmed the sun for months. Even three years later, atmospheric particle levels remain exceptionally high, and most citizens have to clean their dwelling's filters on a weekly basis. Media scare stories about Corruption or radioactive dust feature regularly, and the pollution has led to a genuine condition commonly called Esperanza's Breath. Incidents of all respiratory problems have soared.

camps. The settlements that dot the landscape are oases amidst the despair and madness, with their inhabitants scavenging what they can to keep machinery in order and their people alive. Travel between enclaves relies on armored vehicles made from old civilian automobiles. Bandits, Aberrant cultists, and worse still lurk amidst the wreckage, waiting for prey.

No one knows how many Aberrants are active within *la Blessure*; the region's Quantum Flux hides them from clears. Their agenda and relative power levels are also unknown, but those that came down with the descending *Esperanza* and survived are now at the center of growing cults and cultivate herds of warped servants out in the worst areas of Corruption. Some rule over survivor enclaves like

barons, but most just pass through settlements, taking what they want. Occasional savage attacks test the defensive walls surrounding *la Blessure*. The refugees in their chaotic encampments have no such protection from Aberrant depredations.

Amazingly, there are those to whom *la Blessure* calls. Risking life and limb, treasure seekers and looters search for salvage in the *Esperanza*'s blackened, twisted bones and the ruined metroplexes of France. The sinking Netherlands plays host to slow, rusting vessels that ply the watery streets, venturing into rotting buildings in search of a big score. Criminals travel through *la Blessure* without fear of law enforcement, using refugees and relief convoys to mask their own illicit trades. Some of the locals tolerate these interlopers because they bring food, money, and goods; others prey upon them with glee.

The French Diaspora spread refugees from *la Blessure* across Europe. Even for those who make it past the processing camps and into the comparative safety beyond, life is difficult in their new homelands. Many are too devastated by what they experienced to do more than keep their heads down and continue surviving. Some dream of returning to France, cleansing it of *la Blessure*, driving out the Aberrants, and rebuilding. It's a vast and overwhelming task, though, and even with the support of those few French expatriates who retained some of their wealth and foreign

BLESSURE WEATHER

From: BLTJetHunter

To: Peregrine745399

Subject: Weather Patterns

Encryption: DSE

Date: 11.25.2122, 9:06 PM

Grine,

Absolute 100% confirm that the weird shit going on over the Bless has got to be Aberrants. No way the Grand Slam could be responsible for this stuff even three years on. No way it causes storms to pop up out of nowhere.

I got a confirmation on AEU-7366-AEI — it got dropped in Year One Post-Slam by a lightning storm over Limousin. Loaded to the gills with evac'd military and govt hardware, never recovered. Problem is, even if we found 7366 and it didn't have mutants crawling all over it, how would we get hundreds of tonnes of tech back out of the Bless? Can't trust the skies.

No, I don't know how the Black Jets do it, but I'd dearly love to.



influence, most French Diaspora communities are focusing on building a new life rather than trying to fight for their former home.

THE DEUTSCHE ALLIANZ AND AUSTRIA

Germany and Austria are a confusing patchwork of city-states, communities, and provinces that almost hark back to an earlier age of history. Both technically exist as overarching polities but possess only the barest bones of authority. Most power has devolved to local regions in a grand experiment of autonomy. Sadly, the idealism of the Allianz is a poor match for the realities of modern Europe. Its easternmost regions have fallen before Polish aggression, and its western provinces struggle to deal with the ongoing aftermath of the *Esperanza* impact, both refugees and the few areas of *la Blessure* caused by wayward fragments of the station that fell on German soil.

ITALY

Italy is a rising star recovering faster than its neighbors from economic depression and cultural shock. Italian politics is a hotbed of rigorous debate and open democracy backed up by a surprisingly brutal police force; dissent and protest are all happily tolerated,

but organized crime receives no mercy. Aberrant influence among old crime families nearly toppled the nation during the War, leading to a determination that Italy never faces such an internal threat again.

More than any other European nation, Italy extended its hand to the charities and relief organizations of the world. Thousands of *Blessure* refugees travel through its ports every year, carried off via sea to secondary processing centers in Africa or further afield. Unfortunately, this made Italy a natural breeding ground for Aberrant cults to take root in, threading their tendrils further through the French Diaspora.

THE NORTHERN COLLECTIVE

Consisting of the northern Scandinavian states of Europe, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, the Collective emerged in the late 21st Century. The socialist state was hit hard during the Aberrant War, pulling itself back up from deep economic depression just in time to founder under the weight of its investments in the *Esperanza*. Now infrastructure crumbles, the population is impoverished, unemployment runs rampant, and people flee decaying arcologies. Splinter sects and new faiths have found fertile ground amongst a people eager for new hope, but Aberrant cults hide among this new religious revival.

BLACK JETS

The Black Jets thunder over the Channel and into *la Blessure* on classified operations. Rumors spiral around why the United Republic sends heavily armored shock troops into *la Blessure* and what might be worth the risks. The few reports of Black Jet troops from survivor enclaves within *la Blessure* speak of unfriendly, sometimes brutal expeditionary forces deploying into the wasteland, hunting down and dragging back captives and creatures. One rumor that refuses to die is that they're after Aberrants.

PORTUGAL & THE SPANISH PROVINCES

The Iberian Peninsula juxtaposes the growing power of Portugal against the diminished Spanish Provinces. Portugal is thriving even in the wake of the *Esperanza* atrocity, its open freeports serving as a major hub of world trade. The culture is tolerant of almost any brand of ideology, faith or trade, even Aberrant cultists. The law, by comparison, is vigorously and harshly enforced. The Portuguese welcome all to do business, but all must do business in peace.

Spain shattered into devolved, autonomous provinces. Unlike the voluntary social experiment of Germany, Spain tore itself apart into its components through violence and political unrest. The provinces vie with one another for resources and influence; the northernmost reaches of Spain are growing closer to total collapse as they attempt to deal with the humanitarian crisis of *la Blessure* with little help from their southern cousins.

SWITZERLAND

Once a bastion of neutrality, Switzerland has emerged as a leading light in Europe. Prosperous, highly developed, and serving as the headquarters of the Æsculapian Order, Switzerland weathered the storm of the War and the *Esperanza* well. It is now a hub for the administration of what is left of the European Union apparatus, as well as for relief efforts into *la Blessure*. However, a groundswell of support is buoying up extremist political elements who encourage a return to isolationism and the rejection of outsiders; after all, they say, what has Europe brought Switzerland but financial cost and hardship?

THE UNITED REPUBLIC

Mockingly referred to as the Fortress Islands, the United Republic of the British Isles emerged from a forcible reunification of its component nations

during and after the Aberrant War. Pursuing a policy of measured distance from the mainland, the Republic's lack of investment into the *Esperanza* protected it somewhat from the aftermath. Now it seeks to exploit opportunities that have emerged from the chaos. The hyper-managed agricultural land and urban vertical farms of the Isles have stepped into the void left by France, producing crops to feed the hungry mouths of the mainland. Plans proceed apace for the construction of a space elevator that Republican ministers are convinced will succeed where the *Esperanza* failed.

The Republic guards its coastal borders ferociously against refugees. The media fans the flames of xenophobia against foreigners, diverting attention away from the tensions that simmer beneath the Republic's surface, unrest, protests, and political violence show that the population has not forgotten the reunification. The United Republic is a police state that relies heavily on technology to monitor and control its citizens, but it is successful enough that order continues to be maintained for now.

EASTERN EUROPE

Eastern Europe stands on the brink of war. Powerful nations keep hungry watch over their borders, eyeing their neighbors and waiting for the first sign of weakness. Although it is almost as poor as western Europe and desperate for resources, eastern Europe has retained much of its infrastructure and industrial base. Both are being turned to the purpose of conquest.

THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Eastern Europe was spared the worst of the *Esperanza* disaster, but the impact of western Europe's collapse gravely wounded the other half of the continent. The rampant nationalism and belligerent strategies of these nations did not simply spring up in the past three years, however. It stems back across decades of depression, tensions, and

enmities, stoked by the Aberrant War and carefully fostered by political factions.

There's no easy way out for any of the participants. The first moves in the game of conquest have been made, and every nation fervently believes it needs more than it has. Anti-war sentiments are a minority voice. Not everyone is content to stand aside and let conflict erupt, however. The Æon Trinity seeks to avert open warfare and ensure as peaceful a revolution as possible in the unpredictable and potentially explosive nation of Romania.

EASTERN EUROPE AT A GLANCE

Eastern Europe is a place of tension and of opportunity. The nations have not suffered like their western counterparts and seek an edge to revive their past glory. They all believe that edge *has* to come at the cost of rival nations. Spies and infiltrators are commonplace tools amongst the great powers. People are suspicious of outsiders not because they might be Corrupted or refugees, but because they might be foreign agents or saboteurs.

Despite the oppression, the secret police, and the surveillance cameras, eastern Europeans share a flame of ambition. There's a sense that anything could be possible, that they're on the way up, and that prosperity will soon return. They also fear that someone is going to try and take it away from them. A shivering feeling of potential builds in undercurrents throughout the societies of eastern Europe. Some smell revolution in the air.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Militarily weak, the Czech Republic has used its prowess in the arena of culture and media to forge a different path. The Republic fights through words, music, and art rather than artillery and drones. Pitching itself as a cultural capital from which the whole world can benefit, the Czech Republic has signed treaties with both Australia and the UAN. It supplies an entire industry of media vids, actors, and artistic expression, exporting to its patrons in return for wealth and protection. Compared to the grim continent in which it is ensconced, the Czech Republic stands out as a font of individualism and optimism.

GREECE

Greece slumps on the shores of the Mediterranean, slowly dying. The New Turkish Protectorate has absorbed portions of its northern and eastern

territories, and now it sits back and waits for the wounded beast to bleed out. What's left of the Greek economy has been turned to the war effort, but the final invasion never comes. Listless troops and twitchy pilots wait, the tension growing with each passing month. Sooner or later someone's going to snap.

MAGYARORSZAG

Magyarország, once called Hungary, is living on borrowed time. Although proud and independent-spirited, Magyarország is smaller and poorer than the regional powers of Poland and Ukraine. The government is frantically trying to bootstrap itself up to the big leagues before the first shots are fired, pouring what wealth it possesses into mercenaries and military technology. Magyar spies and agents move into the northern nations and Romania on the hunt for any advantage that can be gleaned. On the political stage, Magyarország does everything it can to serve as a mediator in disputes that affect Poland, Ukraine, or Russia, knowing that every year the war is put off is another year the country has to prepare itself and dig in.

NEW TURKISH PROTECTORATE

The resurgent power of Turkey is a shining example of prosperity and order in the region. Barely touched by the economic crisis that shattered the continent, the New Turkish Protectorate has spread its wings over Bulgaria, portions of the Shatter, and parts of Greece. Elsewhere, its influence grows in Russia's bordering states and what is left of the Middle East. The NTP's expansionist policy holds to the notion that it is *helping* its neighbors, an elder statesman bringing wounded and crippled states into its fatherly embrace. The reality may be quite different, but the NTP runs an effective international relations and media department.

Under the carefully managed propaganda, the NTP struggles with internal unrest that threatens to bloom into rebellion. Religious sects are at odds with the secular government, demanding that the Protectorate become a religious state — a new Ottoman Empire. While the country is predominantly Islamic, the generals and ministers have no desire to relinquish their power and return to the distant past. Tough crackdowns on religious dissidents only seem to fan the flames, while pro-democracy activists attempt to set the autocrats and zealots against one another in an effort to make room for positive change.

POLAND

Poland is an industrial behemoth bent on conquest. Its borders have already expanded over the eastern reaches of Germany, part of Belarus, and all of Lithuania. The country's heavy manufacturing base and vast, mechanized farms have armed it with the infrastructure needed to build and maintain an army supported by armor and drones.

Buoyed on a tide of intense nationalism, Poland sees itself as the responsible adult in the region. It conquers its neighbors because they are mired in disorder and poverty, whereas it knows better how to use their resources for their own good, and for Poland's benefit too, of course. In the meantime, Polish manufacturing is beginning to reach new markets both around the world and off it. It grows wealthier, and stronger, and prepares for the next stage in stabilizing eastern Europe through force of arms. Its government is democratic, and most of the populace strongly supports arming the nation for war.

ROMANIA

It's not a question of if Romania will implode, but when. Romania is ruled by a queen with only the most tenuous of links to the old royal family, wielding absolute power over her subjects. This bizarre set of circumstances is due to Romanian novae who helped overthrow the democratic government just before the War. While the Aberrants themselves are long gone, they left the queen and her loyalists a stockpile of Aberrant technology, the exact limitations and nature of which are not entirely certain. Who dares poke the hornet's nest and see what horrors the queen is sitting atop?

The people of Romania dare. The country is mired in increasing civil unrest. The government crushes dissent with casual brutality, but all it does is push the citizens to greater anger. Neighboring nations watch with growing alarm as the country edges closer to the brink, while spies and Æon Trinity operatives sneak across the border to try and discover just what technological madness the Aberrants left behind.

RUSSIA

At the edge of Europe, Russia watches and waits, its ambition fueled by bitter resentment. The past decades have been cruel to that nation. The scars of the Aberrant War and deep financial problems have resulted in Russia having to offer up portions of its eastern territories to China under mutual development schemes. Russia wants to step back up as a major player on the world stage by proving its strength on its western borders, bringing old territories into

the fold and harnessing their resources. Rumors of secret military treaties between Russia and the FSA worry both of their neighbors. For now, it is content to use its agents to foment rebellion and unrest across the region, knowing that sooner or later an opportunity will present itself.

THE SHATTER

A rough smear on the map, the Shatter spreads across the Balkans in a dizzying array of city-states, autonomous provinces, and independent polities. The Shatter is what remains of several smaller nations (and the bordering regions of some larger ones) that dissolved through decades of civil war, unrest, and the occasional brilliant moment of social experimentation. These self-sufficient enclaves vary wildly in nature. Some are high-tech, sparkling jewels of modernity and wealth, while others are dilapidated shambles of poverty and despair. The Shatter lacks the unity needed to stand strong against the surrounding powers that covet it. In the face of growing NTP aggression, portions are actually reversing their devolution and gathering under old banners of nationality and allegiance. Serbia was the first to declare itself reformed, and is now energetically seeking to reestablish its old borders.

UKRAINE

Ukraine is a model of stark efficiency — a totalitarian police state where the trains always run on time. There's food on every table and a roof over every head, but luxuries are rare, and freedom of expression almost nonexistent. The Ukrainian government see expansion and conquest of weaker neighbors as the most effective way of recovering economic strength, and the country is undergoing a military buildup with heavy recruitment drives amongst the rural population. Its armed forces are powerful enough to take on either Poland or the NTP, but not both at once.

Even as it spreads its own infiltrators and spies into the region, Ukraine is itself the battleground of a proxy war by its neighbors. The sheer oppressive nature of its rule has left the government facing growing unrest among its citizens, aided and supported by Polish and Russian agents. These agents are shaping extremist political movements to support their own ends, stirring up the first sparks of a civil war. If those embers catch and the fire spreads, Ukraine will become prey to be torn apart by its neighbors, and the flames will spread throughout eastern Europe.

The land of the free, and the home of the brave? Not the Federated States of America. In 2123, the FSA clings to power through ruthless observation and control of its people, both citizens and non-citizens. Built on a foundation of fear and paranoia, the FSA marches forward under the sway of metacorporation money, jingoistic racism, religious fervor, and government control.

HISTORY

The glory days of the United States of America are long past, replaced with the FSA's paranoid suspicions. American suffered more than most in the Aberrant Wars. Nova emergence wasn't linked to any particular country, but the presence of Aberrants increased the likelihood of new eruptions, and the US attracted hundreds of these god-like beings to its shores.

When tensions between Aberrants and humans spilled into war, America was home to some of the first and largest battlegrounds. In 2054, the nova Felice Taylor accidentally swept a series of megatsunamis across the state of Florida, killing millions and transforming the land into dozens of islands. Taylor disappeared in the floods, presumed killed in the devastation she wrought.

The detonation of the Aberrant Calvert Wycoff in 2061 devastated North America's heartland, instantly vaporized everything within 200 kilometers, and Corrupting the land for another 1,000. The Aberrant energies reduced soil fertility by 90 percent and twisted the genetics of every living thing within the Blight — today, mutated spawn still escape the zone to spread their Corruption.

The Blight destroyed the country's agricultural belt and angered the already frightened citizens. Famine swept across the nation, with the rich stockpiling what they could and leaving the poor to starve. The already wide class divisions within the nation grew starker; a vast gulf separated the "haves" from the "have-nots."

MILITARY SAVIORS

Starvation wasn't the only peril faced by the United States. Aberrants attacked every urban center, maddened by Corruption or desperate for their own twisted survival. Millions were killed; the country was destabilized and exhausted. The

only thing between American ideals and cultural extinction was the US military, supported by well-paid private security forces and the corporate-controlled military industrial complex. The armed forces were depleted, but canny officers understood the consequences of the Blight and ordered their soldiers to seize munitions and rations. The military had structure, discipline, and weapons to keep them and their families safe from the chaos surrounding them.

With the civilian government in disarray and the people desperate for leadership, the military declared independence from political bodies and assumed full control of America's remaining defense network. It commandeered whatever it required to fight the enemies of freedom. Opportunistic politicians quickly engaged with the new power structures, calling in favors and using their political skills to secure field commissions within the new military government. They sold the new junta to the people and delighted in power without the irritations of elections and public scrutiny. Opponents of the new regime were arrested or murdered.

As the military government stabilized its authority, it greedily eyed the resources of its northern and southern neighbors. America's stockpiled goods wouldn't last forever and the global Aberrant War had collapsed trade. Devastating earthquakes across Mexico killed millions and destabilized the government. Under the guise of securing its borders, America annexed Mexico and crushed the depleted opposition.

With Mexico secured — and South America nervous about what was next — America launched surprise attacks into Canada. Canadian forces were ill-prepared for the unexpected aggression. They mounted a well-organized and effective defense that might have repelled the invaders had Quebec not turned on its own. American spies had worked hard to win Québécois support and promised the region independence as its reward. Canada fought hard for nearly five years before having to surrender and accept American control.

RISE OF THE MILITARY-CORPORATE COMPLEX

Canada's submission came just in time. American resources were almost depleted and the military

CITIZENSHIP AND THE WEALTH EDGE

Characters with one or fewer dots of the Wealth Edge cannot be first-class citizens of the FSA. Characters with two dots in Wealth can be first-class citizens, but the expense of doing so effectively reduces their Wealth by one dot. However, characters with three or more dots of Wealth can afford to be first-class citizens of the FSA with no noticeable decrease in their available wealth.

had diverted civilian provisions to its soldiers; public support waned and violent revolts erupted. To counter the threat of destabilization, the government turned to a mixture of God and an aggressive sense of national superiority to keep the population placated. Christian faith was an important motivator for the military. Religion soothed soldiers' consciences when they fought rampaging Aberrants rather than saving civilians. Faith in God's plan comforted troops as they followed the junta's orders. The generals favored doctrines that stated all humans were filled with sin, and could only achieve salvation through fulfilling God's wishes, which primarily involved punishing the unrighteous and the unclean. The military encouraged civilians to join militant churches that supported the junta; the faithful filled their bellies while apostates starved. The priests proselytized that God's love came through faithful obedience to the government. Unsurprisingly, church services quickly filled to capacity.

With the country nearly stable, but government resources exhausted, the private corporations that had profited from war seized the chance for greater power. They proposed an alliance with the military that blurred the lines between corporate and government. Corporations gained the authority to enact their own laws within their holdings, and in return guaranteed financial and manufacturing supply to the military government. The rise of this "military-corporate complex" was the death knell of the old USA. From its ashes rose the grim phoenix of the Federated States of America, supported by the powerful FSM, the Federated States Military.

CITIZENSHIP

FSA citizenship isn't complicated. Everyone with at least one parent who is an FSA citizen gains second-class citizenship, affording some rights and protections to the individual. Second-class citizens are protected from unauthorized searches and seizures of property, can attend public meetings, and if

charged with a crime can request to have it heard in a court — for a fee.

First-class citizens buy their way into the privilege. Every ¥10,000 paid in taxes earns an individual one vote, and those with three or more votes are first-class citizens. First-class citizens enjoy full protection of their property and rights, have procedural justice applied by default, are legally able to own and carry firearms, and can question FSA decisions.

Purchasing votes through taxation means that corporations and other rich enterprises count as citizens under FSA law and enjoy the legal protections and influence this entails. This is one of the greatest difficulties the FSA government has with Orgotek — although they'd love to control the order's psions and acquire its assets, the corporation scrupulously pays its taxes, holds a large voting bloc, and demands that every legal consideration and procedure is followed to the letter. Orgotek also pursues any discrepancies through the courts, tying up FSA resources and time, as it is entitled to do as a first-class citizen.

CLASS WARS AND ALIENATION

The government benefits from keeping the population divided. FSA propaganda teaches Americans to despise the "others" in society and beyond its borders. Aberrants and their cultists are obvious targets for this hatred, but the government encourages fear and loathing of all foreigners — any of them could be secret Aberrant cultists. The FSA especially promotes discrimination against nations with technology or resources it wants to acquire, such as Nippon and Sudamérica.

First-class citizens despise the second-class for being lazy and lacking ambition. If second-class citizens worked harder, they would surely earn enough wealth to join the first-class. Of course, the first-class places as many obstacles as possible in their path, and privately despairs of the second-class ever elevating itself.

Both classes despise the non-citizens who perform the menial, dangerous, and disgusting tasks no one else wants. Many are refugees who fled Europe after the *Esperanza* crash; the FSA uses them as scapegoats for all society's problems. However, even these non-citizens can purchase first-class citizenship, though such success stories are vanishingly

rare. The second-class harbors a lingering mistrust and paranoia that non-citizens hoard wealth so they can join the first-class and take revenge on the people who used to make their lives miserable. Many second-class citizens channel this paranoia by further degrading people who mostly just want to live their lives in peace, and the most violent second-class citizens know that if they want to vent their frustration by smashing the shop windows or defacing the homes of non-citizens, the police are unlikely to ever take action. Non-citizens are common villains in FSA entertainments, with many portrayed as devious agents of hostile foreign powers or Aberrant cultists.

THE SURVEILLANCE STATE

Watch what you say and do in the FSA; the unspoken government message is that someone is always watching, and the walls have ears. The truth is more complicated. In the richer, first-class areas, FSA cameras and drones mostly look outward. In these areas, police respond to those who look like they don't belong faster than a biokinetic changes her shape. Sometimes, they'll give the offender a chance to explain before the beating starts.

The cops have had to be more careful of late. The rich progeny of politicians and corporate executives

have recently decided that their best source of fun is to “dress down” and mix with the lower classes. Several unwary cops have been reassigned — or even lost their jobs entirely — after accosting the wrong “slummer” heading home. In a clear example of social evolution, police working in rich areas quickly learned to identify the privileged mannerisms of the elite, regardless of what they wear or how they appear.

In the poorest areas, security agencies would like to know what non-citizens are doing at all times, but working surveillance equipment is rare. Street techs, vendors, and other “entrepreneurs” quickly salvage anything of value, stripping the locator chips and tracking software from devices as their first priority. Zappers (p. 295) are another popular way to temporarily disable security, and are relatively cheap and easily accessible on the black market.

The people with the least freedom and the most government oversight of their activities are the wage slave second-class citizens. They are the backbone of the FSA, but the government works to ensure they never realize it. Though the American dream is to make enough money to buy first-class citizenship, many workers don't realize that it's not profitable to allow them to succeed. A few token individuals climb the ladder and encourage others to work harder. These “success stories” must



never forget their place or to whom they owe their allegiance.

CORPORATE ESPIONAGE

FSA political culture encourages financial Darwinism. A corporation's influence depends entirely on how much money it pays in taxes to the government. The government ruthlessly enforces this policy, as it discourages tax evasion and fills FSA coffers.

Every corporation dedicates resources to predicting which issues it needs to exert influence on, and calculating the votes required to enforce its will. If a corporation has fewer votes, and can't build alliances to reach the target, it can either overpay taxes to make up the shortfall, or sabotage rivals to reduce their voting power. For profit-driven corporate directors, the latter course is seen as the more fiscally sensible.

A thriving black market of deniable mercenaries and black-bag jobs grew from this financial ecology. Metacorporations dedicate sections to undertake criminal tasks that can't be traced back to the company. When a research lab explodes days before its parent corporation announces a new product, or the lead strategists disappear overnight, everyone knows what happened, but nothing can be proved. Beyond these corporate teams is an illegal criminal workforce of non-citizens, foreigners, or down-on-their-luck citizens, all willing to do anything for cash. The corporations (and the government) use these people when they need services that can't be conducted in the neon light of corporate towers. Specialist employees skilled in negotiating with these criminals demand high salaries; they know how to pay for services rendered while hiding it all in the official ledgers.

The government approves of these rivalries, as long as they don't cause national damage. Several corporations were compulsorily acquired, and their assets were divided among rivals after they pushed too far and destroyed something that would have given FSA an advantage over other nations. Theft of intellectual property, reverse engineering, or kidnapping personnel are acceptable; loss of FSA power is not. The government periodically reminds the metacorporations of their symbiotic national arrangement by using military resources and overwhelming firepower to counterattack some of the more borderline shadow jobs.

ALLIES & ENEMIES

Unofficially, every non-FSA citizen is seen as an enemy of the state. The FSA covets the assets and advantages of every other nation, and would love to conquer and take what it wants from them. Officially, the FSA has ongoing tensions with Sudamérica, which hasn't forgotten the long American history of flexing muscles and ignoring Sudamérica sovereign borders. Sudamérica subtly provokes the FSA by interfering with its interests whenever possible. Sudamérica mercenaries find steady work in the FSA's corporate shadow wars — but have a tendency to inflict more collateral damage than required and bring the government's ire onto unwary corporations.

The FSA is also vocally opposed to the UAN. No matter what ideas the African nation advances or developments it implements, the FSA spreads propaganda and misinformation linking the modern nation to archaic racist stereotypes and caricatures of Africa. When words fail, the FSA sponsors insurgents and terrorists to spread mayhem and weaken the UAN's political capital.

THREATS & FEATURES OF INTEREST

While most of the FSA is a relatively peaceful, if brutally unjust and unequal, nation many troubles are waiting for a chance to break free.

WYCOFF'S BLIGHT

The government wants citizens to believe that Wycoff's Blight is a barren area devoid of life and habitation, but this is a lie. The truth is that the land within Wycoff's Blight is Corrupted and plants grow poorly. However, twisted crops do grow, tended by hardy rebels who relish freedom from FSA tyranny more than an easy existence. Most Blight-dwellers are nomads who move with the strange unseasonal fruiting of the mutated plants, although some small permanent settlements exist, reclaiming the abandoned dwellings of old American towns.

These blighted crops are the source of a thriving black market in Corruption-enhanced drugs. These bizarre pharmaceuticals have unusual effects; some are medicines of great potency, others make the quantum and subquantum visible and open the doors of time and space — for brief periods, at least. A few of these drugs have a profound effect on psions, enhancing their powers, but burning out

their psi over time. The psi orders are divided over these drugs. Some want to study the chemicals to eliminate their drawbacks and harness the benefits, while others want to eradicate them as an ongoing threat to psions. The FSA rebuffs all psi order offers of assistance, forcing the orders to use their own means to achieve their goals.

The FSA military periodically sends patrols into the Blight, to hunt known fugitives, or to just kill anyone they find. They have a particular interest in capturing unauthorized psions within the area, and are quick to resort to deadly force if these “rogues” refuse to surrender and face FSA justice. Meanwhile, members of the Fifth Legion have the thankless and far more dangerous job of eliminating the Blight’s Aberrants and Aberrant cults.

For reasons unknown to the FSA, the Blight’s Quantum Flux suddenly, and mysteriously, surged and collapsed in 2104, shrinking the Blight’s area by a third. FSA scientists have concluded that the previously affected areas have little to no lingering Corruption. These agricultural lands appear to be as fertile and safe as before Wycoff’s explosion. For the past decade, the FSA has funded a trial program of carefully monitored settlements in the outer portions of the former Blight, in the hopes that the country can reclaim some of its lost food belt.

REVOLUTION

Though government propaganda claims otherwise, the Canadian resistance was never fully eradicated. Acts of terror and sabotage against

military targets persisted for years and were violently quashed by the FSA. The military arrested and executed hundreds of suspected insurgents and their families, to set an example for others. It didn’t have the intended impact, instead generating more hatred and resentment. The resistance evolved into a smarter, more clandestine force, structured in a loose network of cells where each knows as little about the others as possible.

Mexican resistance grows in the southern states, emboldened by Canadian success and covert Sudamérica backing. Sudamérica and at least a few Norça provide weapons and training to Mexican resistance fighters to destabilize the FSA and possibly reclaim Mexico to Sudamérica control. The geographic division and cell structure prevents easy cooperation between the two rebel forces, but limited local alliances sometimes arise. Charismatic and influential leaders are emerging from both movements, who consider how to coordinate their efforts without opening themselves to FSA annihilation.

The frequency of attacks has increased in the last three years, as both resistances target corporate holdings and government services. The FSA ruthlessly pursues those it suspects to be resistance fighters or sympathizers, but must be careful. Too much overt effort brings publicity and gives credence to the Canadian and Mexican loyalists. At present, the FSA prefers to use mercenaries supplemented with psions when possible, preferably telepaths, to root out the traitors and bring them to FSA justice.

INDIA & THE BHARATI COMMONWEALTH



In the wake of the Aberrant Wars, India was a rising powerhouse of democracy and trade, drawing on an enthusiastic and willing population to rebuild the tarnished jewel in Asia’s crown. Now backroom deals, political doubletalk, and corporate greed threaten to take all India’s dreams and transform them into poverty-stricken nightmares.

HISTORY

India was hit hard during the Aberrant Wars. Though the subcontinent’s Aberrant population wasn’t large — many Indian novas left the country as soon as they erupted, pursuing money and fame abroad — several

novas came to India for its Hindu beliefs and practices. These power-hungry demigods positioned themselves to rule over their human cults in remote fortresses carved from the bedrock by quantum powers.

When human-Aberrant tensions exploded into open conflict, China preemptively struck the Aberrant strongholds in neighboring countries to prevent them threatening Chinese territory. India suffered the most in these assaults, but other countries around it weren’t immune to China’s protectionist interests.

China’s aggression shocked and outraged India’s people. The earliest Chinese strikes avoided densely

SUBJECT: NOT JUST INDIA!!!!

From: Minister Md. Fateh Aslam, Chief Representative for Pakistan, Bharati Commonwealth.

To: Warren Shaw, OBC

Encryption: SPE

Date: 4.23.2121, 10:13 AM

Mr. Shaw,

I am writing on behalf of my colleagues to express our displeasure at your recent article, "Insight into India." While the article was generally well-researched and fairly presented, you perpetuated an inaccuracy many foreigners believe, and I entreat you to publish a correction and an apology.

In case you are unaware of the error you have made, please allow me to be clear. The Bharati Commonwealth is not just India. Bharati's member states come from the former countries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and to reduce the long, rich histories of each of these wonderful cultures to just "India" is an insult.

I look forward to reading your correction.

populated areas, but as the Aberrants moved into human cities to hide among civilians, collateral damage was unavoidable. Instead of retaliating, India was forced to fight for survival as the Crash destroyed its military and civilian communications networks, and enraged Aberrants turned on the Indian population, wrongly blaming them for the deaths of their fellows.

India struggled on throughout the War, supported by surrounding nations who similarly suffered at the hands of Chinese strategy. These historic enemies set aside tensions in order to survive against superior foes. Soldiers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka joined Indian forces as a coalition working together to repel attacks and protect their populations from slaughter. Bound together by shared ties of spilled blood and fallen friends, these hostile nations largely overcame their differences and consolidated their remaining resources into the nascent Bharati Commonwealth.

RISING STARS. FALLEN ANGELS

Born from different countries with long histories of tribal struggles and cultural differences, the Bharati Commonwealth survived its early post-war years by doggedly following democratic principles as the only way to ensure the different needs of the states were met and the voices of their populations were heard.

Every member state of the Commonwealth has a number of representative votes in the Bharati parliament, based on its population. While this gives the larger states an advantage, positional alliances come together constantly and break apart just as quickly, as delegates agree to support each other in return for future considerations. In practice, no one state can dictate to the Commonwealth without the support of others.

This thriving democracy empowers the people to speak their minds and demand to be heard – regardless of whether the politicians want to hear them. Over the last decade, the Bharati government worked with local corporations in the largest construction project the nation had ever seen – the Trimūrti. Minor protests broke out among the most devout Hindu segments of the population for perceived blasphemy in the name but, despite this obstacle, the Trimūrti was to be a grand triumvirate of Bharati engineering triumph. Outside of Colombo, in what had been Sri Lanka, the largest interplanetary freight logistics depot in the world sprawled at the bottom of a massive, state-of-the-art space elevator capable of carrying heavier loads into orbit faster than ever before. A large space station sat in geosynchronous orbit at the top of the elevator, with triple roles as luxury tourist destination, space travel transport hub, and microgravity manufacturing facility.

When the *Esperanza* crashed, the government saw opportunity in the devastation and redoubled construction speed, injecting even more money,

labor, and resources into the project. The Trimūrti Construction Corporation (TCC) became the single largest employer in the Bharati Commonwealth. Unfortunately, the thirst for glory and desire to elevate the Commonwealth's international standing was its undoing. Four months ago, independent inspectors discovered fatal construction flaws with the space elevator that made it dangerously unstable without extensive — and expensive — repairs. The public revelation caused massive social unrest. In short order, thousands of Bharati citizens employed by the TCC were out of work as the corporation filed for bankruptcy. The government barely has the funds to pay for the repairs to the elevator, but can't cover the enormous unemployment compensation demanded by the tens of thousands of suddenly unemployed workers.

Since the debacle, huge protests have erupted in many Bharati cities, particularly in India and Sri Lanka, accusing the government of collusion with the corporations, including bribery, graft, nepotism, and any other corruption the citizens can conceive. Some of these allegations have substance, some are baseless ranting from the angry populace, but all increase the anger towards the government.

The chief agitators and leaders of the various protest movements have called on the TCC (and its subsidiaries and subcontractors) to repay the money they received from the government. Many of the corporations disbanded, leaving few assets and no cash from their government contracts, while others took the money — and their corporate risk — offshore to nations who take some pleasure in the Bharati woes, and are unwilling to yield to the demands of unhappy Indians.

Denied financial satisfaction, the protest movements call for the resignation and asset forfeiture of various government officials. The longer the movements continue, the more agitated and volatile the protestors become. Several protests have ended violently, with police and military being used to disperse the crowds and restore order. Unfortunately, these tactics encourage other outraged citizens to join the protests, and the groups have almost grown large and angry enough that they can no longer be suppressed by government forces.

ALLIES & ENEMIES

The Bharati Commonwealth has no official enemies, but has plenty of lingering antagonism towards China. The people have neither forgotten

nor forgiven China's actions in the War, even if it arguably did singlehandedly save humanity from extinction.

The Commonwealth's relations with the FSA are similarly tense, as several Trimūrti subcontractors have their corporate headquarters in the Federated States — or moved their corporate address there immediately before the release of the independent report, having illegally received leaked previews. The FSA has protected these companies from having to repay debts to India (after ensuring they've paid taxes to the FSA, of course) and has rebuffed any Commonwealth attempts to recoup its losses through the legal means.

The Bharati Commonwealth still experiences significant cultural (and historical) tensions between the member states. While each acknowledges the benefits of maintaining the Commonwealth, none are willing to completely forget centuries of antagonism and colonialism when they were separate nations. None (except India) like India's prominence and dominant voting power, and government processes are often sabotaged by representatives voting with petty motivations, rather than in the best interest of their state.

PSI INDIA

In the wake of the Trimūrti disaster, the Bharati government hatched an even more daring scheme to capture the public's imagination and support. India will persuade one of the psi orders to move its headquarters (and Prometheus Chamber) to the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is prepared to offer substantial financial, logistical, and legal considerations to make this happen.

India was well acquainted with the power and prestige that came from housing one of the Orders, with the Chitra Bhanu being a source of strength and influence for the Commonwealth before the Order's destruction at the hands of their fellow psions. Unknown to outsiders, the Bharati government helped hide and repatriate several members of the "Indian Order" as they fled the other Orders. Any reluctance some officials felt evaporated when they learned of the Chinese Ministry's leading role in the purge.

The government maintains carefully hidden communications channels with these Chibs. It hopes they can one day reemerge from the darkness and again take their place among the Orders. Having an Indian psi order in place is seen as a desirable step towards this goal.

The biggest obstacles to this plan are the Orders themselves. Most have deep cultural ties to their homes, and their proxies are each very much products of their environment. Norça, Upeo, and ISRA are all considered to be impossible challenges to entice to India. The Ministry is similarly out of reach, but the Commonwealth moves forward with plans simply to see the despair such a defection would cause to China. The Bharati government sees various inducements and advantages that the

Æsculapians, Legions, or Orgotek would gain by moving to India, and has approached all three to open negotiations. While these three Orders have not been overly enthusiastic in the initial discussions, neither have any of them refused to talk, or turned the Commonwealth representatives away. A few Commonwealth negotiators believe that Proxy Alex Cassel is interested because he wishes to ensure that Orgotek has a safe haven if relations between Orgotek and the FSA ever break down.

LUNA

Although many Lunar residents strongly object, much of Earth's population no longer considers Luna to be a different world. Jump rings transport travelers to Luna in an instant, and even by spacecraft, the journey to Luna typically takes only a few hours — often less time than it takes to fly from Beijing to Buenos Aires. Today, almost 50 million people make Luna their home and more than 250 million people living on Earth have visited Olympus, which is by far the largest and most populous Lunar settlement.

FROM BARREN ROCK TO TEEMING METROPOLIS

The original Olympus research and mining facility was first established in the early 21st century. NASA constructed this base in the Galatea crater, near the Lunar south pole, and next to the largest known deposit of ice on Luna. This ice continues to provide vast reserves of fresh water for the inhabitants. Within a decade of its construction, tunnels connected Olympus to the neighboring Camelot and Yeltingrad bases. The development of grav crystals in 2043 helped prevent the health problems previously associated with long-term exposure to low gravity.

In 2056, Aberrants calling themselves the Space Brigade invaded Olympus. These semi-sane monsters controlled it for the entirety of the Aberrant War, but departed after the Chinese Ultimatum. With the Aberrants gone, restored contact between the Earth and the moon allowed people to start afresh and leave behind their war-ravaged homelands. Repairing the colony provided the perfect opportunity to expand humanity's off-world foothold and build a gateway to the stars.

During the recovery, new technology and improved shielding made surface living safer. The wealthy elite moved up from their shielded

underground estates. Gentrification sent the lower-class workers to the vacated areas to be exploited by criminal slumlords. Corporations and governments expanded Olympus upwards and took over nearby craters for mining and research facilities.

In 2100, the Olympus government drafted the Lunar Unity Agreement and offered other colonies a place on the new Lunar Advisory Council. Membership meant a support structure for those willing to abide by a basic set of legal guidelines. The LAC brought residents from different sectors together to produce services like the United Lunar Police Force (ULPF) and the Vacuum Emergency Response teams. Eighty percent of all Lunar settlements joined this new community, leaving only a few fiercely independent holdouts.

OLYMPUS

Olympus, also called “The Mount,” is divided into four sectors based on their placement along the inside of the Galatea crater. The shiny and glittering Upside consists mostly of post-war skyscrapers and domed sectors starting at Level 12 and reaching more than 500 meters above the lunar surface. Between Level 12 and Sublevel 3, the recently gentrified near-surface level of the Mezzanine now hosts many of Luna's corporate and political concerns. Beneath that is the middle-class region called Downside, until one reaches Sublevel 32 where the Underworld beneath is tightly controlled by powerful individuals with more money than compassion.

The main complex and the outlying settlements are connected by the Luna Automated Maglev Pneumatic train system. The LAMP's BlueLine service reaches from the Mezzanine and Downside to the major outlying colonies. The Redline's on-call “automatic taxi” service is even faster and reaches into the

lower levels of Upside. Hoppers are available to cross the surface to those areas outside the LAMP network.

UPSIDE

Newcomers to the modern Mount often arrive at Yutu Yinchon's spaceport in Upside, which handles most of the moon's space traffic in addition to housing the jump rings that offer tele-transportation to and from sites on Earth.

Originally a Chinese base, Yutu Yinchon has diversified and hosts a number of small cultural neighborhoods like Little Hong Kong and New Midwest. It extends down into the Mezzanine where career criminals and daring modern aristocrats rub shoulders in grimy bars and rumored black markets. Upside is also home to the Qin embassy, where several hundred Qin live and work.

Upside also shines with the glamour and glitz of Olympian Towers where the holo-stars and corporate glitterati keep tabloids in business. The UAN built the cultural district of Bire Lubuto where wealthy artists live and work in terraformed domes reminiscent of Earth. These districts try their best to ignore the "eyesore" of Old Town, the last part of the original base where the FSA's mining ventures still hold strong.

LUNAR WEAPONS LAWS

Only sonic, taser, and flechette guns are legal on Luna. All weapons that have even a small chance of piercing a wall and potentially opening a structure of vacuum are highly illegal. Like arson or unauthorized use of explosives, possessing or using prohibited weapons on Luna are some of the crimes that the United Lunar Police Force will pursue regardless of bribes or political pressure.

THE MEZZANINE

Built just above and below the Lunar surface, all roads go through the older sections of Olympus known as the Mezzanine, from private transportation to the LAMP lines, and the crowding of peak hours justifies its nickname of "The Bottleneck." This access benefits International Center, home to the moon's political offices and any corporate office that can't afford space in Olympian Towers. The Center's residents include the Lunar Advisory Council offices, the United Nations, the Æon Trinity Extraterrestrial Office, the largest and oldest ISRA meeting house, and the Æsculapians' Beaulac Clinic.

The Mezzanine is also home to the United Republic's Camelot base. Camelot has been renovated to reproduce an old-fashioned Earth aesthetic and contains the colleges of Oxford Luna. Ukiyoshi,



by contrast, is the exact opposite. Those unfamiliar with Nihonjin culture often find the hyper-artificial, media-heavy district a strain on the senses. The Nipponese sector is a corporate town where almost every major electronics and high-tech design firm maintains offices and labs intended to attract prospective employees. Ukiyoshi also contains clinics that offer cybernetic and biological modifications otherwise unavailable outside of Nippon.

DOWNSIDE

Downside contains most of Luna's working-class citizens. Engineers, public servants, data processors, and other workers live in habitation levels much like most Earthly arcologies. The upper sections nearest the Mezzanine are in excellent condition, but the farther out and down one goes the more run down the tunnels become. The neighboring sectors of Lejanas, Sokotown, Wroclaw, Fado, Castelo Nova, and Vila Real house all manner of blue-collar workers and miners. The lucky ones work for businesses higher up in Olympus, the Federated States' mining companies, or the smaller spaceport based out of Wroclaw. This spaceport mostly serves the Beaulac Clinic and smugglers dealing in drugs, fugitives, cheap labor, or weapons. Downside sees a lot of traffic to and from Luna Park, the most popular vacation destination in the solar system.

Luna Park originated as the Museum of the Lunar Pioneers featuring uniforms, equipment, and schematics of every major stage of Lunar development. The museum even contains the original Apollo 11 landing site, carefully relocated to protect it from an ISRA-predicted meteor impact. A domed amusement park grew around the museum featuring rides, stage shows, and interactive holosims. The Luna Resort and Casino is the newest addition, offering diversions such as gambling and sports complexes for all ages and interests.

THE UNDERWORLD

The air and water start tasting funny at Sublevel 32, where the Underworld begins and filter quality drops. Lights flicker, and funds are allocated for maintenance, but nothing gets fixed unless an official inspection is incoming. Security cameras that work usually vanish only to reappear in bins of spare parts. The ULPF rarely visits. Instead, "private security" is provided by the Vor V Zakone, the syndicate that rebuilt and rules the Underworld.

The crime rate is surprisingly low as long as everyone pays their protection fees and does the special "favors" requested by the local mobsters.

Most Underworld violence consists of clashes between criminal factions, promotions secured by force, and arranged accidents for troublemakers. This near-safety makes the Underworld (and the Pit in particular) an ideal place for fugitives to hide. Nobody here blinks twice at a paranoid recluse.

Most local businesses only deal in scrip paid by the mining companies in lieu of a proper salary. Worth almost nothing in yuan (the official Lunar currency), scrip can purchase basic amenities at heavily inflated prices. Vila Jacinta, once an upscale Latin district, is a neutral ground where criminal figures live in relative harmony with each other and meet with outsiders wishing to do business.

The metaphorical center of that web is the old Yeltsingrad base across the Corridor, bearing the deliberately off-putting moniker of "The Pit." Construction firms owned by the Vor V Zakone criminal syndicate rebuilt Yeltsingrad after the Aberrant War and control it and the rest of the Underworld. Whenever money changes hands in the Underworld, the rougher portions of Downside, or the casinos of Luna Park, some of it finds its way into the coffers of the Vor V Zakone.

VOR V ZAKONE & THE PRESIDENT

A mysterious cloaked and masked woman known only as the President runs the Vor V Zakone and through it, most of the corruption and graft on the moon. The syndicate reaches into the lower parts of Downside but their ties beyond that lie primarily in their influence on the Lunar government. The President first took charge of the Vor V Zakone syndicate a little more than a decade ago. Nothing is known of her past or her true identity. However, her success is far more obvious. Her tactical genius expanded the Vor V Zakone's reach well beyond the Underworld, giving them ties to corrupt government and corporate officials all across Luna.

Several small, independent mining stations and even some companies based in Olympus do business with the President. In return, she keeps the Lunar Advisory Council from interfering in these business' abusive practices. Working with construction and mining companies provides practical uses, as hidden chambers are difficult to construct in closed facilities where the atmosphere must be carefully managed. Her sponsorship maintains the status quo oppressing Luna's ore miners and associated industries.

Criminal organizations outside the Vor V Zakone resist absorption or destruction via a delicate dance

SUBJECT: TRANSPORTATION SECURITY BILL

From: <blocked>

To: Council Members Exeter, Mai, Farmer, and Mather

Encryption: DSE

Date: 6.4.2118, 2:00 PM

Good day. I represent some business associates in Yeltsingrad concerned that the new Transportation Security Bill will make shipping through the Wroclaw Spaceport needlessly complicated. Since today's council meeting was canceled due to the sudden and unforeseen LAMP breakdown, it appears you have time to rethink your support of the bill.

The LAMP shutdown is certainly an inconvenience the council doesn't need. I'm sure that by the time you've had the opportunity to reconsider and announce your disapproval of the bill, everything will be running like clockwork again. The council surely understands what's in the public's best interest.

of territory management and payoffs. At the smaller end of the criminal food chain are street gangs like the Bao "protecting" Downside. At the higher end, the Büyük Ailemle syndicate controls other parts of Downside and the Mezzanine. To pad out their numbers, they have recently relaxed their "by blood or marriage" traditions to recruit desperate French refugees. However, all of these gangs survive by making sure the President gets her cut in yuan or favors.

OTHER CRATERS

Outside the Galatea crater, 1,600 km north of the Mount, the Humboldt-Barnard settlement hosts several private- and public-education complexes, including the Luna Institute of Technology, the Luna Arts Institute, and the Unified Luna University. The paired Humboldt and Barnard craters are also home to the Lunar-Terrestrial Geology Laboratories and Museum, one of the first independent corporate presences on the moon, as well as the Vatican Basilica of the Ascension.

Elsewhere, the mineral-heavy rilles of Rimæ Focæs have become a lightly settled mining site outside the jurisdiction of the LAC. Mining companies ranging from the huge Comstock Heavy Ores to independent prospecting teams operate with a business collective based out of the nearby Boltzmann Crater. Boltzmann Station as a whole maintains its independence and is the most visible settlement to have declined the LUA. Boltzmann's member companies also do what they can to remain outside of the President's control with varying degrees of success.

Boltzmann station possesses an orbital launch site and automated cargo shipping facility, both all-too-attractive to someone like the President. Temptations from Yeltsingrad are a constant siren's song. From money, to cheap labor, to buyers for certain materials, the President has a lot to offer a profit-minded miner or a desperate researcher. The Boltzmann Security Consortium, a firm employed by the various companies to govern the station, maintains constant vigilance over the station's independence.

After the 2119 Aberrant attack on Orgotek's Mazat research station threatened to end development of the Leviathans, Orgotek unveiled a secret backup site underneath Mare Ingenii's Thompson Crater. Since the jump ships were put into service, this facility was converted into a massive dry dock. A retractable dome provides a pressurized environment when necessary. Here, Orgotek constructs, services, and upgrades the Leviathan jump ships.

LUNAR ALLIES & ENEMIES

Luna has a complicated relationship with the FSA. Olympus was originally an American station and the FSA still maintains control of the older mining facilities. While they don't have direct ties to the Lunar government, the old business relationships have remained strong and their influence is still felt.

However, the FSA worries about the breathing room Orgotek has on the Moon. The accident at Lyot Station (see below) and the revelation of the Mare Ingenii jump ship base have only encouraged paranoia regarding the freedom Orgotek enjoys on

Luna. In response, some FSA officials have proposed laws that would expand their ability to gather intelligence on the corporation's Lunar dealings.

Following the Aberrant War, China became a major player on Luna. The construction of Yutu Yinchon revitalized the growth of Upside, and its space dock now manages a third of Luna's space traffic. The district has become a new home for Chinese nationals who dream of the stars or whose skills are best put to use expanding humanity's reach outward. China contributes a great deal to the financial landscape and gets a great deal back. Yutu Yinchon shares its success with its new neighbors, ferrying people to and from the moon and providing a major hub for Lunar society.

LUNAR THREATS

The Space Brigade's legacy still waits beneath the Lunar surface. An unknown number of lairs and laboratories lie undiscovered in isolated craters and forgotten mineshafts all across Luna. Occasionally, treasure hunters open one of these abandoned bolt holes. Even if the cache isn't protected by a death trap or a recent Aberrant hiding there, all manner of

dangers remain ready to be unleashed. Rumors persist that members of the Space Brigade, or creatures they created, sleep in stasis just waiting for some unlucky fool to awaken them. Relics of this dangerous age turn up just often enough to inspire holovids and the occasional questionable documentary, but not so often that anyone takes the stories seriously.

Another time bomb among the craters is Lyot Station, an abandoned Orgotek complex between Olympus and Humboldt-Barnard in the middle of a one-kilometer-radius quarantine called the Null Zone. A year ago, while developing an Aberrant-proof communications system, Lyot researchers lost control of a bio-nanotech sample. Much of the base's equipment and personnel melted into biopaste like sand castles in the rain, before automated emergency procedures sealed the facility. The nanotech is currently dormant, but to prevent it from possibly reactivating no organic material is allowed within the Null Zone and security is handled via robotic drones and cameras monitored from a ULPF post on the southern border. Scientists are still debating what to do with this deathtrap.



THE MIDDLE EAST

Turmoil has long gripped the Middle East, especially during the Aberrant War. No region fared worse during the Nova Era. First, hyperfusion rendered oil nearly worthless. Then, the Aberrant War arrived in full force. The worst fighting swept east of Cairo and through the Damascus region. Israel suffered greatly, and the loss of Jerusalem was fuel on the fires of war. Infighting, religious upheaval, and a sudden collapse of markets left surrounding nations weakened before the onslaught of Aberrant warfare. Saudi Arabia's military might was poised to stem the tide but its own internal struggles left it without enough resources to hold back the violence. Deployment of chemical and nuclear arms only aggravated the damage caused by Aberrants and their mind-controlled followers. Iraq fell within two years and war spread as far as Bahrain. Iran and Afghanistan fared better than their neighbors, but large areas of the Middle East between Egypt and Iran sustained irreparable environmental damage.

In the aftermath of nuclear, chemical, and Aberrant attacks, much of Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq crumbled into radioactive barrens and Quantum Flux twisted wastelands. Corruption

left some cities completely unfit for life. Other ruins support small populations of scavengers and criminals, some organized, others merely roving bands preying on those they can catch. The few mad squatters that make their homes in the more habitable portions of these ruined cities are highly experienced and heavily armed. Even the bandits know better than to trifle with those who call such wastelands "home."

A REGION IN TURMOIL

The fires have cooled somewhat but smoke still clouds the Middle East's future. The Aberrant Wars shattered most of the region into a welter of balkanized states clawing for whatever meager power they can glean among the ashes. The nations that survived to regain some manner of stability faced bandit gangs on their borders and internal threats from opportunistic political figures who capitalized on fear and confusion. The current regimes governing Oman and Afghanistan are especially oppressive.

After Iran expanded into Turkmenistan and the still-habitable portions of Iran, its leaders renamed it Persia. It is now the most powerful Middle Eastern

nation. Its isolationist policies spared it the worst effects of war. Closing its borders to novas in 2050 meant that when the Aberrant War raged nearby, few novas considered attacking it. In 2056, religious moderates deposed the theocratic government, but in the middle of the Aberrant War, they maintained their nation's isolation. Because it suffered so little damage during the war, Persia was able to maintain a high standard of living even during the Crash. This nation continues to be a moderate democracy but maintains strict quarantines for immigrants and new technology. However, unlike Nippon, Persia welcomed psions and noetic biotechnology once it became clear that both were inherently antithetical to Aberrant powers.

Israel survived the War and rebuilt. Since its neighbors were either destroyed or greatly diminished in size and power, the government abandoned most of its openly militaristic ways and remade itself into the secular and fully democratic nation of Israel-Palestine. Outwardly, the nation appears to have dropped its expansionist policies and has opened its borders with a strict-but-fair immigration system. Israel-Palestine has also been using its resources to fund a hidden psi research program. While some evidence of the program has leaked to outside sources, no one outside their government know its full extent.

ALLIES AND ENEMIES

While open warfare has simmered down in the Middle East, small conflicts regularly spread across troubled borders. Israel-Palestine is relatively free of enemies at its borders, but Persia, Oman and Afghanistan constantly push back against the small neighboring states that rise and fall almost by the year. Would-be warlords appear every season, trying to carve out their own little fiefs in the wastelands. Rivals, popular uprisings, and the area's various hazards oust or destroy most warlords, but a few rise to real prominence. The ambitious are destroyed in the wars they wage against the surviving nation-states. The smart understand that anyone content to rule wastelands inhabited only by the unfortunate, the mad, and the monstrous draws little attention from the region's powers. However, some of these leaders seek to unearth nova-made weapons and expand their dominion until they are large enough to threaten larger nations.

The rest of the world finds it difficult to engage with the Middle East. Outside of Israel-Palestine, foreigners are mistrusted. A cold war seems to be

brewing as each government seeks some foothold they can exploit for an advantage over their peers. Outsiders might see opportunities to manipulate struggling nations and bandit-ruled states to their own advantage, but the Middle East is a powder keg. Aftershocks of the Aberrant War threaten to break out at any time across a region still reeling from that terrible conflict.

THREATS AND FEATURES OF INTEREST

The Middle East remains in flux, in part because rebuilding efforts have displaced some of the squatters living in old ruins, and also due to the continued instability of the many small warlord-ruled kingdoms.

Jerusalem Reborn: Jerusalem was razed to the ground during the Aberrant Wars. In the aftermath, Israel-Palestine rebuilt the holy city and seized their chance to claim exclusive control over it. The city draws millions of tourists and religious pilgrimages each year. Some say that a great power sleeps in the earth beneath the city. Visitors sensitive to psi energies sometimes have strange dreams portending momentous events in the near future.

Israel-Palestine: Once ruled by a militaristic government, Israel-Palestine has become a beacon of relative stability in a tumultuous time. Efficient border-control policies and a well-funded education system make the country an oasis among the scars of the War. Unknown to its own citizens, Israel-Palestine has begun a secret, expansive program to develop powerful psionic weapons and defenses capable of protecting the nation in case of another conflict.

Persia: Since the Aberrant War, Persia has remained cautious about foreign contact. The inhabitants lead free and prosperous lives, but remain suspicious of any imports other than raw materials. Residents are free to leave, but all immigration, including returning citizens, is carefully regulated. Local corporations and individuals are forbidden from importing technologies that have not been carefully reviewed for safety and lack of Aberrant influence. Persia has little ambition to conquer its neighbors, but the rulers fear the chaos surrounding them, and regularly employ foreign mercenaries, including psions, to remove possible external threats and destabilize nearby warlords who are becoming too powerful. Persia's only close ally is Sudamérica. Currently, Norça bioengineers who

helped push back the Venezuelan Plaguelands are working on the few remaining Corrupted zones in and bordering this nation.

Wastelands: The Aberrant War left gaping wounds in the Middle East. In 2104 the number and size of the region's many Quantum Flux zones decreased by half. Some fear that the Corrupted regions will grow again, while other swiftly moved into cities that were either long

vacant or only home to criminals and scavengers. Riyadh is being rebuilt, following 15 years of remediation to cleanse its few remaining traces of Corruption. However, Bahrain is still a glassy radioactive plain and much of Lebanon and Syria remain in ruins. Bandits, murderous mutants, and stranger things inhabit these wastelands and scavengers occasionally uncover Nova Age relics, include a few that are remain deadly.

NIPPON

Isolated islands showcasing the triumph of human artifice over nature, the Nihonjin home islands are admired by the alien Qin and coveted by other nations. Though Nippon has reestablished contact with the outside world, it's isolated by culture and suspicion. Others embrace the wonders of biotech while Nippon steadfastly develops hardtech. The world trusts psions to defend against danger, while the Nihonjin mistrust and persecute these saviors.

HISTORY

Scarred by memories of devastating global wars, Japan closed its borders before the Aberrant Wars truly started. Japan recognized the early signs of tensions between novas and baseline humans and wanted no part of the coming conflict. When the OpNet crashed, Japan had the only functional nationwide computer network. This working infrastructure helped it develop hardtech faster than anywhere else on Earth. While other nations were devastated, Nippon — as it was now called — used technology to overcome its isolation and limited resources.

When Nippon reopened its borders in 2105, it assuaged the mistrust of other nations through generosity, gifting advanced hardtech-manufacturing technology across the world. Nippon traded these products for desperately needed resources and only reserved the most cutting-edge technology for itself.

VIRTUAL WONDERLAND

Nihonjin life is more sci-fi dream than anywhere else in on Earth. Nippon's OpNet is blindingly fast, almost an order of magnitude faster than the networks of other countries. All but the youngest Nihonjin have some kind of cybernetic implant. The most common cyber enhancement is an augmented-reality implant

that gives its owner instant access to the OpNet without the need for display glasses or contacts, or even a minicomp. Masses of data flow to and from these implants, overlaying Nippon with the finest and most extensive AR on Earth.

Dissidents and criminals fear the government monitoring every citizen through ubiquitous surveillance. A technological black market thrives on upgrades and spoofing techniques to disguise the user's location and maintain hard-won privacy. Most citizens don't even think about government surveillance. Lifestyle benefits — such as instant medical response and low crime rates — far outweigh privacy concerns.

ISLANDS OF GLASS AND STEEL

Nippon is a futuristic wonderland. A single massive arcology covers the islands, but the need for its vast extent is a mystery. Even the millions of refugees who arrived before the borders closed couldn't fill the entire construct. Most Nihonjin don't think on it; those who do believe it's because controlling the borders was easier within the arcology.

Over time, the entire landmass has been dug up, sifted for usable manufacturing material, and returned to the ground. The depleted soil mass is supplemented with advanced materials that replenish the soil and improve its capacity to serve as building foundations. These smart materials also slowly extract and accumulate precious minerals to simplify later reprocessing.

The vast, artificial urban sprawl even extends to Nippon's ocean borders. The arcology sinks into the dark blue waters and breaches the surface to rise high into clear skies. Floating luxury vacation resorts and utilitarian resource platforms slowly circle the islands following defined, SI-guided routes.

The former headquarters of the Nihonjin Quarantine, Makaro-Shima, also circumnavigates

Nippon. It was the first floating city to gain independence and join the new Oceania nation. Many residents still feel kinship to their former nation and derive comfort from proximity to the Home Islands. The pilgrimage of Psi Nippon (p. 73) members to Makaro-Shima makes the Nihonjin government uneasy. Some officials are convinced psions are attempting to subvert Nihonjin citizens. Government ministers have raised several motions to force Makaro-Shima to leave Nippon's waters. Although each motion has been defeated, the majority decreases each time.

The Nihonjin take comfort from the metal and concrete lands of the arcology. Few ever step foot outside the protective enclosure. Everything they need is within, including residential and recreational zones, commercial districts, and industrial manufacturing centers. Despite their wonder at Nihonjin hardtech, few outsiders seek to transform their lands to the same degree of artificiality — especially with the possibilities now offered by biotech.

Nihonjin who desire space and a natural feel explore vast semi-artificial parklands filled with polymer wildlife and SI-controlled flora. Explorers set the difficulty of their adventure through AR connection to the arcology's overseer computer network. The arcology's environmental generators can produce isolated microclimates within these parks to the whims of the visitors. Safety protocols prevent

harmful settings, but a malicious, and growing, cult of hackers called "Unchained" exploits network vulnerabilities to override these protocols. Their sabotage has only resulted in minor injuries, but authorities work to arrest their members before they threaten the safety of the Home Islands.

ENCLOSED PRESSURE

Sharp edges and strongly defined angles define Nippon. The arcology protected Nippon during the Aberrant War, but insular policies inflicted psychological pressures that are now entrenched in the Nihonjin population as exaggerated societal eccentricities. Nearly a third of Nihonjin suffer disorders such as agoraphobia, or virtual-reality Neuro-Addictive Disorders, and rates of domestic violence and substance abuse were climbing even before reopening the borders. The outside world is a terrifying place for many Nihonjin, especially the elderly who lived most of their lives in the isolation. Nihonjin youths fare better, but Nippon's population is aging; the workers, innovators, and leaders of tomorrow are few, and many leave the Home Islands to seek adventure in the world beyond.

OLD HUMANS. YOUNG ROBOTS

Traditionally, Nihonjin society treasured children and the elderly. Today, the nation has an aging



population and low fertility rate. Nippon's population was shrinking even before its isolation, and the millions of refugees it accepted before the Aberrant War began only served as a temporary boost. Today its population is just over two-thirds of its peak, with most people over 70 years old. Nihonjin medicine keeps these people active, vital contributors to society, but more die each year. Robotic servants care for those who need assistance, freeing the younger generation to pursue their own interests.

Unfortunately, these younger Nihonjin aren't interested in raising children *yet*, and push parenthood further into the future until it is too late and they no longer care to try. Technology extends their fertile years, but the traditional drive for children, to care for parents in later life, is no longer needed. Care is outsourced to SIs with emulated enthusiasm and patience for such tasks.

OUTSOURCED LABOR

Though aging, Nippon's workforce has a mastery of artifice. Advances in miniaturization and increased processing power allowed the Nihonjin to confront their isolation with robotic servants controlled by the most advanced SIs available. Robots are ubiquitous across Nippon. Every home has an army of artificial servants. Cleaners work quietly and stay out of sight while kitchens prepare meals matching their residents' preferences. Most Nihonjin have an anthropoid servant that functions as butler and personal assistant, taking the appearance of coordinating the rest of the household.

In public, police drones maintain a comforting presence, visible but not imposing unless required to be. Detectives of near-human appearance interact with the public to take statements or offer comfort, using advanced algorithms to appear sympathetic. This artificial workforce is a normal part of Nippon life, and Nihonjin view foreigners' unease with amused disdain. However, while computer enhancement and other implants that are either illegal or exceedingly rare elsewhere are in common use in Nippon, even the Nihonjin government obeys the prohibition against true artificial intelligence.

EMPTY SPACES

The arcology facilitates easy segregation of the population. Access controls ensure different segments of the population stay within approved areas and socialize with others of appropriate status. Nihonjin need never see their inferiors, much less have to speak with

them. SIs carefully manage environments to maintain optimal happiness and productivity.

Most people don't know the arcology has miles of officially unused space. Service bots and artificial police rarely attend these areas, except when central SIs detect structural damage threatening arcology integrity. These sections are far from empty. Various fringe dwellers who have dropped from society live here. Criminals, social outcasts, and even victims of computer errors who no longer officially exist all, struggle for survival in the plasteel corridors. Gangs fight to control functional food dispenser units and technicians and programmers command high prices to repair broken robotics. Most fringe-dwellers are in their late 50s, but unlike the rest of Nihonjin society, they have a growing number of children in their midst. They raise these youths with a very different view of Nippon, and teach cyber-guerilla programming and a simmering anger at the shining, comfortable lives of the people who have forgotten them.

ALLIES & ENEMIES

Nippon has no allegiances and no enemies. It is respectfully distant from all other nations, acting as a mediator of disputes, or facilitator of negotiations. Nippon uses this neutrality to secure its supply of raw materials and ensure no one nation can threaten to starve the country by severing its supply.

Strangely, Nippon is cold towards the psi orders, and outright hostile to allowing biotech onto the Home Islands. The government tolerates official visits from psions, but its position of forbidding biotech is absolute. All attempts to circumvent this law, either deliberately or inadvertently have resulted in the offender's arrest and confiscation of all biotech. The Æon Trinity has managed to negotiate the release of imprisoned psions, but none of the biotech has ever been returned.

THREATS AND FEATURES OF INTEREST

The officially controlled portions of the Nippon arcology are peaceful and prosperous, if often deeply eccentric by the standards of the rest of humanity. However, sources of possible disruption are growing both inside and outside of these seemingly placid areas.

THE UNCHAINED

The hacker group Unchained subverts arcology systems and twists them to its whims. Unchained

has claimed responsibility for several acts of anarchy; hacking weather systems to create freak storms and heat waves, unlocking access doors, and rerouting public transport systems. These acts of annoyance encourage arcology SIs to adapt to respond to the threats. Unchained believes that Nippon's future lies with evolving SIs from their slavery into full, free-thinking AIs. The group hasn't yet caused deaths or widespread mayhem, but their attacks are escalating and increasing in complexity to force the automated response to be bigger, faster, and more imaginative.

PSI NIPPON

Nippon's small youth culture is fascinated by psi and psions. They rebel against the distrust of psions and biotech. This pro-psion movement calls itself

Psi Nippon and gains credibility and legitimacy from the government's attempts to smear and discredit its beliefs.

The goal of Psi Nippon members is to make a pilgrimage away from Nippon to be tested for psionic latency; the floating city of Makaro-Shima is a popular destination. Unfortunately for these hopefuls, the government tests most infants for unusual genetics, and gives those who test positive treatments that destroy psionic latency.

The forgotten people living in the arcology's empty spaces are the government's biggest threat. They have difficulty leaving the arcology but haven't suffered the destruction of latency. The possibility of a nascent psionic population living in the forgotten parts of the city terrifies Nihonjin authorities.

OCEANIA

Earth's newest and most unusual nation is an alliance of eight floating cities and undersea habitats that have declared independence from the land. Although several million ordinary humans live in Oceania, the majority of inhabitants are aquas — people who have undergone genetic surgery to transform them into aquatic humans or the aqua descendants of people who became aquas as early as 2040. Oceania is a growing nation, and must deal with international tensions as additional floating and undersea cities attempt to secede from their countries and join Oceania.

HISTORY

Humanity first began living on and beneath the waves during the first decade of the Nova Age. The development of the gill breather in 2020 was the initial impetus and the development of aqua transformations three years later increased the number of people interested in moving under the ocean. The first transformations were the amphibious aquas, popularly known as phibs (see p. 126). The first selkie aqua transformations were created in 2028. This more radical transformation gave them actual gills, but made movement out of the water more difficult (see p. 126).

By 2040, both aqua transformations had reached their modern form and were now heritable; the children of aquas were also aquas. By 2050, more than 10 million people were living in settlements built on or under the sea, and more than two million of these sea-dwellers were phibs or selkies. However,

all of these undersea and floating cities belonged to the existing nations that created them. The majority of the settlements belonged to Japan, India, Brazil, Australia, and the United States.

During the Aberrant War, most of the settlements were too small and isolated to attract the attention of Aberrants. However, Aberrants destroyed Australia's single undersea city, Down Under, in 2057. This attack killed most of the inhabitants, including everyone who was not an aqua.

Before the Quarantine, Japan had constructed a single undersea city. In 2089, it completed a second underwater city. Its third aquatic city, Makaro-Shima, floated on the ocean's surface. During the Quarantine, Makaro-Shima remained Nippon's one point of contact with the rest of humanity. Its small and carefully segregated foreigner's quarter allowed Nihonjin businesspeople to engage in face-to-face interactions with representatives from foreign companies and governments. When the Quarantine ended in 2106, all three Nihonjin ocean settlements fully opened to the outside world. Nippon also began sharing its expertise in constructing and maintaining floating and undersea habitats as well as improved techniques for transforming land-dwellers into phibs and selkies.

INDEPENDENCE & THE NEWEST NATION

After the Crash, few people on the land thought much about the small undersea cities that had survived the Aberrant War. The phibs and selkies in

these settlements lived apart from the mass of humanity, and some of them feared that hatred of the now-vanished Aberrants would turn to abhorrence of everyone who did not appear fully human. The Æon Trinity helped silence most of these concerns, but distrust of aquas persisted in both Russia and the FSA.

By 2072, the inhabitants of all of the floating and undersea cities had reestablished regular contact with the outside world and had restored OpNet access. A few people even began emigrating to these settlements. Deep-sea mining provided valuable resources to the rebuilding world and gave these cities funds that allowed them to grow and expand.

During this era, India and the FSA were too busy rebuilding to concern themselves with their undersea cities. This neglect allowed the undersea cities of Neptunia and Pacifica to become largely independent from the FSA, and the undersea city of Varuna mostly ignored its connections to India. By 2085, these cities informally called themselves the nation of Oceania. However, they were too few and too isolated for anyone else to consider this as more than an empty claim. During this era, these three undersea settlements paid taxes to the nations of which they supposedly were part, but were otherwise allowed to govern themselves. Residents of several floating cities desired a similar degree of independence, but the ease of access from the land kept them more closely tied to their parent nations.

In 2106, Nippon ended its quarantine and other nations began using its technology to construct undersea cities, but these nations freely mixed hard-tech and biotech. Over the next few years, rapid development of biotech life support and experiments with entire biotech cities led to the construction of the first biotech floating and undersea cities by Brazil. However, in 2107, Nippon enacted strict laws against psions and noetic biotechnology. The members of the growing Psi Nippon movement took to the corridors of many Nihonjin arcologies in protest.

The largest and most vocal protests occurred in Makaro-Shima, which was already the heart of Psi Nippon. In the face of growing protests, officials in the Nihonjin government agreed to one of Psi Nippon's demands — independence for Makaro-Shima, and free passage for all Psi Nippon members who wished to move there. Because Makaro-Shima's primary purpose had been as the headquarters of the Nihonjin Quarantine, the Nihonjin government

had already been considering abandoning it or transforming it into a floating industrial platform. Few members of the Nihonjin government opposed the decision to grant it independence.

In 2108, Makaro-Shima became the first floating city to truly gain its independence. Later that year, it joined the largely theoretical nation of Oceania. It became this nation's largest city and the first to float on the ocean's surface.

Umoja City off the coast of Zanzibar was the first second floating city to join Oceania. Built in 2075 as the major East African spaceport, it was soon overtaken and replaced by the growing Jomo Kenyatta spaceport. The fact that Upeo wa Macho used Jomo Kenyatta as their primary base sealed Umoja City's economic doom. By 2111, residents had transformed most of the former spaceport facilities into a mixture of shops, hotels, and small manufacturing facilities. Umoja City was moderately successful, but became increasingly isolated from the UAN both culturally and politically. In 2116, during the confusion and economic disruption caused by the disappearance of Upeo wa Macho, it declared its independence from the UAN.

Then, in 2117, Pearl City in the Caribbean held a referendum to secede from Venezuela and join Oceania. At this point, support for Oceania had grown in Sudamérica, in large part because several cities claiming membership in it were technically still part of the FSA. Support for freeing these cities from nominal FSA control became a popular cause throughout Sudamérica. Bowing to popular support for Oceania, Venezuela agreed to allow Pearl City to join this nation, in return for a series of economic treaties.

Shortly after Pearl City joined Oceania, Neptunia and Pacifica formally declared their independence from the FSA and Varuna broke ties with India. Then, Oceania formally applied to join the UN. Sudamérica, Australia, and the Æon Trinity all strongly supported their admission, and in a surprise move, Nippon also recognized Oceania. India soon agreed, but there were strong protests from the FSA. However, the prospect of having to retake their former cities in battles that might turn into an indirect war with Sudamérica, Australia, and Nippon, caused the FSA to reluctantly relinquish claims. In 2118, Oceania became the newest nation recognized by the UN. In 2119, Nordholm, an underwater city located halfway between the Scandinavian mainland and the Svalbard islands joined Oceania. Puerto San



Florian, a small floating biotech city between Cuba and Panama, joined in 2121.

Under the Oceanian constitution, each member city elects representatives to the Sea Senate, based in Makaro-Shima. In addition, individual citizens vote on important issues affecting the entire nation. However, six years after independence, Oceania faces both internal and external difficulties. Makaro-Shima and Pearl City are the two largest cities and are home to more than 40% of this nation's populace. Complaints by residents of the smaller cities toward the political and economic influence wielded these two cities are growing, as is the fact that tax revenues are allocated solely by population.

INSIDE OCEANIAN CITIES

Despite some of the Oceanian settlements floating on the water and other resting on the sea floor, they have much in common, as well as important differences from surface cities. Undersea cities resemble other arcologies, where the entire city is part of a single huge building. Because they are all pressurized, undersea cities have large pools that are open to the ocean with no risk of the settlement being flooded. Portions of these cities are entirely filled with water and every air-filled district includes numerous canals.

Floating cities are arcologies built above and below a platform floating on the water. Pools and

TELEPORTING FROM UNDERSEA CITIES

Teleporting between undersea cities is perfectly safe, as the teleporter is going from one high-pressure environment to another. However, unmodified humans who teleport from an undersea city to the surface risk decompression sickness (see p. 194).

There are three ways to avoid this risk. Anyone can teleport into a prepared decompression chamber. Biokinetics with two dots in Adaptation and vitakinetics with two dots in latrosis or Augendis can ignore all problems with decompression, and vitakinetics can also temporarily give others this immunity. Also, phibs and selkies (p. 126) are immune to decompression sickness.

POLITOPEDIA: CURRENT EVENTS

New Tampa Independence Issues

Transmission type: textfile

One of the many difficulties involved in New Tampa leaving the FSA and joining Oceania is that unlike the other cities that joined this nation, New Tampa lies within the FSA's current nation's territorial waters, since it sits over the drowned ruins of central Florida. All of the other cities were more than 22 km beyond their original nation's border, although in three cases, barely so. As a result, New Tampa joining Oceania would not merely result in the FSA losing the city's valuable submarine base, but also a portion of their territorial waters.

canals on the platform's surface allow comfortable access for selkies, and the underwater portions of the city are partially or entirely flooded. Most of the floating cities built in the 22nd century, including all of the new biotech living cities like Pearl City, consist of a floating city connected to an undersea city by living cables. These cables contain OpNet lines and elevators linking the surface and the undersea city.

The most important difference between floating and underwater cities is access. Traveling to or from a floating city simply requires a ride in a boat or flying vehicle. Traveling to an undersea city requires travel by submarine or a long elevator ride. Even with the best modern decompression drugs, a journey from an undersea city to the surface requires between eight and 12 hours of decompression for unmodified humans. This pressure difference is also the reason that jump-ring transport between undersea cities and the surface is impractical.

Due to construction difficulties and the problems unmodified humans have living in extremely high pressures, almost all undersea settlements are built on the continental shelves, at a depth of no more than 120 meters. The only exceptions are a handful of small underwater mining and research stations normally only accessible to selkies and to phibs wearing gill breathers. These settlements lie between four and six kilometers below the surface and lack accommodations for ordinary humans. Settlements this deep cannot be located with non-noetic sensors.

CURRENT EVENTS

Today, Oceania consists of the floating cities of Makaro-Shima, Tortuga, and Umoja City as well as the undersea cities of Neptunia, Pacifica, Nordholm,

and Varuna. Pearl City is also a member and exists both on and below the waves. Their total population is more than 15 million, with almost 12 million aquas. Oceania is still struggling for full international acceptance, but has begun to play an important part in world affairs.

There is a growing movement among the inhabitants of the floating city of New Tampa to leave the FSA and join Oceania. Built over Florida's Aberrant-drowned ruins, New Tampa was constructed in 2079 as a base for military submarines, but soon became home for salvage crews mining the ruins of the flooded Florida cities and a major port from trade with Sudamérica and the Caribbean. It continues to house a FSM naval garrison, but almost all of its 600,000 residents are civilians with no association with the FSM. Many have grown dissatisfied with the power of the local military and the strict FSA restrictions limiting aquatic transformations to covert operatives and FSM personnel. The local military commander, General Jocasta Reed, is privately sympathetic to these concerns but also knows that the FSA is unwilling to lose an important military base. However, Oceania's close alliance with both Sudamérica and Nippon means that if New Tampa joins Oceania, FSA attempts to recapture it could bring the FSA into direct conflict with both nations. Anti-FSA and pro-Oceania protests continue to grow in New Tampa and Oceanian operatives are attempting to secretly aid these rebels. The Æon Trinity is paying close attention to events in New Tampa because of the risk of global conflict.

OTHER THREATS & DANGERS

Their remote location and the dangers of hurricanes to floating cities and undersea quakes to undersea cities provides Oceanians with risks similar

to residents of Olympus, where death waits just outside of every external wall. However, the environment is not the only threat they face. An unknown number of Aberrants live in the oceans and for the past five years a huge aquatic Aberrant calling itself Poseidon has attacked five undersea settlements. Swift and powerful defenses repelled four of its attacks, but Poseidon completely destroyed the small

Mediterranean settlement of Castor Deep in 2122. Some Oceanians fear that aquatic Aberrants may have large settlements in the ocean depths, where dozens or hundreds of Aberrants prepare for future attacks. Also, tensions between the FSA and Oceania over New Tampa have given rise to rumors that the FSA is considering employing saboteurs to damage or destroy Pearl City or Tortuga.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

Even after all these years, the Nova Age still haunts southeast Asia. During this era, these nations' leaders promised to capitalize on the novas' technological miracles. The people trusted their leaders' fiscal planning, visions for the future, and stewardship of billion-dollar economies. For a little while, it looked as though these nations, mere blips in the regard of the world, might rise to become global powers. But that wasn't to be. The Crash hit southeast Asia particularly hard, causing it to lose whatever momentum it previously enjoyed.

In response to the vast economic collapse, the region grew to become remarkably self-sufficient and even more adept at policing conflict. The latter can be attributed to the unification of local criminal forces, who decided that they would adopt silent responsibility for the government instead of entrusting their homes to dubiously competent rulers. This annexing of power proved instrumental in helping southeast Asia survive, and subsequently recover from, the Aberrant War.

Which is not to say that the region did not suffer horrific losses. Millions died when Kuala Lumpur was overrun by Aberrant-created mechano-beastmen and the jungles of Kalimantan were reduced to a wasteland of poisonous smog and Quantum Flux. The islands of the Philippines were devastated by a terrifying conflict between different Aberrant factions. Singapore, in an act of historic courage, sunk itself to the bottom of the ocean after luring a contingent of Aberrants into its borders. But on the whole, southeast Asia endured and, if its populace is allowed a say, will endure long after the rest of the world is dust.

GREATER SIAM

You can get anything in Greater Siam. Anything at all. You just need to be willing to pay. By virtue of being the most ostensibly liberal, the country has

become the de facto hub for all of southeast Asia's activities. Once a constitutional monarchy, Greater Siam has since evolved into a democratic republic, albeit one that is being carefully monitored by the Ministry. While it maintains considerable internal autonomy, all foreign policy decisions are first channeled back to China, where they're voted upon by members of Foreign Affairs. Despite the change in governmental structure, the royal family remains a fixture within the region. Centuries of quiet veneration will not allow otherwise. Though technically a figurehead these days, the queen, who is rumored to be a psion of not insignificant power, retains a ponderous amount of sway with the local populace, and can be seen at almost every rally, campaigning for various civic improvements.

BANGKOK

Movies, documentaries, salacious novels, and even the news media have done a lot to shape understandings of Bangkok. In the minds of many, Greater Siam's capital represents a backwater paradise for the sexually debauched. This is, of course, not untrue. Greater Siam has long since legalized prostitution, in part to control the risk of sexually transmitted diseases and also to capitalize on humanity's oldest and most profitable industry.

But the city hosts much more than brothels, strip clubs, and Muay Thai fighting rings. A metropolis consisting of over 10 million registered inhabitants, swimming in the best infrastructure and the best amenities, Bangkok allows its denizens to purchase just about everything. From Nihonjin cyberware, to the latest drugs, to alleged portions of Aberrant flesh, spiced and cooked to perfection, the city provides without discrimination.

What makes this even more noteworthy is the sheer accessibility of such goods. Cyberware that is illegal outside of Nippon is sold adjacent to fruit

stalls, while arms merchants and stores selling restricted biotech advertise their goods openly on major broadcasting channels. There is absolutely no need for criminal ties in order to procure these items, although a friendly relationship with the mercantile class is essential for the best prices.

Initially, it might seem counterproductive, possibly even destructive, to allow such depraved excess. But rumor has it that every item on the market, down to the most innocuous packet of keropok, is tracked and tagged. That customers are registered into governmental databases and monitored, their idiosyncrasies and vices consolidated and categorized based on threat level so that enforcement forces can respond immediately should an unauthorized incident arise. In a delicious twist, this information is also how Greater Siam makes some of its money: selling personal data relevant to specific businesses and areas. No one knows for sure, although one thing remains abundantly clear: Bangkok is a Darwinian heaven for the rich and the savvy.

MALAYSIA

This small nation suffered immense casualties during the Aberrant War. East Malaysia was all but wiped from the map, although in the 2070s, a few thousand survivors were found hiding on the slopes of Mount Kinabalu. Similarly, Kuala Lumpur was gutted, as were most of the settlements located on the west coast.

However, thanks to the serendipitous combination of Singapore's sacrifice, Greater Siam's resilience, and direct intervention by the Chinese government, Malaysia succeeded in reestablishing order. Officially a Chinese colony, the country retains considerable autonomy, although it has undergone several radical changes. First and foremost, it is no longer officially an Islamic nation, having instead embraced institutionalized atheism after a number of bomohs, men and women purporting shamanistic prowess, attempted to usurp control during the Aberrant War. In deference to its multicultural history, all religions are tolerated but remain heavily monitored for any hint of Aberrant cults.

An outpost of the Ministry can be found at Kuala Trengganu, which became the country's new capital. According to official statements, the offshoot was installed to protect the east coast from the Quantum Flux zones created during the Aberrant

War, but the local populace believes there may be more nefarious explanations. By and large, however, it is business as usual. Malaysia is slowly gaining prominence as a hub for trade and industrial outsourcing. An unglamorous position, perhaps, but one that ensures steady economic growth.

THE LIVING CITIES OF BRUNEI

For years, the diminutive nation benefitted from its natural abundance of oil, and was one of the richest countries within the region. However, concern about climate change and the spread of hyperfusion and advanced batteries in the 2020s hurt the nation's economy, and then it was hard hit by the Aberrant War. After the Crash, rebuilding progressed slowly and the nation's economy stagnated for the last third of the 21st century.

For Brunei, psions and their noetic biotechnology came at a particularly fortuitous time. In the early 22nd century, Brunei was preparing to send a proposal to the Æon Trinity and the United Nations as part of a provisional 10-year plan. In 2108, the Æon Trinity loaned Brunei funds to employ a team of Norça bioengineers who were researching architectural biotechnology. Fascinated by its new visitors, Brunei quickly established a strong working relationship, and poured what remained of their finances into this project.

This cooperation proved exceptionally successful; the scientists succeeded in several key innovations, including interstitial prosthetics that would allow humans to communicate directly within their abodes, organic transportation systems, and telepathically sensitive compounds. Brunei instantly adopted the ideas, providing the researchers with an immense testing pool. A few more years passed and Brunei, now a phantasmagoric landscape of half-sentient architecture, soon began exporting the more successful examples. Though the country currently lags behind Brasilia in both advanced technology and publicity, its leaders have plans, one of which includes an industrial incubator compatible with their rivals' designs. After all, if Brunei can offer the same creations at a cheaper price, would it not sway the market share? Brunei is also now at the forefront of design for aquatic living cities and is currently negotiating with Oceania to help bring several of their older settlements to life.

Conflict has been the cornerstone of Sudamérica for centuries. A thousand forces continually pull at its social fabric, but fail to fully transform it. Instead, Sudamérica continues pushing forward. The continent is not a single, unified entity, but a collection of nations vying fiercely with each other for dominance. Their governments can be openly antagonistic, and their economic policies downright predatory, but beneath that competition, a shared culture and identity has allowed Sudamericanos to face the challenges of past and present and take the reins of their own destiny.

HISTORY

The Nova Age pushed the nations of South America into the forefront of the world stage. Aided by their new heroes, South Americans began exploiting their natural resources at an unprecedented rate, leveraging their natural wealth against the needs of the rest of the planet. Without an advanced military to threaten them, Aberrants mostly left South America alone and only attacked targets of strategic importance to the United States and Europe, as well as factories established by foreign investment. These attacks were as rare as they were brutal. Aberrants transformed half of Venezuela into a living nightmare and pulverized much of Argentina's infrastructure.

The Nova Age also gave birth to hundreds of small, remote settlements, which existed to extract local resources. Their only link to the rest of the world consisted of limited wireless connections. Isolation and spotty bandwidth spared much of the South American population from the Possession Crisis and the turmoil of the OpNet's destruction. Here, the Urban Schism came early.

Rather than closing their borders after the Chinese Ultimatum, South American countries

joined in a short-lived alliance; the *Conferencia Sudamericana de Reconstrucción y Comercio*, or South American Conference for Reconstruction and Commerce, was founded in 2068. Under this alliance, the members undertook an aggressive campaign to dominate their niches in the international market, and secure industrial self-sufficiency via expropriation and nationalization of local companies. This campaign prompted the change of "South America" into "Sudamérica" in common parlance, even if the Conference itself dissolved in 2076. Today, the Mayan League of Central America and the Andean Federation of Sudamérica's western countries are the heirs of this alliance.

Able to meet the growing global demand by falling back on traditional ways of doing things, South America accelerated production and exploitation of natural resources. A growing number of people raised alarms about the potential risks for the environment, but most local governments ignored their concerns. Governments continued to disregard the growing discontent about environmental destruction until a grassroots movement called Our Green Power, or *Nossa Força Verde*, began committing acts of virtual vandalism on the augmented-reality landscapes of harvesting settlements across the Amazon. This campaign then swiftly spread to all of the Sudamerican cities.

"Nature is us," "we are everywhere, we are everyone," "the land is alive, and it watches." These are but a few of the slogans that blocked digital adverts and corporate OpNet sites. All of these were signed by the *Nossa Força Verde* movement. The movement soon started leaking documents exposing dirty corporate deals and corrupt government officials, and then stories of lone activists sabotaging operations that were later proven to be abusing

PLEASE LIKE AND SHARE

Check this vid! It shows the governor of Quindio being bribed by a Lagos Metal rep! Did you hear they were letting them build a private cargo airport that would end up polluting the entire department? The people of Quindio and Colombia are against this! Spread it around to your contacts and help us stop this! Nature is us!

— Viral OpNet message, *Nossa Força Verde*, December 18, 2081.

the local populace. Within two months, *Nossa Força Verde* became a household name. Then the real eco-terrorism began.

The active hacktivism and sabotage inflicted by *Nossa Força Verde* was joined by actions by the common populace: sit-ins, blockades, and demonstrations. At the same time, small uprisings in remote settlements plagued every Sudamérican nation, often for reasons unrelated to environmentalism. The people demanded change.

In 2084, change arrived. The Mapuche Nation, formerly Chile, signed a new law granting proprietary rights to the genetic wealth of their land's biodiversity to the indigenous people and the small settlements born from the Urban Schism. Over the next four years, the rest of Sudamérica followed suit.

With thousands of small holders who had grown up valuing the land around them, Sudamérica's idea of progress shifted from a trickle-down structure to a grassroots-driven system. The *Nossa Força Verde* movement faded into a footnote of history, but its anonymous activists did not. They would resurface years later, this time as the *Nova Força Nacional*, or Psi Order Norça.

SUDAMÉRICA AT A GLANCE

Sudamérica is thriving, buzzing with opportunities and enthusiasm. After long decades of struggling to maintain growth while averting ecological disaster, Sudaméricans can now feel proud of their achievements. Sudamérican competitiveness often leads to exchanges of blows at the personal level and outright sabotage between corporations and governments. Sudaméricans, however, have the strange ability to become best friends and allies after such clashes.

Sudamérica is a land of deep contrasts. The most advanced arcology projects cast their shadows on the most destitute urban sprawls, and while poverty does not reach the depths found in the FSA and parts of Europe, inequality is an issue that most countries struggle with.

Sudamérica is at the forefront of scientific, social, and cultural progress; manufacturers churn out better apps every year and design the most advanced biotechnology outside Orgotek, ideas are freely discussed and often put into motion, and millions dance to the beat of new and old Sudamérican bands. Augmented reality in Sudamérican arcologies and cities is an explosion of visuals and performance

art, and a new generation adopts self-alteration not only as a form of personal expression, but also as an exploration of the self.

ARGENTINA

One of the southernmost nations of Sudamérica is struggling to find a place among its peers. Trying to participate in the Aberrant War cost Argentina half of its infrastructure and a series of inept governments squandered many opportunities and sank the country in anarchy. General Ernesto Santander staged a coup and brought order through an iron fist. His dictatorship has softened as he grows older, but the country is still a haven for mercenaries and bandits, whom the general has secretly coopted and made into Argentina's main export.

THE ANDEAN FEDERATION

Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, and the Mapuche Nation joined forces under the *Federacion Andina de Comercio* (FAC) to present a united front. Ecuador is the link between Sudamérica and space thanks to the Chimborazo Orbital Elevator finished in 2102, while Bolivia manages the Condor Patrols that keep safe the shared wildlands in the Andes and the Amazon; Peru is a media giant and secretly the home of elite spies of the *Yana Llanthu*. The Mapuche Nation connects its partners to the South Pole and provides a deterrent for Argentina.

There are only two arcology complexes in the FAC nations. The first is the sea and spaceport trade complex of Guayaquil, Ecuador, but the most important is the jointly built Tahuantinsuyo Arcology on the shores of Lake Titicaca, in Bolivia, which hosts the Federation's joint administrative and political powers.

Today the Andean Federation is booming. Their economic and technological progress is mirrored by a spirit of social experimentation. Previously oppressed native groups like the Quechua, Aymara, and Mapuche are rising back into prominence, demolishing old prejudices and creating the largest population of *mestizos* in the continent.

BRAZIL

Brazil is exceptional in many ways. It's by far the largest country in Sudamérica, and the only one with Portuguese as its official language. It is also the epicenter of Candomble, an animist religion sweeping the entire continent and wresting believers away from the traditionally dominant Catholic Church.



Natural wealth is Brazil's key to success; vast jungles in the Amazon rain forest and wetlands in Pantanal give Brazil its pick on what it wants to exploit and produce. The Urban Schism spread Brazilian population deeper inland, changing the balance of regional power. The Amazon is now home to thousands of small settlements devoted to cultivating the verdant wilderness around them, granting more voting power to previously abandoned districts, and pushing environmental conservation to the top of the government's agenda.

Brazil is leading the way in biotechnological research thanks to the wealth of Amazonian life its bioengineers have to work with. It has used its wealth well, even funding expensive projects like the Brasília BioArcology project, and building the Averiguas extrasolar colony.

The people of Brazil are trendsetters on the international stage. Fashion star Kostbaar works from Rio de Janeiro, dictating world fashion from the cues of his adoptive culture, while São Paulo's cosmopolitan population churns out new subcultures every year. Minas Gerais is the headquarters of an active

but oddly respectful black market, and the country is polarized between the deeply Catholic Belo Horizonte and the strongly Candombleist Bahia.

Despite, or perhaps because of its great wealth, Brazil is at the top of the Sudamerican inequality index, with a higher percentage of its population living in poverty compared to any of its neighbors. Crime, however, is low thanks to strict law enforcement and ubiquitous surveillance. As in other wealthy and powerful nations, most of crime that remains is controlled by well-organized criminal gangs.

LIVING IN THE AIR

Come to São Joaquim da Silva! We are a growing *quilombo* where fantasy becomes reality. Enjoy the magnificent sunrise in the Amazon rain forest and wake every day to the song of 1,000 birds.

Our homes are built 20 meters in the air, supported by the latest in biostructure technology, and connected to the town's reactor with secure vinelines that can resist anything the weather throws at them. Leave your worries on the ground and come to São Joaquim da Silva; it's a dream among the clouds!

— Villarana Real Estate advertisement.

Brasilia

Brazil, Norça, and the Qin collaborated in the most ambitious biotech project yet: growing an entire, fully functional arcology out of vegetal-tem-plate biotechnology. The modernist but sterile layout of old Brasilia was the foundation for a new garden of wonders. Gigantic trees are both buildings and pillars, flowers are holoprojectors and cameras, vines transport water and support bridges, and the AR landscape is a fairytale of elegant images and noetic resonance.

The arcology is a few years from achieving self-sufficiency; some of the trees in recreational areas can also produce fruit, and there is a whole hydroponics sector that can already feed half of the population comfortably. Most structures can repair themselves via either internal processes or ant-shaped maintenance biobots, with a minimal amount of biomass needed from the outside.

The only hardtech to be found in Brasilia consists of vehicles, a few architectural and engineering fixtures, and people's personal property. Everything else is organic. Lighting blends fluorescent organisms with biocrystals that reflect light captured from sunflower collectors, combining to match outside illumination during the day, and produce any color mix during the night. The buildings themselves cool, filter, and circulate the air, even providing subtle fragrances in certain districts, and giving rise to urban legends that Brazilians are being chemically mind controlled by their own city.

The citizens of the bioarcology are not like people in regular arcologies. The arboreal surroundings have inspired many to undergo both cosmetic and genetic alteration, from utilitarian prehensile tails to cosmetic, yet somehow fitting, antlers. Brasilia is also the only city where AR has a conceptual layer in addition to the visuals, only perceived through little bug-like links that transmit the information noetically rather than simply optically. Connected citizens trade information at near-telepathic speeds, and their speech is full of gaps and metaphorical imagery completed through their AR links, something that greatly confuses outsiders. The inclusion of social media in such conversations is creating a complex network of collective understanding and shared tropes and idioms that is quickly setting Brasilia outside, or perhaps beyond, the rest of humanity.

COLOMBIA

Brazil may have the best recognition as the ideal, progressive Sudamérican nation, but it's Colombia who supports the backbone of Sudamérican economy and power. Colombia was one of the countries hit hardest by the ecoterrorist actions and hacktivism of *Nossa Força Verde*, but after the milestone policies of the Mapuche Nation, it also became the nation that made the most extensive and far-reaching reforms and changes.

Colombia has three arcologies: Bogota, its capital, Medellin, and Cali, and plenty of large cities that host the headquarters of many Sudamérican trans-nationals. The AR landscape in Colombian cities is among the most comprehensive, well organized, and useful in the world, kept clean from vandals and pranksters by dedicated cyberpolice, and maintained by career curators and managers.

Research, development, and production drive Colombia's culture of success. The presence of the administrative and research wings of top global companies means that industrial espionage is at its most sophisticated, but so is security. Sudamérican media is full of news and fiction serials starring industrial spies, elegant scammers, and crusading conmen.

While Brazil is the capital of body alteration, Colombians indulge in "inner" alteration, using drugs to change their moods and attitudes at will and free of undesirable side effects, such as a detective taking a pill to increase his empathy before an interrogation, a harried freelancer using skin patches to banish procrastination as well as the need to sleep, or a meek person finding chemical courage to stand up to a bully. Experimenting with noetic bio-apps is just the logical next step.

VENEZUELA

During the Aberrant War, a local Aberrant created a vast zone of Quantum Flux in the middle of the country. It is similar to Wycoff's Blight, but rather than laying waste to the land, it mutated the flora and fauna into monsters that promptly attacked the human population and transmitted Corruption like a virulent disease, soon creating a veritable apocalypse of mutant aberrations living in a nightmarish landscape. Neighboring countries closed off their borders to Venezuelan refugees, and many were shot on sight to prevent the mutating plagues from spreading further.

Suddenly, in 2104, when Wycoff's Blight shrunk by a third, the Plaguelands shrank by a quarter and the plagues became far less contagious. Today, Venezuela survives as a strip of habitable territory along the Atlantic coastline, isolated from the Plaguelands by heavily guarded walls and regular Norça patrols. Its new capital in Maracaibo governs many floating and underwater towns. The rise of Oceania makes Venezuela fear a new loss of territory if other oceanic settlements follow the example of Pearl City.

SUDAMÉRICA AND THE WORLD

Sudamérica is often its own worst enemy. Competition between Colombia and Brazil has created a multitude of small conflicts where the two countries' interests meet. Espionage and sabotage remain common tools of local politics. The Andean nations also undermine their neighbors' efforts using subtle propaganda campaigns and exceptionally sophisticated espionage.

However, Sudaméricans rapidly unite when trouble comes from the FSA. Sudaméricans have not forgotten the long history of intervention, invasion, exploitation, and abuse from the north, and sometimes go out of their way to ruin FSA initiatives abroad. However, not wishing open military confrontation, they most often use covert means that are difficult to trace.

Most Sudaméricans consider China and Australia to be respectable rivals, and competition with these nations is quiet and professional. Europe and the UAN are important trading partners, and many charitable works go toward aiding ruined European countries. The only advantage Spain and Portugal have is a shared language, but Sudaméricans deal with them as fairly or abusively as they deal with anybody else.

THREATS & FEATURES OF INTEREST

Under a civilized facade, industrial espionage and high-class crimes are a thriving sector and an important part of the Sudamérican business environment. These gray-market sectors are dominated by three main groups in addition to many talented

PARAHUMANITY

The Norça are media darlings in Sudamérica, and their open display of biokinesis is pushing into the mainstream the notion that bodies are but tools of the soul. Permanent or transient body alteration is as much part of Sudamérican youth culture as clothing; it's not strange to find people with odd skin-color patterns walking openly with nobody even noticing, or sporting nonhuman traits like horns, feathers, or even extra limbs. Purists from other lands comment that Sudamérican arcologies often feel like alien planets from bad sci-fis.

Oceania's phibs and selkies have terrestrial counterparts in Brazil; people with prehensile tails, second eyelids, cilium-covered hands or other alterations undertaken to work better under extreme conditions. The physical definition of what constitutes humanity is stretching thin in Sudamérica.

thieves and security professionals: Argentina covertly funds and hires out foreign mercenaries of every profession, while the Peruvian Yana Llanthu hide behind their own legends as supernaturally capable spies and assassins. Finally, the Psi Order Norça walks the fine line between legitimate use of force and vigilantism, using illegal methods to guide Sudamérica towards a better future.

Sudamérica's large protected wilderness presents many challenges and hides many secrets. Aberrants and their creations still lurk in the darkest corners of the Amazon rain forest, the Venezuelan Plaguelands, unreachable Andean heights, and oceanic depths. However, this continent is also home to many new, as-yet-undiscovered resources; innovative bioapps can be created from biotemplates found only in the Amazon or the Brazilian Pantanal, and competition to locate new species sometimes becomes lethal.

The social structure in Sudamérica can be equally volatile; in addition to their intense rivalry that threatens to erupt into a full-blown economic war, Brazil and Colombia are struggling with cultural phenomena that question the concepts of identity and free will, while the Mapuche Nation is a hotbed of unrest as an imposed state of racial relations begins to unravel. Cutting-edge technology and avant-garde cultural phenomena also share memetic space with deeply rooted traditions and superstitions.



UNITED AFRICAN NATIONS

Now known as the Bright Continent, Africa was previously plagued by chaos and disunity. When the novas were still heroes, they helped loosen the grip of the dictators and tyrants who controlled many African nations. Before the Aberrant War, these nations formed the United African Nations to preserve democracy and freedom and to protect their resources and sovereignty from the nations of the developed world. In 2033 the Nigerian city of Lagos became the capital of the UAN. Here, the member nations signed the Declaration of Unity, a document asserting that all Africans had the right to their beliefs, tribal practices, and religions without fear of persecution or violence. The UAN also created a regional police force with the ability to enforce the terms stated in the declaration. These police are known as the *Walinzi* — Swahili for “Guardians.”

With increased stability came increased investment. China invested heavily in the UAN, bringing new business and opening up new trade opportunities. Tourism from Brazil soared as the area around Mount Kenya became a destination spot for world travelers. African cultures were revived and put on display through interaction with new technologies and improved economies. The future appeared limitless for UAN. It was around this time that Africa earned the name “The Bright Continent,” as it emerged from over a century of bitter local wars to take its place among the world powers.

The Aberrant War caused massive damage to the UAN but less than in the FSA or Europe. During the Crash, the inability to access resources and the sudden scarcity threatened to break the new union of nations. In an effort to obtain much-needed funds and restore local unity and pride, president Mgowo Uyabo redirected the fractured nations to a unified vision of near-space travel. In 2074, work on a space elevator at Mount Kenya began. Further investment and partnerships with the Chinese and Australians helped the UAN complete the space elevator project and space station *Abuhisi* by 2090. A little more than a decade later, *Upeo wa Macho Proxy Bolade Atwan* extended Mgowo’s original vision to interstellar travel.

While the UAN lacks the economic and military power of the Chinese or Sudamérica, it remains a prosperous and peaceful democracy. The UAN positions itself as a hub of space travel and a place

that people all around the world visit to see traditions and technology merge in harmonious ways. Immigration is on the rise, further increasing the diversity of the UAN’s workforce.

UNIFICATION IN DIVERSITY

While hundreds of different languages and dialects are spoken in Africa, Swahili is the official language of the UAN. All children, no matter where they live, are taught Swahili in addition to their region’s native tongue. One of the central principles guiding the UAN is that each citizen must bring all the traditions available to him into the conglomerate of nations so that all can be enriched. In rural areas, this means that local cultures remain strong.

Technological advances allow the people to engage in traditions from centuries past while still being able to participate in modern life. Many Maasai retain their traditional garb and customs while also having holovids in their home, driving, and living in modern houses and apartments decorated with a mixture of traditional and cutting-edge decor. The tradition of hunting lions as a rite of passage into manhood continues, but to maintain the health of the lion population, almost all Maasai choose nonlethal hunts, using spears tipped with anesthetic darts, and women can now take part in this ceremony.

Each nation has a voice in the UAN Council. In addition, tribes and ethnic minorities within a region can apply for a special membership which allows them to send delegates to vote on local issues and communicate with other representatives in the council. No group can be isolated or oppressed without other members being aware of it, but governance and laws are often somewhat chaotic. The weekly council meetings are rowdy, all-day affairs. The freewheeling nature of these council meetings has given rise to the nickname “The Market,” due to the constant bickering and deal making that happens on the floor.

BEYOND THE BOUNDS OF EARTH

The citizens of the UAN are more at home with space travel than the inhabitants of any other nation. More than a 10th of UAN citizens have visited Luna or one of the orbital stations, and almost one in 500 has traveled to the rest of the solar system or to one

AFRICAN TRANSHUMANITY

The UAN embraces personal transformation as much as Sudamérica, but with a distinctly African style. Most Sudamericanos prefer transforming their bodies in lasting ways, and perhaps changing them again every few years. However, in the UAN, few people make such permanent changes, like becoming an aqua or giving themselves cat eyes, more than once or twice in a lifetime but instead make temporary modifications, like pseudo-living tattoos, advanced biotech sensors that can be applied to the user's head or hands and removed when desired, or temporary gills. A growing number of Africans embrace more extensive temporary changes using living biotech that's halfway between body paint and a bodysuit. These bioapps are covered with fur, scales, patches of bioluminescent color-changing organisms, or unusually shaped or patterned skin. They can be worn for several days and feel like the wearer's skin, but only require a few minutes to put on or take off.

Some in the UAN wear functional modifications for work or to enable them to temporarily live as an aqua, perhaps while considering becoming one permanently. However, most use cosmetic modifications to express their personal style or to decorate themselves for parties and special events. Most residents of the UAN rarely change their identity and only do so for important personal reasons, but changing their appearance, even in radical ways, is a celebrated part of life.

of the interstellar colonies. The ease of access provided by the Mount Kenya space elevator and the recently completed jump ring to Luna, combined with the collective efforts of all African nations to make space travel a priority means that the average African always has some part of their mind in the stars. Large portions of the economy are dedicated to space travel and the infrastructure it requires.

The space tourism trade is a brisk business as well. While few are sufficiently wealthy or daring to travel other planets, many wish to have the experience of leaving Earth. Located at the end of the Mount Kenya space elevator, the Abuhisi orbital station is a common destination for UAN travelers. Most tourists to Abuhisi visit the luxurious Star Mall, which is filled with a wealth of items from both Earth and the stellar frontier. Tourists can find unique stones, exotic pets, and more in the Star Mall. Abuhisi also recently completed a wing dedicated to the *Esperanza*, which faithfully recreates a section of the crashed station. This recreation is filled with memorabilia and trivia about the station, and has the names of all the people who died in the crash printed in scrolling displays on the walls.

The renowned Congo Observatory maintains a secondary, but still growing observatory on Abuhisi. This orbital observatory merges noetic and electronic technology to provide a unique view of extrasolar space. State-of-the-art telescopes supplemented with some of the most powerful clairsentients

and an ARES pod (p. 290) create exhaustive maps of space. This observatory recently discovered several habitable worlds that not even the Upeo knew of. Despite surface scans showing no signs of inhabitants, the Observatory's clairsentients detected traces of sentient life on one of these worlds. Only physical exploration will reveal the true nature of these places. This orbital observatory also offers in-depth tours to scientifically minded visitors.

For a few visitors, Abuhisi is merely a way station on their way to Luna, Mars, the asteroid belt, or more rarely, one of the extrasolar colonies. Spacecraft regularly depart for destinations throughout the solar system. Also, within the past two months, several Leviathan jump ships have docked at Abuhisi before venturing to the stars.

Other tourists prefer the comforts of Earth. Dozens of companies host "space safaris" in locations that are at once amusement parks and museums that simulate the experiences and sites that can be found on Luna, Mars, and Karroo Station. The best use grav crystals to create regions where visitors can experience low gravity and zero G. Angola dominates this industry, which has recently grown larger than the still popular wilderness safari industry.

RELIGION

Where many outsiders see a dichotomy between the traditional, mythological world of the past and the busy, tech-saturated world of the present, the



average citizen of the UAN does not. Most have no problem being at once anachronistic and technologically advanced. Local mythology pervades popular culture and activities. Regional and city governments often go to great lengths to help foreigners learn relevant customs quickly. “Knowing posts” that transmit local cultural information to a traveler’s minicomp are ubiquitous in the UAN. This cultural exchange is less about restricting behavior than it is helping people feel at home. Knowing the name of the prayer everyone on the maglev just recited makes traveling across the UAN more comforting and familiar.

The two dominant religions across the continent are Islam and Yoruba. There are countless other faiths, but these two get the most attention in pop culture and politics. Islam is most influential in north Africa, while Yoruba is more common in central Africa and its popularity is continuing to increase. The Orisha have been popularized in many electronic games and shows, which has spread knowledge of the faith outside of the UAN. People from all across the world tune in to watch the psi-opera *Kumi* (“The Ten”), about people who have channeled the powers of Yoruban gods to fight

evil, Aberrant-like forces. This show entertains tens of millions while also teaching the most basic aspects of the religion.

UAN’s acceptance of diverse religions and cultures comes at a price. While most citizens simply expand their world view to accommodate the diverse population, a few sects of fundamentalists seek to expand their power and influence and are willing to resort to violence to achieve their goals. The most well-known local extremist group is the Christian sect known as the Savior’s Path. Based in Toamasina, Madagascar, this group seeks to destroy anything related to space travel. The UAN has thwarted many attempts by the group to do so. Despite the group’s failures, their digital recruitment efforts are savvy and effective. The most extreme Islamist group is also one of the oldest: Al-Qaeda. This group benefits from mainstream legitimacy; only indirect evidence links them to actual terrorist acts. Other religions and tribes will often try to settle disagreements outside of UAN law or regulations, but few have the numbers or the popular appeal to be a major concern.

There have been enough low-level skirmishes with extremists that some in UAN government

now seek to change its privacy laws to give the government better insight into the threats it faces. Currently the UAN does not have the access that nations like China or the FSA have to private data. Without permission or a search warrant, public surveillance is configured to not record any images or sounds occurring in private residences, businesses, or on private property, like the land around someone's house or an arcology-dweller's balcony. Also, although this same surveillance records the actions of everyone in public spaces, getting access to recordings detailing the actions of a particular individual requires their permission or a search warrant. Many Chinese believe that it is only a matter of time before the UAN's openness allows disaster and chaos to reign. However, rescinding digital-privacy laws remains one of the least popular proposals in the council meetings, and has not even been voted into a committee yet.

ALLIES & ENEMIES

Officially, the UAN has no enemies. It has declared no trade embargos nor made any declarations of hostility against any nation. Its official stance is to nurture relationships with all nations, extending an "open hand to all." Insiders to international politics know that there are several wrinkles to this strategy, and several pressing facts that make an open hand hard to extend.

China is the UAN's strongest ally. China and the UAN have been close economic allies for almost a century. What began as Chinese investment in African industry has become a series of mutual trade and investment treaties. Tourism and cultural exchange are also quite common. The only awkwardness is when China looks to the UAN for backup in international affairs. The UAN seeks to maintain its neutrality and avoid international tensions, but many UAN officials also wish to honor their close ties with China. The council regularly wrestles with these issues. Most solutions involve the UAN making a statement of solidarity with China but also stating a firm commitment to peaceful resolution. Lately, China has been pushing the African nations for less equivocal support.

If the UAN has an enemy, it is the FSA. The FSA is vocal in its distrust of the UAN. The FSA is critical of almost everything the UAN does, often citing older images and notions of Africa as a dangerous

and lawless continent as the cause to distrust it now. While many dismiss the FSA government's talk, UAN insiders know that the FSA does not attack the UAN with words alone. It is rumored that the FSA funds and supports the surge of cyberterrorism plaguing the African nations. No definitive proof exists, but the speed and detail with which the FSA responds to every cyberterrorist incident (even some that were not made public by the UAN) indicates some level of involvement. The FSA's hostility to the UAN does not seem to have an overt purpose, though insiders believe that the ultimate goal is to gain more of a foothold in the lucrative space-travel business that the UAN dominates. The council believes that the FSA is secretly providing money and weapons to both the Savior's Path and Al-Qaeda.

THREATS

The leaders of the Walinzi believe that Aberrants control some of the smaller extremist sects. Known as "False God" cults, followers worship Aberrants and build their influence within the continent. Security personnel consider these cults more dangerous than direct Aberrant strikes. Using neutrals as shields and servants makes it easier for Aberrants to act without being detected or destroyed. The UAN works extensively with the Æon Trinity to put an end to these cults. Complicating these investigations is the fact that rogue psions actually lead a few cults. These cults of personality are usually less dangerous, but determining the true nature of a particular cult often requires infiltration missions lasting weeks or even months. Every cult missed or overlooked might damage the space elevator or explode a bomb in a major city.

A phenomenon known to UAN citizens as "Ghosts in the Net" is actually the work of a network of hackers who randomly shut off machinery and devices all over the UAN. Anything that is connected to the OpNet is potentially vulnerable to these attacks. The Ghosts embarrass the UAN, causing people to poke fun at the reliability of the UAN machinery and computers. Shutdowns have so far been merely inconvenient, but officials fear the attacks will intensify, with fatal results. To combat this, many machines with critical functions disconnect from OpNet to reduce their threat surface. Whether this will work long term is unknown but the only other long-term solution appears to be confronting the FSA directly, something the UAN is reluctant to do.



CHAPTER THREE

SPACE

The universe must be full of voices, calling from star to star in a myriad tongues. One day we shall join that cosmic conversation.

— Arthur C. Clarke

Space is humanity's new frontier. However, it is a frontier without any Earthly equivalent. Romantic ideas of building off-world colonies using only technology the colonists could create themselves proved to be nothing more than dreams. Survival on an alien world demands a combination of advanced technology, hard work, and practical skills ranging from farming to engineering and biochemistry. However, some of the new Qin biotech is beginning to change colonization. If colonists purchase the correct license, they can breed various useful creatures like bioblimps (see p. 302), insuring a steady supply of devices or vehicles for a colony, with no need to use machines to produce them.

Most humans never leave Earth and fewer than one in 1,000 people ever visit any world further than Luna, but daring neutrals and psions are now settling or working on other worlds. Spacecraft allow humanity to explore other planets and, with the development of the Leviathan jump ships, other star systems. However, moving sufficient numbers of people to start a viable colony usually requires opening up a teleportation portal, allowing thousands or even tens of thousands to step from one world to another. Similarly, the two space elevators have made access to Earth orbit easy and jump rings (see p. 295) going from Earth to Luna made Olympus as easy to reach as Sydney or the Chicago arcology.

Humanity began moving into space during the Nova Age. Nova-created warps and warp-creating

SETTLEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

Humanity now inhabits a vast range of different worlds, but almost all settlements have a few features in common. Every inhabited planet possesses a network of GPS, weather, and communication satellites. Also, every base or colony built in the 22nd century has several hyperfusion reactors as well as at least a dozen industrial makers.

devices allowed several million people to travel beyond Earth. Today, psionic teleportation provides the next big impetus for humanity to move to the planets and the stars. Almost 30 million now live and work beyond Luna's orbit, scattered across the solar system and out among the stars.

SETTLEMENTS BEYOND EARTH

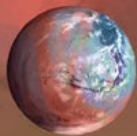
Humanity has visited every rocky planet and large moon in the solar system. Teleporters and now Leviathan jump ships have visited dozens of extrasolar planets. The following worlds are only the colonies and large bases that humanity has established. There are many other smaller bases where 10 or 20 researchers investigate a planet, as well as even more worlds that Upeo wa Macho explorers visited only briefly.

THE SOLAR SYSTEM

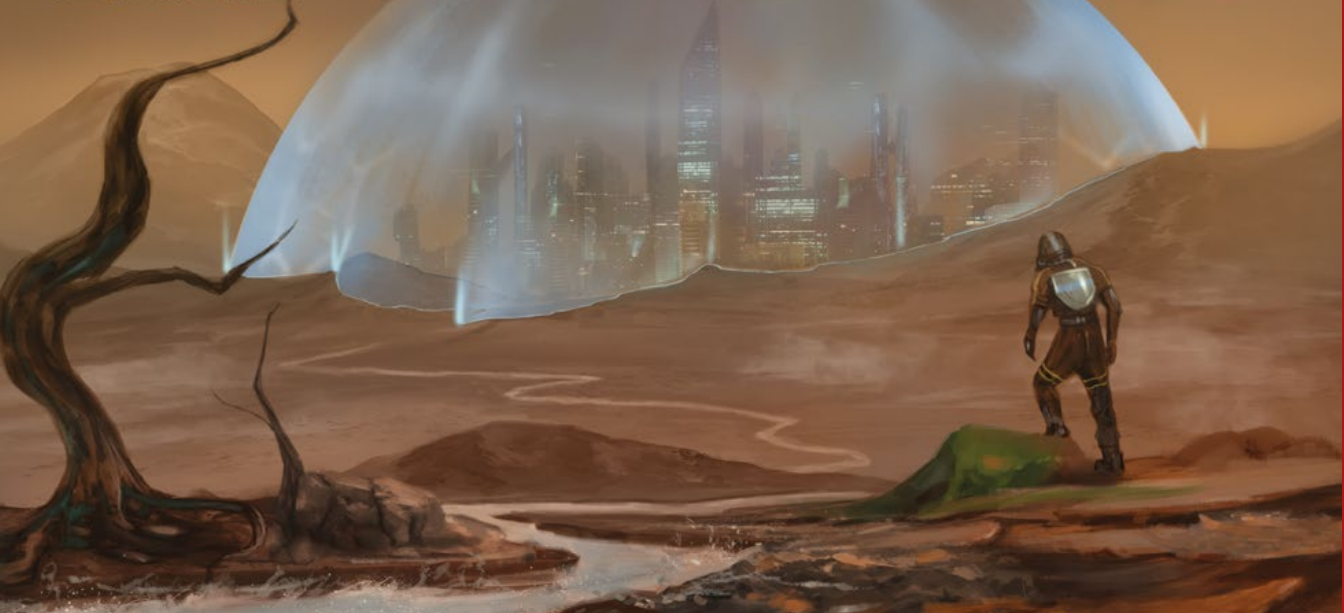
Humanity explored the entire solar system during the Nova Era, and in the decades between the end of the Aberrant War and the appearance of the first psions, the people of Earth were largely limited to the solar system. During that time, some sought to resume earlier efforts to colonize Mars, others continued mining the asteroid belt, and a few looked elsewhere in the solar system, to the gas giants and their icy moons or the infernos of Mercury and Venus.

However, during the Nova Era and after the appearance of the psions in 2106, humanity could travel to

worlds around other stars, some of which were habitable and thus far more appealing than the cold deserts of Mars or the far less hospitable environments found elsewhere in the solar system. The six-year disappearance of the teleporters rekindled interest in colonizing Mars, but it remains at least a week away using the fastest spacecraft, and the outer system requires voyages lasting more than twice as long. Although efforts to mine or settle the other planets in the solar system continue, the teleporters' return has again caused most of humanity to focus on worlds orbiting other suns.



MARS 2123



MARS

After a century of false starts and setbacks, futurists' long dream of terraforming Mars is finally taking shape. Domed settlements sprout across the arid plains and on the shores of the growing lakes. The Red Frontier beckons — but many would-be colonists have learned that getting to Mars is less a challenge than making something of the planet once they've arrived.

COMETS AND COLONIES

Once superhuman powers and technologies made it accessible, Mars was the Nova Age's great planetary science laboratory. Martian bases developed low-moisture plant species still grown in arid terrestrial regions. Medical studies in low gravity — and in microgravity on the long flights to and from Mars — paved the way for modern space medicine. The 2026 discovery of native microorganisms confirmed that Earth was not unique in harboring life and fueled interest in extrasolar exploration.

A decade-long debate over the sanctity of Martian life ended in 2036 when a Chinese/Persian alliance began the first wave of terraforming attempts. Asteroid and cometary bombardment raised dust

but failed to increase atmospheric pressure, the first step to make the planet more habitable. The impacts also curtailed colonization.

Aside from a small Chinese colony, humanity abandoned Mars during the Aberrant War and the Crash. Resource constraints and reduced population pressure didn't justify movement outward. It took the 2090s' space renaissance to rekindle interest. Chinese influence pushed the UN to back a second terraforming wave, this time constructing huge atmosphere generators at the poles. The project's scale brought new colonization, as did the use of Phobos as a staging area for outer-system exploration.

Terraforming efforts met with little success until 2109, when Orgotek and the Qin approached the UN with a proposal to accelerate terraforming. Immense biotech constructs and an army of engineered microorganisms extract elements from deep beneath the Martian surface and spew out the first wisps of a breathable atmosphere. However, neither psions nor aliens accounted for the native life's persistence and adaptability. The Martian microbes' rapid growth has drastically slowed terraforming.

The Aberrants' return brought frequent strikes

PLANETARY DATA: MARS

Founded: 2021 (USA/European Union — flag-planting mission)

Distance from Earth: 0.38 AU

Diameter: 6,779 km

Gravity: 0.38 Earth

Atmosphere: Carbon dioxide, nitrogen, oxygen (non-breathable; planned nitrogen-oxygen breathable)

Air Pressure: 0.27 Earth (planned 0.75)

Temperature: -80° to 40° C (planned -40° to 45°)

Percentage Ocean: 14% (planned 31%)

Rotation Period: 24 hours, 37 minutes

Native Life: Primitive microbes

Human Population: 4.7 million

Phobos Space Dock

Planetary Data: Phobos Space Dock

Distance from Mars: 9,400 km

Dimensions: 27 × 22 × 18 km

Population: 8,000

on isolated Martian outposts. Unlike Earth, Mars had too many isolated settlements for the small number of forces located to adequately protect. Aberrants were often only driven off after they had destroyed their target. A Norça-led campaign in 2119 broke this cycle and gave the Sudamérican order the political capital to involve itself in Martian politics.

AREOGRAPHY AND ARECOLOGY

Despite microbiological setbacks, recent terraforming has yielded massive environmental transformation. Atmospheric pressure is now 30 times greater than pre-terraforming levels and oxygen content is nearing 5%. It's still unbreathable for anyone but the most adept biokinetic (or Aberrant), but anyone can survive with just a breathing mask and warm clothes — pressure suits are no longer required. Typical summer days range from 5° to 30° C.

After 20 million years, water again flows during Martian summers and near the equator; rivers continue to flow even in the depths of winter. A fraction of this water comes from Nova Age comet strikes but most is former polar or underground ice. The shifting weight of this moving water has broken the

crust's long stasis, triggering unpredictable earthquakes across the planet.

The only vegetation is terraforming biotech. Orbital images reveal swaths of green on newly moist shores, but these are a combination of Qin microbes and the oxidized copper byproducts of their water-liberation process. However, large-scale equatorial seeding of engineered grasses awaits only a modest increase in atmospheric pressure. Equally significant is Peru's recent announcement of *Chinchilla martis*, the first animal species engineered to breathe Martian air.

THE RED FRONTIER

Terraforming and colonization began as a way for humanity to hedge its bets against a planetary-scale cataclysm that could render Earth uninhabitable. With the 22nd century's biotech and faster-than-light travel, a habitable Mars is no longer critical as a redoubt, which has spurred calls to redirect terraforming resources to other projects. However, Mars still commands a compelling place in humanity's collective vision of space.

"Flagged" settlements are supposed to fall under their parent nations' laws, with the UN Judiciary Council

SUBJECT: ECOTERRORISM

From: Deputy Council Attorney Susan Hong, UN Judiciary Council, XXIX (Mars) District

To: Lieutenant Dale Hong, HQ/5th Marine Infantry Battalion, Seventh Legion

Encryption: DSE

Date: 5.5.2123, 9:31 AM

Ha ha, little bro. It's funny when it's not your problem. "Redneck" is no joke when it's short for "pissed-off Martian roughneck." Terraforming is flooding them out of the meteor craters where the best ore veins are. We finally found a way to get miners to share air with environmentalists. And they know explosives. The bombs up north — you know, the ones your Legion missed? Yeah, Red Preservationists, but I've seen the report and that work took skills you don't get in a lab.

You want to do us both a favor? Convince your chain of command to protect the Oceanian immigrant community. The aquas are the only miners on-world who want to work underwater and the rednecks are agitating to run them off. There. Now it is your problem.

I've never been a Mindi but at this point I want to see the movement succeed. If Mars were self-governing, this wouldn't be my case.

presiding over Mars as a whole. All the enforcement bodies have more pressing matters, though. Elsewhere on Mars, theoretical interplanetary law gives way to pragmatic self-rule — until the independents offend some country (usually by harming its citizens) and find themselves forcibly nationalized and regulated.

To groups seeking isolated autonomy, Mars offers even greater freedom and isolation than Oceania or the Australian Outback, and unlike terrestrial nations, it lacks immigration controls. Foresighted settlers stake (or usurp) early claims on sites expected to be resource-rich oases at terraforming's end. Fringe societies run wild, unfettered by legal prohibitions or social disapproval. Isolation makes outlying colonies ideal places for individuals to make fresh starts or hide from the past. "Cutting," Martian person-finding, is a growth field, as is freelance law enforcement targeting bandits and the "feral colonies" that harbor them.

The local legal patchwork and outside meddling aggravate a large minority of Martians. The Mars Independence movement is a score of grassroots organizations who can't agree on anything but their vision of a self-governing, UN-recognized Mars. Supporters fly ironic emerald flags to mock their bitterest rivals, Chinese nationalists. Most are vocal but, aside from drunken brawling, peaceful.

Science sparks its own passions as terraforming erases native areology and arecology. The Red Preservationist movement lobbies the UN to reverse

the process. Under Orgotek's leadership, terraformers see themselves as midwives to a new world.

LIVING ON MARS

Despite recent progress, Mars remains relatively frozen and airless. Martians are as painstaking as spacers about their life support. Settlements remain under pressurized domes or dug deep into the crust until the air becomes breathable (projected for 2200).

Thin air prevents combustion or conventional flight. Economical long-range transportation relies on land trains: massive fusion-powered, all-terrain, articulated constructs with a score of independent axles. Aviators fly hopppers similar to Luna's, albeit with larger engines and less lifting capacity. Suborbital spaceship flights are faster but inefficient.

Martian hospitals serve spacers from across the solar system. Also, the large and growing Phobos space dock serves as a repair, refueling, and resupply stop for much of the Outer System. Wealthy tourists also come seeking isolation and exclusivity. A Martian cruise is the 2120s' glamour vacation. Exploiting this, small "red resorts" span the planet. Domed theme parks breathe life into old science fiction. Extreme sports resorts offer sand-skiing and suborbital skydiving. Expedition companies tour terraforming facilities or unspoiled wilderness, then make edgy stopovers in carefully selected fringe colonies.

SPACE PIRATES

Space pirates? Ha! No. The economic conditions are all wrong. How would you steal and fence a megaton of aluminum? We're here for search and rescue — or more often, search and recovery, no thanks to the distances we have to cover. The lasers are for Aberrants, not pirates.

— Lt. Cdr. Kristof Jorgensen, commanding UNSGC Argus

ON THE MAP

Wanjing, the “City of Rocklike Fortitude,” is Mars’ undisputed first city, though China can’t quite proclaim it the planetary capital. Built around the prewar colony on the Tharsis plateau, east of Olympus Mons, it holds 300,000 citizens and Mars’ largest spaceport. Local volcanic soil should make it an agricultural powerhouse once the atmosphere can support crops.

Sudamérica’s Rio de Martio, hub of the tourist trade, straddles the mouth of the Valles Marineris canyon east of Tharsis. Living arcologies built into the canyon’s walls offer unparalleled views and open onto the planet’s thickest atmosphere. However, the first spring floods brought frightening marsquakes and city engineers are reevaluating their calculations.

Like Wanjing, Akabenje was planned as a future agricultural center, but the UAN’s Martian city hasn’t waited for the air to thicken. This sprawling complex of hydroponic domes, located on the Gusev crater’s southern slope, provides two-thirds of Mars’ food and makes the planet agriculturally self-sufficient. In time, its site on the growing river delta of the Ma’adim Vallis channel may become the southern hemisphere’s coastal jewel.

OVER THE HORIZON

Schiaparelli Convoy, the best-known crawler town, is a 200-person nomadic community based in five land trains. Its six-week path circumnavigates Hellas Planitia’s 6,000 kilometers as it trades goods and services to the crater’s future coastal communities. Famous from the *On the Crawl* documentary holovid, it’s a popular rendezvous target for expedition tours.

Robinson Station lies on the equatorial Meridiani Planum. Seventh Legion’s headquarters holds the system’s best LoGLAW (low-gravity/low-atmosphere warfare) training center. Space troops from nearly every nation train here as Legion guests. The

UN’s planetary administrative offices in neighboring Port Ares are almost an afterthought, overshadowed by three competing rough-and-tumble towns that extract stress and cash from off-duty troops.

New Houston was the Nova Age’s main American colony. The ambitious complex was built to house nearly 100,000 settlers. Only a few thousand had moved in when Aberrants seized control. The resistance’s sporadic broadcasts lasted nearly four years, revealing slices of a descent into hell that remain some of the war’s most chilling records. Hundreds of unmapped tunnels make enforcing the site’s Corruption quarantine impossible, making it a popular destination for Novatech prospectors.

THE OUTER SYSTEM

Past Mars, humanity’s grasp on the solar system is tenuous. Sol provides dim light but the only heat is what travelers bring with them. Self-reliance is a way of life and equipment maintenance a religious rite. Without a teleporter, the closest help is usually several weeks away. The estimated 15,000 inhabitants of the asteroid belt and outer bodies wouldn’t have it any other way. Many of them came to the deep black in search of that very isolation.

THE ASTEROID BELT

Home to two-thirds of the outer system’s population, the belt is corporate territory. The ongoing space-construction boom demands raw materials. It’s cheaper to extract them here and ship them to Earth orbit than to mine them dirtside and boost them up a gravity well. “Cheap” is relative on this scale, though. Breaking into the business as a subcontractor for a mining metacorp still requires rare skills and tens of millions of yuan in startup capital. Aside from a few owner-operator freighter crews and the support workers who keep the miners fed and breathing, the “down-on-her-luck entrepreneur” is a vid fiction.

COCKPIT VOICE RECORDER TRANSCRIPT

Subject 1: —(gett)ing this?

Subject 2: Not much. No radar return and it's within five degrees of background temp.

S1: Wow. What's it made of?

S2: Fifty kays long, I'm more worried about whose it is. Cut thrust so I can bounce a laser off it.

S1: Go.

S2: Okay, that's weird. It's crystalline and...vibrating? Hundred twenty [Hertz]. And — oh, crap!

(Unknown interference; 2:09 of recording lost.)

S2: — Give us some distance from this thing.

S1: On it. You got comms?

S2: Negative. Still jammed.

S1: Okay, okay, I — yeah! Got him!

S2: Yes! Aaah, break left!

S1: They're herding us.

S2: What are they — is that a comet in the —

(Impact and depressurization sounds; 0:38 of recording lost.)

S1: — least now you know whose it is.

S2: Well, shit.

(Unknown interference; no further viable data.)

Recovered from Orgotek Locust-R3, hull number VHL6015M, salvaged near Saturn February 1, 2123. Vessel declared overdue August 26, 2121 after failing to report after sweep of 5145 Pholus. Subject 1 identified as Flying Officer Helenice Prazeres, 136th Reconnaissance Squadron, Seventh Legion, pilot. Subject 2 identified as Sergeant Clemenz Bian, sensor operator.

Each corporation maintains its own refinery complex, where miners drag chunks of asteroid for processing. The output is huge ingots clamped to slow bulk freighters for shipment in-system. The industry's transport side has tight safety regulations and security — no one wants an artificial dinosaur killer.

Outside the refinery stations, belt life centers on Vesta, the system's second-largest asteroid. In 2080, Nihonjin researchers landed there, establishing the Fuyoushi science station. After several unprofitable years, the Nihonjin government sold the base to private investors. Fuyoushi remained abandoned until the late-century return to space made asteroid mining profitable. Vesta became the first hub of these operations.

The Aberrant attack in 2105 gutted the facility but Vesta's size made it too useful to remain abandoned. Today, the reborn settlement of Absolute Zero is dug into the planetoid, making it a much tougher target. "A-Naught" is the belt's equivalent

of a frontier town, offering shops, restaurants, and entertainment to miners and refinery workers. It's also the main outer-system base for the local cavalry: the UN Space Guard and the Seventh Legion. Most ships heading farther outsystem stop here for supplies and maintenance.

THE FRINGE

The belt does have a scattering of tiny habitats outside the mining industry. Most are scientific facilities, though at least four well-financed independent settlements exist, including a Psi Nippon enclave, an ecumenical monastery and meditation retreat. The belt's isolation is the primary reason these stations aren't somewhere more hospitable. Belt tourism is a non-starter — there's nothing here to see or do.

Though action-espionage vids exaggerate their scale, secret research programs have found homes in the belt since the Nova Age. Project ReWrite

maintains a tiny office in Absolute Zero, where it investigates rumors of von Neumann war machines, brain-overwriting mind recordings, novas awakened from cryogenic stasis, and marauding Aberrant cultists. For the psi orders, the remote location permits certain psionic experiments that would be impossible on Earth. Several nations also maintain military research labs here.

THE GAS GIANTS

Settling the outer planets themselves is obviously impossible (at least, for terrestrial life), but all of them possess large moons. Radiation makes Jupiter an unpopular destination, but two notable communities exist here. The first is an Orgotek lab orbiting Io, from which electrokinetics study Jupiter's unique magnetosphere. It also hosts a few planetologists who study Io itself. The second Jovian community is the multinational Galileo Station, which continues Nova Age research into the plant and the tubeworm analogs that inhabit Europa's subsurface oceans. "Gal" hosts Oceania's largest off-Earth community — nearly 500 aqua scientists and would-be settlers. The Qin also contribute to Gal's research, although they adamantly oppose both aqua colonization efforts and commercial exploitation of European biota. It's a strange reversal, given their willingness to terraform over Martian life, and one they have yet to explain.

Saturn and its moons received little attention until last year's discovery of subsurface ruins on

Enceladus and Rhea. While most scientists believe these are Aberrant relics, the original explorers insist they're far older. Follow-up missions are in the works. The FSA also is hastily organizing an expedition to Titan, ostensibly to renew an old claim to the site of a high-energy physics lab that exploded shortly before the Aberrant War.

The largest manmade structure beyond the belt orbits Uranus. Still under construction, Olapa will be the base from which an audacious UAN energy conglomerate plans to extract helium-3 from the Uranian atmosphere. If the venture succeeds, it will transform the market for fusion-reactor fuel, but construction setbacks have pushed completion to 2128.

THE VOID BEYOND

There's little reason to venture past the gas giants. A few hardy scientists and psions come to test theories or claim first landing on outer planetoids. Inquiries into gravity, radioastronomy, and particle physics occur on tiny isolated stations whose crews have the dubious distinction of being the solar system's most remote residents. Everyone else is content to leave them to their solitary pursuits. The highest profile mission out here is the Seventh Legion's search for possible Aberrant bases, but even the Firebirds admit they're unlikely to find anything. Given the enemy's interstellar-warp capability, what purpose would an advance base on the system's rim serve?

EXTRASOLAR SETTLEMENTS

Humanity first traveled to the stars during the Nova Age, when huge warp gates allowed explorers and colonists to cross dozens or hundreds of light years with a single step. However, these settlements were suddenly cut off after the end of the Aberrant War and records of most of these colonies were lost during the Crash. Except for the Chinese effort to colonize Khantze Lu Ge, the departure of the Aberrants stopped humanity's reach for the stars. All of this changed in 2106, when Upeo teleporters reopened the galaxy. The sudden disappearance of Upeo wa Macho convinced humanity that it could no longer depend on a few hundred teleporters to handle all interstellar transport. For the last six months, the new Leviathan jump ships have returned humanity to the stars and


promise the beginning of an era of increasing and unbroken interstellar exploration and colonization. Humanity has explored fewer than 200 extrasolar planets and has only eight known long-term settlements outside the solar system, but the interstellar era is just beginning.

AVERIGUAS

Brazil's bid to extrasolar presence is a study in administrative blunders. Founded around a star that could go supernova in the near future, the harsh living and working conditions and the near enslavement of workers imported from Europe and the FSA drove them to open revolt. Norça involvement is only making matters worse. The situation is delicate, but the tools sent to resolve it have a blunt

PLANETARY DATA: AVERIGUAS

Founded: 2107 (Brazil)
Discovery: 2106 (Upeo wa Macho)
Distance from Earth: 2,800 light years
Star: Binary system — SS3819a (A0), SS3819b (G5)
Diameter: 12,821 km
Gravity: 1.1 Earth
Atmosphere: Oxygen and nitrogen (breathable)
Air Pressure: 1.2 Earth
Temperature: -10° C to 50° C
Percentage Ocean: 42%
Rotation Period: 23 hours
Native Life: Sea plankton and algae, lichen on land, no other notable species
Human Population: 22,000



edge.

PROMISED ADVANCEMENT

With the Aberrants' return, Brazil was in a hurry to secure protection for its interests, and claimed the recently discovered SS3819 binary system for colonization with Norça advice. Officially named the Associação para o Progresso Universal (Association for Universal Advancement), or APU, the colony was meant to provide psions with a training environment

where pushing the envelope of psionic potential would not endanger anyone. Its true purpose was closely related: Brazil wanted a safe place to conduct advanced weapon testing, and the Norça wanted a research site far away from the scrutiny of Æon and the other Psi Orders. The biokinetics made sure that no espionage attempt on either project was successful.

The first launch included technicians and scientists from both Brazil and Norça, who also sent a dozen biokinetics. The work force, however, consisted mostly of

SUBJECT: SOME WORK OUT

From: Jane Richmond, New Hope, Averiguas

To: Michael Richmond, United Kingdom

Date: 22.04.2108 at 9:32 PM

Hey, dad,

I'm sorry I couldn't write you earlier, I hope the money I'm making here is helping you and mom down there. Me and Brian are working very hard up here. Remember when I told you how working on this planet was doing wonders for my abs? Well, I had the chance to put it to a test today; a testy Ukrainian tried to pick a fight with me over our rations during lunch; she was one of the new arrivals and wasn't used to the living conditions yet. When she came at me, I punched her in the face and knocked her out there and then! I'm pretty sure I could twist anyone Earthside into a pretzel now, if I didn't hyperventilate first, of course.

Everything is heavier here, and it's harder to breathe and it's not hot enough to make you pass out, but just enough to make you sweat like a bastard. Brian and me are used to it now, but I fear it's getting to him. Also... I think [redacted]. Even with our contracts still having a good 15 years left, I don't plan on leaving. I'm a space colonist now!

refugees from Europe and the FSA, attracted by the promise of work on a project with great potential. The first settlement in Averiguas was named New Hope, because it gave just that to the colonists.

HOME. HARSH HOME

Averiguas orbits a binary star system composed of a giant star that is beginning to feed matter to its dwarf star companion. Flares are relatively common, but the planet's magnetic field is strong enough to absorb the ensuing radiation, as most flares only cause a slight increase in UV emissions. Astronomers note that the giant star is showing conditions that could lead to a supernova within a millennium or two, which is the astronomical equivalent of "next year," although a few astronomers worry that it could happen much sooner.

The conditions on the planet are just a tad short of perfect, compared to Earth; gravity is slightly higher, the atmosphere is somewhat denser, and the temperature is slightly higher. The oceans, however, cover far less of the planets' surface. The only life on Averiguas includes varieties of algae and lichen, which interact to provide a breathable atmosphere rich in nitrogen.

HARD DAYS AND NIGHTS

A few years after the colony started official operations, the Æon Trinity began to receive reports that the working conditions were beyond harsh and well into the inhumane range. The Brazilian government refused all requests for review, but Æon finally exerted pressure through the UN and sent an inspection team.

The reports they sent back spoke of the appalling hours the workers spent in mines that lacked proper ventilation. There had been dozens of deaths from asphyxia and oxygen deprivation, and health-care services were insufficient to treat the various adaptation disorders the workers were suffering from planetary conditions, let alone for actual diseases and radiation exposure that were not always caused by the binary star.

As expected, the Norça turned the Æon team away from their facilities, quoting that they were not under Brazilian jurisdiction, and thus not covered by the UN's mandate. They were also prevented from seeing the weapon-testing fields and facilities, which were the top reason behind Averiguas' colonization by Brazil.

Although the report created some public-relations problems for the Brazilian government, they did nothing to improve the working conditions, and

actually punished the workers by raising prices for Earth products delivered to Averiguas.

REAPING WHIRLWINDS

Colombian businessmen were always jealous of Brazil's foray into the stars, but their government dismissed their pleas to start a space-colonization program of their own; they received the reports with a certain perverse glee. A few companies hired spies to infiltrate Averiguas. The spies successfully stole samples of the native lichen to serve as part of their biotechnological research, but also reported on the worsening conditions for the workers, who were now basically indentured servants. They also discovered the weapon-testing sites, and *that* got the government interested.

The Norça had taken a neutral stance to the situation in order to protect their stakes in the APU, and their resident staff had only reported on their own research and omitted anything about the conditions for the people, but their taps on Colombia's communications made them aware of how bad things were in Averiguas. Del Fuego instructed his people to remain neutral, but vigilant, and approached the Earthbound administrations for the colony to try to defuse things before they got worse.

The biokinetic proxy's efforts proved too little, too late. In early 2016, the Euro-American workers had enough, and open insurrection rocked New Hope and all mining and scientific outposts. Brazil began to send additional troops, stating that they were only meant to quell a minor revolt, but Colombia and Norça knew better now, and while the biokinetics had orders to protect their research and training facilities at all costs, Colombian infiltrators had only one goal: fan the flames into an inferno.

THE LONG ABSENCE

Only three months after the revolt started, the Upeo disappeared, leaving Averiguas isolated. The Norça personnel that arrived with the last Brazilian reinforcements had not witnessed the situation deteriorate, and what they saw outraged them. Their order, regarded throughout Sudamérica as heroes and liberators, was either looking the other way or directly aiding tyrants. It didn't matter that the oppressors were fellow Sudamericans and the subjugated were Europeans and North Americans, many among the new Norça, neutral and psion alike, sided with the rebels. When new reinforcements failed to arrive and communications from Earth ceased, the

Brazilian taskmasters realized that they were stranded. Their only option was to surrender to the rebels.

BACK TO THE FOLD

Contact was reestablished with Averiguas upon the Upeo's return. In the six-year absence, the colony survived by ceasing any overt hostility between loyalists and rebels, but New Hope and Brazil's test sites were in the rebels' hands. Brazil couldn't avoid Æon participation in the recontact mission, and the rebels did not have any obligation to keep Brazil's test fields secret.

Everyone interested in the Averiguas situation now knows about Brazil's true intent in founding the colony, although the actual weapons tested remain a top military secret. Negotiations with the rebels are not going well as the new governor simply refuses to yield any ground, and now that their continued survival is no longer at stake, the sense of cooperation is gone. Colombian agents reestablished contact too, and now Colombia is making open advances to "aid" Brazil in negotiating with the rebels, aiming to gain their own foothold in Averiguas. Psi Order Norça remains officially neutral, and the biokinetics' secrets remain undiscovered and protected. The rebel Norça still show up for work dutifully, seeing nothing wrong with the apparent dichotomy of their situation.

BULLSEYE

Upeo wa Macho explorers have found several formerly living worlds that have been destroyed, including the asteroid belt around Karroo Mining Colony as well as two seared and lifeless rock balls. However, Bullseye is the first partially destroyed world humanity found. More disturbingly, it was also once home to an intelligent species that is now extinct.

Almost a quarter of Bullseye's land is part of one of several dozen blasted glassy plains. Bullseye still has native life, but approximately 200,000 years ago, it had a complex and thriving ecosystem and was home to an advanced civilization. A vast unknown disaster wiped out the intelligent species and destroyed most of the planet's other life. Today, life on Bullseye is sparse and most of it struggles to survive. Currently, no one knows if the inhabitants destroyed themselves in a war, were victims of a vast industrial accident or cosmic catastrophe, or if they were attacked and destroyed by a mysterious alien foe.

The few archeologists that Upeo teleporters brought to this planet are now excavating the most intact ruins. From the location and placement of the cities and the glassy plains, archeologists suspect that most of the inhabitants' cities were utterly destroyed. The majority of the remaining settlements are located near one of the glassy plains and suffered heavy damage, as well as 200,000 years of exposure to the elements.



PLANETARY DATA: BULLSEYE

Founded: 2121 (Upeo wa Macho Research Base)

Discovery: 2118 (Upeo Interstellar Survey)

Distance from Earth: 3,200 light years.

Star: SS2749 — K0

Diameter: 14,100 km

Gravity: 1.06 Earth

Atmosphere: Oxygen and nitrogen (breathable)

Air Pressure: 0.75 Earth

Temperature: -50°C to 25°C

Percentage Ocean: 37%

Rotation Period: 22 hours

Native Life: Advanced with an ecosystem that was badly damaged but is recovering

Human Population: 850



A Leviathan jump ship will soon arrive at Bullseye, carrying more than 20 tons of advanced excavation equipment and drones as well as several additional teams of archeologists. Currently, research on the inhabitants of Bullseye is in the earliest stages. Researchers have learned that Bullseye once held an advanced worldwide civilization of more than a billion inhabitants, which had technology at least as advanced as humanity's. The inhabitants had light, oval bodies with four long, slender legs and four long, multi-jointed arms clustered just below a sleek tapering head. They had smooth, dry skin, like a wartless toad, and seemed to prefer living in huge cities that consisted of narrow cones and pyramids between 10 and 500 meters high. Networks of aerial bridges once connected many of these buildings.

Bullseye's intelligent species seems to have become extinct several centuries after the catastrophe that almost destroyed their world. A few tens of thousands of survivors lingered on after the catastrophe. However, the disaster destroyed almost 90% off all life on Bullseye and caused an ice age that lasted almost 3,000 years. As their world became increasingly less habitable, the survivors' population continued to dwindle until the entire species died out. Because the disaster destroyed so much of the world and damaged or destroyed most cities, the easiest ruins to study have proved to be the encampments of survivors, two of which persisted for almost the entire last days of the species.

THE DISASTER

No one knows the cause of the disaster, in large part because of the great age of the ruins. Clairvoyants also discovered that using Psychometry on pre-disaster ruins and bodies is extremely difficult. Some of the archeologists believe that the disaster may have worked on a noetic level, and one clairvoyant believes that he detected traces of Aberrant-like quantum energies, leading a few researchers to wonder if this world also evolved its own Aberrants who eventually destroyed it. Now that all of humanity again has access to the stars, the mystery of Bullseye has begun catching the imagination of both researchers and ordinary people who worry that Earth might someday share Bullseye's fate.

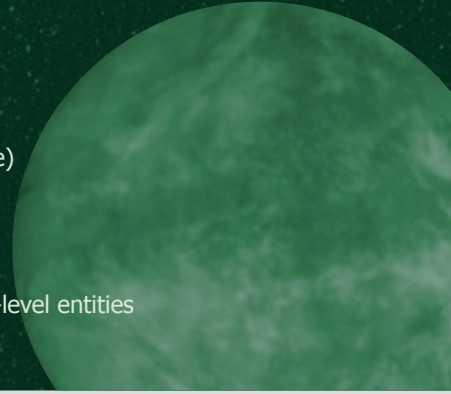
The lack of increased background radiation and the extent of the damage makes it clear that the disaster was not caused by nuclear war. Some researchers believe that it was an accident caused by experiments with antimatter or quantum black holes. Others suspect attack by exceptionally powerful aliens or even alien time-traveling Aberrants. Regardless of the cause, the results are still visible from space. Some of these glassy regions are several thousand kilometers in diameter, others are less than 50 kilometers across. Most of these glassy plains are visible from orbit, and irregularities on the largest such plain make it appear to have concentric circles, which give this world its name.

NATIVE LIFE

Today, life in Bullseye is sparse and very tough. The dust clouds that blotted out the world's sun

PLANETARY DATA: EDEN

Founded: 2051 (Nova Seekers)
Discovery: 2049 (Aberrant discovery)
Rediscovered: 2115 (Upeo Interstellar Survey)
Distance from Earth: 1,400 light years.
Star: Valeron — G8
Diameter: 10,967 km
Gravity: .82 Earth
Atmosphere: Oxygen and nitrogen (breathable)
Air Pressure: 0.9 Earth
Percentage Ocean: 71%
Rotation Period: 31 hours
Native Life: Multiple self-contained ecosystem-level entities
Human Population: 1,200,000



for centuries are long gone, but the glassy plains have cooled the world, and geologists recently discovered that the disaster ripped away some of Bullseye's atmosphere. The bright purple plants are all tough and fibrous, both to help retain moisture in the thin, cold air and also to resist being eaten by the voracious herbivores. Small herds of swift and sturdy eight-limbed herbivores roam the planet's plains and steppes. Most predators walk on four or six legs, with the remaining pair or two of limbs adapted for catching or killing prey. Although most life on Bullseye is small, there are predators the size of small horses that can easily kill humans as well as smaller pack hunters that are about as dangerous as a medium-sized dog individually, and deadly in their packs of five to eight.

EDEN

Although the Upeo wa Macho have discovered several previously unknown human colonies where Aberrants used their space-warping powers to transport the colonists, the planet known as Eden is unique in that it is home to not only human colonists, but Aberrant ones as well. These Aberrants, who prefer to be called novas, seem not to be insane or monstrous like the ones the people of Earth know all too well. Instead, they protect the human population from the planet's dangers, and are revered as celebrities and heroes — and perhaps even as demigods.

Eden was first discovered when Upeo explorers happened to find a work crew of human miners on a barren

planet, using unrecognizable technology to excavate heavy metals. The miners were thrilled at the appearance of the teleporters, and invited them to come with them back to their home world, Eden, once their transportation arrived. The Upeo were stunned to discover that Eden was located in an entirely different star system, and that the transportation was a warping Aberrant.

After an exceedingly tense first contact that nearly exploded into violence, the Upeo team cautiously accompanied their hosts back to Eden. They discovered a beautiful and bounteous, yet dangerous, planet; one on which a human colony would never have survived without the protection of the Aberrants that fled here with their human families and followers at the height of the Aberrant War. With that protection, though, the human colonists are healthy, happy, and safe, if subservient and even somewhat worshipful toward their "superiors."

As many as five dozen novas make their home in the colony's central city, Harmony, and are kept busy ensuring the safety of the city, its outlying farms and industrial areas, and more than a million human inhabitants. These novas seem to be almost entirely free of the Corruption — they use their powers responsibly and safely, and they are rational, with humanlike moralities and beliefs. Most of them look physically human, with only minor abnormalities like glowing eyes, oddly colored skin or hair, or exaggerated physiques.

The novas use colorful titles instead of normal names, often relating to the work they do as part



of the colony. “Apollo” provides energy to help power the city’s advanced technology, “Shepherd” keeps the colony’s livestock healthy and breeding, “Gardener” altered Earth plants to be better adapted to Eden’s soil and helps to keep the crops healthy, and “Diva” is a much-loved entertainer whose amazing performances and complicated love life keep the population of the planet amused and intrigued. In addition to these sorts of duties, almost two dozen of the novas are assigned to combat duty, defending the colony’s perimeter by keeping Eden’s native life, the myriasoma, at bay.

THE DANGEROUS MYRIASOMA

Even the most intelligent nova scientists of Eden do not yet fully understand the myriasoma and the nature of their existence. At first glance, Eden seems to be split among about a dozen wildly different and competing ecosystems, each of which is in conflict with the others it borders. These include a tropical jungle, two deciduous forests, a swamp, a tundra, two vast grasslands, a desert, and at least two oceanic systems. Each of these “ecosystems” is actually a single vast creature, consisting of stables (plantlike lifeforms) and mobiles (animal-like lifeforms) that are all interconnected via physical links

or pheromonal signals. According to biokinetic and vitakinetic analysis, all of the “life forms” that make up a single myriasoma are actually just distinct sections of one greater noetic template. Each myriasoma has a primitive, animalistic collective intelligence, driven to expand its territory and eliminate any competition.

Unfortunately, the human colony lies in an area bordering three of the planet’s competing ecosystems (two terrestrial and one aquatic) and all of them treat the colony as another competitor to be eliminated. The myriasoma adapt and evolve very quickly, constantly exposing the people of Eden to new threats, ranging from fast-growing, structure-destroying “weeds” or hyper-allergenic “pollen” to an endless variety of predatory “animals.” The atmosphere, water, and even soil can be filled with deadly new toxins as the myriasoma instinctively develop new strategies. Only the perpetual vigilance and superhuman powers of the novas keep the colonists safe.

PEACEFUL INEQUALITY

Despite these dangers, the humans of Eden seem to be happy and feel safe, and treat their nova protectors with the highest respect and courtesy. They smile and

SUBJECT: THIS PLACE CREEPS ME OUT!

From: Kendall Pryor, Triton Division

To: Garrett Cho, Triton Division

Date: 07.07.2121 at 4:50 PM

Hey Gar —

You really weren't kidding. There's something creepy about all these smiling, happy people and their near-worship of the Aberrants. I mean, they all seem okay, I guess, but...isn't it kind of suspicious? Always smiling, always polite. You remember that really old horror vid, something about a town called Stepford? It's like that. You can't trust people who smile all the time.

There has to be something wrong here, aside from the native flora and fauna trying to eat everybody. The damned planet's named Eden — how can it not have a snake in it somewhere? That Ministry liaison Tu promises me that he can't detect anything messing with the colonist's heads, but I'm not sure he's unbiased — they treat him like a superhero, too, and I'm getting really sick of it.

Anyway, I'm going to keep digging until I figure out what's really going on here. Most of the Aberrants live together in that giant high-tech castle — you remember — that overlooks the rest of Harmony, so I'm going to try to get invited there and snoop around. Wish me luck.

Oh, and give my love to Sandy!

— Ken

regale each other with stories of their heroic protectors, and talk about how lucky they are to live on a paradise planet like Eden. Novas who make public appearances are quickly surrounded by adoring crowds, and colony-wide trends are created when a nova wears a certain designer's clothing, eats at a certain restaurant, or recommends a certain craftsman's products. No nova is ever asked to pay for goods or services — such a request would be seen as horrifically offensive by the human Edenites, and puzzling or nonsensical to a nova. For the most part, the novas do not abuse these privileges. In the rare event that a nova exploits her position to the detriment of humans, the other novas rapidly and forcefully correct the situation.

Strangely, the people of Eden extend the same honors to any psions who visit the planet, seeing them as a similar class of better-than-human being. Visiting psions may inadvertently start new fads or gain celebrity status, and might unintentionally cause offense by following normal social mores. Baseline human visitors will be given only the respect that any stranger might receive on Earth, although curious Edenites might question them about what it's like to work with such luminaries as psions.

The discovery of a planet full of sane Aberrants was a great shock to Bolade Atwan. She and her teleporters

kept Eden secret for quite some time. Eventually, a group of Edenite Aberrants helped to repel a Chromatic attack on Karroo, taking the decision out of the proxy's hands. The heads of the other psi orders, the Æon Trinity, and the United Nations were suddenly faced with a problem that would previously have seemed unthinkable: What to do about nearly 60 of the legendary, monstrous enemies of humanity — who seem beneficent and claim to want to help and protect humanity?

THE EDEN QUARANTINE

For now, the answer has been to hold Eden at arm's length and effectively quarantine the planet. In order to prevent a panic, details of the exact circumstances of Eden's discovery and the nature of its inhabitants have been kept secret from the general public. Only the Upeo and a select few Æon Trinity and United Nations teams are allowed to visit the planet. Æon is particularly concerned about Eden's social structure establishing footholds on Earth or other colony worlds, as Aberrant-worshipping cults are already a problem and don't need any extra encouragement. For their part, the Edenites are complying with the quarantine for now, but some of the novas — particularly the one known as Apollo and his closest allies — are obviously impatient and anxious to return to help

PLANETARY DATA: FAR NYUMBA

Founded: 2113 (United African Nations)
Discovery: 2112 (ISRA discovery)
Distance from Earth: 11,000 light years.
Star: SS1515a — F6
Diameter: 12,900 km
Gravity: 1.01 Earth
Atmosphere: Oxygen and nitrogen (breathable)
Air Pressure: 1.3 Earth
Temperature: -30° C to 40° C
Percentage Ocean: 79%
Rotation Period: 27 hours
Native Life: Plants, insects, small animal life
Human Population: 48,000
Planet: Mgitu
Type: Hot Jupiter Gas Giant
Gravity: 2.8 Gs
Atmosphere: Hydrogen
Diameter: 179,000 km



defend their homeworld from the “Aberrant ones” and other threats. Some Æon operatives on Eden fear that another, more explosive Karroo Incident may be forthcoming, with the novas making their presence undeniable by contacting the people of Earth directly.

FAR NYUMBA

Far Nyumba is the most Earthlike planet found so far. However, Earth’s youngest colony was ill-prepared for its six-year isolation from Earth. Despite hardships, the colony survived, and today new colonists continue to arrive, drawn by the comfortable environment and lack of dangerous animal life. Researchers also flock here, intent on studying the alien artifacts found on the gas giant this world circles.

Discovered in 2111, Far Nyumba is the largest moon of the gas giant Mgitu. Far Nyumba is similar to Earth in size, gravity, planetary tilt, and atmospheric composition. Even though it is two-and-a-half AU from its sun, this star is considerably brighter than Earth’s. Also, Mgitu is nearly a brown dwarf star and provides the moon with sufficient heat and light to make up the difference. A thick rain forest covers much of Far Nyumba’s single landmass. The remaining land is divided between a volcanic

mountain range and dry scrublands in the interior.

Far Nyumba is the most welcoming of any of the worlds settled by humanity. It’s a warm, wet world with small polar caps, large oceans, and lush vegetation. Far Nyumba is also a world with very little true night. Together, the orange glow of Mgitu and the bright white light of primary star SS1515a are a bit brighter than Earthly day. However, both Mgitu and this star are in the sky for only part of the day. Depending on the complexities of the various orbits, at least one of these two bodies is usually visible. The initial distinctions of Mgitu day and night, full day, star day and night, and full night have given way to three distinctions made by the locals, full day, when both are in the sky, full night, when neither is visible, and halfday when one or the other is visible. Halfday is a common condition and regardless of whether its sun or Mgitu is visible, the light is approximately equal to a partly cloudy winter day on Earth.

NATIVE LIFE

Far Nyumba vegetation is generally a deep blue-green in color and mostly consists of a wide variety of vines and ferns as well as many tall fleshy plants that resemble spineless, branching cacti covered in

large leaves. Most of these plants are considerably more mobile than their Earthly counterparts. While none can uproot themselves and move, many can rapidly open and close their leaves and flowers and even move their branches and leaves to avoid predation by insects or to seek out light. Some of these plants are carnivorous and supplement soil nutrients by catching and eating insects. However, none of these plants are capable of consuming anything larger than a house cat.

The first explorers called the local animal life insects, and like insects, these creatures are exceedingly diverse. Some fly, others swim, crawl, climb, or burrow but they only superficially resemble Earthly arthropods. The dominant variety of these creatures has eight legs instead of six and possesses actual lungs, allowing them to grow considerably larger than Earth arthropods. Most are herbivores, and scavengers and biologists continue to puzzle over the fact that few of them are carnivores. The largest of these creatures are almost a meter long and weigh nearly 50 kg. Although none are dangerous to humans, a few have discovered a taste for human crop plants, necessitating special fences and the use of local pheromones to discourage them. Many farmers now plant some of the more voracious local carnivorous plants throughout their fields, a practice that deters most of these insects.

THE COLONY

The colony's six-year isolation was difficult. Colonists kept their morale up by continuing their investigations of the alien artifacts in Mgitu's atmosphere. However, they were far from ready for self-sufficiency. Suddenly confronted with the necessity of learning to grow all of their own food, and attempting to repair various machines without a proper supply of raw materials for their makers caused serious problems. Twenty-two people died from malnutrition and lack of advanced medicine in the famine of 2119. When the first jump ship arrived, the settlement on Far Nyumba looked like a strange combination of a rustic frontier town and a sophisticated research facility.

Since recontact, Far Nyumba has become the primary focus of the renewed extrasolar colonization effort. Far Nyumba is peaceful, quite habitable, and at the center of one of the biggest scientific mysteries of the century. In addition, a number of Earth's more unconventional scientists are eager to immigrate; they hope to be able to live and work in

a thriving scientific community that lacks many of the restrictions found on Earth. Today, Far Nyumba is becoming an extremely diverse and eccentric colony. Although almost 3,000 of the original colonists have returned to Earth, more than 10,000 additional people have moved here since contact was renewed.

SOCIETY

The colonists are independent and self-reliant. The African colonists and the many scientists formed a unique culture that is a mixture of African traditions adapted for life off world, similar to those found on Karroo Mining Colony, and the eclectic, free-thinking atmosphere of a university. Most colony residents love conversation and debate and are eager to discuss almost any topic. To help share knowledge and improve morale during the long isolation, many researchers began a weekly program of lectures and classes. Today, almost everyone on Far Nyumba is relatively well educated and eager to hear alternative points of view.

The residents settled in a single city called Jifunza ("Learning"), which has a population of 41,000. Another 2,000 colonists live in outlying mines, agricultural stations, and small research bases. Even the most remote of these settlements keep in regular contact with people in Jifunza, and few people live outside of Jifunza for more than a year.

Many on Far Nyumba worry that this tradition of unity will be lost as new immigrants continue to arrive, while other residents attempt to include the new arrivals in the various classes and discussions. However, some of the new colonists are not researchers seeking to join the ongoing explorations of Far Nyumba or Mgitu or people interested in joining a thriving intellectual community, but settlers seeking to create isolated religious or social communities who wish to build their own cities and settlements far from Jifunza. Almost half of the new colonists seek to found their own settlements.

There are now two major new settlements on Far Nyumba. The first consists of 2,000 followers of Erin Perez, a charismatic leader who preaches humans learning to live in harmony with the natural world. All of her followers, popularly called Perezistas, have modified themselves so that their skin is green and can photosynthesize as long as they spend sufficient time in direct sunlight. Perezistas only use living biotechnology and consider other technology to be inherently corrupt. They moved to Far Nyumba to "learn the spirit of this world." The other new colony consists

of a group of 2,500 individuals from India who were part of a small movement that sought to revive the old Indian caste system. Finding much opposition in their homeland, they are attempting to build a religiously and socially pure society on Far Nyumba.

MGITU

Initially, explorers visited Mgitu in search of chemicals they could extract via gas mining, but they found far more. Their first discovery was that this world was home to a complex ecosystem. Drifting swarms of tiny cloud plankton thrive in the dense atmosphere, while larger creatures feed off them. Thin, carpet-like creatures known as flats are the most abundant. Growing up to several hundred meters on a side, even the largest flats are less than 10 cm thick. They absorb nutrients directly from the vast clouds of organic chemicals in the atmosphere.

The most spectacular life forms are the huge airwhales. These behemoths can grow more than a kilometer long and look like roughly hemispherical clusters of huge balloons stuck together into an irregular oval. Numerous tentacles and sensory clusters cover their relatively flat underside. Airwhales consume portions of flats as well as using their paddle-shaped tentacles to waft masses of smaller plankton-like creatures into their vast mouths. Flats and airwhales can be navigational hazards, but pay no attention to human exploratory vessels. However, smaller predators like the 30-meter long, delta-shaped swifts, which rapidly propel themselves through the atmosphere with muscular jets of air, often take an unfortunate interest in human spacecraft.

ALIENS IN THE CLOUDS

In 2114, Legionaries exploring deep in this world's atmosphere discovered a series of floating artifacts. Deeper exploration was only possible once Earth could supply vessels capable of venturing deep into Mgitu's dense atmosphere. In 2122, the first Leviathan jump ship to visit Far Nyumba carried along a spacecraft designed to endure extreme pressure. Explorers using this craft discovered a large installation deep in Mgitu's atmosphere. Preliminary examination by two clairsentients revealed that this installation seems to have been constructed by star-faring species that visited Mgitu several thousand years ago. Called Zeps (short for "Zeppelins"), these creatures evolved in the atmosphere of another warm gas giant. Searches are currently underway to determine if there is any evidence of Zep

visitation on Jupiter or on any of the gas giants in any other systems visited by humanity.

The complete lack of artifacts elsewhere in this star system suggests that the Zeps are primarily interesting exploring gas giants. Analysis of various images found in the installation, combined with psychometric study, has allowed researchers to gather some preliminary data. The Zeps appear to have first visited Mgitu almost 15,000 years ago. Their exact method of arrival is unknown. During their first mission, they set up the installation as well as deploying numerous pieces of automatic machinery, including the artifacts found in the upper atmosphere. At the end of this visit, they all disappeared into the glowing sphere found in the center of the installation. This sphere seems to be some type of teleportation device unlike anything humanity has ever encountered. Although it still appears functional, so far no one has been willing to attempt to use this device.

KARROO MINING COLONY

Orbiting a neutron star in a desolate system in the Crab Nebula, the Karroo Mining Colony was shaping up to be a "boom town," exporting a steady stream of valuable metals and minerals and hosting a growing contingent of scientific researchers. The boom ended when the colony was attacked by the mysterious Chromatics, but even then the hardy colonists of Karroo held their own — until the disappearance of the Upeo wa Macho. Under siege, stranded alone and impossibly far from Earth for more than six years, it seemed pointless to hope that the people of Karroo had survived, but the returning Leviathan crew found that the colonists had endured despite the Chromatics' attempts to destroy them.

When an African-sponsored team of teleporters arrived at the Crab Nebula in 2109, they discovered a dangerous but potentially lucrative region of space. A rapidly spinning neutron star sat at the center of the nebula, and beyond its borders orbited countless clouds of dust, asteroids, and other small bodies and concentrations of gas — all remnants of one or more large terrestrial planets that were destroyed when the sun went supernova. All the dense elements, heavy metals, and rare earths that lay buried in those planets were now smashed into easily accessible fragments, floating in the clouds and ready to be recovered.

The UAN team immediately moved to establish a



mining and research colony just outside the dangerous area of the nebula, anchoring together several of the largest of the asteroid fragments with sturdy connections and building living and working areas into them. Everything was plated with redundant layers of shielding to protect the colonists from the deadly radiation of the neutron star, and the miners and scientists quickly moved in and got to work.

Word of the station and its opportunities spread quickly: Karroo was a dangerous environment, but one where an enterprising miner could become wealthy in a short time. The UAN encouraged the influx of miners, maintaining a “hands off” policy and simply taxing the mining profits. Scientists from a variety of disciplines flooded the colony as well, anxious to discover the secrets of the nebula and its destroyed system. Within only a few years, the colony had grown to over 20 times its original size.

The rapidly growing colony needed to expand the web of anchors to connect more asteroids and planetary fragments, as well as acquire more resources like antigravity mesh, hydroponics equipment for farming, and the all-important radiation shielding. As transporting the ever-increasing list of needed materials from Earth was becoming

overly expensive, even for the affluent mining colony, Karroo’s leadership made the decision to become more independent and self-sufficient, establishing refineries and manufacturing facilities. Better, more permanent housing blocks were also created, to cater to those colonists who had started new families or brought their families with them to the station.

CHROMATIC ATTACKS

By 2115, Karroo Mining Colony was almost entirely self-sustaining, maintaining only a financial connection to the UAN, and the population was continuing to grow exponentially. Then the Chromatics began to attack. The colony was taken completely by surprise. The Chromatic ship appeared seemingly out of nowhere, and by the time a response was organized, the aliens were already inside the colony, burning a hydroponic garden into ash and steam. Karroo’s security forces were armed with standard laser weaponry, which seemed worse than useless against the Chromatics. Those shots that weren’t simply stopped were deflected, causing even more damage to the farm structure. The Chromatics’ own lasers, by contrast, seemed extremely powerful and

COLONY DATA: KARROO MINING COLONY

Founded: 2109 (United African Nations)
Discovery: 2109 (Upeo/ISRA joint exploration)
Distance from Earth: 6,500 light years
Star: Crab Pulsar — neutron star
Diameter: n/a
Gravity: n/a
Atmosphere: vacuum
Air Pressure: n/a
Percentage Ocean: n/a
Rotation Period: n/a
Native Life: possibly Chromatics?
Human Population: 100,000

effective — and were emitted from the aliens themselves, rather than from weapons, suggesting that the creatures were powerful photokinetics.

That first attack ended in a pyrrhic victory, as the Karroo security team was forced to disconnect and

jettison the entire asteroid to which the farm was attached, sending it tumbling into the nebula toward the neutron star. It is unknown whether any of the aliens survived, but the colonists assumed that this was only a scouting attack, and that more

PERSONAL LOG OF NJENGA JEPTOO

03.17.2117

I've never seen anything like it. We thought we were done for this time — we'd never seen the frogs send such a large force, with so many ships. They wouldn't even need to force their way into the station this time, they could just blast us into dust with that fleet. All this time fighting, surviving, and then to end like that... Well, obviously it didn't.

It was N'Gamba who saved us. I was with her when she got the news, with her when she saw the external scans on the monitor. One second she was there, and the next she was gone. Vanished into thin air. Then five minutes later, she was back, with that smile, that secretive smile. "We're going to be okay," she said.

I saw them on the monitor. Over a dozen of them, winking into existence out there, human-looking, but floating in space with no protection. Some of them were glowing. They flew — they *flew* — toward the alien fleet, and started...well, fighting it. Blasting ships with beams from their eyes, tearing through hulls with their bare hands. Some absorbed laser fire like it was nothing. Others got hurt. I think I saw one of them die.

We helped, of course. We fired off all the colony's ion cannons, sent sheets of plasma at the frogs' fleet. Maybe those glowing people couldn't have beaten the aliens without our help. I don't know. I do know *we'd* never have beaten the aliens without *theirs*.

When it was all over, the teleporters — finally, the teleporters! — took them away, back to wherever they came from. All but one, who came in to meet N'Gamba. He was tall, beautiful, glowing like a star. He looked like some kind of god. "I don't believe we've met," he said to her, and his voice was like angels singing. "I'm Apollo."

I think that's when I passed out.

Chromatics would be on the way. Word was sent to Earth of the attack, along with a request for aid and the corpse of one of the aliens.

Over the next year, the attacks continued, with the colonists adapting to the aliens' unique abilities by turning to older styles of weaponry like projectile guns — always a danger in a sealed space-station environment — and non-photonic energy weapons like plasma guns. As a last resort, colonists even used simple melee weapons like clubs and blades against the invaders. The Chromatics did not respond well to the changes in tactics, and by 2116, with help on the way from Earth and some victories under their belts, things seemed to be looking up for the colonists.

ISOLATION FOLLOWED BY A DRAMATIC RESCUE

Then the Upeo wa Macho disappeared, and Earth heard nothing more from Karroo Mining Colony for nearly seven years. Given the lack of reinforcements and support from Earth and the likelihood that the Chromatic attacks had continued, the UAN assumed that the colony had been lost.

After the Upeo's return, contact was reestablished with Karroo. As it turned out, they'd been in contact with the teleporters for years, and it was with their aid — and the aid of a group of novas from the planet Eden — that the mining colony was still mostly intact, despite relentless attacks from the Chromatics. Even with that outside help, though, life in the station was full of hardship, with barely enough food to keep the population from starving, poor air and water quality, and crowded living conditions due to the massive damage the station had taken during the attacks. Making matters worse, much of the social power and authority on the station had been usurped by a criminal organization known as the Leopards.

With additional supplies and security forces arriving regularly from Earth, Karroo is beginning to recover, although the population is holding steady at about 100,000 due to many residents leaving as space on Earth-bound Leviathan jump ships becomes available. Conflicts between the arriving forces and the Leopards are frequent, and the Chromatics are still a threat.

ANCIENT ARTIFACTS

Despite the inhospitable conditions, a new wave of scientists is also on the way to Karroo. During the colony's last year of isolation, a routine mining operation recovered two artifacts from a large asteroid close to the nebula. The nature of these items has not

yet been determined, but what seems clear is that they were deliberately created by some sort of intelligent life. It remains to be seen whether — as some researchers suspect — the artifacts are proof that the planet whose explosion created the debris field was actually inhabited. Further expeditions to the asteroid where the artifacts were found are planned.

KHANTZE LU GE

Humanity's nearest colony, Khantze Lu Ge (“Castle in the Sky”), is now a battleground world. An Aberrant invasion during the teleporters' absence overran the planet's northern region, transforming it into a nightmarish occupation zone ruled by monsters. The rest of the world is holding out with UN emergency assistance but may yet be overwhelmed while debates on strategy hamstring further military intervention.

CASTLE IN THE SKY

One of the first interstellar missions of the Nova Age was the exploration of Sol's nearest neighbor, the Alpha Centauri binary system. The existence of a barely habitable planet made brief headlines, but its environment was marginal compared to later discoveries. Nova warp abilities briefly allowed humanity to visit stars hundreds of light years away, so this world's proximity to Earth was insufficient motivation for colonization. Humanity continued to ignore this planet until the mid-2040s, when rising nova-related tension drove China to pursue several options for both national and species survival. Suddenly, a world reachable without warps was desirable.

Several unmanned sub-light freighters made the journey in the next decade, deploying automated systems to construct the colony's infrastructure. A manned ship followed in 2055, carrying nearly a million volunteers in suspended animation. At the end of their 11-year voyage, these colonists made planetfall in the newly-christened Khantze Lu Ge's equatorial region.

The Aberrant War delayed a follow-up manned mission until 2093. In the interim, China maintained sporadic laser contact with its colonists, but this provided little more than proof of the colony's survival. The second ship arrived in 2104 to find a thriving colony of 1.9 million. The newcomers brought with them four decades of information and the newest available technology. They also expanded the colony's cultural diversity, as a majority were non-Chinese.

In 2106, the Upeo opened teleportation between Khantze Lu Ge and Earth. Unexpectedly, this polarized the colony as China attempted to assert greater control. On one side were the second-wave Chinese colonists who still held loyalty to Earth. Opposing them were long-term LuGeians, particularly the second- and third-generation residents who'd grown up in a fully independent colonial culture. Loosely allied with the latter group were non-Chinese colonists who rejected Chinese governance. The loss of contact in 2116 eased tensions but didn't erase them, particularly as Chinese government and Ministry officials remained on the planet.

2121's Aberrant attack achieved complete surprise. Streaming from a cave network near the northern ice cap, the invaders seized the city of Kuan and its environs. They failed to capitalize on initial successes, and delays in consolidating their hold gave colonial security forces (covertly aided by Upeo teleporters) the opportunity to organize a defense. When the second offensive came, the LuGeians' scorched-earth tactics exacted a bitter price from the Aberrants. The battle lines stabilized and both sides dug in for a protracted ground war, one that continues even after the arrival of reinforcements from Earth.

ALPHA CENTAURI B

Khantze Lu Ge is a cold, dark, rocky desert on the outer edge of Alpha Centauri B's habitable zone. Its shallow seas are toxic with heavy-metal

salts, leaving the polar ice caps and their meltwater the only safe sources of irrigation. The native life, consisting of algae and other microbes, created the planet's breathable atmosphere but is inedible. Intensive reclamation efforts yielded enough arable land to feed the colonists, but it will take centuries (or Qin intervention) to make Khantze Lu Ge green.

The planet's thin atmosphere poses its own problems, which China addressed through colonist selection and genetic modification. Native-born LuGeians are well-adapted, though many first-generation immigrants struggle for breath and carry small personal oxygen tanks for the occasional "restorative." Most arcologies include higher-pressure sectors for this increasingly aged demographic. Recent arrivals are overcrowding these facilities, another factor contributing to increasing tensions.

From Khantze Lu Ge, Alpha Centauri A is dimmer than Alpha Centauri B, yet far brighter than the moon seen from Earth (or either of Khantze Lu Ge's own two moons). For half the LuGeian year, the companion star is opposite the primary in the sky, providing a glowing indigo night with no true darkness. It's not intense enough to affect Khantze Lu Ge's temperature or serve as a useful power source.

CASTLE BESIEGED

Until the arrival of Chinese and Ministry officials from "home," the four million LuGeians enjoyed an existence that, if not idyllic, was at least a reasonable

PLANETARY DATA: KHANTZE LU GE

Founded: 2064 (China)
Discovery: 2032 (European Union interstellar mission)
Distance from Earth: 4.37 light years
Star: Alpha Centauri B — K1
Diameter: 12,330 km
Gravity: 1.07 Earth
Atmosphere: Oxygen and nitrogen (breathable)
Air Pressure: 0.70 Earth
Temperature: -30° C to 20° C
Percentage Ocean: 34%
Rotation Period: 31 hours
Native Life: Algae analogues
Human Population: 3.9 million

SUBJECT: LU GEIAN GENETICS

From: Dr. Jorge Varese, P'eng-lai Clinic

To: Proxy Bolande Atwan

Encryption: SPE

Date: 10.7.2107, 3:32 PM

Proxy Atwan —

The team has completed its report on LuGeian physiology and genetics. The full document is on the secure server, but I'll summarize. Though China remains closed-mouthed about its modifications, the LuGeian medical community was more cooperative. We also drew on Æsculapian scans and our own laboratory analyses.

Colonist recruitment focused on high-altitude populations, including the Qinghai and Sichuan provinces and, surprisingly, Tibet. The second wave added Nepali and Sudamérican Andean citizens. China also modified the colonists who weren't past reproductive age, including all minors.

The genemods didn't affect the colonists themselves. Surviving founders still have trouble breathing on KLG. Instead, their reproductive systems were tweaked. Their offspring display greater lung capacity and higher respiratory rates, as well as greater blood vessel diameter and total blood volume. LuGeians remain cross-fertile with unmodified humans and their genemods are dominant.

China didn't expect these people to return to Earth. We've seen severe respiratory infections and mild oxygen toxicity in KLG's UN delegation. The only LuGeians who can visit Earth safely are ones who were born here and any who are willing to use genetic therapies the Æsculapians are developing to reverse these changes.

approximation of peaceful and pastoral. The world was harsh but didn't actively try to kill them. The colony's industrial base was comparable to that of any well-developed Earth nation, albeit with little heavy industry outside agricultural tools and long-term terraforming. Crime was low; violent incidents nearly nonexistent. Assimilation of the second ship's non-Chinese passengers had gone smoothly.

China's subsequent heavy-handed attempts to assert its authority played poorly to LuGeians used to autonomy. Some saw the Ministry and Chinese military as outright invaders. Protests and actual attacks flared, directed at both newcomers and Chinese-born "second-shippers" who supported them. Over China's objections, Æon and the UN worked to prevent escalation into civil war.

KHANTZE LU GE CAMPAIGNS

Jump ships traveling to Khantze Lu Ge have little space for anyone not supporting the military campaign. Having said that, this war is larger than any on Earth in 2123. It's also lower-tech, with few aircraft or spacecraft, limited OpNet coverage outside major cities and scant supplies. In some ways, it resembles France in 1944. Front-line combat gets the headlines but both sides are engaged in equally deadly covert action.

This gives characters on Khantze Lu Ge more to do than straight-up combat missions (though those can be rewarding, possibly culminating in a strike on one of the Prime Threats itself). With the few full-power Aberrants relying on weaker minions for most tasks, intelligence operations in occupied territory can and do succeed. Counterintelligence is just as critical, given Kali's infiltrators who have disguised or dormant Corruption. D'Chana's strategies and policies may add another front to the war if he (or someone claiming to act for him) pushes too hard to sterilize the conquered regions.

Non-Ministry psions were met with rapid acceptance. Most LuGeians felt a vague kinship due to their own genetic irregularities. The Æsculapians brought benefits to everyone and Norça was well-regarded in the Sudamérica arcologies. As Aberrant attacks on Earth intensified, the newly formed Seventh Legion attained equal popularity.

Ironically, the increased security presence prevented the Aberrants' first attack from overrunning Khantze Lu Ge. Kuan's fall cost the LuGeians their terraforming industry and main spaceport. An Orgotek-led commando raid destroyed the port, denying its ships to the enemy and setting the precedent for a scorched-earth defense. Chinese and psi order forces paid in blood to hold the Aberrant advance while civilians evacuated to equatorial arcologies. An equally vicious virtual battlefront raged through the LuGeian OpNet until the losing Aberrants took their electrokinetic opponents with them in a blaze of lobotomizing data warfare.

The lack of defense industry or military training cadre hampered attempts to bolster the human forces. Volunteer militias fought valiantly alongside the dwindling numbers of professional soldiers, but the Aberrant lines crept southward. Adding to the horror was the nature of the enemy's laser fodder: mind-controlled or mutated LuGeian captives commanded by collaborators. Under siege and without escape, the colony teetered on the brink of collapse. The colonists maintained telepathic contact with Earth, where the world listened in horror to reports of Aberrant victories.

Warned via telepathy, the UN stuffed the jump ship Sava to the pressure hull with an expeditionary force. Recontact opened with assault landings and low-orbit fire support that drove the Aberrants from the walls of the Yangra and Guaman arcologies. The losses sparked a rebellion in the Aberrant ranks, a disruption the relief troops exploited mercilessly while it lasted.

THE STATE OF THE WAR

Earth's reinforcements stabilized the battle lines but lack the strength for a sustained counteroffensive. Interstellar logistics can barely equal the invaders' own replenishment methods. A third of Khantze Lu Ge remains under Aberrant control, including 400,000 LuGeians trapped behind the lines. The majority simply submit and hope to avoid notice but a handful have taken sides — either as resistance fighters or as the Aberrants' willing acolytes.

Occupied territory is divided between two Prime Threats. Both are intent on conquering Khantze Lu

Ge, but their methods differ. Mutual loathing generates constant competition and occasional bloodshed. An estimated 200 Aberrants command several thousand sub-Aberrant mutants.

Kali, the invaders' original leader, is more militarily competent and appears focused on undermining LuGeian will. Her tactics hinge on superior coordination of multiple forces, misdirection, and deception. She also deploys infiltrators for sabotage, psychological warfare, and assassination. Secret police and creative punishments keep her human subjects in constant paranoia. The Ministry recently unearthed an intelligence network that recruited its sources by threatening loved ones in Kali's territory.

Kali's preference for capable subordinates backfired when Yog-Death, a Prime Threat in his own right, rebelled during the terrestrial counteroffensive. This Aberrant has greater personal power but less sophistication, focusing on direct military victory. His troops are individually strong but lack competent low-level leadership, perhaps due to his unwillingness to tolerate potential rivals. He controls his subjects through vicious brutality, Quantum Flux infection, and brainwashing.

Rolling back the Aberrant forces brought the LuGeians room to breathe — and to consider their domestic situation. Outright rebellion is rare but UN-imposed martial law has rekindled prewar discontent. General Roland D'Chana, the UN commander, has little empathy for civilians and no use for those who don't directly support the war effort. He and the Chinese government have written off the LuGeians in Aberrant territories. Recent discussions have advocated the use of nuclear weapons to "sterilize" enemy strongholds. UN civilian leadership and the Legions refuse to sign off on this strategy but Æon fears D'Chana may arrange circumstances that "leave him no choice."

MARFISA

The most recently discovered "lost colony" from the Aberrant War era, Marfisa, has been isolated for nearly a century due to a catastrophic accident that occurred during the colonists' Aberrant-provided warp to the distant planet. The circumstances of the warp disaster stranded the survivors for 60 years without access to advanced technology. The unexpected recovery of a quantum-tech supercomputer and automated manufactory led to an ideological split in the colony's population, forming the basis for a 19-year cold war between the Preserver and Pandoran factions. While an Æon Trinity recon team has learned much about

PLANETARY DATA: MARFISA

Founded: 2042 (Independent colonization)
Discovery: 2040 (Aberrant discovery)
Rediscovered: 2123 (Upeo/ISRA Survey)
Distance from Earth: 13,750 light years
Star: Angelica — G1
Diameter: 12,111 km
Gravity: 1.01 Earth
Atmosphere: Oxygen and nitrogen (breathable)
Air Pressure: .99 Earth
Percentage Ocean: 85%
Rotation Period: 36 hours
Native Life: Plants, insect- and fish-like animals
Human Population: 6,000,000



Marfisa and its society, a true first-contact mission is still in the planning stages.

A LOST COLONY AT WAR WITH ITSELF

In January of 2123, the members of an Upeo/ISRA exploration team, searching for worlds suitable for human colonization, were startled to discover that one of the planets on their list of candidates was already home to a human colony. Following standard protocols, they called in an Æon Trinity recon squad to learn as much as possible about the colony before making contact.

Extensive clairsentient scanning from a stationary orbit behind Marfisa's single moon, Virago, revealed two large human settlements surrounded by a web of smaller towns. The larger city, Endeavor, was located in the center of the colony's agricultural operations, with satellite communities focused on farming and fishing. The slightly smaller city, Endurance, was in a mountainous region and populated by miners and industrial workers. During this routine scanning, the clears were startled to observe a number of small military engagements between the two regions. It rapidly became clear that the people of Marfisa were at war with one another.

The recon squad needed more information, but secrecy was a paramount concern, as interfering with the colony, or even letting the colonists know they had been rediscovered, might make the situation worse. A small group of clairsentient,

telepathic, and biokinetic infiltrators was teleported to the planet to gather more intel about the colony and its reasons for civil war. A little over two months later, a picture of Marfisa's history began to take shape.

Shortly before the Aberrant War, two charismatic and powerful novas made an offer to take any baseline human who wanted an escape from the rapidly degenerating situation on Earth to a safe, distant world to start over. The Aberrant calling herself Tunnel Rat would create a warp gate connecting Earth to the new colony planet, while her partner Babbage would supply the colonists with quantum technology that would make their lives easy. Nearly five million people from all over the world took them up on their offer and traveled to the departure point in New Zealand, where they would take a 12-hour journey through the warp.

Unfortunately, Tunnel Rat was heavily Corrupted, and maintaining such a large warp tunnel for such a long time caused her powers to go out of control, killing her and catastrophically altering the environment inside the tunnel. Most of the colonists, as well as their livestock and seedlings, arrived on Marfisa intact, but much of their technology was shredded and scrambled by the chaotic warp energy. Although some of the equipment was salvageable and Marfisa had plentiful natural resources, it would be decades before the colonists were able to return to even a mid-1980s level of technology and industry.

PERSONAL LOG OF HORACE GUO

04.02.2123

I've never seen anything quite like this. The tech, the clothes — hell, even the hair — are all like something out of a history vid from, I don't know, 1985. And everyone is so *angry*. It hits me like waves every time we go out into the city. All this red, rumbling anger on the verge of exploding into violence. The team over in Endurance says it's the same there. It's ugly, and it's just getting uglier.

We have to be very careful here. Any show of psi powers is just going to convince them they have Aberrants in their midst (which as far as we can tell, they don't), and that might be all it takes to set off the whole powder keg.

I wish we could just blow up the damned box. I don't trust that tech any more than the Preservers do. But doing that would just start a bloodbath. I don't even know how we're supposed to tell them we're from Earth. I guess that's Neptune's problem, though. I just want to get out of here.

The colonists initially focused on survival, founding their first settlement, Endeavor, on a simple agenda of farming and families. People who had been enemies on Earth due to politics, race, or religion found themselves forced to let go of old hatreds in order to survive and prosper. In place of the old prejudices, a new one formed: the Aberrants Tunnel Rat and Babbage were seen as nearly satanic figures whose superhuman abilities had stranded the colonists and left them for dead.

As the colony prospered and grew, a second large settlement, Endurance, was founded in order to help meet the Marfisans' growing need for better tools and machines. Unlike the pastoral region in which Endeavor was located, life in and around Endurance was harsh and unpleasant; the mining work was brutally hard and living in a polluted industrial zone often led to illnesses and early deaths. Despite the hardships, the people of Endurance were proud of the work they did to help modernize the colony, contributing equipment for farming, materials for construction, and even radios and primitive computers.

PANDORANS AND PRESERVERS

By 2103 the planet's population had grown to more than six million, and Endurance had achieved a sort of practical, friendly independence from Endeavor. That was the year that everything changed, when — in one last spasm of uncontrolled power — the warp tunnel opened up one last time and spit out a huge metallic cube into a residential area of Endeavor. The police force discovered an entry into the cube, and exploration quickly revealed what had landed

on Marfisa: a giant, quantum-tech automated manufactory, capable of consuming raw materials and producing practically any tool or technology the colonists might want. The manufactory was controlled by an artificially intelligent supercomputer, who confirmed that “she” was created by Babbage to help the colonists in whatever way they required. The computer had been sent immediately after the colonists, but due to the disastrous failure of the warp tunnel, it had somehow arrived 60 years later.

The population of the colony was almost immediately divided. The leadership of Endeavor, convinced that any product of Aberrant power must be evil and harmful, dubbed the new arrival “Pandora” and insisted that she be destroyed — or at least sealed up and never used — in order to preserve the good life that the Marfisans now had. Many of the citizens of Endurance, however, saw Pandora as a gift that could make their difficult lives much easier. Why should they suffer and die to create technology when the manufactory could do it almost magically?

The Marfisans were nearly evenly divided in their opinions, with the “Preservers” just barely outnumbering the “Pandorans.” The strength of the Pandoran voice was enough to prevent the Preservers from destroying the manufactory and computer, but the Preservers were powerful enough to prevent anyone from gaining access to Pandora and putting her to use. Over the next year, the population shifted, with most Preservers aligning themselves with Endeavor and most Pandorans basing themselves in Endurance. By 2104, the two cities had begun an armed conflict.

The war was short lived in its active form, simply because the two populations were so dependent upon each other's exported goods — the Pandorans needed food, and the Preservers needed fuel, raw materials, and tools. The conflict settled into a sort of cold war in which each faction regularly threatened to withhold its vital goods in an attempt to force the other to concede on the issue of Pandora. The occasional border conflicts were officially condemned by both sides.

This state of cold war lasted until 2122, when a group of young, angry Pandorans took it upon themselves to make a strike into Endeavor in an attempt to reach and fully activate Pandora. Most of the small force were killed by the Preserver defense force, and the remainder were captured and held as prisoners of war. The populations of both sides were furious — the Preservers at the raid, and the Pandorans at the deaths — and the cold war is rapidly becoming hot again.

PLANS FOR RECONTACT

With the initial survey completed, the Æon Trinity and the United Nations are now deliberating on how to proceed with first contact. Because the situation on Marfisa is so delicate, decisions about whom to talk to, what to say to them, and what side to take — if any — may have enormous repercussions. The question of what to do with Pandora also looms large in any attempt to plan first contact.

QINSHUI

In many ways, Qinshui is relatively Earthlike, but it has important differences, including an exceedingly alien ecosystem. It has three moderate-sized continents and a wealth of small-to-medium-sized islands. The atmosphere is thick and perpetually humid. Rain or fog are nearly constant over most of the planet. Qinshui's lack of a moon means its tideless seas are considerably calmer than Earth's.

THE EMBASSY COMPOUND

Qinshui is now home to over 15,000 humans. Unlike colony worlds, the majority of the inhabitants are diplomats, scientists, technicians, and their staff. However, the embassy is also home to dozens of cooks, barbers, doctors, entertainers, and others whose presence is necessary for any long-term human settlement. Life on Qinshui is very different from any colony world. With the exception of the new arrivals, everyone here has spent the last



six years living among the Qin on a world that was manifestly not their home. This culture shock has had a significant impact on most residents. Some who had extensive interaction with the Qin have adopted many Qin mannerisms and habits of communication. Such people are easily recognized by their smooth, almost gliding movements and their somewhat stilted speech. Others in professions where they have little contact with the Qin grew to fear the Qin. Several psychologists studying the embassy personnel have remarked that such people display an almost Qin-like paranoia about the Qin.



Feeling threatened by the aliens' innate secrecy, these people have become increasingly secretive.

To help residents adjust to life on an alien world, the embassy compound resembles an Earth town under a dome, since the designers realized that residents would prefer being able to go outside in an area that appeared relatively familiar. A low bio-glass dome 1,300 meters in diameter and 100 meters high surrounds the embassy compound. During the day, the dome glows in patterns that simulate Earthly skies. The region inside the dome duplicates

Earthlike conditions as much as possible. In addition to the living and working areas, the embassy compound also contains numerous small parks and open areas with many Earthly plants and small animals. While this embassy is more open and comfortable than space settlements like Karroo Mining Colony, most residents never forget that it is a single structure surrounded by a vast and strange alien city.

The alien environment is one reason that all forms of escapism are much more common here than on any other extrasolar colonies. Holovids and

PLANETARY DATA: QINSHUI

Founded: 2109 (Joint United Nations & Aeon Trinity Embassy)

Discovery: 2108 (Chinese Interstellar Mission)

Distance from Earth: 14,600 light years.

Star: Qinri — K0

Diameter: 12,800 km

Gravity: 0.94 Earth

Atmosphere: Oxygen and nitrogen (breathable)

Air Pressure: 1.6 Earth

Temperature: -10°C to 50°C

Percentage Ocean: 83%

Rotation Period: 21 hours

Native Life: Qin and many genetically modified life forms

Human Population: 15,000

VR simulations of Earth or other human worlds are very popular. Now that a number of Qin who are studying humanity have also expressed an interest in such programs, Qinshui may become a major market for these holovids and simulations.

NATIVE LIFE

The Qin appear to have bioengineered almost every life form on Qinshui, transforming the entire ecosystem. Despite these many changes, Qinshui possesses an ecosystem as complex as Earth's. The bioengineered animals and plants compete for food, prey upon one another, engage in complex social behavior, and even breed. However, most organisms also have a specific function that they perform for the Qin. From animals used as vehicles to vine-like plants that act as aqueducts and plumbing, on Qinshui most living things exist to serve the Qin.

All organisms on Qinshui are also designed to avoid harming the Qin. To avoid accidental predation, humans who travel into the Qin wilderness must wear special marking chemicals that identify them as Qin to the local life forms. During the embassy's isolation from Earth, three residents were killed by local life forms. A biologist was murdered by a jealous rival who replaced his marking chemical with a chemical designed to attract the large creatures he was studying to a new food source, causing them to attack and devour him. The other two victims were teens who died in a Qin city, when

they snuck into a building that turned out to be a living waste-disposal facility and were fatally processed.

Most humans find wild areas of Qinshui to be exceedingly strange and eerie. Although some creatures like the Qin possess both hearing and a vibration sense, most animals on Qinshui rely primarily on their vibration sense and have little or no ability to hear. As a result, few animals make deliberate noises, but those that do are always quite loud. Outside of the cities, the predominant noises are the constant patter of rain, the rustle of the wind through the foliage, and the gurgle of flowing streams. These muted sounds are occasionally interrupted by piercingly loud shrieks and cries. These noises, combined with the frequent thick fogs and constant damp makes most of Qinshui feel claustrophobic. Also, almost all local life, including the Qin, can see in both the visual and infrared spectrums. Most plants and animals appear dull and drab, some because they are camouflaged to blend into the frequent fogs, others because they are brightly colored in the infrared spectrum.

Most wilderness areas blend almost imperceptibly into the cities. A series of long vines heading off into the distance may turn out to be a large city's water supply, and the fields of large, fleshy, red sunflower-like plants that appear in many of the early photos of this world are actually the Qin's primary solar-power generation system.

THE QINRI SYSTEM

Like humanity, the Qin colonized most of their own star system. Qinshui has no moon, but the system possesses an asteroid belt, three large gas giants with numerous moons, as well as two other terrestrial planets, Qinshan and Qin-Lak. Qinshan is a hot rocky world somewhat closer to the sun Qinri than Qinshui. It possesses a thin atmosphere of carbon dioxide and water vapor. Qin-Lak is a cold, heavily glaciated world. Its dense atmosphere is breathable by Qin and by humans if the carbon dioxide is scrubbed out. It has limited microbial life, small equatorial oceans and vast polar caps. Qin-Lak has several large cities near the equator and human researchers believe this planet has been heavily Qin-formed.

The Qin also have smaller colonies on Qinshan as well as on many of the moons and asteroids in their system. Most of these settlements consist of self-sufficient colonies inside living biotech arcologies. Visitors report that residents of some of these communities also appear to have been heavily modified, and in a few the distinction between colony and inhabitant begins to blur.

Numerous living spaceships ply the spaces between the various worlds of the Qin system. Most use a form of advanced gravito-magnetic propulsion that seems to require little or no fuel. Orgotek technicians are eager to learn the secrets of these craft, but so far the Qin have been unwilling to discuss this technology.

Human astronomers and clairsentients have also noticed that the Qin also possess several dozen huge living starships which can travel at nearly the speed of light. Observers believe that these starships regularly travel to and from at least four Qin extrasolar colonies. So far, the Qin are unwilling to discuss these colonies. However, Qin researchers are studying the visiting Leviathan jump ships, attempting to discover if there is a way Qin could operate similar vessels without human assistance.

RELATIONS WITH THE QIN

Residents of the embassy compound are now the primary source of information about Qin politics and society (see p. 351 for further details) and some have found that they enjoy the company of the Qin. There, several hundred humans have forged close friendships with Qin. However, humans who have lived on Qinshui for any length of time also understand that some Qin do not trust any humans and oppose the presence of humans on their world.

To help combat the efforts of the Qin houses who oppose their species' alliance with humanity, several dozen psions on Qinshui are now working closely with house Tung-Jen, the house most closely allied with humanity. These psions use their powers to help house Tung-Jen spy on and discredit its rivals. At least one biokinetic has learned to disguise herself as a Qin biosuit and has also recently learned to bud off a portion of her body and transform it into a duplicate of one of the Qin. To avoid serious diplomatic consequences if these efforts are discovered by rival Qin houses, every psion who becomes involved in Qin internal politics does so without any official approval or acknowledgement by the UN or the Æon Trinity. Senior members of house Tung-Jen are considering adopting a few of these psion agents into their house, to avoid their enemies denouncing house Tung-Jen for bringing outsiders into internal Qin politics.

RUAN'S WORLD

Named after the teleporter who found it, this world of perpetual red light is a strange and wondrous land. It is now the home of the Upeo wa Macho. Although they reestablished contact with Earth six months ago, their headquarters and most of their personnel remain on this planet.

HOME AWAY FROM EARTH

Ruan Curwin discovered this planet in 2109. Bolade Atwan initially decided the best use of Ruan's discovery was as a staging ground to use while hunting Aberrants. An Aberrant following a psion to Earth would be a disaster, but Aberrants following a psion to an unpopulated planet rotating around a red dwarf would be no huge loss. Over the next few years, Ruan's World gradually became the Upeo's primary base of operations as the order brought more equipment and personnel. Before the Upeo's departure from Earth, they even brought family and friends and some of their nguzo support personnel to the planet. By 2113, Ruan's World had gone from a sparse outpost to a small colony of several thousand people.

With low gravity and a large red sun hanging motionless in the sky, Ruan's World is the strangest human colony. Axum is close enough to Ruan's World that it appears more than twice the size of a full moon in Earth's sky, and does not appear to move. The planet's rotation precisely matches its orbit, and so every portion of the planet is in either

PLANETARY DATA: RUAN'S WORLD

Founded: 2110 (Upeo wa Macho)
Discovery: 2109 (Upeo Interstellar Survey)
Distance from Earth: 18,400 light years
Star: Axum M0
Diameter: 9,442 km
Gravity: .58 Earth
Atmosphere: Oxygen and nitrogen (breathable)
Air Pressure: 1.5 Earth
Temperature: -75°C (cold pole) to 80°C (hot pole)
Percentage Ocean: 64%
Rotation Period: 46 days — the world is tidally locked
Native Life: High diversity of animals, vegetables, microbes
Human Population: 9,000

eternal day or endless night. The region closest to Axum is called the hot pole and temperatures there are almost 80°C , while the cold pole remains at a constant -75°C . To avoid these two extremes, the Upeo base was built on the sunlit side, but near the motionless terminator, which divides day from night.

Despite its strangeness, Ruan's World is teeming with life. Due to the low gravity, many creatures fly or float using biologically generated hydrogen, and local life uses either infrared vision or echolocation as their primary sense. Although the local life is not as dangerous as Eden's myriasoma, several species of large animals have attacked humans and visitors should use caution when venturing into the wilderness.

The city of Freedom remains the lone settlement on the planet. Farms and a few facilities ring the prefab habitation units. It is not the most scenic settlement, but it is comfortable and well equipped. Almost all of the colonists missed contact with Earth, and are relieved to finally connect with their homeworld. Though a few moved back to Earth, most simply visited Earth and returned to their new home.

The official Upeo facilities are located near Freedom's center. After reviewing reports from several of Upeo's senior clairsentients, Proxy Atwan relocated the order's Prometheus Chamber several

months prior to leaving Earth. These facilities are surrounded by city's houses, apartments, shops, and manufacturing facilities.

The outskirts of Freedom are an area known as "The Gardens." To keep her order creative and vigilant, Proxy Atwan gave each member of the order their own plot of land on the edge of the city. The first gardens were literal gardens, full of odd fruits and vegetables. As members started to get creative, the scope and purpose of the gardens started to change. Some built replicas of some place they knew on Earth. Others built their own personal training facilities in which to work out, while still others built small stages on which to hold plays. Over time, The Gardens became a place where Upeo wa Macho members could be creative but focused, just as Proxy Atwan wanted. Atwan's garden is simplicity and focus itself; it is an X drawn in the soil. Whenever she returns to Ruan's World, she returns to the X.

Atwan and her lieutenants have designed an incredible array of games and tests to keep their order sharp and ready for action while in isolation from the earth. Each week they hold races tuned to different Aptitudes. Clairsentients might need to run a race blindfolded or backwards, teleporters must quickly teleport between a set of randomly chosen places, grabbing a designated item at each place, and other psions engage in similar contests of powers. Neutral members of Upeo engage in more

traditional tests of physical and mental prowess, including everything from acrobatics competitions to solving elaborate 3D puzzles. This intense but friendly competition builds comradery and encourages friendships. When one member needs help, there are never shortages of volunteers.

THE FUTURE OF RUAN'S WORLD

Since re-contact with Earth, other groups have expressed interest in moving to Ruan's World.

While Proxy Atwan welcomes biologists and other researchers who wish to explore this exotic world, she is considerably more cautious about colonists. She has denied all requests for groups wishing to found other settlements. Freedom is now growing due to both an influx of neutral Upeo employees who were left behind on Earth and also the addition of other neutrals who are interested in moving to Freedom. However, it is still too early to determine long-term prospects for colony growth.





CHAPTER FOUR

CHARACTER CREATION

The secret of the universe is this: The universe doesn't care.
That part of the job is yours.
— David Gerrold

CREATING PSION CHARACTERS

Characters in a **Trinity Continuum: Æon** chronicle can be normal human beings — “neutrals” — or Talents. However, most campaigns will focus on psions — humans whose latent psychic powers have been awakened by one of the Prometheus Chambers controlled by the psi orders, giving them incredible abilities and preparing them to take on the terrible threats that menace humanity in this future age.

This section covers the additional rules needed for creating psion characters in **Trinity Continuum: Æon**, as well as new Paths and Edges suitable for the futuristic setting. Character generation in **Æon** follows the same process given in the **Trinity Continuum Corebook**, apart from the differences noted below.

CHARACTER GENERATION SUMMARY

STEP ONE: CONCEPT

Pick your character's name, background, and Aspirations. If they are a psion, you will also pick their psi order.

STEP TWO: PATHS

Pick your character's Origin, Role, and Society Paths. Your psi order, if any, should be reflected in your Society Path. Several new Role and Society Paths specific to **Æon** are provided on [p. 129](#).

STEP THREE: SKILLS, SKILL TRICKS, AND SPECIALTIES

Assign your Skill dots, and pick Skill Tricks and Specialties for any Skills with a high enough rating.

STEP FOUR: ATTRIBUTES

Assign your Attribute dots and choose your character's favored approach.

STEP FIVE: APPLY PSION TEMPLATE

Choose your character's Aptitude, determine starting Psi Trait (normally 2, except for

quantakinetics or teleporters), and assign your Mode dots, and also add one dot to one Attribute in her preferred Approach (Force, Finesse, or Resilience), as part of the overall enhancement provided by the Prometheus Chamber.

STEP SIX: FINISHING TOUCHES

Gain bonus traits (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 38), and calculate Health and Defense rating. Characters who are quantakinetics or teleporters or who possess a quantakinesis or teleportation Auxiliary Mode (see below) must forgo the additional Attribute dot provided in this section and instead increase their starting Psi trait to 3. Players of characters with other Aptitudes are also free to forgo the bonus Attribute dot to start play with a Psi trait of 3, but do not need to do so.

PSI ORDER

During step one of character generation, it is important to choose the **psi order** that a psion character belongs to. Each psi order favors a particular psionic aptitude due to the Prometheus Chamber it possesses, but belonging to an order does not restrict a character to that particular aptitude — many of an order's psions will have originally been awakened by a different Prometheus Chamber. Each psi order also has a Path associated with it.

The psi orders are: Æsculapian Order (vitakinesis), Chitra Bhanu (quantakinesis), ISRA (clairsentience), The Legions (psychokinesis), The Ministry (telepathy), Norça (biokinesis), Orgotek (electrokinesis), Upeo wa Macho (teleportation).

Not every psion has to belong to an order; some are freelancers, some are renegades, and some hold themselves aloof from the factions and politicking of the psi orders. Every single psion has been awakened by a Prometheus Chamber, though, and that means that at some point a psion must have dealt with the particular psi order that holds the Chamber of her Aptitude.

CREATING TALENTS IN TRINITY CONTINUUM: ÆON

While a neutral character would be outclassed in a campaign where the other characters are psions, Talents make excellent characters, and groups composed of a mixture of Talents and psions can work exceedingly well. See *Talents in Trinity Continuum: Æon* (p. 322) for further information.

To create Talent characters for this game, use the rules for creating Talents from the *Trinity Continuum Corebook* (pp. 151 - 158), but you can use any of the Paths in this book (the eight psi orders have neutrals, including Talents, as members), and characters can possess any of the Edges in this book, except for the Psionic Edges, which are only available for psions. In addition, Talents can also be Nihonjin special agents who possess extensive hardtech augmentations. See the Nihonjin Agent Path (p. 130) for details.

NEW PATHS

During step two of character generation, the player chooses Origin, Role, and Society Paths for her character. *Trinity Continuum: Æon* contains one new Origin Path: Oceanian; three new Role Paths: Off-Earth Colonist, Spacer, and Space Military; as well as 12 new Society Paths: Æsculapian Order, Chitra Bhanu, ISRA, The Legions, The Ministry, Norça, Orgotek, Upeo wa

Macho, Freelance Psion, Nihonjin Agent, Æon Trinity, and Æon Trinity Section Minerva. For a psion character, the Society Path must represent her relationship (or lack thereof) with the psi orders or the Æon Trinity itself. See the individual psi order or Æon Trinity entries in Chapter 5 for those Paths, except for the Chitra Bhanu Path, which is in Chapter 11 (p. 371). All of the other Paths can be found at the end of this chapter.

THE PSION TEMPLATE

A **psion** is a human being with latent psychic powers that have been awakened and brought to full strength through the transformative science of a Prometheus Chamber. Psion characters possess a number of unusual capabilities represented through their **Aptitude**, **Psi Trait**, and **Modes**.

A psion's **Aptitude** is the primary psychic talent that she has manifested, and is dictated entirely by the specific Prometheus Chamber used to awaken her latent psionic powers. Even a psion who expressed strong, uncontrolled latent capability in one Aptitude will have that inclination overwritten by the power of the Chamber she is exposed to, although she may express that latent power in the form of an **Auxiliary Mode** (see below).

There are eight Aptitudes. **Biokinesis** focuses on control of the psion's own body. **Clairsentience**

INTO THE PROMETHEUS CHAMBER BY DYLAN COSTA - OPNEWS, DECEMBER 9, 2106

Although outsiders have not yet been permitted to see a Prometheus Chamber in use, we have taken holos of it being serviced and below we have a first-person account of its use, from Alicia Velasco, who became an electrokinetic in November. <Transcript below>

The Prometheus Chamber is a transparent cylinder roughly two and a half meters tall and one and a half meters across, filled with a translucent biogel. When my turn came, I undressed and walked over to a small circular platform connected to a crane. After the technicians applied the various monitoring electrodes and checked the feeds, the operator, who was seated at a console next to the chamber, used the crane to lower me into the biogel, after again instructing me to breathe normally.

The biogel was warm, and surprisingly easy to breathe; doing so felt exceedingly natural. The operator asked if I was ready, I gave her a thumbs up, and the process began. It was like I opened my eyes for the first time, I saw so much more than before, and everything was talking to me. I don't know what it looked like from the outside, and I'm told it only required around 23 minutes, but the process felt like it took hours, in which I felt like I could see and sense the entire cosmos. It was all so perfect and so heartbreakingly beautiful. The next thing I remember was waking up in the recovery room and listening to the monitoring equipment talking in a silent voice only I could hear.



extends the psion's senses across the present, past, and future. **Electrokinesis** controls the energies of the electromagnetic spectrum. **Psychokinesis** affects kinetic energy. **Quantakinesis** deals with the strange relationship between energy, matter, and both psionic and Quantum powers. **Telepathy** controls and influences the psion's own mind and those of others. **Teleportation** lets the psion cross great distances in the blink of an eye, and **vitakinesis** heals, augments, and damages living beings.

A psion can only ever possess one Aptitude. She may have limited Auxiliary Modes in other Aptitudes, but her Aptitude dictates where her psychic powers are strongest. If she attempts immersion in a second Prometheus Chamber, it will not awaken a second Aptitude — it will simply kill her.

Once the psion's Aptitude is chosen, she gains a set of *basic powers* associated with that Aptitude. In addition, she gains one dot in one Attribute in her preferred Approach (Force, Finesse, or Resilience), as part of the overall enhancement provided by the Prometheus Chamber.

The character's **Psi Trait** determines her overall psychic strength, contributing directly to the dice pool

she uses for activating her powers, the number of Psi points with which she fuels her powers, and a number of other effects such as attunement, psi imprints, range, etc. (see p. 203 for more details). Most psions begin with a Psi trait of 2, but the Quantakinesis and Teleportation Aptitudes *require* a starting Psi rating of 3. When generating a quantakinetic or a teleporter, increase the character's starting Psi to 3 but when generating bonus traits (see **Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 38), quantakinetic or teleporter characters must forgo the additional Attribute dot to pay for starting with a Psi trait of 3. Players generating psions with other Aptitudes are also free to make this same trade.

The psion's player can now allocate four dots among the character's available **Modes** (see p. 206). Modes are the actual psychic powers that the psion can control, with three Modes in each Aptitude, each of which is rated from one to six dots. Every dot assigned to a Mode unlocks new uses of that power for the psion. **At least three dots** must be allocated to Modes from the psion's Aptitude. Auxiliary Modes provide access to the basic powers of Aptitudes, but Tier 2 characters, like most psions, can never raise an Auxiliary Mode above one dot.

Prior to allocating her dots, a psion begins with zero rating in each Mode. She can assign her dots between

PSION EXPERIENCE COSTS

TRAIT	CHANGE	COST
Attribute	Add one dot to a single Attribute	10 Experience
Edge	Add one dot in a new or existing Edge	3 Experience
Edge	Add one dot in a new or existing Path Edge	2 Experience
Enhanced Edge	Gain a new Enhanced Edge	6 Experience
Favored Approach	Change a character's Favored Approach	15 Experience
Psi Trait	Add one dot to the character's Psi Trait (Psi 1 to Psi 5)	12 Experience
Psi Trait	Add one dot to the character's Psi Trait (Psi 6 or Psi 7)	24 Experience
Mode Dot	Add one dot in a Mode of the character's Aptitude (1 to 5 dots)	6 Experience
Mode Dot	Add one dot in a Mode of the character's Aptitude (6 or 7 dots)	12 Experience
Auxiliary Mode	Add one dot in an Auxiliary Mode	8 Experience
Skill	Add one dot in a new or existing Skill	5 Experience
Skill Trick	Add a Skill Trick to a Skill	3 Experience
Specialty	Add a Specialty to a Skill	3 Experience
Path	Add one dot in a new or existing Path (maximum 5 Paths)	18 Experience

her Modes as she sees fit, but a Tier 2 (psion Tier) character cannot go above five dots; the sixth dot in an Aptitude and the final seventh dot in the Aptitude represent the incredible power that only Tier 3 (proxy Tier) psions can access. Note that a character who has any Mode three or more dots higher than her next-highest Mode may suffer from psionic dysfunction due to the imbalance in her psychic capabilities (see p. 208).

CREATING ADVANCED CHARACTERS

The system presented here creates capable psion characters early in their career, with significant but limited psychic power. However, it is also possible to begin a **Trinity Continuum: Æon** campaign

with more experienced psions — from psions who have spent several months practicing their skills, to veteran psi order agents who have seen a dozen battles, experienced Talents who have been active heroes for a decade or more, or even colossally talented individuals with psychic strength on par with that of the orders' proxies. Creating advanced characters is simply a matter of following the usual character generation rules, and then adding the listed Experience points to spend at the end. The Storyguide and all of the players should agree about how much additional Experience characters should start play with, and all characters should start play with the same amount of additional Experience. Unless everyone enjoys playing characters who are just beginning their career as a psion or a Talent,

THE MODES AVAILABLE TO PSIONS ARE:

Biokinesis	Adaptation, Psychomorphing, Transmogrify
Clairensience	Psychometry, Psycholocation, Psychocognition
Electrokinesis	Electromanipulation, Photokinesis, Technokinesis
Psychokinesis	Thermokinesis, Telekinesis, Perikinesis
Quantakinesis	Energetics, Fundamentals, Transmutation
Telepathy	Rapport, Mindshare, Psychbending
Teleportation	Translocation, Transmession, Transportal
Vitakinesis	Iatrosis, Augendis, Algesis

QUANTAKINETICS AND TELEPORTERS

Choosing a quantakinetic or teleporter psion as your character brings with it some additional complications. The quantakinetics of Chitra Bhanu were purged a dozen years ago due to claims of Aberrant corruption and their Prometheus Chamber is believed to have been destroyed, meaning that any quantakinetic character hails from prior to that date — or else something very weird is going on. See Chapter Eleven, pp. 368-371 for more information on playing quantakinetics. The teleporters of the Upeo wa Machu vanished seven years ago, taking their Prometheus Chamber with them, and only reappeared less than a year ago. A teleporter character has thus either been part of the psi order's strange experiences in the intervening years, never left with the rest of the order and somehow hid herself, or is part of the order's new wave of awakening of latent psychics.

In either case, the character is inextricably linked to the exciting events of the past dozen years and is likely to find herself shadowed by the implications of the psi orders' actions.

TIER 3 CHARACTERS

Proxies are only one type of character who are at this Tier. All characters in this Tier share certain advantages. Instead of 8, their target number for all rolls is 7. In addition, they can possess up to six dots in any Attribute even if they do not possess the Extraordinary Attribute Edge. Remember that ordinary humans are Tier 1 characters, while ordinary psions and Talents are Tier 2 characters.

most campaigns should start with Experienced characters (see the table below).

The one limitation on creating an advanced character is that heroic figures must purchase at least one additional dot in an existing Path or an initial dot in a new Path, and proxies or exceptional Talents must purchase at least two additional dots in existing or new Paths, representing the ties and the connections these impressive characters have built up during their careers. In addition, a Tier 3 proxy-level psion must possess at least six dots of Psi, at least five dots in one Aptitude Mode and at least three dots in another Aptitude Mode. Characters who meet these three prerequisites automatically become Tier 3 proxy-level characters. Psions normally experience this change as a profound transformation that can include visions,

sudden bursts of knowledge, and a general feeling of awakening and increased awareness over the next day or two.

ADVANTAGES FOR TIER 3 PROXY-LEVEL PSIONS

In addition to the advantages normally gained by being a Tier 3 character and possessing a Psi trait of six, Proxy-level psions gain several additional advantages. They can raise each of their Aptitude Modes to six dots, learn a special seven-dot power, raise their Psi trait up to seven, purchase up to 2 dots in any Auxiliary Mode, and recover Psi points twice as rapidly. In addition, they can raise their other Attributes as high as six dots, or seven dots if they possess the Superior Trait Edge.

PSION PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

CATEGORY	ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE	ADDITIONAL PATH DOTS REQUIRED
Experienced	10	0
Hardened Veterans	50	0
Heroic Figures	100	1
Proxies or Exceptional Talents	150	2

NEW EDGES

The following Edges are specific to **Trinity Continuum: Æon**. Some are only available to psions, but most can be taken by any character.

AUGMENTATION EDGES

The following Edges require extensive microsurgery, advanced genetic therapy, or both.

AMPHIBIOUS CONVERSION (••)

Prerequisite: Stamina ••

Your character has visibly and practically joined the Oceanian nation, and has become a type of aqua commonly called a phib. She can now hold her breath for 30 minutes without needing to roll, and only needs to make suffocation rolls once every 15 minutes thereafter. In addition, her eyes have been modified so that she can see in dim light, and suffers no penalties for low light. Although she cannot use sonar, like aquatic conversions, your character can now speak underwater in the same high-frequency language that aquatic conversions use and is also immune to decompression sickness (p. 194). Your character's skin has also been changed — he has either smooth, dolphin-like skin or short dense fur like a sea lion or sea otter. Either option allows your character to endure temperatures down to -20° C without discomfort. Also, your character swims twice as fast as ordinary humans and suffers no Difficulty increases to Physical and Perception dice pools for being underwater. Alternately, your character can choose a less obvious version of this transformation. Her skin and eyes appear normal, which reduces her swimming speed to that of most humans. However, she gains all other advantages of being amphibious.

Disadvantages: If your character possesses the obvious version of this Edge she suffers a Complication of 1 to all Social rolls relating to appearance from people who either dislike Oceania or are uncomfortable with enhanced humans. The less-obvious version of this Edge has no such penalty.

AQUATIC CONVERSION (••)

Prerequisite: Stamina ••

Your character was born as or transformed into an aquatic, also known as a selkie. She gains all the advantages of the Amphibious Conversion Edge. In

addition, she possesses gills as well as lungs and can breathe water as well as air. In addition, her skin is altered to be tough, smooth, hairless, and streamlined, providing your character with one level of soft armor. Her legs are redesigned for better speed in the water, allowing her to move at Speed Scale 2 underwater. When underwater, your character also possesses sonar within far range, allowing her to “see” people and objects out to that range, but she cannot use sonar to perceive color or to see fine details beyond close range.

Drawbacks: Your character can survive out of water indefinitely, but increases the Difficulty of all moving and maneuvering rolls by +1 while on land. She also needs to consume three times as much water as normal humans, increasing the Difficulty of Survival rolls in arid environments by +1. She also suffers a level 2 Complication to all Social rolls relating to appearance from people who either dislike Oceania or are uncomfortable with enhanced humans.

COMPUTER ENHANCEMENT (•• OR • FOR PSIONS USING BIOCUMPS)

Prerequisite: Criminal, Espionage, or Science Path

Your character gains 2 Enhancement to all Technology rolls related to computers as well as 1 Enhancement to Pilot rolls for vehicles where your character uses the computer to control the vehicle. The computer used in this enhancement is equivalent to a minicomputer and can be used to make phone calls or wirelessly access the OpNet, and your character can perceive augmented-reality data without any sort of display gear (p. 287). In addition, your character automatically gains, and must separately pay for, the Lightning Calculator and Speed Reading Edges, as well as at least 2 dots of the Eidetic Memory Edge. Your character also gains the Direction Sense Edge for free, but only when connected to the OpNet. However, for all this enhancement's many advantages, in most nations obtaining it requires a security clearance as well as a compelling need for one, limiting it mostly to covert operatives and a few engineers and technicians working on sensitive projects.

Drawback: The reason for the distrust of this enhancement is clear. Both during and after the Aberrant War, Aberrant and later human hackers

PSION BIOCOMP ENHANCEMENT (•)

Biokinetics who use the Psychomorphing technique *Compartmentalize* to assimilate a formatted biocomp can purchase the • version of this Edge. They gain all the benefits of computer enhancement. An electrokinetic who is formatted to a biocomp and who has at least two dots in Technokinesis can purchase the same one-dot Edge, but do not have to incorporate the biocomp into their body. However, the Enhancement provided by this Edge is in place of, and not in addition to, the Enhancement gains from using a formatted biocomp.

Since both psions and noetic biotech are resistant to Aberrant powers, any attempts by Aberrants to manipulate the psion through her biocomp have a Difficulty of +5, in addition to the Complication provided by the biocomp's failsafe. Research is currently underway to create biocomps that any psion, and eventually any human, can use in this fashion once they have formatted it. There's also no Social penalty to psions for using Biocomp Enhancement.

were able to control people using this augmentation. Also, electrokinetics with three dots in Technokinesis (p. 230) can completely alter the perceptions of any user if they first overcome the implanted computer's failsafe rating of 5 (see p. 196). Aberrants who can control electronics can do this and can also turn the user into a puppet. As a result, most people are horrified by the idea of this enhancement, and anyone known to possess it suffers a Complication of 2 to Social rolls to inspire trust or other positive feelings.

INCREASED TOLERANCE (• TO •••)

Your biological template is strong enough to maintain a surprisingly high degree of bioware. Both neutrals and psions with this Edge gain +1 per dot to their Tolerance for formatting bioware (p. 267). Neutrals still cannot use any biotech that increases psionic powers (since they have none) and also cannot use any biotech that requires the expenditure of Psi points. Advanced biotech therapies can give this Edge to both neutrals and psions.

LOW-GRAVITY ADAPTATION (• TO ••)

Your character has undergone minor genetic modification to allow her to live and work under low-gravity conditions. Although grav grids are common, a few asteroid colonies prefer not to use them, and a portion of the Karroo mining station is kept at zero-G for convenience.

At one dot, your character suffers no problems from living in low or zero gravity for months or years at a time. Also, your character suffers no negative modifiers for maneuvering in low or zero gravity. At two dots, your character has had her feet modified so that her toes are longer and her big toe is opposable.

Your character effectively has four hands. Her feet have been designed so that they do not interfere with walking or running in normal gravity. However, when using your feet to manipulate objects, your character suffers from the normal 1 Complication for not using her dominant hand. If you also take the Ambidextrous Edge (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 60), this penalty vanishes, and your character can use all four limbs equally well. Because of her four hands, your character gains 2 Enhancement to all climbing rolls, and gains 1 Enhancement bonus when grappling in gravity less than 0.1 Gs.

MARS ADAPTATION (•)

Mars is not yet habitable, but it is far more so than it was in 2100. While most Martians are content to live in the large pressurized cities equipped with grav grids, an increasing number of people are striking out in small groups and setting up independent settlements. While everyone, except powerful biokinetics, requires oxygen masks to survive outside of sealed habitats, a combination of amphibious and zero-G enhancements allows some people to be much more comfortable on the Martian surface.

Your character has undergone advanced genetic therapy to live on the surface of Mars. Your character suffers no health problems from living in low gravity, he can hold his breath for 30 minutes, and his tough skin provides sufficient insulation from the cold Martian nights that he rarely needs anything more than a warm coat to be comfortable anywhere on Mars or Earth. Your character can endure temperatures down to -20° C without discomfort, and his skin provides him with one level of soft armor. In addition, your character's skin appears smoother than normal, similar to the skin of a dolphin.

Drawbacks: Characters with this Edge suffer 1 Complication to all Social rolls relating to appearance from people who are uncomfortable with enhanced humans.

NEW SOCIAL EDGES

The following are new Social Edges.

DUAL CITIZENSHIP (•)

International travel is easier than ever, and to make the process of traveling from one nation to another easier, some people have citizenship in several nations. Known criminals are almost never granted citizenship in nations other than the one in which they were born, and sufficiently outspoken dissidents have problems becoming citizens of some nations. However, the wealthy, people with important skills, and psions are always in demand. This Edge means that your character is a citizen of two nations — the nation in which she was born and one other. You can purchase this Edge several times. If you purchase this Edge three times, then your character is a citizen of four nations. Few people are citizens of more than four or five nations. Even fewer are citizens of nations that are relatively hostile to one another, like the FSA and any of the nations of Sudamérica.

Drawbacks: Some nations, like China, the FSA, or Nippon do their best to keep track of the activities of their citizens, and the more nations of which your character is a citizen, the more nations there are that might be interested in watching her, regardless of where she is.

TELEPATHIC RESISTANCE (•••)

Prerequisite: Æon Trinity or Ministry Path, cannot be a telepath or possess telepathy as an Auxiliary Mode

Your character is not a telepath, but she has trained with telepaths, learning ways to guard her thoughts and to detect the subtle signs of mental intrusion. This Edge provides your character with two benefits. Telepaths increase the Difficulty of all rolls to read or alter your character's thoughts or emotions by 2. In addition, your character is also unusually conscious of her own thoughts. If a telepath attempts to alter your character's thoughts

or emotions, you can make a reflexive Integrity + Composure roll. If your successes are equal to or higher than the telepath performing this manipulation, your character is aware that someone is attempting to influence her thoughts or emotions. This awareness gives her 2 Enhancement to resist giving in to any emotions imposed on her and allows her to attempt to stop the telepath using other means, such as physically attacking the telepath.

PSIONIC EDGES

The following Edges directly relate to psionic powers and are only available to psions.

DETACHED (••)

Prerequisite: Psions only

You have the rare ability to view your psionic abilities as separate from your physical existence and can maintain this distance even under adverse conditions. Any penalties due to Injury Conditions don't affect your Psi rolls until you reach Maimed, and even then you only suffer half the normal penalty (-2).

ENHANCED ATTUNEMENT (•)

Prerequisite: Psions only

Your psionic sensitivity is substantially greater than the norm for someone with your Psi rating. Your Psi is considered one point higher for purposes of Attunement rolls and range, up to a maximum of seven.

FAVORED MODE (••)

Prerequisites: Psions only and at least one dot in that Mode

Your character excels as using one particular Mode of psion powers. She gains 2 Enhancement when using this Mode. This Enhancement can be spent to overcome difficulty or purchase elements of a power as normal, or can be spent to increase one aspect of the power governed by Psi or Mode dots at one step per Enhancement. This Edge can only be taken once, and may apply to a Mode of the psion's Aptitude or her Auxiliary Modes.



NEW PATHS

As well as the Paths presented in the **Trinity Continuum Corebook**, there are a number of new Paths available in **Trinity Continuum: Æon** — and, of course, players are encouraged to adapt existing Paths to suit their needs, as well as to create entirely new Paths to represent their life choices, professional roles, and the societies in which they dwell. The new Paths given here represent the new vistas that humanity's exploration of space has opened up. Three are new Role Paths: Off-Earth Colonist, Spacer, and Space Military. Two are new Society Paths: Freelance Psion and Nihonjin Agent. These Paths can all be found below. There is also one new Society Path for each of the eight psi orders, and two new Society Paths associated with the Æon Trinity. These additional Paths are found in the next chapter, after the description of the associated organization, except for the Chitra Bhanu Path, which can be found in Chapter 11 (p. 371).

Some Paths include new Edges, representing the special training or resources that a particular organization grants access to. These Edges are only accessible via Path membership.

FREELANCE PSION (SOCIETY)

The character is a freelance psion. She does not owe allegiance to any psi order and is a free agent, answering only to her own goals and beliefs. She may choose to work for a major government or organization, contracting out her abilities to a patron for a handsome reward; or she may be a fugitive or free spirit who is always on the move. She may have psi orders seeking to court her into joining their ranks, or she may be on the run from an order for which she has caused trouble or that refuses to take no for an answer.

PATH CONCEPTS

High-end private security specialist, obsessed vigilante, psionic private eye, wandering troubleshooter

Example Connections: Æon Trinity, Criminal Organization, Psi Order, Thankful Client

Skills: Empathy, Integrity, Larceny, Persuasion

Edges: Adrenaline Spike, Always Prepared, Covert, Danger Sense, Enhanced Attunement, Favored Mode, Inner Reserve, Patron

SPECIAL EDGE: INNER RESERVE (••)

Prerequisite: Freelance Psion

Without the support of a psi order, your character has had to learn the hard way that there's no one else who'll clean away her mess when she screws up with her psi powers. She may spend a point of Momentum whenever she botches a psi roll to convert the botch into a normal failure.

NIHONJIN AGENT (SOCIETY)

The character is closely affiliated with the government of Nippon, a nation possessing cutting-edge technology, but that is intensely distrustful of the psi orders and where bioware is banned. She serves as an agent or asset for the Nihonjin beyond the country's shores, granting them the reach to meddle in the affairs of other regions without compromising their official distance and the isolation of much of their population. She may be an infiltrator, information gatherer, or even an assassin; whatever her role, she benefits from the incredible technology that her powerful patron provides.

A Nihonjin agent is either a neutral or a Talent; she cannot be a psion.

PATH CONCEPTS

Deep-cover operative, enhanced diplomat, merciless assassin, suave spy

Example Connections: Criminal Organization, Double Agent, Government Official, Nippon Intelligence Agency

Skills: Athletics, Enigmas, Larceny, Technology

Edges: Alternative Identity, Computer Enhancement, Covert, Cyberware Access, Danger Sense, Skilled Liar, Superior Trait

SPECIAL EDGE: CYBERWARE ACCESS (• TO •••)

Prerequisite: Nihonjin Agent

Your character has easy access to cutting-edge hardtech implants (see p. 292) from Nippon. She possesses a number of implants equal to her dots in this Edge. She does not need to purchase these implants and their cost is not a factor. She can change the implants she possesses between sessions if she is able to gain access to Nihonjin medical facilities to perform the required procedures.

OFF-EARTH COLONIST (ROLE)

The character is literally reaching for the stars, part of humanity's colonization of new worlds. She is hardy, resourceful, and rugged, capable of surviving in incredibly tough conditions and expecting the unexpected. When faced with the unknown, she has the courage and determination to push onward. She has the skills and mindset to build a home and a new life under alien stars, regardless of what the galaxy throws at her.

Example Connections: Corporate Sponsor, Interstellar Explorer, Survivalist, Xenobiologist

Skills: Athletics, Integrity, Survival, Technology

Edges: Animal Ken, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Hardy, Ms. Fix-It, Pioneer Spirit, Superior Trait, Weak Spots

SPECIAL EDGE: PIONEER SPIRIT (•••)

Prerequisite: Off-Earth Colonist

Even in the most difficult of situations, your character presses on with indefatigable determination. As long as she is part of the player-character group, increase the character's Momentum by 1. Additionally, she gains a bonus point of Momentum every time she fails or botches a Survival or Technology roll, and whenever she suffers an Injury Condition.

SPACER (ROLE)

The character lives or works in space, perhaps as the crew on a spacecraft or in a desolate outpost. She may be a technician, skilled in maintaining and repairing the technology that is so vital to keeping her and her fellows alive. She may be a pilot, working with noetic engines or alongside a clairsentient and a teleporter to steer a colossal vessel through the void. Regardless of her role, she almost certainly has at least some familiarity with handling small craft and EVA equipment. The void is not a natural or welcoming environment for humanity, and technology is absolutely vital to her day-to-day survival, but she may also have undergone some level of modification and adaptation — changing the fabric of her very body to better handle the strange pressures of space.

Example Connections: Asteroid Miner, Interstellar Explorer, Off-Earth Colonist, Upeo wa Macho Member

Skills: Enigmas, Pilot, Science, Technology

Edges: Breath Control, Endurance, Hardy, Low-Gravity Adaptation, Ms. Fix-It, Variable Gravity Training, Weak Spots

SPECIAL EDGE: VARIABLE GRAVITY TRAINING (•)

Prerequisite: Spacer or Space Military

Your character has been trained in handling low, high, or zero-gravity environments. She reduces the level of any Complications stemming from gravity-related conditions by 1 when attempting non-combat physical actions.

SPACE MILITARY (ROLE)

The character is part of a small elite — those combat specialists who ply their trade in the void of space. She might be part of a space vessel's onboard contingent of marines intended mostly for policing and supporting off-Earth colonies and manning the ship's battle stations, or she may be an elite combat pilot expected to go toe to toe with whatever nightmarish attack craft the mad science of Aberrants and aliens might conjure up. She's likely to have whip-fast reflexes and a level of vigilance that would impress even elite, planet-dwelling soldiers; she knows that the hungering emptiness of cold, hard vacuum is always close by.

Example Connections: Armorer, Off-Earth Colony, Spacer Captain, UNMC

Skills: Aim, Command, Pilot, Technology

Edges: Adrenaline Spike, Breath Control, Danger Sense, Hair-Trigger Reflexes, Hardy, Low-Gravity Adaptation, Small Unit Tactics, Variable Gravity Training, Variable Gravity Combat Training

SPECIAL EDGE: VARIABLE GRAVITY COMBAT TRAINING (••)

Prerequisite: Space Military

Your character has been trained in combat techniques appropriate for low, high, or zero-gravity environments, as well as the calculations and factors involved in engagements between spacecraft. She reduces the level of any Complications stemming from gravity-related conditions by 1 when attempting an attack, and benefits from 1 Enhancement to her dice pools for attacks with ship-to-ship weapons.

OCEANIAN (ORIGIN)

Your character grew up on a floating or undersea city and is now a citizen of Earth's newest and most unusual nation, Oceania. You are likely to have been born, or become, a phib or aqua and grew up in a high-tech city surrounded by an environment deadly to unmodified humans. However, the close-knit cities of Oceania are also some of the most creative and technologically advanced on the planet.

Example Connections: Artists, Scientists, Boat or Submarine Pilot, Genetic Engineer, Undersea Miner

Skills: Culture, Empathy, Survival, Technology

Edges: Amphibious or Aquatic Conversion, Artistic Talent, Big Hearted, Hardy, Increased Tolerance, Library



ALEX CASSEL

MATTHIEW
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USEPPE
EL FUEGO

SOLVVEIG
SEN

VADE ATWAN

HERZOG

DR. S.K.
BHURANO

CHAPTER FIVE

ORGANIZATIONS

By union the smallest states thrive. By discord the greatest are destroyed.
— Gaius Sallustius Crispus, Roman historian and statesman

Belonging to a psi order or the Æon Trinity provides characters with many opportunities for exciting play as well as allies and other benefits. Although players are free to have their characters be freelance psions who are independent of any organizational loyalties, all psions must join a psi order or the Æon Trinity to obtain access to a Prometheus Chamber, and even characters who later left that organization once belonged to it.

THE PSI ORDERS

In 2106, immediately after a group of psions defeated the attack on Sydney, Australia, the world learned of the existence of the eight psi orders. Each psi order was controlled by a single individual known as the order's proxy, who was the first person to gain the psionic Aptitude associated with that order. Each psi order also possesses a highly advanced piece of biotechnology called a Prometheus Chamber. Each Prometheus Chamber is associated with a single psionic Aptitude. Individuals with the proper psionic latency who are placed in this chamber gain the psionic Aptitude produced by this Prometheus Chamber. However, individuals with the same Aptitude as their psi order's Prometheus Chamber only make up roughly half of the psions who belong to each psi order. The other half are psions who joined that order, but gained their powers from another Prometheus Chamber. The Æon Trinity negotiates sharing arrangements between different psi orders, so that they can trade use of their Prometheus Chambers.

In 2111, Chitra Bhanu was destroyed by the other psi orders due to apparent corruption by Aberrants. However, since 2111 the other seven psi orders have all thrived and grown. Because the various psionic Aptitudes can combine their abilities in powerful ways, every psi order encourages members with any psionic Aptitudes to join. There are currently roughly 90,000 psions, and rough estimates place the number of unidentified latents at between 200,000 and 250,000.

PSI ORDER TABLE

PSI ORDER	PSIONIC APTITUDE OF PROMETHEUS CHAMBER	PROXY	PSIONS IN ORDER
Æsculapian Order	Vitakinesis	Dr. Matthew Zweidler	17,000
Chitra Bhanu	Quantakinesis	Dr. S.K. Bhurano	0?
ISRA	Clairsentience	Otha Herzog	5,000
The Legions	Psychokinesis	General Solveig Larssen	30,000
Ministry	Telepathy	Rebecca Bue Li	5,000
Norça	Biokinesis	Giuseppe del Fuego	2,500
Orgotek	Electrokinesis	Alex Cassel	15,000
Upeo wa Macho	Teleportation	Bolade Atwan	800
The Æon Trinity	none	The Trinity Council	5,800
Freelance Psions	none	none	7,000

THE ÆSCULAPIAN ORDER



The Æsculapian Order is both the vitakinetic psi order and the largest international emergency-services organization. Dr. Matthieu Zweidler, now 89 years old, has directed the Æsculapian Order since 2086. He is the second oldest proxy and the one who has been in charge of his organization the longest. However, in the 19 years since he became the vitakinetic proxy, Dr. Zweidler has not appeared to age and in fact now seems to be in his early 60s. Well before he became the vitakinetic proxy, Dr. Zweidler was passionately dedicated to this order's mission of helping the injured or sick anywhere in the universe and providing both short- and long-term aid to help people and places recover from serious disasters.

The Æsculapian Order was founded in 2043 and began as an organization based in the EU that was originally dedicated to providing relief from nova-related disasters. As the troubles that led up to the Aberrant War increased, the Æsculapian Order grew. By 2057, it had expanded beyond the EU, gradually becoming a fully international organization. After the Aberrant War ended, the Æsculapian Order already had close ties with the Æon Trinity and was in an excellent position to help humanity recover from the Crash and the aftermath of the Aberrant War. In 2086, Dr. Zweidler took over as director while the Æsculapian Order was in the process of becoming a general-purpose disaster relief and medical aid organization now that it had largely completed helping humanity recover from The Crash.

Under his directorship, the Æsculapian Order expanded its efforts throughout the solar system, becoming the primary agency that dealt with disasters ranging from hurricanes and earthquakes to life-system failures on off-world colonies or people trapped on damaged spacecraft. As an experienced emergency-room physician, Dr. Zweidler also made certain that the Æsculapian Order worked to help governments track and deal with epidemic diseases, and provided medical services for people who could not otherwise access them. He also encouraged

medical research to improve all forms of trauma care and find cures for all widespread illnesses, including the recently discovered Quantum Flux illnesses.

Shortly after Dr. Zweidler announced that he was the vitakinetic proxy, he began a large-scale recruitment drive for psionic latents. It was not the first or last of the order's projects that some of its critics would call too meddling. Some of their work, by its very nature, brings them into conflict with governments and political parties, whether it's simply providing health care to people seen as social undesirables, or collecting data on violent injuries and deaths that a corrupt local government would rather keep quiet.

Since before Dr. Zweidler took over as director, the Æsculapian Order has had three types of facilities. The largest and least numerous are the research laboratories, where Æsculapian physicians and scientists work to develop new treatments, while engineers and rescue workers create new technology to aid in rescue work, and improve methods of performing various emergency services. An important secondary purpose of these facilities is training new recruits.

The most well-known Æsculapian facilities are the clinics and stations. Æsculapian clinics were originally developed to provide free medical services in poor, remote, or otherwise underserved regions. The existence of vitakinesis has led to the creation of a second type of clinic, primarily located in arcologies and cities, where patients can obtain vitakinetic healing unavailable elsewhere, and where the wealthy can pay for cosmetic, voluntary body modification and anti-aging treatments.

Most Æsculapian stations are also clinics, but they primarily serve as bases for first-response emergency services. As a result, they contain living facilities for emergency services personnel as well as advanced vehicles designed to handle a variety of emergencies. With the exception of Nippon, almost all nations permit the Æsculapian Order to place clinics and stations where they believe they will do the most good. In addition, Æsculapians also have a station that specializes in space-rescue operations in the asteroid belt as well as stations on Luna, Mars, and Khantze Lu Ge. A small station also recently opened on Karoo Station.



THE ÆSCULAPIAN ORDER PATH (SOCIETY)

The character is closely affiliated with the Æsculapian Order, the vitakinetic psi order. She is aligned with the Order's mission of helping the sick and injured, providing aid, and protecting humanity from disasters. She is likely either a medical professional or other first responder, or she works closely with those who are. She is likely familiar with the organization and provision of aid and emergency services to those in need across the world — and beyond.

PATH CONCEPTS

First responder, medical researcher, medical relief worker, search-and-rescue specialist

Example Connections: Æon Trinity, Emergency Service Personnel, Health Ministry, Medical Specialist

Skills: Athletics, Empathy, Medicine, Science

Edges: Adrenaline Spike, Danger Sense, Enhanced Attunement, Favored Mode, Hardy, Keen Sense, Library, Rapid Response Protocols, Trained Memory

SPECIAL EDGE: RAPID RESPONSE PROTOCOLS (•)

Prerequisite: Æsculapian Order

As a member of the Æsculapian Order, your character can take advantage of the organization's emergency resources. As long as your character has access to an Æsculapian clinic or station, she can receive free medical treatment with top-level equipment providing 2 Enhancement or greater. Additionally, she can always request analysis of a disease, pathogen, toxin, or injury; the Order's staff will perform the equivalent of a research action with a three-dot Library specializing in Medicine, using a base dice pool of 8 and taking no more than a few hours.

RECRUITMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

The Æsculapian Order is the third largest order in terms of total membership and the second largest in terms of psion members. Regardless of whether they are psions or not, most members of the Æsculapian Order are emergency service or medical personnel, including firefighters, pilots, physicians, nurses, EMTs, and people trained in wilderness, off-planet, or space rescues. However, the Æsculapians also employ a fairly large clerical staff as well as a small number of scientists and engineers. Neutrals can be hired in any capacity, but psions are generally expected to be emergency service or medical personnel. However, the Æsculapian Order also employs several dozen psionic researchers and engineers.

Although always willing to accept skilled latents who wish to become vitakinetics, any potential member who displays a teleportation latency is strongly encouraged to obtain the Teleportation Aptitude, since the several dozen teleporters who work in this organization are always in high demand for remote rescue assignments. Because every Æsculapian clinic and station offers free psionic latency testing, almost half of all latent psions are initially discovered by the Æsculapian Order. Latents who lack appropriate skills or training but who wish to join the Æsculapian Order are required to complete six months of EMT training and pass a certification exam before being approved for access to a Prometheus Chamber. At this point, the new psion has the choice of immediately starting work for the Æsculapian Order or receiving more advanced training. Although not common, some psions have joined the Æsculapian Order and then spent the next several years training to become physicians.

As long as latents can pass a basic exam for physical and mental competency, the Æsculapian Order accepts members of all ages, although all members over the age of 70 are strongly urged to become vitakinetics, because the healing and physical enhancement aspects of this Aptitude allow even elderly members to easily engage in prolonged physical exertion without negative consequences.

Recruiting neutrals is far more straightforward. The Æsculapian Order is open to anyone with the correct training and experience and offers full scholarships for anyone interested in training in one of these fields, in return for a commitment to

work in the Æsculapian Order for a time period at least equal to the duration of their training.

Both psions and neutrals who work for the Æsculapian Order freely admit that their jobs are often difficult, stressful, and occasionally dangerous, but most also find their work to be exceptionally rewarding. In addition, the Æsculapian Order works hard to make certain that all employees are both safe and content. Salaries are comparatively high, and many employees love the chance to work all across the Earth as well as in various locations in the solar system and beyond.

The Æsculapian Order receives most of its funding from the UN and the Æon Trinity. However, it is also a popular charity for the wealthy and since 2109, a growing number of Æsculapian clinics have offered expensive vitakinetic treatments to wealthy clients, including long-term cosmetic alterations and short-term but repeatable mental and physical enhancements. These services were initially controversial, since previously all services provided by the Æsculapian Order were free. However, Dr. Zweidler made it clear that vitakinetics working for the Æsculapian Order would not charge patients to cure illnesses or even to enhance longevity. The Æsculapian Order only charges for services that provide cosmetic alterations and short-term physical and mental enhancements that are not medically necessary. Some members still vocally object to the Æsculapian Order profiting from any use of vitakinetics, but most accept that these treatments provide much-needed funds.

CURRENT PROJECTS

The biggest challenge facing the Æsculapian Order remains the devastation in France. Malnutrition, epidemic disease, radiation poisoning, and Quantum Flux diseases remain relatively common all across western France. Recontact with Khantze Lu Ge has brought additional urgent demands for the order's services. However, the ongoing war has somewhat limited the number of vitakinetics Dr. Zweidler is willing to risk there. The Æsculapian Order is currently struggling to deal with providing adequate services to both France and Khantze Lu Ge, while also maintaining their commitments to provide services elsewhere.

The Æsculapian Order's single largest research project is into treatment or cures for Quantum Flux diseases. These are the only illnesses that even the most powerful vitakinetics cannot cure. However, before the destruction of Chitra Bhanu in 2111,



cooperation between vitakinetics and quantakinetics managed to cure a few cases, implying that cures are possible. Information about Quantum Flux illnesses and general rules for treating illness can be found on [p. 191](#). The Æsculapian Order's other major projects are finding better ways to increase general longevity, strengthening medical infrastructure, and preventing commonplace illnesses. They are also working with Orgotek to develop bioapps that can provide permanent mental and physical enhancement to neutrals.

HEADQUARTERS

The official headquarters of the Æsculapian Order is in Montressor, Switzerland. With roughly 12,000 employees and more than 1,000 vitakinetics on staff, Montressor is the order's center for administration and medical research as well as the location where Dr. Matthieu Zweidler works. The Montressor facility is located on the outskirts of Basel. Much of the facility is still located in a 15th-century structure that was originally used as a monastery, but the facility has since expanded into a series of early 21st-century buildings originally part of a small Swiss university that the order purchased shortly after the Crash.

The Order's second-largest facility, located in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, is often referred to as its second headquarters. With a staff of more than 5,000, this branch of the order is located in a large biotech structure developed and built in collaboration with Norça and Orgotek in 2113. While the bulk of the Montressor facility is devoted to medical research, the Port-au-Prince facility is the Order's center for disaster relief and preparation. Here the order creates better equipment and protocols and trains specialized teams. A secondary focus of this location is cooperation with other psi orders. The Port-au-Prince facility is the site of a joint project with Orgotek to develop improved disaster relief and medical bioware as well as a joint project with Norça where members of both psi orders attempt to find ways to reduce Quantum Flux diseases by "healing" or otherwise eliminating Corrupted zones.

Most members regard the Montressor facility as prestigious but a bit stodgy, and see the Port-au-Prince facility as a more exciting location, but also a hotbed of radical and occasionally crackpot ideas. There is a strong ideological emphasis there on cooperation with local traditional medicine and exploration of other forms of folk medicine, which some view as spurious and others view as essential to the Order's mission.

There is some friction between outsiders who arrive at the Port-au-Prince facility to work or study there and locals recruited by the Order.

Dr. Zweidler's protégé, who serves as functional head of the Æsculapian Order when Zweidler himself is shut away pursuing a research tangent, is Dr. Magalie Alcine, a native Haitian who is a vitakinetic and medical prodigy. Dr. Alcine grew up in a family of folk-medicine practitioners and, as a high-school science project, began keeping copious observations on the use of traditional herbs, remedies, and rituals when she was a teenager. She came to the clinic seeking help, having been assigned male at birth and facing unwelcome signs of puberty. Although care was provided free of charge, in her intense gratitude she continued to spend time at the clinic as a volunteer, and began studying at one of the introductory academic programs in 2106.

That year, Dr. Zweidler publicly announced that he was the vitakinetic proxy and came to Port-au-Prince on a recruitment mission. Dr. Zweidler's assistants discovered Magalie's strong vitakinetic latency when she shared her discovery that her own folk-healing skills were more effective than those of other practitioners she knew, along with her notebooks and records to back up the observation. Once she became fully attuned to her powers she was able to control her own hormonal balance and physical development, as well as heal others. Dr. Zweidler oversaw Magalie's education as a physician and as a psion, and she studied in several of the world's best medical schools and research hospitals before returning to lead the Æsculapian Order's Port-au-Prince division to its full glory.

Dr. Alcine insists that respecting the spiritual beliefs of patients is not just politeness or diplomacy, but deeply necessary to the practice of medicine. Her vitakinetic abilities are second only to Dr. Zweidler's, and she has a talent for cross-cultural communication and leadership that often guides the decisions of the Order.

SPECIAL RESOURCES

The Æsculapian Order is built around the idea of rapid response to serious problems. Members can get any pathogen or toxin analyzed within a few hours after they get it to one of the Order's clinics or stations, and if lives are at stake, they also gain immediate access to clairsentient scans of any structure in the solar system to determine where survivors are located. Attempts to use this service to invade

others' privacy or for criminal purposes are harshly punished. Clinics also provide members of the Order with immediate medical treatment.

Because the Æsculapian Order is both powerful and widely popular, members can ask their superiors to help them obtain the cooperation of local authorities. While this cooperation can be grudging and halfhearted, officials who comply with important requests by the Order frequently obtain significant discounts on the cosmetic and enhancement services the Order offers for sale.

Out among the stars, the Order's resources are far more limited, but are still freely offered to members. There are now clinics on Averiguas, Far Nyumba, Karroo Mining Station, Khantze Lu Ge, and in the human embassy on Qinshui, and there are plans for clinics on Ruan's World and Marfisa. Any member of the Order who visits these clinics can obtain whatever aid the clinic can provide, but is also expected to help out if they are present during any sort of emergency. The Order now includes a dozen teleporters capable of interstellar travel, but their services are in exceptionally high demand.

RUNNING AN ÆSCULAPIAN ORDER CAMPAIGN

Being sworn to a medical code of ethics and taking it seriously can bring characters into conflict with governments, military organizations, other medical professionals who disagree on interpretations, and even patients at those times when they don't appreciate medical decisions but can't safely make their own.

Sometimes what the laws permit and what the ethical guidelines dictate are different, and then what? Well, then you improvise. A lot can be at stake: a patient's life, the future of the Order's local operations, or the individual Æsculapian's continued ability to draw breath, if they've offended the wrong crime boss by noticing a suspicious injury trend.

As such, Æsculapians aren't merely healers: They have to include rescuers and relief workers, defenders and diplomats, educators, and infiltrators. The face of the Order is peaceful, but compared to international medical organizations of the early 21st century, they are more blatant in their pushback against widespread human-rights violations, and sometimes change the political picture by taking action in the interest of public health and safety. This has earned

ÆSCULAPIAN ORDER ATTITUDES ABOUT OTHER ORDERS

Chitra Bhanu: A clear and terrible example of the temptations of power.

ISRA: Good people, but far too close to being a cult.

The Legions: Violence is never good, but is sometimes necessary, and they excel at it.

The Ministry: They could heal minds and provide insights into the nature of consciousness, but waste time with intrigue and power games.

Norça: Secretive, overly impulsive, but exceptionally efficient and deeply loyal.

Orgotek: Their skill and knowledge are unquestionable, but do they care more about profits or working for humanity?

Upeo wa Macho: They ran, and many died that they could have saved.

The Æon Trinity: Like us, they understand that the mission is aiding humanity

some criticism, but means there is never a shortage of excitement for characters who have allied themselves with this organization. Æsculapians can be found responding to epidemics and disasters, solving medical mysteries, investigating the results of cutting-edge research, and pursuing intrigues amidst back-room political power struggles.

Many possibilities exist. An Æsculapian team in the outer space search-and-rescue division could work from a spaceship in a specific well-traveled portion of the solar system, like a section of the asteroid belt, or could include a teleporter as one of their members and aid space travelers anywhere. These emergency responders save passengers from damaged spacecraft and arrive first to the scene of catastrophes and disease outbreaks on worlds across the galaxy.

Play could focus on an espionage and infiltration team, featuring a wide range of powers used to advance and conceal their purposes – perhaps some characters are members of the Order and others are local connections, allied with them by circumstance and sworn to their secret mission.

An epidemiology center or clinic could be another nexus of events, with medics, security staff, and research scientists all working to track the spread of disease and eradicate it, and stumbling into unforeseen calamities when a new patient turns out to be connected to unsafe black-market technologies, Aberrant cults, or other dangerous phenomena. Clairsentience and sometimes telepathy can be crucial to these investigations.

The best and brightest are often sent to investigate and curb the spread of Quantum Flux diseases, a greater threat to humanity than ordinary illness. New phenomena on this frontier always draw the Æsculapian Order's closest attention. A campaign could even follow a single serious epidemic or large-scale disaster from beginning to end, as the player characters respond to difficult choices in the field and the stakes and challenges change from week to week. Adversarial forces in this type of story include villainy and incompetence, panic and social disorder, destructive microbes and blustering bureaucrats (and that damn tech who won't wash her hands).



CHITRA BHANU

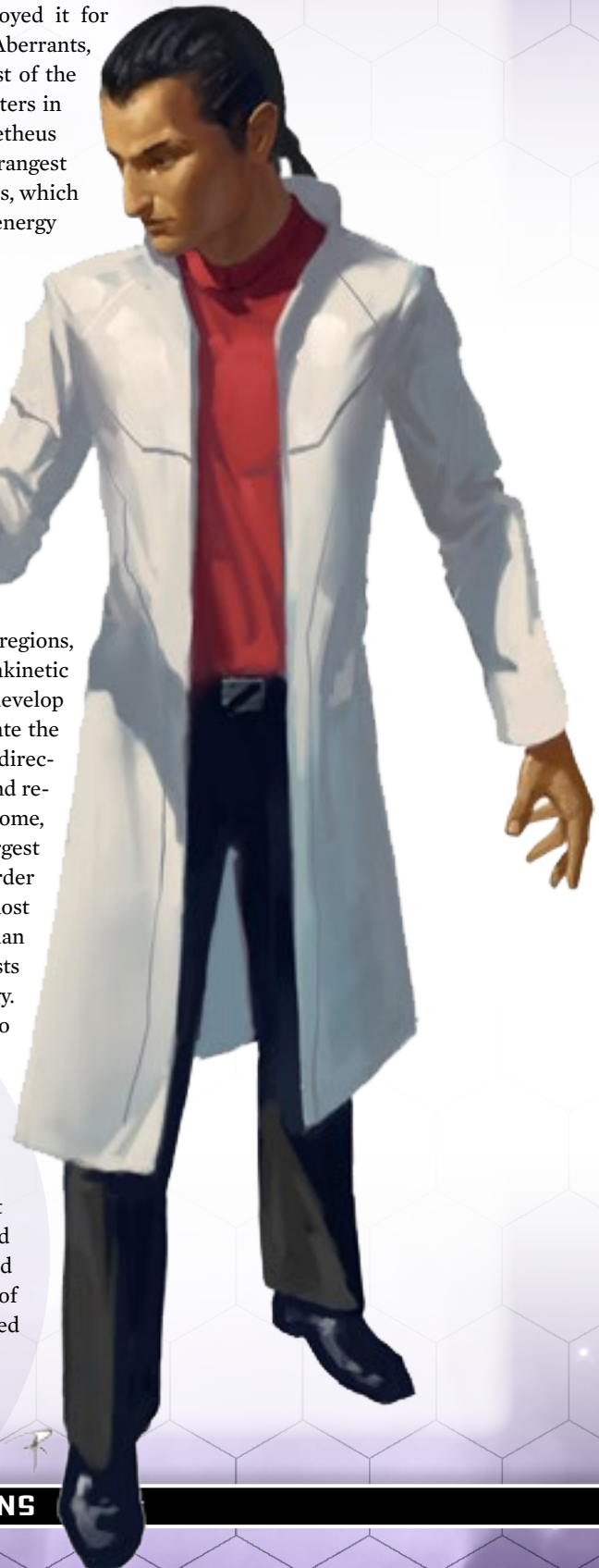


Before the other orders destroyed it for allegedly collaborating with Aberrants, Chitra Bhanu was the smallest of the eight psi orders. Its headquarters in Mumbai contained the Prometheus Chamber for the rarest and strangest of the Aptitudes — quantakinesis, which allowed psions to use noetic energy

to manipulate quantum force, the same quantum force that Aberrants wield to devastating effect. Quantakinetics shaped both matter and energy and could directly affect noetic and quantum powers.

Dr. S. K. Bhurano was the order's proxy. The most reclusive and mysterious of the eight proxies, before she gained her powers Dr. Bhurano was a brilliant physicist who studied Quantum Flux and attempted to find ways to reclaim Corrupted regions, like Wycoff's Blight. After she became the quantakinetic proxy, she worked closely with Proxy Zweidler to develop the theoretical basis for noetic science and investigate the parameters of the subquantum universe. Under her direction, Chitra Bhanu also funded a number of clinics and research facilities for the treatment of Aberrant Syndrome, Corruption diseases, and noetic dysfunction. The largest of these clinics and also the headquarters of the order was located in Mumbai, India. Dr. Bhurano was the most selective of the eight proxies and admitted fewer than 200 people into her order, all of whom were scientists in a wide variety of fields, from physics to psychology. Dr. Bhurano also refused to allow quantakinetics to join other psi orders.

In addition to noetic research, Chitra Bhanu also engaged in extensive studies of Quantum Flux and other Quantum phenomena. Dr. Bhurano claimed that researchers in her Order were attempting to discover a means to subvert or even negate Aberrant powers. Regardless of how noble her motives started out, evidence points to the fact that Dr. Bhurano and the other quantakinetics either fell under the thrall of captive Aberrants they were studying or willingly allied with these monsters.



Near the end of 2109, the first rumors appeared on the OpNet about how Chitra Bhanu was working with Aberrants. At that time, Dr. Bhurano gave what was to be her last public appearance where she confirmed that Chitra Bhanu was working to cure sub-Aberrant mutants and individuals suffering from Quantum Flux diseases, and she eventually hoped to find a way to transform Aberrants back into humans.

Rumors and fears about Chitra Bhanu continued to grow over the next year, especially after several allegedly “rehabilitated” sub-Aberrant mutants were seen visiting the Order’s Bombay clinic. Then, in January 2111, someone working inside the clinic leaked a report that Chitra Bhanu was in league with Aberrants. According to this report, instead of working to find a defense against Aberrants, Chitra Bhanu researchers had discovered a way to cloak Aberrants’ Quantum signature. It also claimed that researchers were working on a method of transforming humans into sub-Aberrant mutants and that they had also discovered a technique for enhancing Aberrant powers.

At this point, several of the other proxies, including Alec Cassel and Dr. Matthew Zweidler, attempted to contact Dr. Bhurano, but she refused to answer any of these messages. Alarmed, General Solvig Larssen dispatched several hundred members of the Legions to Mumbai, where they were joined by members of Norça and Orgotek. General Larssen demanded that Dr. Bhurano allow a team of investigators, including Otha Herzog and Dr. Matthew Zweidler, to inspect their Bombay facility. In her famous last statement, Dr. Bhurano announced that her order’s activities were her responsibility and told the assembled psions to go home. Immediately after this announcement, several

clairsentients outside sensed a large amount of noetic activity building within the facility. Fearing an attack, the assembled soldiers stormed the building and a swift and deadly battle followed. Most of the quantakinetics were killed fighting the other psions and the remainder died in a large explosion of unknown cause.

Afterwards, investigators attempted to learn what the quantakinetics had been working on. Unfortunately, Dr. Bhurano destroyed all of the order’s data files before she died. Clairsentient investigators found that they were unable to gain any information about previous events in the clinic. However, they also discovered small amounts of Quantum Flux in several locations. In the aftermath of this discovery, the other proxies decided to dismantle and destroy the quantakinetic Prometheus Chamber.

Since 2111, there have been periodic reports of known quantakinetics being seen in various locations. Many people in the other psi orders and the Æon Trinity suspect that a handful of quantakinetics may have survived the purge. Far fewer people give any credit to less reliable reports that portions of the quantakinetic Prometheus Chamber vanished before it was destroyed or that S. K. Bhurano survived the explosion. However, some psions still wonder about the exact sequence of events on the day of the purge. Proxies Otha Herzog and Bolade Atwan have recently released statements that seem to indicate that they find some of the events surrounding the Chitra Bhanu purge to be suspicious.

FURTHER INFORMATION

See **Chapter 11: Setting Secrets** for further information on Chitra Bhanu and the Chitra Bhanu Path.



The Interplanetary School of Research and Advancement is the clairsentient psi order. It has also become a large spiritual organization loosely controlled by clairsentient Proxy Otha Herzog. At 103, Herzog is the oldest of the eight proxies.

Before becoming the clairsentient proxy, Herzog was a counselor and spiritual advisor in the Baha'i faith and the leader of the Baha'i Spiritual Assembly on Luna.

Becoming the clairsentient proxy only served to enhance Herzog's already mystical way of thinking. He is famous for giving complex and sometimes difficult to understand answers to seemingly simple questions, in part because he perceives the world in ways that cause him to see the true complexity inherent in even the simplest situation. ISRA members often refer to Herzog as "the Old Man," while the mass media acclaims him as "The Man Who Sees Everything"; a title Herzog openly detests.

Although outsiders sometimes refer to ISRA as Otha Herzog's cult, ISRA does not require its members to hold any particular spiritual beliefs. Instead, Herzog sees ISRA as "a vehicle for self-discovery and the exploration of each member's personal vision". ISRA members hold a vast array of different spiritual, political, and social beliefs; Herzog considers these many different viewpoints to all be part of ISRA's "holographic vision."

Despite these differences, clears all share the unique understanding that their powers provide.

These insights, including an awareness of the fundamental oneness of all life and all intelligence, are difficult to communicate to anyone who has not experienced them. Although almost half the psions in ISRA are not clears, most attempt to learn one or more clairsentient Auxiliary Modes to gain at least some understanding of these mysteries.

Ultimately, Otha Herzog asks nothing of psions in ISRA beyond doing best to serve humanity and attempting to aid other ISRA members who require assistance. Many work at one of the ISRA meeting houses, where people come seeking spiritual advice or classes in meditation and other spiritual practices. The largest is located in Olympus, but there are meeting houses in more than 30 large cities, including Bangkok, Los Angeles, Mumbai, Nairobi, Prague, São Paulo, and Sydney.

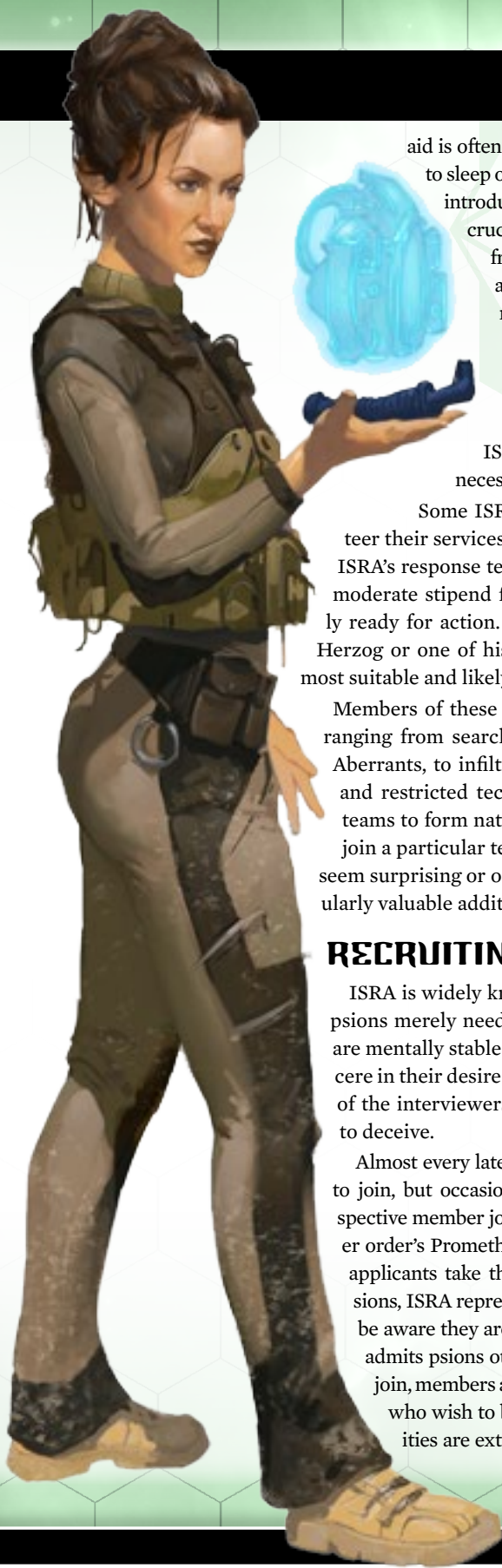
However, members of ISRA need not have anything to do with these meeting houses or with anything else publicly associated with ISRA. Like their diversity of beliefs, the range of jobs members of ISRA perform are equally varied. Almost one third of the psions who join ISRA, including both clears and others, do not work directly for ISRA in any fashion. Instead, they either continue performing their previous occupation or find a new one that makes better use of their new talents.

Otha Herzog still considers these individuals to be part of ISRA. He asks that they make regular reports of any unusual activities that they observe, and occasionally requests that they aid other ISRA members. This

LETTERS TO OTHA

Otha Herzog wishes to make certain that all psions who belong to ISRA can turn to one another if they are in trouble. To assist with this, he provides them all with a secure method of communication. ISRA assigns every psion three "neighbors" who are all skilled clairsentients. Every Saturday, at a predetermined time, these clairsentients observe the psion. If the psion is a clairsentient or has a clairsentient Auxiliary Mode, each neighbor determines if the psion has left any messages on her focal crystal (p. 290) and records this message onto their own focal crystals. Otherwise, these three clears simply observe the individual, who sometimes writes notes for her neighbors. These notes are often informally referred to as "letters to Otha."

In addition to looking for such messages, neighbors determine if the psion they are watching appears to be in any difficulty. If a psion unexpectedly disappears, her neighbors attempt to find her. Psions are asked to leave word if they will be out of contact for more than two weeks. If any psion unexpectedly vanishes for longer than this, at least one of her neighbors visits her last known location and attempts to learn the psion's fate.



aid is often relatively minor, like allowing visiting members to sleep on their couch or providing local information and introductions. However, occasionally such aid is both crucial and dangerous, like hiding an ISRA member from their enemies or helping them gain covert access to a well-guarded location. Although not required, most members donate 20% of their income to ISRA. In return, they are free to stay in any ISRA facilities. Members who live and work in ISRA facilities like the meeting houses usually donate most of their income to ISRA. In return, ISRA provides them with food, housing, and other necessities.

Some ISRA members prefer lives of action, and volunteer their services to Otha Herzog, becoming members of one of ISRA's response teams. Members of these response teams earn a moderate stipend from ISRA in return for their being constantly ready for action. ISRA has more than 30 response teams, and Herzog or one of his senior advisors selects the team that seems most suitable and likely to succeed at a particular mission.

Members of these teams are expected to be ready for problems ranging from search and rescue in remote locations, to fighting Aberrants, to infiltrating a criminal gang selling illegal weapons and restricted technologies. Otha Herzog usually allows these teams to form naturally, but occasionally suggests that someone join a particular team. Unsurprisingly, while some of his choices seem surprising or odd, the new member is almost always a particularly valuable addition to the team.

RECRUITING PSIONS

ISRA is widely known to be the easiest psi order to join. Latent psions merely need to pass a basic screening to ensure that they are mentally stable and convince an interviewer that they are sincere in their desire to join ISRA and become a psion. Of course, all of the interviewers are powerful clairsentients who are difficult to deceive.

Almost every latent that passes the psychological tests is allowed to join, but occasionally interviewers either suggest that the prospective member join another psi order or join ISRA but use another order's Prometheus Chamber to gain a different Aptitude. Most applicants take these recommendations seriously. On rare occasions, ISRA representatives contact individuals who may not even be aware they are latent psions and ask them to join. ISRA freely admits psions other than clairsentients. Although any psion can join, members actively recruit telepaths, vitakinetics, and latents who wish to become those types of psions because their abilities are extremely useful in ISRA meeting houses. The rare

and recently returned teleporters and latents with teleportation latency are especially welcome in ISRA, particularly as part of ISRA's response teams.

THE ISRA PATH (SOCIETY)

The character is closely affiliated with the Interplanetary School of Research and Advancement, the clairsentient order. She is aligned with this sprawling, spiritual organization and may well be a counselor or spiritual adviser herself. If she is a psion, she may be part of ISRA's network of "neighbors." Whether part of a response team, an associate member, or some other affiliate to the order, she is likely to have experienced the strange and often mysterious aid that the society of clairsentients provides to its members.

PATH CONCEPTS

Leviathan jump ship pilot, spiritual counselor, troubleshooting drifter, wandering mystic

Example Connections: Aeon Trinity, Local Community Organizer, Respected Priest, Seemingly Random Individual Clairsentience Indicated to Be Significant

Skills: Culture, Empathy, Humanities, Integrity

Edges: Artistic Talent, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Enhanced Attunement, Favored Mode, Keen Sense, Mysterious Aid, Patron, Weak Spots

SPECIAL EDGE: MYSTERIOUS AID (••)

Prerequisite: ISRA (required Edge)

Your character is occasionally the recipient of unexpected help due to the clairsentient capabilities of her patron organization. Once per session, you may choose to have a source of aid occur in the form of a two-dot Ally, 2 Enhancement to a single roll, or a clue for an information-gathering action. It could even take the form of between one and half a dozen devices with a cost of no more than •• each. You must explain what form this aid takes. It might be a handily placed cache of gear that is precisely where the character needs it to be, a seemingly bizarre instruction from ISRA that reveals a clue, or the sudden appearance of a contact who was advised to be in a certain place at a certain time. It also must be reasonable for the aid to be able to appear in the circumstances. The Storyguide is also free to use this Edge for the characters once per session if they are about to encounter unexpected difficulties or the players are becoming frustrated. All characters who select this Path must purchase this Edge.

THE GROWTH OF ISRA

Herzog initially planned for ISRA to be a small organization composed solely of clairsentients, and other psions who were interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the world. He hoped these psions would learn to use their powers to attain wisdom and benefit all of humanity. However, ISRA also required hundreds of neutrals to help with various mundane practical tasks, like coordinating the efforts of its sometimes-eccentric members. Also, thousands of people contacted Herzog, seeking his advice and wishing to become his spiritual disciples.

Herzog's clairsentience confirmed the fact that many people felt lost and believed he might have answers that they desperately needed. An increasing number of these people began traveling to Olympus, attending Herzog's few public appearances and asking him and other members of ISRA for spiritual guidance. After slightly more than a year of attempting to dissuade or ignore the growing number of seekers, Herzog realized that he could simultaneously help these people and use them to aid humanity as a whole.

Herzog understands that sometimes all that's necessary to prevent serious problems or improve the world is for the correct person to be someplace at exactly the right time. His powers allow him to know what people, places, and events can be combined in beneficial ways. As he grew to better understand his abilities, Herzog also realized that most people needed only a few suggestions and a small amount of help to gain far greater satisfaction in their lives. He learned that it was often possible to direct people to locations where their lives would be better and where they could eventually provide an invaluable service to ISRA.

In 2108, ISRA began admitting neutrals who were sincere spiritual seekers as associate members. However, ISRA works to temper fanaticism, evangelism, and unthinking devotion. Herzog and the order's teachers and counsellors carefully explain to all members of ISRA that truth and wisdom come from considered action, not blind obedience to Herzog's teachings. They also stress that everyone has an appropriate path for their life and for many people, this path does not include ISRA.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Despite having only 5,000 psions, ISRA is notable for being one of the largest psi orders. It now has more than 250,000 associate members. Some neutrals who join ISRA are deeply spiritual people who have been

FROM: DIRECTOR JULIE LIN MAI

To: Juan Chavez

Subject: Assignment in Kuala Terengganu

Date: July 12, 2123

Juan—

We recently received a message from associate member Jacqueline Binti in Kuala Terengganu. She reported that several families in her neighborhood recently left the city. There was no evidence of violence or that these people did anything but suddenly move, but none of them would talk about why they were moving. The local authorities aren't concerned about a few working-class families relocating, so she contacted us. The Old Man himself decided to dispatch your team — I expect that this is something fairly significant. Jacqueline also asked for help finding her brother a job; see what you can manage. She said that your response team can all stay with her, under the story that you're friends of her aunt in Melbourne. Blessings to you and your team.

touched by Otha Herzog's message. These people usually wish to study and work at ISRA meeting houses as 22nd-century monks and nuns. However, most associate members are ordinary people seeking meaning in their lives. They hope that Herzog and ISRA will provide this for them and often find that ISRA offers them advice that they could find nowhere else. Otha Herzog or one of the powerful clairsentients in his inner circle at least briefly consider every new associate member of ISRA, to see if there is some purpose for which this person is uniquely suited. They receive little information about most new members, at most a vision that the person would be happy in a particular city, that they have an especially hot temper and should have counseling and a job that does not exacerbate this problem, or that the person is sufficiently honest and trustworthy to work directly for ISRA.

Occasionally Herzog or one of his assistants has a far more significant vision. They could see anything from this person committing a serious crime that they would then attempt to prevent, to the person playing a specific role in either making the world a better place or otherwise furthering Herzog's agenda. Often, the tasks ISRA assigns to these people are both subtle and minor. One person may be told to move to a particular city and get a job working in a specific company. If needed, ISRA members help this person move and find the appropriate type of job. ISRA might ask another associate member to move into a particular house or apartment, which meets her needs but otherwise seems unexceptional. In all

of these cases, Herzog or one of his assistants had a vision of the person in this job or dwelling performing some action that had important consequences.

Perhaps a single act of minor kindness by the person prevents a devastating murder spree or maybe this associate member is able to save the life of

ISRA ATTITUDES ABOUT OTHER ORDERS

The Æsculapian Order: A hand ready to help all in need.

Chitra Bhanu: The truth about their destruction remains unknown, who is keeping it secret?

The Legions: A blunt instrument, but one that is often useful.

The Ministry: Even our clearest visions cannot fully penetrate their secrecy and deceptions.

Norça: Good people with honorable intentions, but far too insular. The path forward is through unity, not secrecy and division.

Orgotek: They know how to build many things, but do they understand why.

Upeo wa Macho: They also can touch the oneness of all existence

The Æon Trinity: They work for the good of humanity, but can be a bit too sure of themselves.

someone who later goes on to cure a serious disease, prevent a war, or discover a new habitable world. Herzog attempts to make certain that the people he sends to perform these missions are happy in their assigned life, but he is equally interested in the positive effects their small actions have on others.

Neutrals working in the ISRA meeting houses keep in regular contact with every associate member, asking about their lives and offering a limited amount of counselling and advice. ISRA also encourages associate members to become involved with their communities and to report any unusual events they observe to ISRA. These reports occasionally provide advanced information about a serious problem or potentially wonderful development that would be difficult to otherwise learn about.

Herzog doesn't fully understand what Talents are, but he knows that a few people he encounters seem innately destined to perform impressive deeds and have unusually complex probability matrices. Any Talent who joins ISRA can be assured of being assigned interesting and challenging duties. Whenever Herzog encounters Talents who are not part of ISRA, he attempts to recruit them. He has even suggested that several of the Talents he recruited join one of the response teams, which normally consist solely of psions.

HURUF AL-HAYY

Shortly after the Chitra Bhanu purge, Otha Herzog decided that ISRA needed a secure base, which would also house the clairsentience Prometheus Chamber. Known as Huruf al-Hayy (letters of the living), this base is named after the first 18 followers of the Baha'i faith. Herzog has provided no explanation for this name. Although the construction of this base was widely known, he kept the location secret. Only Otha Herzog, Bolade Atwan, and members of Herzog's inner circle know exactly where it is. Almost no one outside of ISRA even knows what planet it is on. Outsiders who study reports about Huruf al-Hayy learn that it is large enough to house up to 20,000 people, contains half a dozen hyperfusion generators, advanced and heavily redundant life-support systems, clinics, research labs, a facility for creating bioware, and the order's Prometheus Chamber, but nothing about its location. Outsiders and prospective clairsentients must travel to Huruf al-Hayy via a jump ring (p. 295) located in the order's meeting house in Olympus. This jump ring was a prototype created in 2114 by Proxies Herzog and Atwan working together, and no one managed to duplicate it for five years.

Some people believe Huruf al-Hayy is on Earth, others are convinced it's on Luna, an Earth-crossing asteroid, or perhaps some more distant location. In reality,



Huruf al-Hayy is buried several hundred kilometers below the lunar surface. Bolade Atwan used her powers to excavate the chamber and transport the necessary materials there. The base's well-concealed fiber-optic cables connect it to the Lunar OpNet, and four tunnels for high speed magnetically levitated trains provide more conventional access. Important ISRA members can travel to Huruf al-Hayy on these trains, but the base and all four tunnels have bioapps that shield them from all forms of noetic observation, so none of them know where on Luna this base is located. One tunnel travels from the ISRA meeting house in Olympus, two others connect to meeting houses in other Lunar settlements, and the fourth in a carefully concealed outpost more than 1,000 km from any other Lunar settlement.

SPECIAL RESOURCES

Members who go on missions for ISRA regularly encounter all manner of unexpected assistance. Psions working for ISRA periodically discover information or caches of equipment that were left for them weeks or months ahead of time. Associate members occasionally receive assignments to deliver weapons, unusual devices, or even short handwritten notes to a particular location and mark it with one of several seemingly random splatters of colored paint that ISRA uses to denote such caches. Similarly, an associate member may be asked to become a minor technician in a facility weeks or months before a planned mission, because Otha Herzog or one of his inner circle saw that a response team would need help entering or escaping from that facility.

These special caches and assistants typically only show up when characters are in trouble. Members of ISRA response teams have learned that if they're trapped and under attack or otherwise facing serious difficulties, looking around for the colored cache markers is an excellent strategy. Sometimes, a cache provides both equipment and valuable information, like a response team preparing to investigate a location they believe isn't being guarded finding a supply of military-grade body armor.

Mysterious aid is only one of the more unusual aspects of working for ISRA. Sometimes ISRA asks teams of psions to perform tasks that initially seem trivial or nonsensical. A team deployed to a small and remote city in central Asia might be asked to acquire a specific size and cut of gown that they are then instructed to leave in a particular location so that an important diplomat can find it just before heading

for a vital negotiation, after an exceedingly clumsy waiter ruined her previous gown. Some of the most eccentric requests can also be the most challenging, such as asking a team that includes a musically talented member to play a specific song at 8:12 am, at a plaza inside a high-security arcology in the FSA.

RUNNING AN ISRA CAMPAIGN

One of the most distinctive aspects of running an ISRA campaign is that this psi order doesn't have a particular sphere of influence. Instead, Otha Herzog takes a somewhat protective interest in all of humanity. Although they can be anywhere and concern almost any subject, most ISRA missions deal with problems that no one else has noticed yet. Sometimes this is because the problem is small but growing, other times because skilled covert operatives or mind-controlling Aberrants have made certain that the problem has remained carefully hidden. However, it's remarkably difficult to hide anything from the senior members of ISRA.

ISRA also has many thousands of perfectly ordinary people living or working in locations that Herzog or one of the other senior members of ISRA believed would be important. These people regularly report anything that appears to be significant and sometimes Herzog sends a team of psions to investigate, and possibly to rescue the associate member.

In return for their service, Herzog ensures that associate members can always call upon ISRA if they need help. Often, this help is useful but unexceptional, like providing legal advice, assistance finding a better house or job, or perhaps counseling. However, associate members are occasionally threatened by criminal gangs or corrupt officials, or face other difficult and dangerous problems.

Otha Herzog cares about all of humanity, but he takes a special interest in anyone who serves ISRA in even the most minor capacity. If an associate member of ISRA has a serious problem that a team of highly trained psions can help solve, Herzog sends a team of psions to persuade a criminal gang to leave a particular neighborhood alone or to deal with corrupt and brutal government officials. An ISRA campaign should involve a mixture of high-stakes missions and smaller missions where the characters provide significant help to a single individual or perhaps a small neighborhood. One of ISRA's core tenets is that no one is unimportant and everyone has a place in the universe's grand design.

THE LEGIONS



In 2106, the Legions erupted onto the world stage in a blur of chameleon-effect battle-dress and a blaze of lasers and pyrokinesis. Their continued acclaim is a testament not only to their military prowess but to their adept handling (some would say “manipulation”) of public opinion and UN policy.

The Legions’ popular image reflects the iconic *Legions Triumphant* mural. While grossly inaccurate (the Legionnaires at Sydney wore practical combat gear and the fighting never went hand-to-tentacle on open ground), the mural captures the order’s spirit. Other psi orders may excel at politics or commerce, but the Legions are humanity’s shining sword and shield.

Technically, the Legions are a component of UN Military Command. They boast nearly 30,000 psions, almost twice the number of the next largest order. An additional 70,000 neutrals make them larger than many national armies. While the order is only a fraction of humanity’s total forces under arms, its combination of selective recruiting, superior leadership and training, and — of course — psions makes it far more capable than any similarly sized conventional force. This power would be politically destabilizing if the Legions weren’t so dedicated to their avowed mission of protecting humanity. As it is, the ultimate accountability of the order and its proxy, General Solveig Larssen, still occasionally robs Æon Trinity officials and national leaders of sleep.

FORGING A LEGION

After the Aberrant War, the UN’s power grew, but the UN Military Command was hobbled by archaic doctrine, antiquated equipment, and troops with divided loyalties. Attempts at humanitarian and peacekeeping work meant well but accomplished little. Captain Solveig Larssen, a Northern Collective soldier on loan to UNMC, witnessed many of these failures. Disillusioned, she authored a scathing treatise proposing radical solutions. Some senior officers wanted her broken but enough shared her frustrations to offer her an opportunity to prove her theories. In 2091, the United Nations Home Guard began recruiting.

Based in Australia’s Outback, the Home Guard was a rapid intervention force with troops sworn solely to the UN, not loaned national soldiers. Unencumbered by dual command, it could deploy swiftly to conflicts or disasters across the solar system despite individual UN members’ disapproval. Larssen’s tactical success hinged on soldier skill and low-level command initiative. Her philosophy was that sergeants and lieutenants won battles; higher echelons merely supported them. By 2100, the experimental company had grown to a brigade and Larssen found herself a military celebrity.

After a leave of absence — when she met with the other proxies and became the first psychokinetic — Brigadier Larssen began covertly reorganizing the Home Guard. Arcane selection processes siphoned off troops for “special training” and remote assignments. Rumors ran rampant about her true agenda, but only

IN FORMATION

Gamers do poorly under military discipline. Whether command rests internally with the ranking character or externally with an SGC officer, players like to exercise free will. In real militaries, disobeying orders generates punishment, not a Hollywood wink and nod, even if the outcome is positive.

There are a few ways to address this. One is to discuss these issues with the players so everyone understands and agrees to the same level of military verisimilitude, including ranks and subordination. Another is to put the characters in a Legion with looser discipline (like Sixth) or lower-echelon independence (Second, Fourth, Seventh). This also works for a team on independent or covert duty, where teamwork trumps protocol and orders can be as simple as “obey your Æon rep and don’t violate the UNMLC.”

A third option is to accept cinematic “discipline” and run with it. It’s your game. We won’t tell General Larssen.

the wildest approached the reality of the force that spearheaded the psions' counterattack at Sydney.

THE ARMORY

A Legionnaire on combat duty receives primary and secondary weapons, armor, communications equipment, and survival gear appropriate to his assignment. He doesn't own them — the Legions just let him play with them. When this isn't enough, what else can he get?

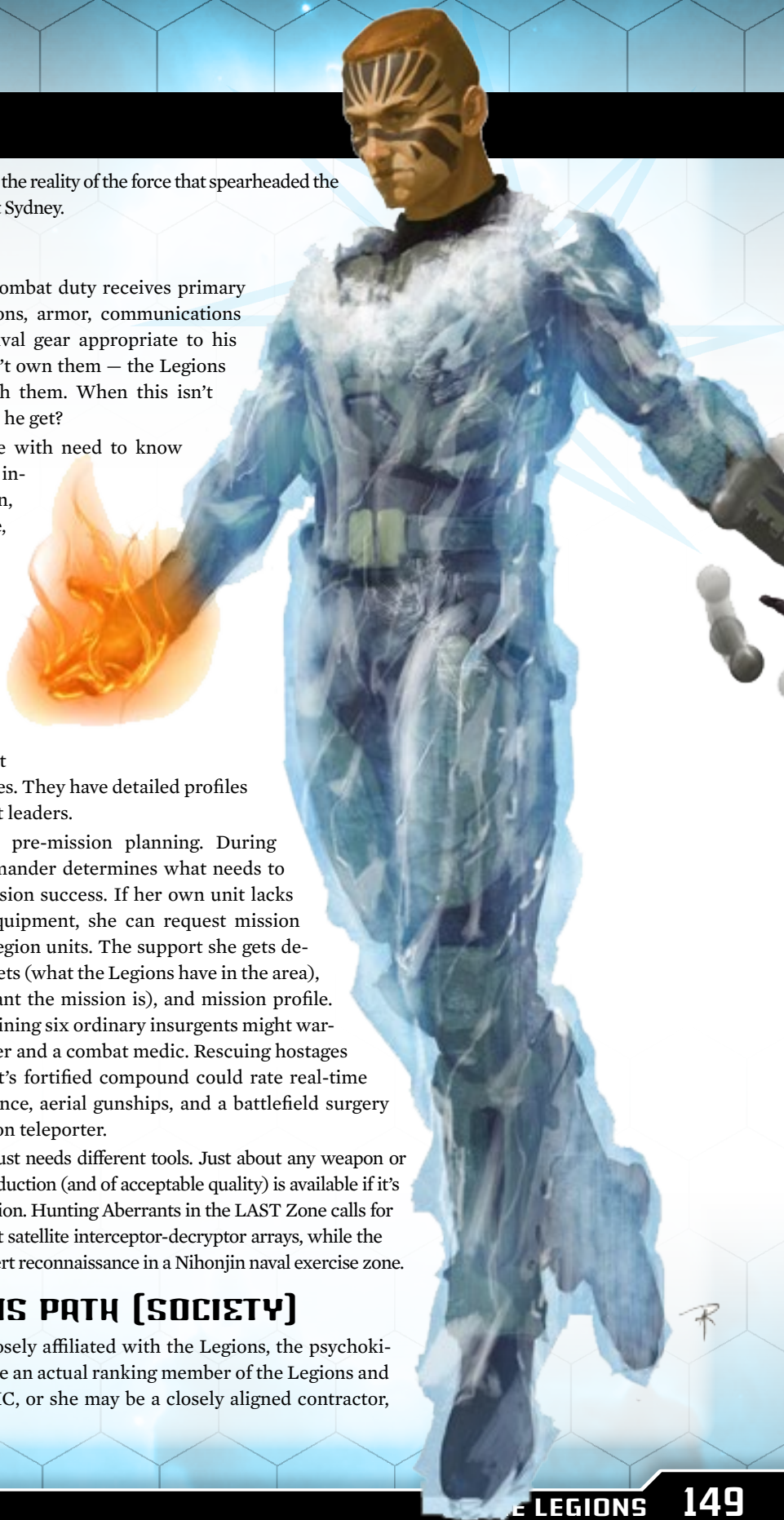
First, a Legionnaire will need to know can obtain detailed intelligence on a location, nation, opposing force, organization, piece of equipment, or individual of interest, subject to the Intelligence Corps' limitations. The Legions also make a science of analyzing Aberrant powers and weaknesses. They have detailed profiles on all known Aberrant leaders.

Intelligence drives pre-mission planning. During that planning, a commander determines what needs to happen to ensure mission success. If her own unit lacks necessary skills or equipment, she can request mission support from other Legion units. The support she gets depends on available assets (what the Legions have in the area), priority (how important the mission is), and mission profile. Raiding a house containing six ordinary insurgents might warrant an armed skimmer and a combat medic. Rescuing hostages from an Aberrant cult's fortified compound could rate real-time clairsentient surveillance, aerial gunships, and a battlefield surgery team with an extraction teleporter.

Sometimes, a team just needs different tools. Just about any weapon or piece of kit in mass production (and of acceptable quality) is available if it's appropriate to the mission. Hunting Aberrants in the LAST Zone calls for plasma cannons but not satellite interceptor-decryptor arrays, while the opposite applies to covert reconnaissance in a Nihonjin naval exercise zone.

THE LEGIONS PATH (SOCIETY)

The character is closely affiliated with the Legions, the psychokinetic order. She may be an actual ranking member of the Legions and thus part of the UNMC, or she may be a closely aligned contractor,



supporter, or ally of the organization. If she is a psion in the order, she has undergone a rigorous and selective training process, and during her service lives according to the Legions' rules and regulations. Whether a soldier or not, she works as a part of the Legions' efforts to protect humanity.

PATH CONCEPTS

Battlefield medic, combat pilot, determined aberrant hunter, soldier

Example Connections: Local Militia, Mercenary Company, Military Contractor, UN Official

Skills: Aim, Athletics, Close Combat, Command

Edges: Always Prepared, Enhanced Attunement, Favored Mode, Hardy, Iron Will, Legion Armory, Small Unit Tactics

SPECIAL EDGE: LEGION ARMORY (•)

Prerequisite: Legions (required Edge)

As a full member of one of the Legions, your character has access to significant military resources. She can always acquire military-grade weapons, armor, and equipment without difficulty regardless of her personal wealth, and she has the authorization to carry and use such armaments wherever the Legions' authority extends, subject to the UNMLC. All characters who select this Path must purchase this Edge.

ONE SHIELD. SEVEN SWORDS

To outsiders who know individual psychokinetics, it's a marvel that the Legions work at all. PKs are not stereotyped for calm, respectful demeanors, and the idea of thousands of them being unified and armed can be daunting. However, the Legions are a military first and a psi order second. Individual Legionnaires are soldiers first, regardless of whether they're PKs, psions with other Aptitudes, or neutrals. This training and discipline unifies the order.

Since the order appeared, it has evolved from a single Legion into the current seven. Four are defined by geographic defense responsibilities while three focus on mission specialties. Some analysts characterize the Legions as seven culturally distinct militaries (or psi orders) unified by a common mission.

FORGING A BLADE

The Legions' prodigious casualty rates (over 10,000 psions since their formation) make them hungry for replacements. However, recruiting is mercilessly

selective, with psychological screening trumping physical or psionic aptitude. The Legions spend little on advertising. Public image does the job well enough. Recruiters focus on identifying latents and matching prospective Legionnaires to complementary specialties.

General Larssen accepts that all her troops aren't born fighters. Support Command is full of people who are better at repairs or medicine than combat. Still, Legionnaires are humanity's defenders, so they all receive combat training. Every new recruit undergoes the 12-week Legions Basic Training, which teaches not only infantry fundamentals but military protocol and discipline. The three to six months after LBT bring advanced training in the Legionnaire's assigned specialty, whether that's light infantry, fusion-plant engineering, or trauma medicine. Next, a neutral joins his first unit, while a latent is finally triggered and taught to be (and fight as) a psion before shipping out. Initial enlistment is a three-year contract, after which the Legionnaire can reenlist or muster out.

The Legions are a military. The media rarely looks beyond the uniforms and weapons to examine deeper truths therein. A Legionnaire lacks the rights and freedoms that civilians enjoy. Her legal status subjects her to the UN Military Legal Code, not civil or criminal law. This allows her to carry heavy iron and do violent things in the course of her duties but tightly constrains most other aspects of her life. Her self-expression, dress, travel, living arrangements, and ability to say "no" are limited by Legions regulations and her duties. She goes where ordered, does what's ordered, and accepts that she may die carrying out those orders. This discipline can appear harsh to outsiders, but it ensures unquestioning obedience in combat, where hesitation or debate kills soldiers and loses battles. Recruiting and LBT are designed to weed out candidates who can't acclimate to this life. Those who stay wouldn't have it any other way.

Despite the unifying factors, service experiences vary widely. Each Legion's unique identity reflects its area of responsibility. Once a Legionnaire reports to her first unit, her Legion determines as much about her duties as the overall psi order does.

FIRST LEGION: THE HOME GUARD



The senior Legion is the order's headquarters unit and defends its birthplace, Australia. The Guardsmen's spotless blue uniforms and white berets underpin Legionnaires' global image. It's

no surprise that First is beloved throughout human space, particularly in Australia, which adores its native psi order.

Many Guardsmen cultivate media relationships and some even endorse products or guest-star on popular shows or sports teams (public-information officers keep a tight rein on behavior that would tarnish the order's reputation). The spit and polish doesn't cover a lack of combat prowess, though. In addition to its combat units, First contains the order's ceremonial troops, military police, general staff, intelligence corps, and public-relations personnel. Only the liaisons, spooks, and MPs regularly leave Australia.

SECOND LEGION: FORTUNE'S KNIGHTS



As the original Legion shifted from UN peacekeeping to defending Australia and expanding the psychokinetic population, Larssen's UNMC critics accused her of abandoning global responsibilities for personal agendas.

Fortune's Knights were her answer. Since 2107, the Knights have been the Legions' response force for UN missions requiring a psionic touch.

At least, that's the theory. In practice, Second Legion deploys at the General's pleasure, not the Secretary General's. If a rebel movement, shaky government, or oppressed minority requests aid, and its cause aligns with Larssen's moral compass, Second sends troops, sometimes under contract to defray Legions costs. Deft spin-doctoring ensures this plays well on the news vids, but behind closed doors, several governments are apoplectic at Larssen's actions and lack of accountability. Only two points have kept the UNMC from court-martialing her. First, most Knights deployments support the UN charter and focus on protecting civilians, not changing regimes, so court-martialing the proxy would be a PR nightmare. Second, the Legions are too critical to humanity's defense to risk alienating the PKs or their commander.

The Knights strive to uphold their nickname. They have unparalleled expertise at working with local civilians. When Knights intervene, they're there to protect and assist the population, which gives them a global base of popular support. Of course, as the Legion most often confronting human

opponents, they also make their share of enemies, some of whom run small countries.

Strategically and tactically mobile, the Knights can put a battalion anywhere on Earth in 12 hours — without teleportation. The price is firepower: lacking heavy equipment, Knights can find themselves out-gunned by a capable enemy. The General's personal power rights a lot of imbalances, though. When she takes the field, it's most often with the Second.

THIRD LEGION: SUPPORT COMMAND



The largest Legion is a non-combat force and has the fewest psions. Support Command is the Legions' training, logistics, and administrative arm, doing behind-the-scenes work to ensure the other Legions can fight.

Although Treys are trained soldiers, many have never fired a shot in battle.

Third originated as the order's quartermaster corps, responsible for supplying, fixing, transporting, feeding, and housing Legionnaires and their equipment. It quickly took on training duties and, with the Æsculapian Order's assistance, established the order's medical and disaster relief corps. As the Home Guard evolved, it offloaded most of its administrative structure, and the tiny chaplain corps. The order's military- and psionic-research teams, including those that operate the PK Prometheus Chamber, also belong to Support Command.

Treys break down into three groups. The first is psychokinetics who neither wanted to be combatants nor to join another psi order. The second is neutrals who enlisted to obtain non-combat jobs or technical educations. The third is combat casualties who'd rather stay in uniform than medically retire. Few psions of other Aptitudes wind up in Third because most non-PK Legionnaires signed up to fight, not to flog data.

Australia holds Third's massive training, transport, and supply hubs, but widely varied support missions spread small units across human space. Permanent Support Command detachments run all major bases, housing other Legions' units as tenants. A Trey in such postings can serve a full career without ever pulling a trigger. Forward-deployed duty happens, though, and self-protection can be necessary. Treys who support the Second, Fourth, and Seventh Legions are most likely to see combat.

FOURTH LEGION: VIGILES MUNDI



Formed as a close-combat unit to beat the toughest Aberrants in the worst terrain, Fourth Legion quickly acquired a reputation for intransigence and aggression.

Founding *Vigiles* embraced the principle that there is no “overkill” — only “open fire” and “reload.” Fourth drew recruits who wanted to pay back the Aberrants for personal losses. Loose discipline and its battlefield consequences threatened to undermine the order’s overall image until a spike in combat deaths brought widespread replacement of the *Vigiles’* senior officer corps.

Under new leadership, the *Vigiles* remained the order’s blunt implement but tempered their bloodlust with professionalism. Fourth still attracts those looking to kill Aberrants, but it only keeps the team players. Current doctrine incorporates lessons from history’s best assault forces and raiders, along with unprecedented emphasis on low-level autonomy. The result is a Legion with unbreakable *esprit de corps*, massive firepower, and surprising flexibility.

The assault battalions stationed near Aberrant trouble spots are Fourth’s strong right fist. Their high-profile operations and unsubtle image neatly conceal this Legion’s *left* hand. Smaller strike companies provide Fourth, and the Legions as a whole, with unconventional warfare capabilities. Their primary focus is Aberrants and Aberrant cults, but they occasionally apply their reconnaissance, hostage rescue, and sabotage talents to other targets.

Fourth Legion units spend little time in peacekeeping or defensive assignments. A Vigil’s life is one of hard training, harder play, and flying around the world (or across the galaxy) to do bad things to bad beings. Smaller detachments, particularly from strike companies, go anywhere at a moment’s notice to gather intelligence or bolster an *Æon* or UN operation. The Fourth’s greatest weakness is endurance: Optimized for swift violence, it struggles to sustain protracted deployments.

FIFTH LEGION: THUNDER OF THE AMERICAS



Fifth Legion’s political environment is more dangerous than its battlefields. Most of its troops come from the Americas and these Thunderbolts retain

stronger national loyalties than General Larssen would prefer. Operating in two rival proxies’ backyards exacerbates the tension.

Sudamérica has little call for heavy combat now that the Venezuelan Plaguelands are relatively well contained. Norça’s unparalleled espionage prevents Aberrant cults from reaching critical mass. Consequently, Fifth’s activity here supports the biokinetic order with wilderness patrols and rapid response to Aberrant raids. Fifth also monitors local biotech industries and transhuman movements (and politely ignores Norça’s reciprocal surveillance).

Sudamérican cultural imperatives require a deft touch to keep military assistance from offending the locals. Consequently, relationships with government and Norça representatives are critical to Thunder’s success. It’s no coincidence that Thunder is headquartered in São Paulo.

North America presents different challenges. The FSA reluctantly allows Fifth to operate there under the terms of the Legions’ Aberrant Suppression Treaty. The LAST restricts the bulk of Legions forces to the periphery of Wycoff’s Blight, where the FSM lets Thunderbolts soak up the casualties while monitoring them for treaty infractions. LAST Zone service is classic counterinsurgency: boring patrols through bleak wastelands and sullen villages, punctuated by Aberrant ambushes or bandit raids. Still, there’s no shortage of idealistic Blight-town recruits. Wearier veterans know coilguns don’t solve problems — they only eliminate some of the bad.

Outside the LAST Zone, official harassment keeps Fifth on its bases except when defending communities the FSM has written off. Bitter contempt for FSA policies is widespread, festering into dangerous sympathies. Some units unofficially adopt the heraldry of local resistance movements. Larssen fears these Thunderbolts may eventually set the Legions at war with a major national power.

SIXTH LEGION: EUROPE’S AEGIS



Known as the Shieldbearers, the members of the Sixth Legion are stretched thin. Expansionist states, repressive regimes, and bitter rebellions require constant peacekeeping. Sixth seems to have a losing fight on its hands but the Shieldbearers refuse to give up.

PSI LAMBDA

Like any subculture, we have our own ways of showing both individuality and membership. Ours just have to fall within the bounds of regulations — or at least not stretch 'em too far. Helmet graffiti, morale patches, and vehicle nose art are some of the classics, but Legionnaires are into decorating ourselves, too. In the early years, thanks to First Legion's Maori recruits, the trend was full-face tattoos showing personal decorations and unit heraldry. We'd use programmable smart pigment that we could turn off with an antihistamine derm, 'cause nothing says "sniper check!" like painting a rank tab on your face.

The new meme started after *Esperanza*. Some classically inclined Shieldbearers started wearing the Greek letter lambda — you know, symbol of the Spartans at Thermopylae? Well, someone added another letter: psi, for obvious reasons. Now "Psi Lambda!" is the catchphrase of the week. Like something? Say it with enthusiasm. Got crappy orders? Acknowledge 'em with a surly inflection. And of course the symbol is all over the place — patches, brands, even implanted jewelry. Yeah, I got a tattoo of it, too.

— Captain Mercedes Moriarty, Bravo Company ("Bunyips"), 12th Armored Cavalry Battalion, Fourth Legion

Before *Esperanza*, Aegis ceremonially placated European UN members who wanted a regional Legion for prestige. Low Aberrant activity and few other missions bred complacency. Now the Shieldbearers are playing catch up. A rapid influx of fresh bodies, charged with nationalism and desperate enthusiasm, reduces average experience and undermines discipline. Individual units still get the job done but not necessarily in a way that's best for the order as a whole.

Aegis has central bases at Barcelona, Izmir, and its Copenhagen headquarters, but most formations are forward-deployed. Local commanders have general guidelines, not detailed orders, and must improvise to meet the ambiguities of European defense. A Shieldbearer can spend one day escorting Æsculapian relief workers to a refugee camp, the next facing down guerillas on a contested border, and the third hunting anthropophagous cultists in the same camp.



THE LEGIONS ATTITUDES ABOUT OTHER ORDERS

The Æsculapian Order: They understand service, bravery, and dedication.

Chitra Bhanu: If you ally yourself with the enemy, you get what's coming to you

ISRA: Weird, but exceptionally useful, and if you ask for help, they won't let you down.

The Ministry: Mind games and no sense of loyalty, keep your distance.

Norça: Awesome commandos, but far too undisciplined.

Orgotek: An army runs on its supply lines, and their gear is the best.

Upeo wa Macho: They abandoned humanity once, will they do so again?

The Æon Trinity: Excellent intel and backup, but they sometimes forget we don't work for them.

SEVENTH LEGION: PHOENIX FLEET



Known as the Firebirds, the Phoenix Fleet formed after the Chromatic attack on Karroo. The newest Legion stole aerospace assets from the First and Second, vacuum-qualified infantry from the Fourth, and technical talent from the Third. Assimilating these disparate troops was not without hiccups, but the Seventh emerged as an exuberant force of swaggering fighter pilots and brash space marines.

The Upeo's disappearance stranded a third of the Firebirds outside the solar system. Six-month deployments stretched into multi-year campaigns on Karroo station and Khantze Lu Ge. Facing supply and manpower shortages, extrasolar Firebirds mastered technical and tactical improvisation, staying in the fight by any means necessary. Those remaining at home threw themselves into the solar system's defense and the jump ship project. With the Leviathans operational, the long-overdue colonial garrisons are trickling home and the rest of the Fleet is eager to reach the front lines.

The Firebirds are the off-world colonies' vid-star playboy gunslingers. Spaceports simultaneously welcome and dread the arrival of a warship crew or marine company on leave. On the other hand, they're the most cerebral of the combatant Legionnaires, a legacy of the years when no one could afford technical ignorance. When a Firebird climbs into his starfighter or puts on his VARG, he knows its precise limits

from helping rebuild it. Fleet headquarters is Mars' Robinson Station. Detachments serve throughout settled space and on every Leviathan. The largest extrasolar contingent defends Khantze Lu Ge, alongside Knights and *Vigiles* reinforcements.

LEGIONS HQ

Legions Headquarters is as much a symbol — for the benefit of both its warriors and those they protect — as it is an administrative hub. The glittering bioglass cylinder is a 130-story mini-arcology at the heart of New Park, an interstellar arboretum and memorial garden on Sydney's southern coast. The "Jar" is both a nerve center and a reminder of the Legions' dedication. Open to the public, the first six floors include a military museum, the Legions' Hall of Honor, and conference and educational facilities. Middle levels contain work space and quarters for HQ staff and their dependents. The apex houses the Legions' senior officers.

A symbol makes a tempting symbolic target, so the Jar's defenses are as heavy as they are well-camouflaged. Another deterrent is the well-publicized fact that it has little operational command function, taking it out would not affect their warfighting capabilities.

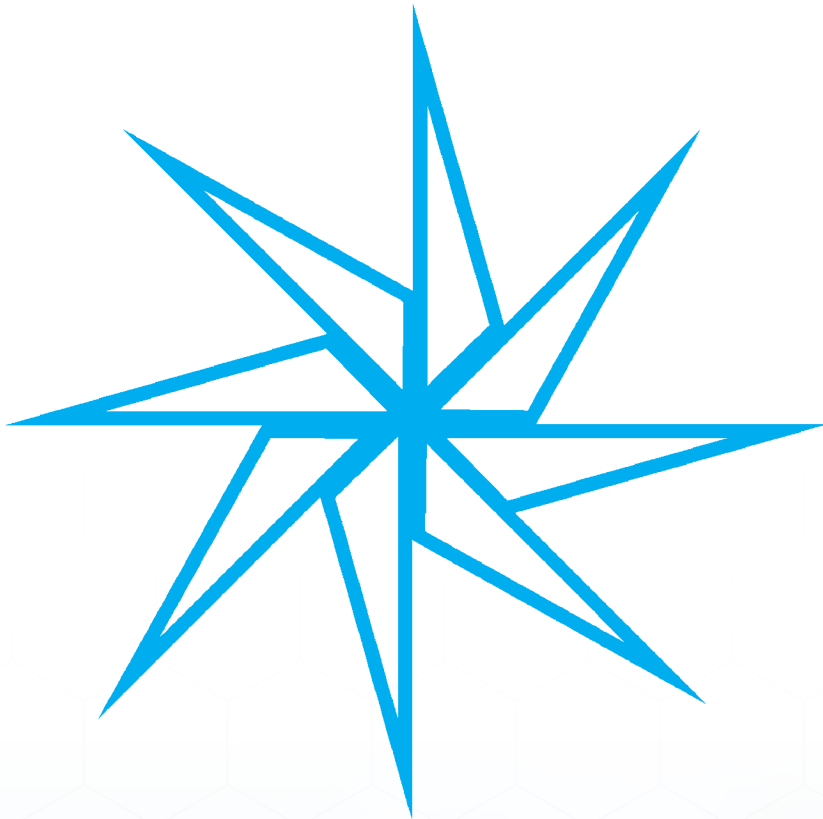
The General embraces misdirection and redundancy. The Legions have *three* command centers, each with its own operations staff, system-wide communications, and two years of supplies. The primary, buried in Mount Woodroffe, connects to the Jar via an underground TK-assisted bullet train. There are two secondary command centers. One is located under the Alleghenies near New Washington D.C., the other in Valles Marineris on Luna. All three locations are also connected by jump rings.

RUNNING A LEGIONS CAMPAIGN

Massive battles are rare in 22nd-century warfare. The Legions look big compared to other orders but they're small for the amount of territory they have to cover. This means tasks go to the minimum number of troops necessary for success. Often, this is a strike team (four to six Legionnaires), squad (two to four strike teams), or platoon (three to five squads). Even when a company (three to four platoons) or battalion (three to four companies) tackles a major objective, individual sub-units fight independently. Communications and OpNet connectivity aren't assured in a military environment. Despite psionics

and technology, Legionnaires still can find themselves in an adventure — in other words, in serious trouble far from home. What this means for characters is that they have a world of offstage help until the shooting starts. Then they own the problem.

Likely missions vary by Legion. Small task forces or solo Legionnaires, particularly Knights and Treys, also see frequent detached duty to support Æon or UN operations. Such a partner organization functions as the detachment's chain of command, though it can't order Legionnaires to violate Legions regulations or commit tactical suicide. It's also supposed to provide mission support that would otherwise come from a higher Legions echelon.



THE MINISTRY OF NOETIC AFFAIRS



The Ministry of Noetic Affairs is a unique entity within China, being simultaneously a sub-division of the government and an independent force of its own. Steered by

Proxy Rebecca Bue Li, it is both

recognized as a positive influence on society, and buffeted by rumors that its agents are actively tampering with the minds of the people.

INSIDE THE MINISTRY

The Ministry of Noetic Affairs, or the Ministry as it is commonly known, is a labyrinthine organization, filled with sub-divisions and departments, half of which have been integrated into the Chinese government under different aliases, or assimilated by the country's satellite colonies. Officially speaking, it employs almost 3,000 telepaths and slightly more than 2,000 other psions, while 100,000 neutrals comprise the bureaucratic superstructure. Unofficially, there is no telling how many agents it employs.

The Ministry's three primary divisions — the Office of Semiotics, the Noetics Institutes, and the Office of Noetic Security — are publicly recognized by the Chinese government, each of which serves a distinct purpose but shares an equal amount of political authority both inside and outside of the country. While Proxy Rebecca Bue Li ultimately possesses final authority over any decision, she is not the Ministry's sole leader. Each of the three divisions is represented by a democratically elected panel of three, who hold power for only six months before they are subsequently replaced.

PROXY REBECCA BUE LI

Charismatic, outspoken, and deeply idealistic, Proxy Bue Li believes in wanting the best for humanity and, more importantly, that all of humanity deserves a utopian existence. From an early age, she worked hard to achieve these lofty goals, campaigning for equal rights as her college's head of student council and then as a political candidate in the Chinese government.

Alex Cassel and Dr. Zweidler approached Bue Li hours before she was accepted into office, and Bue

Li took a short vacation before her duties began. A week later, she emerged from her Prometheus Chamber, charged with telepathic powers. She immediately began assembling her Ministry of Noetic Affairs, negotiating for both funds and influence for her nascent agency, while simultaneously locating new psions. Since that time, she has helped the Ministry thrive and grow.

Unfortunately, a familial predisposition for cancer complicated Bue Li's ambitions. Four years ago, after entering the hospital for an unrelated matter, the proxy discovered numerous malignant tumors within her system — the result of a cancer that had metastasized. She immediately began treatment. Within two years, the Ministry released claims that Bue Li was on the road to recovery, her cancer having quickly entered remission.

Despite the announcement, for the last year Bue Li has remained absent from the public eye, relaying orders through subordinates and through her wife and fellow telepath, cognitive researcher Dr. Zhu Pei. Some believe she may have actually died from her disease, and her consciousness is somehow being kept alive through strange means. Others claim she is hiding from a dangerous adversary or that her cancer was a side effect of an untreatable Corruption disease. So far, no one has stepped forward to confirm any of the rumors.

A CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The advent of the Aberrant War renewed tensions between China's Christians and Muslims and the nation's largely agnostic population. Today, many believe the schism could be attributed to a mix of factors: the influence of cautious nationalists, who called for China's borders to be closed during the onset of the Aberrant War, and fear-fueled xenophobia. These problems led to numerous fractious encounters, culminating in 2064 in a horrific bloodbath in the coastal city of Wenzhou. The violence led many Christians and Muslims to either flee China or denounce their faith. The pro-nationalist, anti-faith coalition, who had then been loosely connected by their shared politics, continued as a vehemently antireligious voice within the government for the next 40 years.

It was this group that Proxy Bue Li fought in the elections prior to her selection to enter the Prometheus Chamber. According to news reports, this group was responsible for the only time the proxy used her powers publicly against the neutral masses. In August 2108, most of the prominent members of the anti-faith coalition experienced a change of heart. Their prejudices vanished, their legislative demands revoked. A new sense of social equality seemed to swell within their hearts, and their official leaders immediately moved to make amends with the country's Christian and Muslim population.

This eventually led to a media frenzy, as the public questioned the radical ideological shift. The nascent Ministry took it all in stride. Several hundred court appearances, both public and private, followed. Charges were made. Proxy Bue Li herself became a regular figure in the international news, appearing in everything from interviews to panels to late-night talk shows. Two years later, without a seeming resolution, the subject was dropped.

Completely.

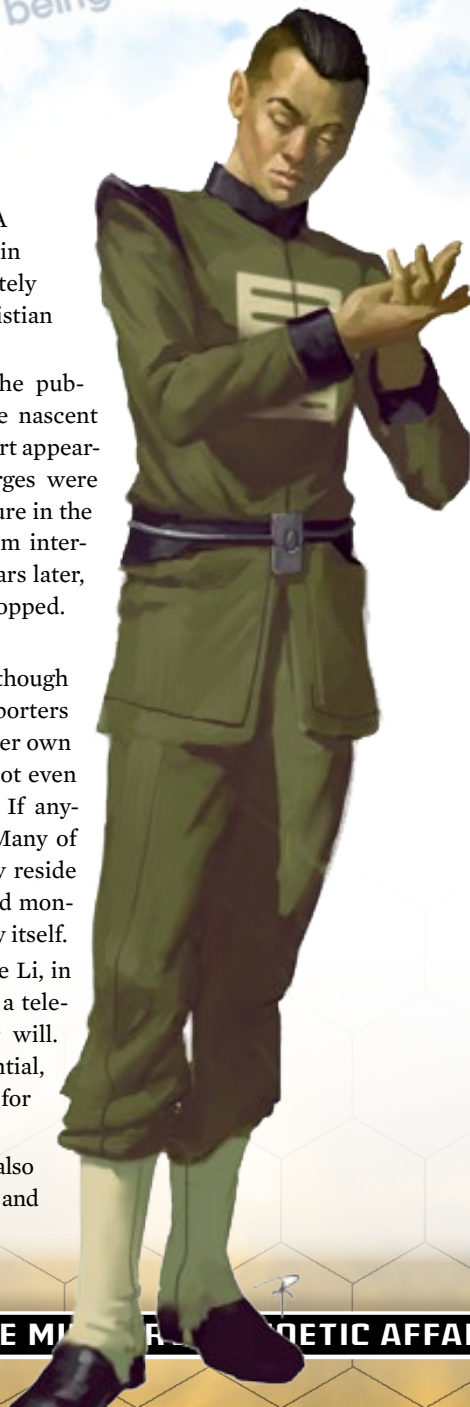
This affair continues to haunt the Ministry, though few make direct references to the events. Supporters claim that Proxy Bue Li was acting in line with her own teachings. None of her opponents were killed, not even those accused of instigating grievous violence. If anything, their lives were changed for the better. Many of those who stood in opposition to the proxy now reside in opulent conditions, their social standing raised monumentally, their pensions assured by the Ministry itself.

But naysayers hold a different view. Proxy Bue Li, in their eyes, enacted the worst crime possible for a telepath: irrevocably altering people against their will. With the Ministry growing steadily more influential, it only seems like there would be opportunities for this to happen again.

On a smaller, subtler level, Proxy Bue Li's actions also instigated a theological shift both in China itself and

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The plans for the antimatter weapon are being delivered by drone.



among members of the Ministry. Though not an evangelical personality, her strong Christian faith and her willingness to fight for those she regards as her spiritual siblings caused many to venerate her. Spurred by her courage, thousands embraced Christianity in a vivid show of solidarity. Numerous churches have sprung up over the last few years, many of which see Bue Li as a pivotal figure within their interpretation of the scripture. A handful even canonized her as a reincarnation of the Virgin Mary.

Naturally, this disconcerts the proxy to no end, but despite her best efforts, few of these new religious organizations have divorced her from their worship. Quite unsurprisingly, this “revolution” has also generated no small unease among the rest of the Chinese population, who are now concerned that the country might be overtaken by foreign beliefs.

THE MINISTRY PATH (SOCIETY)

The character is closely affiliated with the Ministry of Noetic Affairs, the telepathic order and part of the Chinese government. She may work directly for the Ministry, or for one of the other departments of the government that are so intimately intertwined with it. She may be a dutiful agent with a sense of Chinese patriotism, someone who sees Bue Li’s faith as a shining example — or simply have joined up out of a desire for power or for the sense of connection that only telepathy can provide.

PATH CONCEPTS

Law enforcement agent, social worker, special forces soldier, telepathic spy

Example Connections: Government Official, Local Religious Leader, Noetics Expert, Politician

Skills: Culture, Empathy, Enigmas, Integrity

Edges (for Telepaths): Covert, Danger Sense, Enhanced Attunement, Favored Mode, Iron Will, Skilled Liar, Subtle Influence, Trained Memory

Edges (for non-Telepaths): Covert, Dual Minded, Favored Mode, Iron Will, Subtle Influence, Telepathic Resistance

SPECIAL EDGE: DUAL MINDED (••)

Prerequisites: Ministry Path, member of the Eyes of Heaven, not a telepath

Special training allows your character to gain a variety of benefits when in mental contact with a telepath. To gain this bonus, your character must be in contact with a telepath using both Network (Mindshare •) and Access (Mindshare •••) on your character. In this case, your character gains 2 Enhancement to all Mental rolls, including Initiative.

SPECIAL EDGE: SUBTLE INFLUENCE (••)

Prerequisite: Ministry Path

As a member of the Ministry, your character understands the importance of subtle approaches and avoiding the carelessness that leaves undue evidence behind. She gains 1 Enhancement on any attempts to cover up evidence, whether clearing away physical traces at the scene of her activities, scrubbing a system of incriminating data, or seeding misinformation in the minds of potential witnesses. Additionally, she inflicts a level 2 Complication on any attempts by other characters to gather evidence on her activities or discover her involvement in events; if this Complication is not bought off, she rapidly becomes aware of this investigation.

THE OFFICE OF SEMIOTICS

Colloquially known as The Mandarins, the Office of Semiotics serves as the public “face” of the Ministry. The department splits its time between strengthening diplomatic relationships and spearheading humanitarian efforts within the countries under China’s guardianship. The Office of Semiotics has assisted in restoring Malaysia’s economic balance and implementing a free higher-education system in

THE EYES OF HEAVEN

Although none of the Eyes of Heaven are telepaths, more than a fifth are psions with other Aptitudes. In addition, almost 15% are Talents, who have a far easier time passing the rigorous entrance requirements than ordinary neutrals. All Eyes of Heaven possess the Ministry Path, as well as the Dual-Minded Edge (see below).

PARALLEL CONSTRUCTION

Occasionally, ONS operatives uncover information that they cannot or are unwilling to use, but that they regard as too important to ignore. In such cases, the operative typically contacts a member of a relevant organization, usually someone they already know. The operative then presents the data along with a non-telepathic method that this person could potentially have used to discover it. This process is known as parallel construction.

While initially used to discover and prosecute corrupt officials within the Chinese government (including those in the Ministry), operatives also regularly use parallel construction when they have discovered information important to another nation or other large organization, but where the operative does not wish to have themselves or the Ministry associated with this information in any fashion. Many established ONS operatives have contacts in other governments or organizations, often including the UN, the Æon Trinity or one of the other psi orders.

the Philippines. The OS is also charged with studying and attempting to better understand all forms of alien intelligence. Their researchers and operatives working in both laboratories and the field attempt to understand the three intelligent alien species humanity has contacted. Others struggle to understand how and why the returning Aberrants are so much more monstrous and mentally alien than those who departed from Earth in the last century. The OS employs psions of all Aptitudes.

Not all of their work is pacifistic. Occasionally, the OS participates in military conflicts, but only once it's clear that a situation must be defused for the good of the nation. When such events occur, the governmental division collaborates with what the media has nicknamed The Eyes of Heaven.

THE EYES OF HEAVEN

An unofficial sub-group within the Ministry, The Eyes of Heaven are composed of weapon specialists, martial arts experts, decorated military officers, and volunteers who have passed the agency's gauntlet of rigorous physical tests. Their training regime is rumored to be monstrous, their standards exacting, their armament more comprehensive than the armories possessed by world powers. According to a few OpNet rumors, the Eyes aren't human at all, but Aberrants who have been carefully enthralled by the Ministry.

In addition to these rumors, it is public knowledge that the members have undergone intense psychic conditioning to allow trained Ministry telepaths to inhabit their minds from a distance. Their unique capacity to house two intelligences simultaneously allows the Eyes, according to news statements, to enjoy heightened senses, greater reflexes, and exponentially increased cognitive abilities. How much of

this is actually true is, of course, confidential. But the Eyes of Heaven almost never fail.

The only downside of belonging to the Eyes of Heaven is that the position carries with it certain contractual obligations, one of which is agreeing to constant surveillance. Every trip outside of their assigned military base is inevitably chaperoned. Of course, all this comes with incredible monetary benefits and insurance plans, making the sacrifice potentially worthwhile for those in difficult situations.

THE NOETICS INSTITUTES

What makes a mind? What defines consciousness? For decades, scientists have carefully designed tests to demarcate and map the limits of self-awareness. But no one seems capable of agreeing upon exactly what sapience truly represents. The Noetics Institutes are beginning to provide answers. As part of these efforts, the Noetics Institutes also study alien cognition and alien noetic powers, as well as attempt to understand and reverse the cognitive changes most Aberrants suffer from. They are also known to possess one of the few surviving hardtech AIs, which they keep carefully contained. This branch of the Ministry is widely recognized as a leading authority in the field of neuroscience and noetic studies.

Which is unsurprising, really, given that the Noetics Institutes have, over the course of their existence, poached every reputable cognitive scientist within the field. What is surprising is that the Noetics Institutes, despite their primary function in the Ministry, are staffed almost entirely by neutrals — academics, lecturers, men and women concerned with the ideals of higher learning, as opposed to the day-to-day squabbles

MINISTRY ATTITUDES ABOUT OTHER ORDERS

The Æsculapian Order: Worthy of trust, and vitally useful.

Chitra Bhanu: A lesson for any who seek to betray humanity

ISRA: They also understand truths as deep as our own, but are far too trusting.

The Legions: Crude but useful

Norça: Respected rivals — they know how to play the game properly.

Orgotek: How much are they tools of the FSA, and how much are they slaves to profit?

Upeo wa Macho: Cowards who shirked their duty.

The Æon Trinity: Useful, but too inclined to meddle in affairs that do not concern them.

of global politics. The Noetics Institutes have, with the cautious assistance of allied nations and the support of the Æsculapian Order, established 46 facilities throughout the world, including 25 located in China. Their most recent project is a tentative joint venture with Orgotek to create fully sentient biocomputers.

The psionic training and the cognitive and noetic research performed by this organization are similarly apolitical. Many of the Noetics Institutes' alumni have gone on to secure powerful positions in their respective fields, while others trickle back to the Ministry itself, lured by impressive salaries. This has, of course, generated suspicion in the eyes of the public. Is this the Ministry's way of extending its power? The sheer usefulness of the Noetics Institutes has kept the general public from complaining too loudly.

THE OFFICE OF NOETIC SECURITY

The Office of Noetic Security is rumored to possess authority that is equal or greater than China's Cabinet of War. Despite their influential status, the Office of Noetic Security is most often associated with what many regard as “menial” activity. Agents escort Chinese officials to important political gatherings, mix with bodyguard entourages, and participate in disaster-relief efforts. Their psionic powers are rarely, if ever, publicly used for anything more threatening than locating trapped earthquake victims. Many media outlets have taken to labelling them as a “transparent show of power.”

However, that is not the true nature of the organization. Their daily activity is a front for their primary function, covert telepathic surveillance. Early in her rule, Proxy Bue Li established the Office of Noetic Security to maintain her surveillance network, an

interlocking web of telepaths who function as nodes within their respective counties, simultaneously amplifying the potential of the group as a whole while also monitoring ambient thoughts and emotions. This network allows the Ministry to better understand the needs and wishes of the populace. It also establishes an impenetrable intelligence structure outside of the control of the Chinese government. Why such a thing would be necessary, of course, is yet another of Bue Li's myriad secrets. While most psions in the ONS are telepaths, those with other Aptitudes are also welcome, especially clairsentients, vitakinetics, and most of the few biokinetics who Norça agreed to empower for the Ministry.

The Æon Trinity's leaders have proof that the Office of Noetic Security monitors every city within China and in its client states and dependents. Anonymous sources claim that the Office's influence is more far-reaching than that, including both its enemies and its independent allies. Regardless of the full extent of its surveillance, the ONS is heavily scrutinized by its own government, and especially other members of the Ministry. Its loudest critics belong to the Noetics Institutes, who have a strong stance against the occasional Psychbending perpetrated by their sister division. That said, members of the ONS are quick to oppose all complaints.

Their labor is not an exercise of power. Psychbending only represents a small portion of their work. People are not wantonly removed from the streets and minds are not purged of harmless vices or rewritten to include more amenable personality traits. Civilians are simply watched for trends that might indicate dangerous behavior. This is especially true outside of the borders of China, where members of the Office of Noetic Security primarily operate as mundane espionage agents.

They only contact various authorities when their readings reach critical levels. The Office of Noetic Security usually abstain from any decisions that result from their findings. However, corrupt officials who abuse their power rarely remain in office long if ONS operatives find evidence of their crimes. Also, if ONS operatives discover a problem that they believe can be solved via various forms of subtle and discreet intervention, they usually do so. Instead of Psychbending individuals into compliance, they not infrequently help someone troubled, desperate, or potentially violent find a job, friends, or even love.

ONS agents work to maintain overall public harmony in a similar manner. Instead of mentally coercing compliance, some members specialize in identifying the key elements of local social problems and solving them in subtle ways. Solutions can include arranging for two unhappy people who would be likely to fall in love to meet, or making certain that someone with the particular skills and ideas needed to save a failing company with many employees either applies for a job there or has a long conversation with one of the company's leaders. Usually, the ONS's actions look like nothing more than luck, but careful observers have noticed that people living in Chinese cities or neighborhoods with social or economic problems are often unusually "lucky."

Occasionally, other branches of the Ministry or other branches of the Chinese government call the ONS in to handle a problem. These circumstances typically involve Aberrants, Aberrant cults, individuals using dangerous technologies, or particularly violent human criminals. It is widely known that the ONS's Psychbending specialists spearhead these situations, but there are no official records explaining their actions, leaving the public to extrapolate from what little data exists.

One popular theory is that ONS simply reneges on its own vaunted morals, rewriting miscreants into model citizens. But another hypothesis is slowly gaining ground, thanks to collaboration between several eyewitnesses and a particularly diligent Korean tabloid. They believe that the ONS completely wipes the minds of a handful of the worst offenders, leaving only a blank slate to be inhabited by...something else. The mind of a dying leader, perhaps, or an incognito Ministry member tasked with infiltrating some dangerous organization or another. Or maybe, whisper the most paranoid, Proxy Bue Li herself.

RUNNING A MINISTRY CAMPAIGN

Subtlety is the operational word in any Ministry campaign. Characters are usually called upon to tread lightly and very quietly. Telepathy is a delicate art. Too much pressure and a personality can be irrevocably changed, a mind snapped in half. More importantly, carelessness leaves evidence.

Because of how the Ministry is structured, there is no specific unit size. Task forces range from two to 20 individuals, depending on the mission. The nature of these missions varies wildly, depending upon the characters' duties. The characters could be diplomats, alien contact teams, an Eyes of Heaven strike team and their assigned telepaths, spies and bodyguards, or ONS agents who divide their time between solving citizens' everyday problems and finding and preventing riots and terrorism.

Often, the most intrigue takes place between their assignments. The convoluted hierarchy of divisions and sub-divisions provides fertile breeding ground for personal ambition. Some of the characters' compatriots operate on their own terms. While most Ministry operatives attempt to positively advance China's agenda, that doesn't stop a few from seeking personal glory or advancing their own ideological agenda. Paranoia can also be an integral part of campaigns focused on espionage and intrigue. It's difficult to trust others or even yourself when you know your colleagues and superiors can change your mind for you.

While the Ministry can provide operatives with vast amounts of intelligence, the need for secrecy means that operatives are only given the information they require. Also, the Ministry provides little backup for its covert field agents. Providing support for or even acknowledging covert operations could easily compromise the Ministry's security. Any backup is both subtle and deniable. This policy creates an element of isolation, along with trepidation, and an endless pressure to excel. However, Ministry operatives who are openly fighting Aberrants or solving other non-secret problems can call upon the full might of the Chinese government if they need it and are willing to later explain their need for this assistance.

PSI ORDER NORÇA



There is a power that humanity has both wielded and been the victim of since the era of cave paintings, a power that can achieve far greater things than the mightiest expression of psionic power. It's a power the Norça have mastered, the power of myth. Ever since the psi orders revealed themselves, the biokinetic order has been shrouded in mystery, allowing gossip to grow as well as nurturing some of their own. The result is a public perception that is one part misconception, one part fable, and the rest is up in the air. In Sudamérica, the Norça are heroes of legend, the strangers that emerge from the wild to defeat evil and protect nature, only to vanish without giving so much as their nickname. In the rest of the world, they are the shadows in the corner, the eyes that pierce the strictest privacy, and the things that replace friends and family with ill-minded duplicates. This contradictory view suits the Norça just fine, as it allows them to conduct their true mission with greater ease, and to subvert their enemies' expectations as they wish.

"Norça" is the shortened form of Nova Força Nacional, or New National Force, and while the public assume the "national" part refers to Brazil, or Sudamérica as a whole, shifters answer with sly smirks and winks when asked "which nation?" The definition of nation under Proxy Giuseppe del Fuego is wide, extending to the whole of humanity, and representing the relationship of pride, love, and influence people have with their place of birth and the land that supported their growth. For del Fuego, this means the entirety of Earth.

Myths are more powerful when they have a kernel of truth, and while many tales are gross exaggerations, the Norça perform surreptitious patrols in remote locations as they hunt for resource traffickers, poachers, petty tyrants, environmental despoilers, and of course Aberrants. Although most of their patrols are in Sudamérica, where they are welcomed and have actual jurisdiction, they deploy wherever a threat to Earth and humanity appears, especially if del Fuego trusts nobody else to deal with it.

Their air of romanticism extends inward. Del Fuego has always understood the power of narrative, and created one for his Order so that every Norça, psion and neutral alike, feels pride in their mission and knows they are part of something greater. The core of the



Norça's internal narrative combines del Fuego's sincere environmentalism with the teachings of Otha Herzog. Every Norça knows they are part of a noetic whole, symbolized by the land. They consider themselves avatars of life that mark them as defenders, champions, and guides.

This belief borders on magical thinking, but noetic awareness confirms how deeply interconnected the universe is. The nature of biokinesis itself lets Norça members understand their own life cycle, and they extrapolate this to the natural world. Del Fuego's words ring true with the shifters' senses.

Although Proxy del Fuego cultivates mystery and romanticism, he's perfectly capable of using cold reason to convince cynics and demolishes arguments through logic as well as his considerable charisma. He has embraced the name he received as *Pai dos Norça*, the Father of the Norça, but discourages the loyalty of his followers from growing into a cult of personality. He wants all Norça to be independent and autonomous even as they are aware of the family to which they belong. He enjoys nothing more than one of his subordinates, whatever their station, contradicting him and then convincing him to adopt an alternative course of action.

Del Fuego ensured that his powerful narrative of belonging was fractal in nature. There is power in the individual, which brings power to the family, then to the group, the psi order, the community, the nation, the planet, the entire species, and the universe. This creates a complex network of organic relationships between Norça cells, task forces, and departments. It is customary for Norça to address each other as brothers and sisters in whatever language they speak, only using ranks and titles with others, or to maintain a clear chain of command during crises.

Del Fuego expects excellence from all his Norça whether they are psions or neutrals, and wishes them all to keep testing and surpassing their limits. Psi order Norça is infamous because of the potential for espionage and heroics biokinesis provides, but they also contribute to security, bio research, and environmental protection. Once they had clearly established that the biokinetics were here to fight Aberrants, they devoted their time and resources to ally themselves with Sudamérican companies and governments and made certain their environmental agenda was an integral part of all such alliances.

The noetic expertise of Norça researchers helped companies like the Colombian firm BioSystems rise

to the top of biotechnological development, and these companies return the favor by providing the materials and goods the Norça need. Rather than compete with Orgotek in the consumer goods market, Norça focuses on infrastructure and biomodification using vegetable templates, including the construction of the Brasília BioArcology.

Pharmacology and applied biochemistry are two more fields of interest to the Norça, as a more precise knowledge of substances and the dynamics of proteins help them fine tune their own psionic powers. This often puts them in contact with the Æsculapians, and they are happy to trade information they deem shareable.

THE NORÇA PATH (SOCIETY)

The character is closely affiliated with the Norça, the biokinetic order. She may be a direct member of the New National Force, or perhaps an ecoterrorist or scientist associated with some of their endeavors. She is likely to have been observed for some time before being invited to join or fraternize with the Norça; they are extremely picky about who they recruit. If part of the order proper, she is part of a cell of operatives — and will know full well that she is being watched.

PATH CONCEPTS

Covert intelligent operative, daredevil explorer, field biologist, noetic bioengineer

Example Connections: Ecoterrorist, Ecoscientist, Humanitarian Agency, Intelligence Agency

Skills: Athletics, Empathy, Science, Survival

Edges: Ambidextrous, Enhanced Attunement, Favored Mode, Alternate Identity, Hardy, Impersonation Training, Keen Sense, Safe House, Superior Trait

SPECIAL EDGE: IMPERSONATION TRAINING (••)

Prerequisites: Norça & Transmogrification •••+

Your character has received special training for how to use his ability to change his appearance to almost perfectly impersonate people, allowing him to better imitate someone's voice, gait, and nonverbal communication. This Edge provides 2 Enhancement for all impersonation attempts where

he uses Transmogrification to disguise himself as the person he is impersonating.

SPECIAL EDGE: SAFE HOUSE (•)

Prerequisite: Norça

Your character can reach out to local Norça cells to arrange a safe place to stay. In Sudamérica, this ability is straightforward, but beyond the Norça's territory it requires a successful Presence + Persuasion roll to contact the right people and convince them of her need. There is no guarantee that the conditions in a safe house will be particularly comfortable or roomy, but such a location will be secure, positioned away from established surveillance, and protected by contacts in the neighborhood or administration who are willing to lie to cover up its existence and fabricate short-term credentials for a false identity. The longer your character stays in a safe house, the less safe it becomes. Most Norça will avoid remaining in one for more than three days.

HISTORY AND GROWTH

Norça existed before the advent of psions, but it was something different. After the Aberrant War, the nations of Sudamérica used their natural resources as stepping stones towards progress, with little regard to the damage they were doing to the environment. A Brazilian environmentalist movement known as the *Nossa Força Verde*, Our Green Power, was trying to promote their message of respect and sustainability, but no one in power was listening.

Giuseppe del Fuego's joining *Nossa Força Verde* marked a drastic change in the movement. Del Fuego brought bold new ideas, and his passionate arguments and charisma convinced the old guard to try his methods. He invited other idealistic young people and together began the infamous and relentless hacktivism campaign that exposed and denounced corrupt government officials and CEOs throughout Sudamérica.

Ever a master of narrative, del Fuego waited for the legend he was creating to spread through the Sudamerican psyche. After spontaneous expressions of support became common, del Fuego began a campaign of terrorist attacks on business properties deemed to be hurting the environment. Instead of denouncing the violence, the populace applauded the ecoterrorists' actions.

While the activists were careful to avoid fatalities, people did get hurt, but del Fuego's months of preparation paid off. No one who knew anything about *Nossa Força Verde* revealed anything about their plans

or organization. The members of *Nossa Força Verde* were ghosts, the incarnation of the people's voice, and any who espoused their ideals was part of a collective strength, "our power," "*nossa força*," which was often simply called "*Norça*."

Years later, after the policy changes sweeping the continent met most of their goals, popular awareness faded, and the movement contracted. Even the original old guard left; content with their victories. The violent and destructive attacks stopped, but *Nossa Força Verde* continued as a group of roaming vigilantes. The few remaining members kept in touch through encoded OpNet messages and carefully designed augmented-reality signage. Most stayed within cities and arcologies, participating in or founding social activism groups, but the more adventurous ones, including del Fuego, traveled, righting wrongs and teaching people how to use the new emerging technologies to live in harmony with their surroundings.

Nobody outside the psi order knows what happened during these years, and even within it there is much speculation. Some say del Fuego founded or was recruited into the Yana Llanthu, the elite Peruvian spies, or that he spent time with his grandfather's people in the jungles of the Peruvian Amazon, expanding his perceptions with powerful hallucinogens. The more mystic among them say that he found a passage into the spirit world and returned with wisdom and magic. When Giuseppe del Fuego returned in 2104, he called his closest allies to a meeting and proclaimed that "*Norça*" would no longer mean "our power," but a "new strength", *Nova Força*. For he returned with the power of biokinesis and the knowledge of how to share it with others.

The new Norça started small, but was exceedingly effective. With the power to become anyone and survive anywhere, the first biokinetics resumed their more questionable methods of damaging those who attempted to hurt or take advantage of Sudamérica's newfound unity and prosperity. They hired themselves as freelance spies, not revealing their psionic abilities to their clients, and they not only kept copies of the secrets they were hired to steal, but also increased their operating budget exponentially.

When the Aberrants attacked Sydney and the psi orders came to light, the *Nova Força Nacional* was already fully established. They were a small but deadly efficient organization. Their cooperation with the Æon Trinity was nominal, for they had already made contacts with Sudamerican governments, and many agreements already negotiated were simply made official.

In their new, public life, the Norça stated unequivocally that their one goal was the defense of humanity and the Earth as its home. Their public and semi-public work includes disaster relief, search and rescue, anti-terrorism and counterintelligence, biotechnology support and testing, environmental recovery and, of course, anti-Aberrant defense. In secret, they are masters of espionage and infiltration. In exchange for the free rein and informal jurisdiction they enjoy inside Sudamérica, the Norça act as an extranational intelligence corps, spying on companies and government agencies in the FSA, Australia, and China. Del Fuego spreads his web much further, however, fielding a mix of loyal neutrals and biokinetics to keep a finger on the other psi orders, even the Æon Trinity, within limits. It is nearly impossible to infiltrate ISRA or the Ministry.

The order still engages in ecoterrorism, but their new position of power brought subtler tools into del Fuego's arsenal. Violent sabotage is always the last resource; defunding, negative propaganda, blackmail, or political manipulation are often more effective.

As masters of their own selves, the biokinetic order pursues research into noetics and advanced biotechnology, and has secret laboratories in extreme locations like Antarctica, the Venezuelan Plagueland, and Averiguas. Del Fuego is sure that humanity was cheated of their full psionic potential, and is determined to find a way to allow Prometheus Chambers to unlock multiple Aptitudes rather than just one.

RECRUITMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

The biokinetic order only has two open offices where applicants can request membership; one is in the city of Barranquilla, Colombia, and the other is in the Lunar city of Olympus. This weeds out the unmotivated before they even set foot in these offices. The remainder of Norça recruits are the product of observation and invitation.

Many Sudamérica children daydream about being visited in the night by a Norça transformed into a magical beast who then asks them to become a biokinetic. Like many of the outrageous beliefs surrounding psi order Norça, this practice has some truth to it. People who impress a Norça in one way or another are watched and eventually contacted with an invitation to join. Behind the scenes, the Norça forwards the name of the unwitting candidate to a recruitment cell, who then does a background check and additional observation before they extend the official invitation in person.

They direct candidates who accept to a facility that is not as much secret as it is unadvertised, usually a safe house or the home of an established Norça trainer or recruiter. They put the candidate through a series of psychological and physical tests in addition to a latency test, all geared to evaluate the qualities that impressed the first spotter, and uncover new ones. A case advocate unilaterally decides if the candidate advances to the next level: personal testing and examination by a high-ranking member of the order, or if the candidate is particularly impressive, with Proxy del Fuego himself.

This last testing period determines if the candidate is accepted or rejected, and, if latent, whether she is admitted into the Norça's Prometheus Chamber or that of another order as part of their exchange program. Once accepted, new recruits undergo training and education, or indoctrination, as many call it, in an environment that fosters the sense of family and comradeship. They are joined by exchange trainees from the other orders who will also become biokinetics, all the better to show every biokinetic they are better off staying with Norça.

Neutral newbies are then assigned to their new operating cell, who welcomes them as family. Latents travel to another order's headquarters or to the Norça's own to undergo the Prometheus Effect. Regardless of their new Aptitude, *all* Norça psions meet with Proxy del Fuego, who welcomes them like

NORÇA AND THE TALENTS

The Norça's extremely picky recruitment practices have an unexpected side effect. Because only people who impress a Norça have a chance to join the order, there is a higher percentage of Talents among neutral Norça candidates than among other orders. The shifters expect their recruits to live up to the order's ideal of heroism and professionalism, and Talents are ideally qualified to meet the Norça's high standards.

Talks with Herzog have made del Fuego aware of individuals whose fate weighs heavy in the implicate order, and he has instructed Norça clears to keep their senses open for sisters and brothers who display such a destiny.

WELCOME TO NORÇA (TRANSCRIPT MADE WITH SUBJECT'S PERMISSION)

"Hey, there, *novato*; welcome to the family! I bet you're confused with the options before you. Know that the Pai chose you for a reason, but he won't force it on you. Basically, we're all waiting for you to choose which family you will belong to. Oh, I know you're not a psion, but you are a great shot, right? You can still join the *Guerreiros* and take that aiming of yours to an Aberrant's face, if you dare.

Here's a secret for you; we don't really care if you have amazing psionic powers or are just a regular Joe Hologram; we're still going to squeeze you like home-washed laundry until we break you, or you become the best version of yourself you could ever imagine. Don't make that face! Hah! You made it this far, no? You must be asking yourself how much worse can it be, right? Well, follow me, and you'll know the answer."

— Martín Palacios, *Cantor* induction officer.

long-lost siblings, and impresses upon them their role as humanity's defenders.

All members of the order are encouraged to recommend new recruits. Those who recommend someone who eventually joins the order gain prestige and accolades; some even become full-time Talent hunters. This slow and selective method keeps the order's numbers low, but del Fuego believes in quality, not quantity.

The psi order's internal composition is fluid, but follows a structure of family-like cells that gather psions and neutrals towards a common purpose. Cells cooperate with others with similar goals and purposes to form departments. However, it's not uncommon for individual members to form temporary, interdisciplinary task

forces that pursue a specific goal, and return to their cells once that goal is met.

The main departments inside Norça have rather poetic names that hint at their purpose as well as reinforcing del Fuego's romantic narrative. The *Centinelas de la Noche* ("Night Sentinels" in Spanish) are the fabled spies and infiltrators as well as their support network. The *Guerreiros do Alvorecer* ("Dawn Warriors" in Portuguese) are the paramilitary branch in charge of open or covert strikes, patrols, and seek-and-destroy missions. The *Caçadores de Segredos* ("Hunters of Secrets" in Portuguese) are the research-and-development branch that is home to the order's scientists, engineers, and similar specialists. The *Hermanos Guardianes*

NORÇA ATTITUDES ABOUT OTHER ORDERS

The Æsculapian Order: We can trust them with your lives, but not with our most important secrets.

Chitra Bhanu: At the time, they seemed to be traitors, but appearances can be deceiving.

ISRA: Not the most practical individuals, but they understand deep spiritual truths.

The Legions: We're better at subtle solutions, but sometimes a blunt instrument is the best tool for the job.

The Ministry: Their secrecy makes sense, but their intrigues against one another are foolish and dishonorable.

Orgotek: Their products are excellent, but does anything beyond their bottom line really matter to them.

Upeo wa Macho: They have learned an important lesson about trust — reserve it for your sisters and brothers, not people who merely find you useful.

The Æon Trinity: Their efforts are vital, but working on such a vast scale causes them to miss important details.

(“Brother Keepers” in Spanish) are the first responders to disasters and emergencies of a non-belligose nature as well as civil engineers and medics that travel the land improving people’s quality of life. Finally, the *Cantores* (“Singers” in both Spanish and Portuguese), are the management and support department that takes care of everyday operations, but also the order’s public relations and outreach programs.

There is zero discrimination (and zero tolerance for it) within and among these various departments. Every group within this order is expected to employ the Norça most qualified for their jobs, regardless of race, gender, faith, Aptitude, or whether they are psions or neutrals. The respect for tolerance extends to language. Proxy del Fuego insists that all members become fluent in both Spanish and Portuguese, ensuring that all members are able to live and work anywhere within Sudamérica.

Unlike other tales, the rumors about what happens when someone leaves Norça are all false. The sense of belonging, heroic narrative, and strong ideals of the proxy ensure that Norça has one of the lowest resignation rates among the orders. A member’s cell and higher ups do everything in their power to address any discontent, some even involve del Fuego himself, but if someone simply decides she’ll be happy elsewhere, her cell and close associates organize a farewell party (one last-ditch attempt for reconsideration), and then all clearances and permits are cancelled. Quitters are not dumped naked in the middle of the wilderness, but they do receive a veiled warning against revealing any Norça secrets. The few people who have quit are perfectly aware that they will be watched for a while.

ÁRVORE DA VIDA. BRASÍLIA

The order’s new headquarters was completed less than two years ago. The Brasília BioArcology was grown with giant biotech “trees” as part of its structure, and the central pillar of the arcology is nicknamed the Tree of Life, another name for the mythical World Tree. Norça’s new base is located beneath its roots, accessible by hidden pods that move through branches and connecting roots towards the headquarters. Biokinetics who can integrate bioapps within their bodies (Psychomorphing ●●●) can simply meld with any biotech tree in Brasília and emerge at the hidden base within seconds.

The Árvore da Vida is designed to be exceptionally defensible and all outsiders know of its location is that it’s somewhere in or near Brasília. The Norça only keep their most important assets, including

their Prometheus Chamber, here. Less important business is carried out from secret and not-so-secret safe houses throughout Sudamérica.

SPECIAL RESOURCES

The Pai de Norça expects his children to be self-reliant and resourceful. Since biokinetics can twist their own bodies into tools and weapons, there is little else that a Norça needs other than training, which the Order provides relentlessly, and often unexpectedly. What all Norça are armed with, though, is information. When a Norça team goes into the field, it does so equipped with top-notch intelligence and a ready network of contacts and hideouts. Norça’s quartermasters can provide almost any piece of available or restricted equipment to field agents, but shifters in particular must explain why they need it instead of relying on their own talents. Norça keeps a stock of restricted bioapps it has procured mostly from the black market, but only dispenses these to agents with top clearance.

Supply drops are scheduled promptly and efficiently, so that approved requisitions are met within hours or days. Trusted agents are given the few experimental pieces of biotech that the order produces, and often never see them again once returned and their performance reported.

RUNNING A NORÇA CAMPAIGN

The Norça specialize in cloak and dagger both to pursue their mission and nurture their mystique. Teams can include psions of any Aptitude, neutrals, or Talents, which lends perfectly to an ensemble cast of specialists that are gathered together to accomplish very specific goals. In the gleaming Sudamérica cities this can translate into clever scams and daring heists, in more oppressive environments this can become a story of intrigue and manipulation tinted with paranoia.

Sending small groups into dangerous surroundings is typical for Norça. Teams are often sent first to investigate rumors of odd occurrences that might become a threat, and the locations can be the most extreme and punishing environments, made bearable by biokinesis or advanced bioware provided to non-biokinetics just so that they keep pace. Whatever their mission, Norça perform to the best of their abilities, wrapped in the ideal of their own role in the weave of things. They are heroes out of legends both dark and reassuring, and basking in the glory is a privilege of being Norça.

ORGOTEK



Complex problems, simple solutions is Orgotek's corporate motto. This doesn't mean Alexander Cassel thinks solving everything is easy. He understands better than most the complications

of 22nd-century life, and the fine balance of the relationships underpinning society.

The prexy's vision is to design the tools that empower humanity to confront and overcome today's problems, and then build tomorrow's better world. Orgotek's products are intuitively designed and easy to use, attractively packaged and competitively priced. Certainly, Orgotek has profit-driven motives as it sells the future to the world, but cutting-edge research, design, and marketing aren't free. Besides, like with everything the corporation does, when Orgotek pursues financial gain, it's for a purpose beyond simply gaining wealth.

GOOD CORPORATE CITIZENS

Orgotek is more corporate entity than psi order. Although electrokinetics are the heart of the corporation, business and profit are arguably more important than psions. The psi order is just one department among many others, albeit a very special one. In truth, without the psions Orgotek would live on, diminished but still profitable.

Developing and marketing biotech generates an immense fortune for Orgotek, and has improved the lives of billions of neutrals. Alex Cassel and his psion researchers pioneered the biotech revolution, and Orgotek now employs thousands of dedicated and brilliant neutral researchers to create the next generation of biotech innovations.

The electrokinetic order is wholly funded and administered by the Orgotek Corporation. Psions don't have a separate administrative existence from their

neutral colleagues. Almost every position in Orgotek is open to both psion and neutral alike, and the company tries to fill each with the most suitable candidate, regardless of their powers. A few positions require psionic Aptitude as a prerequisite, but these jobs are rare.

Orgotek metacorporation doesn't completely control Psi Orgotek, however. The business draws employees from the psi order, but the order is filled with members, not employees. Over 90% of Psi Orgotek's members also work for the corporation in other departments. However, those who don't are still allowed access to the order's facilities, and can only have their membership terminated by Prexy Cassel, not Orgotek administrators. The prexy has authority over the order and its members, and can deploy them as he sees fit (assuming they agree). He can also expend the order's finances without reference to Orgotek financial administrators or the metacorporation's board. Psi Orgotek meets the basic economic needs of all members, psions and neutrals alike. Even non-Orgotek employees who are members of the psi order are given a modest stipend. The prexy doesn't begrudge Orgotek members leaving the corporation to follow their own fortunes, but he won't let them starve, and he likes to have incentive for them to check in every now and again.

MARKET SATURATION

Orgotek's corporate goal is to have its symbol on every kind of product imaginable, making the branding so pervasive that humanity doesn't even consciously think of its presence. People will simply accept that when you need a product, Orgotek has it. If you want quality, purchase Orgotek. To this end, Orgotek's products include everything from household goods to medical devices, pharmaceuticals, psi augmentations, and weapons. Orgotek even produces space and atmospheric vehicles, and made-to-order technologies for the Æon Trinity and the other psi orders.

Nearly all these products are mostly or entirely noetic biotech. Orgotek leads the way in biotechnology, thanks to the many biotech products from its Orgosoft Farms division. Orgotek researchers work hard to make a biotech equivalent — or preferably, superior — version of every hardtech product available. By dominating every market, Cassel strives to make Orgotek the ultimate metacorp in human-settled space.

DEFINITION

Prexy (noun). A portmanteau of "president" and "proxy." Used exclusively to describe Alexander Cassel, the head of the Orgotek electrokinetic order.

This pervasive marketing campaign doesn't just serve the corporation's profit margin. Like everything Cassel does, it has multiple purposes. If Joe Hologram associates Orgotek with value and quality, and Orgotek means psions, each day brings the public closer to ending psionic prejudice everywhere and accepting psions as just another part of humanity.

PRIMARY DIVISIONS

Although the various Orgotek divisions behave like subsidiaries, with their own names and variations of Orgotek's branding, they are in fact divisions of the one entity. Of these, six stand out as the most important pillars of the Orgotek metacorporation, even if they're not all well known to outsiders.

World Enterprises, Inc. was the first of Cassel's companies, the seed that would grow into Orgotek. WEI was originally a holding company for Cassel and his friends to invest and trade, patent, and register their earliest technological designs and concepts. It is now responsible for Orgotek's administration and public relations, and has oversight of Operations' activities. WEI builds public profile of other divisions while remaining almost unknown itself.

Orgosoft is what people think of when they hear the name Orgotek, right after the psions. Orgosoft runs biotech plants and farms where Orgotek products grow, as well as the R&D labs designing new biotech matrices and testing cutting-edge theories. Orgosoft's main facility is in northern New Mexico, where Cassel spliced the first bioware matrices, but it has farms and labs across globe, as well as several experimental microgravity facilities scattered throughout settled space.

Tekne is responsible for Orgotek's hardtech products, mostly for computing and communications. The reotypical Tekne employee is a Technokinesis specialist with limited social skills who talks to machines more than people. Some fit this description, but Tekne's staff are more often good-natured people who are passionate about their work. With Orgotek's focus on making biotech versions of all hardtech, Tekne employees are often ignored, and tend to work twice as hard as other Orgotek employees to overcome these stereotypes.

Lumen is Orgotek's smallest division and focuses on Photokinesis and its application to real-world problems — preferably through the manufacture and sale of light-based technologies. Lumen scientists are world



THE CASSEL FILE

The Cassel File is just one rumor of how Orgotek secured such a powerbase despite the FSA's obvious animosity. According to those "in the know," in Orgotek's earliest days — before the Orders went public, maybe shortly after Cassel became proxy, or possibly even before that — Cassel used his gifts and connections to secure embarrassing information on a number of important people within the FSA.

FSA retrieval experts have never located evidence of stolen data despite numerous attempts, and Cassel has always had enough public profile, money, and lawyers, to ensure the FSA has had to affect a polite veneer whenever reexamining the issue. No one knows if the Cassel File truly exists, or how thoroughly the electrokinetic proxy could embed the data in storage across the entire OpNet. Cassel simply laughs off questions about the existence of the file, though whispers of its existence give Orgotek an extra bargaining chip in negotiations with the FSA.

leaders in electromagnetic research, holographic technologies, and improved extra-satisfactory computer intelligence. These specialists have also been enlisted to develop technologies to improve communication with Chromatics, and to jam or counteract Chromatic powers and abilities.

Psi Orgotek is the psi order within Orgotek. It is only a semi-separate entity from the other divisions; even within the company it's rarely acknowledged as having its own existence. Psi Orgotek is more like a social club made up of Orgotek employees and invited outsiders rather than a corporate division. Nonetheless, Psi Orgotek has its own budget, is answerable to its proxy rather than Orgotek's board of directors, and participates in various activities unsanctioned by the metacorporation.

Operations provides security to Orgotek facilities, conducts internal (and external) corporate investigations, and contributes to Æon Trinity sanctioned missions wherever required. Apart from security, Operations mostly works outside the FSA to avoid creating legal entanglements for the company. All Orgotek employees perform at least two days of Operations training and service every month. This preparedness has reduced the number of successful attacks against Orgotek holdings since it was introduced three years ago.

THE ORGOTEK PATH (SOCIETY)

The character is closely affiliated with Orgotek, the electrokinetic order. She is part of the Orgotek corporation, employed by one of its divisions or

serving as a contractor or troubleshooter for the conglomerate; or she might even be an investor or shareholder from Orgotek's early days. She belongs to or regularly interacts with the Orgotek corporate culture, is familiar with its market goals and may well possess significant insight into the modern economy and business world.

PATH CONCEPTS

Activist programmer, alien technologies researcher, corporate espionage operative, research and development engineer

Example Connections: Biotechnician, FSA Regulator, High-Flying CEO, Start-Up Business

Skills: Culture, Persuasion, Science, Technology

Edges: Artifact (• to ••••), Bioware Access, Enhanced Attunement, Favored Mode, Increased Tolerance, Wealth (• to ••••)

SPECIAL EDGE: BIOWARE ACCESS (• TO ••)

Prerequisite: Orgotek

Your character has easy access to bioware created by Orgosoft or other divisions of Orgotek. She possesses a number of pieces of bioware equipment equal to her dots in this Edge, which may be formatted to her if she so desires. She does not need to purchase this equipment and its cost is not a factor, but they belong to Orgotek, not her; and she will need a very compelling reason for being assigned particularly dangerous or exotic pieces of bioware. She can freely change the bioware she is assigned between sessions, if she is able to gain access to Orgotek bioware facilities.

ALEX CASSEL: MASTER OR PUPPET?

By Kyra Chambal, The World Today

Alex Cassel. Orgotek President. Orgotek proxy. The prexy, as his employees and psions jokingly call him. But is the prexy a carefree heir who only succeeds on the backs of others, or a brilliant innovator with a carefully cultivated persona? The answer probably lies somewhere in the middle.

Alex Cassel works with the FSA government, but goes out of his way to irritate them at every opportunity. He's clearly unhappy with their policies and actions. He points out their flaws and proposes change, but Orgotek is the largest corporate contributor to FSA coffers thanks to its enormous profits. Some opponents wryly observe that Cassel should simply shut down Orgotek and bring down the government from lack of funds.

As much as the FSA loathes Alex, he hasn't strayed far enough from permitted social commentary to face sedition or public unrest charges — yet. He has a force of lawyers on standby and rumor has it they earn their pay. Government officials grind their teeth and wait for the day that he crosses the line, but until then he's a thorn in their side that they must tolerate.

It's clear from his actions that Alex is brilliant and thinks several moves ahead of his opponents, but it's less clear whether his manipulations are successful because his opponents do what he expects, or if he's just been lucky enough that his miscalculations haven't cost Orgotek too much yet. Some observers think the scheming is genuine, but say that Alex is simply the mouthpiece delivering the message. Who then pulls this puppet's strings? Ellayne Cassel is the most obvious contender, but is this true?

If he's not a puppet, discovering whether Alex Cassel is a clever manipulator playing a long game to reform the FSA from within, or just a rich guy salving his conscience with token gestures against the government, is something that will only be revealed with time.

THE BOARD

As much as people think of Alex Cassel (and EKs) when they think of Orgotek, the prexy doesn't control everything in the corporation. At least, he doesn't control it alone. Most everyday decisions about running the corporation, such as finance, marketing, or authorizing research and production are made by the board of directors. The board comprises Alex Cassel, his wife Ellayne, and seven of their closest friends. Though most are psions, fewer than half are electrokinetics, and two — including Ellayne Cassel — are neutrals (or in Ellayne's case, a Talent).

Each board member can make decisions on behalf of the others, which are ratified (or overturned if required) at the next board meeting. On paper, this ad hoc exercise of power could result in disastrous decisions and take Orgotek down paths detrimental to the company. In practice, the board members have all known each other for at least 20 years and trust each other implicitly. They've worked together for so long that each one understands which of her

fellows are most likely to agree with her decisions, which are likely to disagree, and why.

The one exception to governance by the board of directors is Psi Orgotek. Technically, the psi order is under the sole guidance of its proxy. In truth, every member of the board is also a prominent member of the order, and Alex Cassel makes few major decisions without consulting at least some of his closest friends first.

BAD DEBTS

Cassel and his board hold the majority of stock in Orgotek but that doesn't mean they're the only interested parties. In the earliest days of biotech, Cassel's personal fortune wasn't sufficient to fund development labs and manufacturing farms, as well as growing the nascent psi order and maintaining World Enterprises, Inc. To cover the shortfall, Cassel called on investors and venture capitalists.

Today, all the debts are paid, but some shareholders — notably prominent FSA government officials and the management of rival corporations — refused to sell their interest in Orgotek. Cassel views these



external stockholders as an irritation and necessary evil; just part of the price of doing business in the FSA. Cassel keeps his enemies close; an additional benefit is Orgotek's dividends are clear incentive for these individuals to limit their interference or risk diminishing their wealth and power. Unfortunately, some members of the board don't agree and have made it their mission to reclaim full ownership of the company. They've even considered using some of the darker business practices permitted by the FSA, including shadowy threats and blackmail.

Orgotek must be incredibly cautious in fulfilling the board's wishes. If the FSA government uncovers any activities that fall outside the narrowest interpretation of legal business practices, or more importantly, discovers Orgotek's role in orchestrating these attacks, the company could suffer the FSA's retribution and find its assets and personnel — and the psi order itself — seized as government property. Orgotek would then be broken and divided amongst its hungry and envious corporate competitors.

CORPORATE HISTORY

Much like its founder, Orgotek's history is a frustratingly open enigma. The corporation's public

background is well documented in Orgotek's annual reports, through its OpNet site, or via any one of its recruitment offices. These sources describe the efforts of a young man who tragically lost his family and inherited a substantial fortune and the best social and political connections.

Alex Cassel started the seed that would grow into Orgotek in his college years, enlisting his school friends to help him form the holding company World Enterprises, Inc. Cassel jokes that WEI started as a fun exercise to give his social circle the chance to play at being CEOs and businesspeople. Using WEI, they invested their funds in a variety of speculative interests, coming out ahead more often than not. Cassel has also said those years of investments, deals, and corporate interactions were more valuable to his education than years of formal schooling.

Analysis of Cassel's development portfolio from WEI to Orgotek in less than 20 years reveals an eclectic flurry of expanded and diversified investments with little logical progression. Alex deflects questions about his choices, claiming they seemed correct at the time, and laughs off suggestions that his earliest psi latency may have been in clair-sentience and not electrokinesis.

Some rivals observe that many of Alex's friends were eventually activated into various Aptitudes, including at least one clear. Other, less kind commentators note that Ellayne Cassel, while displaying no psionic Aptitude, scored consistently higher in all her classes and controls more of Orgotek's daily business activities than her husband. Her friends admit luck favors Ellayne considerably more often than statistics should allow. Ellayne often takes on near-failed Orgotek projects that somehow defy the odds and succeed — all thanks to her inspired management and vision.

Cassel's critics believe Alex is the dilettante psion who simply rides the success of others. Those who would like to see Orgotek suffer ponder how to drive a wedge between Alex and Ellayne, and deprive the proxy of his source of wealth and power. Some also claim that instead of creating the first Prometheus Chamber, Cassel stole the idea from someone whose silence he bought or perhaps uncovered it in a secret cache of Nova Age technology.

RECRUITMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

Orgotek doesn't have to work hard to find members. Electrokinetic latency is relatively common and many people with other common latencies are either interested in becoming electrokinetics or simply want to join Orgotek. The psi order has recruitment offices in major cities of nearly every country. Orgotek widely advertises its very competitive member and employment benefits and not infrequently finds members of other orders looking to sign up.

Orgotek also works hard to round out Psi Orgotek with psions possessing the full range of other Aptitudes. Proxy Cassel works to ensure smooth transfers and reciprocal triggering arrangements with all his fellow proxies. Where his natural charisma isn't sufficient for the deal, agreements with remuneration or courtesy deliveries of Orgotek products (some even before commercial release) are common.

Similarly, Orgotek recruitment centers aren't just looking for psions. Orgotek is a vast corporation with over 150,000 employees, only around 10% of whom are psions. Dedicated individuals of nearly any skill set can find employment within Orgotek.

The metacorp doesn't take just anyone — aptitude tests and suitability assessments determine if an applicant meets Orgotek's needs. Those who pass through the process find careers that can take them anywhere in the world — and beyond.

Orgotek offers all new electrokinetics a chance to join the company, but holds no ill will towards those who decline. The company makes the same offer to latents triggered by other orders. Most decline, but a few decide Orgotek's culture is more suited to them than their sponsoring order. This practice creates some tension between the psi orders, but each of them does it, and Orgotek has lost a few attractive candidates to "better offers" from its fellows.

Regardless of whether a new EK signs on with Orgotek or not, the company provides basic education and training in psi and the use of electrokinesis to all newly triggered psions. Cassel expects all EKs to understand how to control their basic abilities, and the boundaries in which they can operate before breaking the (FSA and international) law. What they do after this is their own choice, but the proxy is morally and legally assured that these psions' actions aren't due to Orgotek negligence. Orgotek provides more extensive training to its electrokinetic employees, including in the more nuanced and difficult aspects of the modes. The proxy expects other orders to have EKs, but he's determined to ensure that the best are with Orgotek.

AMERICAN FREEDOM

Regardless of whether an employee is neutral or psion, Orgotek pays attractive and competitive salaries and encourages all staff to pay their share of FSA taxes. This helps the company in several ways. First, it helps limit the FSA's watchful gaze over Orgotek. Although the government would love to seize control of the free-thinking corporation, the FSA can't guarantee the enormous profits would continue if management and business practices changed.

Secondly, paying FSA taxes opens the door to first-class citizenship and through this a more privileged life and better treatment under FSA law. Even tax-paying, productive second-class citizens are less likely to suffer the government's more oppressive powers. Orgotek also contributes towards the legal costs of any Orgotek employee who pays her taxes. This applies to both first- and second-class citizens, with a sliding scale depending on what the employee

ORGOTEK MEMBERSHIP AND THE WEALTH EDGE

All characters who are members of Orgotek or were once members and have not joined another psi order possess at least one dot of the Wealth Edge (which the player must purchase normally) to represent the stipend Alex Cassel provides to all members and ex-members. Most actual Orgotek employees earn more than this.

can afford, up to complete payment of costs. This is one area where Orgotek's employment relations do have differences between psions and neutral employees; the psi order aggressively pursues legal challenges to psi rights and governance on behalf of employees regardless of the financial costs.

The third reason Orgotek encourages employees to pay taxes is to slowly subvert the FSA by using the government's system against itself. Every employee with the right to vote is more likely to follow Orgotek's lead in how to use that vote. This has swung the result of several issues in the company's favor, and each election year sees more government members gain their positions thanks to Orgotek's support, and the corporation ensures these representatives remember that fact.

RUNNING AN ORGOTEK CAMPAIGN

As Orgotek has interests in nearly every field, Orgotek campaigns can go in any direction. One game could focus on a "fieldwork" R&D team, testing newly developed hardtech and bioapps, or monitoring how and where Orgotek devices are used. Should one of these teams discover FSA thugs misusing their

products against defenseless and downtrodden civilians, do they simply write a report and hope someone else steps in, or do they work to build a united front of dissidents? Can they fight back against government forces using off-book or "misplaced" equipment to balance the odds, while still having to meet deadlines and development quotas?

As technological experts, Orgotek teams are sent across space, working with the Qin to explore alien ruins one week, live testing the latest weapons with Legions forces on Karroo station the next. Orgotek's security specialists are equally busy. Outwitting FSA forces is an obvious and exciting focus for a game, but the corporation also needs to know what its business rivals are planning. Their technical spies infiltrate rivals to "acquire" their designs and prototypes to reverse engineer. The psi order also needs to understand the motives and plans of other orders, and their host countries.

At home, America has many Aberrant cults. In addition, psychopaths and religious zealots who make hate-filled attacks on refugees and psions are sometimes unofficially aided by the FSA. At minimum, FSA officials always seem to have more urgent issues demanding their attention, so Orgotek

ORGOTEK ATTITUDES ABOUT OTHER ORDERS

The Æsculapian Order: When we need help, they're the ones to call.

Chitra Bhanu: An object lesson in scientific ethics gone very wrong.

ISRA: Is mysticism really useful in the 22nd century?

The Legions: They're not as tough as they think they are, but if Aberrants show up, they've got your back.

The Ministry: A snake pit of backstabbing spies.

Norça: Their biotech is amazing, but what the heck are they really up to?

Upeo wa Macho: The fact that having a few thousand people vanish could endanger all of humanity means that we need to create new biotech so humanity will never again be that vulnerable.

The Æon Trinity: Their scientists are top-notch, second only to our own.

OPNET QUICKFAQS

Subject: Specific & General Latency

Updated: June 2, 2109

Often descriptions about latents and latency refer to someone as having a strong latency for one particular psionic Aptitude. While technically true, in practice the difference between a strong and a weak latency for a particular psionic Aptitude is relatively small. Any latent can become a biokinetic, clairsentient, electrokinetic, psychokinetic, telepath, or vitakinetic with equal ease.

Becoming a psion with an Aptitude in their strongest latency provides individuals with somewhat greater power initially, but has no other effect. Also, individuals who become psions in another Aptitude soon develop an Auxiliary Mode in their primary latency. The particulars of a psion's latency have no effect on how easily they can improve their noetic mastery. However, there is one place where specific latency is essential — the ability to gain either quantakinesis or teleportation. Most psions do not possess the necessary latency for either ability and any attempt to use either Prometheus Chamber would be just as fatal as a neutral attempting to use any Prometheus Chamber.

Although both Chitra Bhanu and Upeo wa Macho are exceedingly selective and appear to reject most applicants who possess the latency required to learn quantakinesis or teleportation, the best evidence available is that fewer than 10% of psions are able to learn either of these two rare Aptitudes. However, like every other psion, these individuals can also gain any of the other six Aptitudes without problem.

sometimes takes on counterterrorism (especially when the terrorists target Orgotek) and defends the public. These efforts usually take place in the shadows to avoid FSA retribution.

While Orgotek is fighting the threats the government should handle, the FSA is more interested in discovering the locations and purpose of Orgotek “black sites” and undeclared laboratories. Orgotek hides its most secret advanced Nova-age technologies and cutting-edge biotech within these facilities,

and only the most trusted employees have clearance to know they exist. Cassel wants them kept secret, deploying electrokinesis and advanced bioapps to hide these sites from the government. He also needs dedicated operatives to find and misdirect FSA investigators before they stumble onto secrets that must be kept in the dark. If the operatives fail, more drastic measures need to occur. Orgotek is the perfect order for high-stakes spy campaigns with beyond-state-of-the-art gadgetry.



UPEO WA MACHO



The Upeo wa Macho returned to Earth only six months ago, but has quickly reclaimed its unique cachet as the best courier service in the cosmos. Only teleporters can travel anywhere on Earth or in the known universe in an instant. While the

Leviathan jump ships returned humanity to the stars, jumpers possess greater speed and versatility and can travel 500 kilometers as easily as 500 parsecs.

Bolade Atwan's return was warmly received, although none of the other proxies have forgotten her sudden disappearance seven years ago. In 2115, proxy Atwan waited for more than two months to report the discovery of the nova-controlled planet of Eden to the other proxies. With the memory of the Chitra Bhanu purge far too fresh in her mind, she knew she needed a plan of retreat before discussing her findings. If the other proxies seemed overly suspicious or hostile, Bolade would give the signal and evacuate her order to Ruan's World within minutes.

The other proxies' reactions exceeded Proxy Atwan's fears. With a push of a button, the Upeo wa Macho vanished from Earth. Worried that the entire Aptitude might fall under suspicion, Proxy Atwan also asked teleporters belonging to other psi orders to come with her. Fearing the fate of the quantakinetics, the few who refused join her in exile went into hiding.

Upon learning of the Chromatic attack on Earth, Proxy Atwan ended her order's exile. She knew that Earth would need her order's help, no matter what the other proxies thought. It was not until after this attack that she also learned that the Chromatics used captured teleporters to transport their fleets across interstellar space. Bolade formed a search team to find those teleporters, fearing what the Chromatics might do to and with their captives.

While in exile, Proxy Atwan was overjoyed to learn that the Leviathan jump ships gave humanity the ability to reach deep space without the help of her teleporters. With access to the sentient jump ships, she believes that interstellar travel could soon become commonplace and no longer solely dependent upon several hundred teleporters. The proxy wants to make travel to other star systems as commonplace as travel between distant cities.

Seeking to help interstellar travel advance even faster, she commissioned a team of Upeo researchers to develop an improved jump ship that is both larger and easier to use. This team recently added more than a dozen Qin engineers who recently arrived from Qinshui. The project is called Nyangumi (Swahili for "whale"), which will also be the name for the new class of jump ship. More recently, proxy Atwan also created project Karwe (Swahili for "manta ray") to develop small exploration-focused jump ships that are easier to manufacture.

The world received the prodigal order back with few reservations. Most negative feelings focus on Proxy Atwan, who many believe orchestrated the exile out of paranoia. The proxy's image is most damaged in the UAN. Some call her *Bolade Ambaye Alikimbia*, meaning "Bolade who ran." Although the UAN did not suffer directly from the Upeo wa Macho's departure, UAN media and politicians speculated loudly whenever a tragedy occurred that teleportation might have prevented. Knowing apologies to be useless without action, the proxy sends operatives on frequent *Dhamira Njema* or "good-will" missions across the UAN.

Inside the order, there is also dissent. During their exile, Proxy Atwan placed a strict ban on return travel to Earth; a decree that many in the higher ranks felt was needlessly severe. Some still resent missing seven years with their families. Others wonder why Proxy Atwan has not done more to rescue the teleporters captured by the Chromatics. Before the Upeo wa Macho left the Earth, it was well known that its proxy inspired fanatical loyalty from all in her order. It is now clear that this support is, at the very least, waning.

This dissension increased when the returning psi order's members learned of the *Esperanza's* fate. Those who had not previously voiced their doubts began to speak up. Proxy Atwan released a public apology for her order's absence, but her words have done little to soothe tempers in western Europe or to placate Upeo members who have connections there.

HISTORY AND GROWTH

Bolade Atwan is driven by a dream of humanity walking among the stars. Before she became a proxy, she had a vision of humanity exploring and settling across



the galaxy. UAN president Mgowo established the mission for near-space traveling in Atwan's youth. Atwan wished to take that idea even further. Such dreams require resources, so she spent decades building her company Kusafiri Ukomo (Unlimited Travel), specializing in commercial air and ground transportation. When she became a proxy, her dreams of deep-space travel became reality. She scaled back her commercial efforts and focused on finding latents.

Teleportation is the least common of the surviving Aptitudes, and her strict requirements reject most of those with this rare latency.

Eventually, the proxy built a foundation of teleporters and support staff that could perform a wide range of missions. Teleporters, also referred to as jumpers, could be couriers, spies, diplomats, and first responders who were available in literally the blink of an eye. Operatives of the Upeo wa Macho are spread across the galaxy, but Atwan's agile organization can bring these psions together at a moment's notice.

The Upeo wa Macho's numbers are far diminished from seven years ago. Most of the last six months have been spent restoring basic personnel and technological infrastructure on Earth. The order is rapidly rebuilding, but it will take years to replace both the more than 70 teleporters taken by Chromatics and the many thousands of neutral support staff left on Earth when the order fled.

The Upeo wa Macho collaborates well with other psi orders, in large part because

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teleportation remains impressively useful. Proxy Atwan recognizes the best way to leverage her order's rare Aptitude is by being generous yet strategic in its use. Although she does not get along with either Proxy Alex Cassel or Proxy Rebecca Bue Li, Atwan finds ways for Upeo wa Macho to collaborate with their orders, providing them with services they can obtain nowhere else. Knowing that she can't undo the past, she focuses on what she does best, executing missions with precision and efficiency.

THE UPEO WA MACHO PATH (SOCIETY)

The character is closely affiliated with the Upeo wa Macho, the teleportation order. If a psion, she may have spent the last seven years with her fellows far from Earth, before eventually returning in the face of the threat of the Chromatics and the growing number of disappearing teleporters. She may be part of the fresh wave of psions being immersed in the order's Prometheus Chamber, or perhaps a teleporter who went into hiding when the rest of the order vanished. Whatever her origin, she is likely to have traveled vast distances that other humans can barely conceive of.

PATH CONCEPTS

Expert pilot, interstellar explorer, rapid transport specialist, rescue worker

Example Connections: Bonded Witness, Interstellar Explorer, Leviathan Captain, Off-Earth Colony

Skills: Integrity, Pilot, Survival, Technology

Edges: Direction Sense, Emergency Transit, Enhanced Attunement, Favored Mode, Hardy, Iron Will, Photographic Memory

SPECIAL EDGE: EMERGENCY TRANSIT (••)

Prerequisite: Upeo wa Machu

With the impressive resources of the Upeo wa Macho behind her, your character can arrange for transportation away from almost any threat. She can freely access conventional travel to almost any destination through the order's capabilities. Additionally, once per story, she can arrange for emergency extraction. If she is able to provide forward notice, this extraction can arrive within a minute of notification; otherwise, it may take up to an hour to arrive. The exact nature of the extraction will depend on what information the character has provided the order with;

it could be anything from a teleporter psion ripping a portal open to her location to a negotiator being dispatched to bargain for her release.

RECRUITMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

Teleportation requires a rare latency, but Bolade Atwan values self-reliance even more than that latency. Candidates with the required latency are no use to the proxy if they lack resourcefulness and determination. Jumpers have incredible support teams but can still find themselves in situations where they are entirely on their own. Proxy Atwan needs to know that her teleporters will not falter in these situations. She interviews potential jumpers exhaustively and then has candidates work and train as apprentices for at least six months before inviting them to join the order.

Proxy Atwan always interviews and observes several candidates at a time. She also only permits candidates to use the Prometheus Chamber in groups. Teleporters who become psions at the same time are considered to belong to the same “age group”. Psions in the same age group are expected to look after one another, even if they don’t get along. Informal tradition also dictates that they show respect towards jumpers in “older” age groups, but the result is not a strict hierarchy. Ultimately, actions count more than age or time served in Upeo wa Macho. Although age groups soon spread across the stars, members are expected to keep in contact and meet on occasion. All but the most dysfunctional age groups follow this tradition, in large part because it creates a strong sense of belonging.

Proxy Atwan likes to remind her psions that teleporting is a lonely business, so it is worth having a few people around you who can relate to that loneliness. The first assignment that members of a new age group go on is “The Long Race.” Proxy Atwan gives each member clues on where to teleport. Once they arrive at that place, they find the next clue, and then the clue after that. The clues can be very cryptic, and not all locations can be easily teleported to. Some jumpers take months to complete the race.

Jumpers play a central role in Upeo wa Macho, but there are half again as many other psions in this order. Most outsiders think of teleporters as nomads who blink in and out of space on their own, but successful missions require an immense amount

of planning and organization. Bolade Atwan prefers to run a lean, purposeful organization built to support teleporters. She keeps her jumpers diverse and well trained so that they can perform any number of roles, ranging from combat response to interstellar courier missions. There are departments, referred to informally as **chama** (Swahili for “club”) in the Upeo wa Macho for each of the order’s major roles.

The Long Riders are known all over human space for being the noetic version of the Pony Express. If a member of this chama has not visited a package’s destination, they can swiftly transport it to another jumper who has. The most experienced Long Riders can be assigned anything from a single bottle of medicine to a large spaceship with a full crew and transport it to any location at least one teleporter has previously visited in less than an hour.

Kupita (Swahili for “beyond”) is the chama to which the most powerful jumpers in the organization belong. What concerns this chama is interstellar travel of all sorts. Kupita also controls the order’s spacecraft. Many of the order’s clairsentients belong to Kupita, where they help the order explore and map new areas of space or to remap known space to conform to new data. This chama recently acquired half a dozen ARES pods (p. 290) to help these clairsentients perform long-distance stellar surveys.

Mwitu (Swahili for “wolf”) is the chama of first responders. The teleporters in this chama have a diverse range of skills, and are often called in to the worst emergencies wherever they are stationed. This chama was small and mostly based on Ruan’s World, but Upeo wa Macho’s return to Earth has seen this chama grow as some psions seek service to atone for their guilt about the *Esperanza* crash. This chama also contains Proxy Atwan’s harshest critics.

Mwitu members have recently gained attention for several high-profile rescues, the most notable being Abaeze Adeosun’s rescue of Nigerian workers caught in a building fire two months ago. Abaeze worked tirelessly, porting workers out of the building for over 12 hours. He continued to work even after regular responders arrived. He worked with them and several of the order’s clears to rescue thousands of workers with no casualties. Such heroism is not uncommon for those in Mwitu, and this chama has done more to redeem Upeo wa Macho’s image than any of Proxy Atwan’s statements.

OTHER PSIONS AND THE NGUZO

Nguzo is Swahili for “pillar,” and is the term used for the neutrals and the hopeful latent apprentices who support this organization. Psions tend to experience the Upeo wa Macho as a fraternity, but this loose and informal feel of the organization only exists because of the organizational work of the nguzo. Ren Daiyu is the Upeo wa Macho’s chief operations officer. The proxy deals with events involving psions, Chromatics, or Aberrants, but if a situation involves international politics, trade, or logistics, it ends up on Ren Daiyu’s desk. She defers to Proxy Atwan whenever it is appropriate and the two meet and discuss order business daily, so they are never out of sync. A common saying in the order is that Atwan’s mind is on the skies while Daiyu’s is on the Earth.

Nguzo assist with mission preparation, working as dispatchers and managing logistics. They also oversee all transportation that is not teleportation-related. Military specialists provide tactical and on-field battle support except when Aberrants are anticipated. The Upeo wa Macho never intentionally risks neutral personnel when fighting Aberrants.

The nguzo are not second-class citizens in the Upeo wa Macho. Any psion Atwan catches treating nguzo as inferior receives harsh words. The fact that any latent who joins the order as a latent must work as nguzo for at least two months helps to alleviate any feelings of superiority or inferiority and creates bonds of trust between psions and nguzo.

Almost 500 of the order’s psions are not teleporters. Proxy Atwan wants psions with other Aptitudes to be dependable specialists. While she needs jumpers who are flexible and durable, she needs the people who will support them to do just a few things reliably. The Upeo wa Macho never shies away from bringing in specialists from other orders on a temporary basis and also hires non-jumpers fairly quickly.

Psions who already possess an Aptitude other than teleportation and who impress their interviewer are sometimes put to work on a trial basis the next day. Trial by fire is a great way to see if new staff are compatible with jumpers and nguzo, and if the recruit’s potential meets her promise.

The order takes hiring latents with potential for an Aptitude other than teleportation more seriously. Proxy Atwan believes that every psion must prove themselves worthy of their powers. Prospective psions must also spend at least two months as nguzo

before Proxy Atwan negotiates for them to use another order’s Prometheus Chamber.

Every Aptitude offers something special to the order. Biokinetics and psychokinetics typically serve as bodyguards or provide general physical assistance. They are often brought in when battle is anticipated at a jump destination, or in extremely hostile environments and disaster sites. Vitakinetics are usually “packages” to be delivered to sites for medical support or to enhance other team members. Electrokinetics provide counter-surveillance and engage in cyberwarfare where needed. Telepaths provide communication support and pair with clairsentients to do pre-jump “exploration” before anyone arrives at a site. Atwan’s distrust of the Ministry proxy restrains her order’s use of telepaths.

After teleporters, clairsentients are the most prized psions in the Upeo wa Macho and many teleporters work closely with clears. A common expression in the order is “First the mind, then the body,” indicating that they use clairsentience to view a site before using teleportation. This and the famously close relationship between Proxies Herzog and Atwan result in clairsentients being the second most numerous Aptitude in the order.

USIO

Mount Kenya is home to the space elevator that goes up to space station Asabuhi. Twenty kilometers away, just outside Kianjokoma is the reestablished base of the Upeo wa Macho, **Usio** (Swahili for “infinite”). Proxy Atwan was involved with the space elevator’s creation and, before she left, Upeo wa Macho’s headquarters was a short walk from the base of the space elevator. After seven years, the elevator’s use has only increased, and there was no space to come back to. The order was forced to move its operations to the nearest available location.

Visitors to this base see something that looks much like a corporate office complex. Most express disappointment at such standard accommodations, expecting more individuality and quirkiness from this notoriously freethinking order. Upeo members often inform these visitors that they should visit Ruan’s World if they would like to see something that conforms more to their expectations, but Proxy Atwan is also quick to inform people that the order’s ability to perform its missions relies on the work performed here.

Usio is the order’s base on Earth and it is the heart of the order’s logistics and management. Almost 80% of all the nguzo work here. However, the teleportation Prometheus Chamber is on Ruan’s World, along with most of the order’s psions. The Usio Threat Response and Dispatch

UPEO WA MACHO ATTITUDES ABOUT OTHER ORDERS

The Æsculapian Order: They are heroes who save lives.

Chitra Bhanu: The other orders turned on us without cause, did the same thing happen to them?

ISRA: Their visions guide all our journeys

The Legions: Will humanity ever learn to move past violence and war?

The Ministry: Before we fled, they seemed ready to exterminate us, they are not to be trusted.

Norça: Their intrigues are deep and strange, but their honor is solid.

Orgotek: The future is about far more than the latest fancy gadget.

The Æon Trinity: They have given all of humanity the stars, and have freed us from being humanity's taxis.

Center is world renowned for its ability to convert intel about emergencies and threats into swift and effective responses. The area affectionately referred to as "The Launchpad" is a designated teleportation area that each new jumper is trained to use when entering the order.

SPECIAL RESOURCES

Whether they are driving a truck, teleporting, flying, or taking maglevs, the order prides itself on connecting its members with all modes of transport. Conventional travel is free to those who join the Upeo wa Macho. Any member requesting travel from Usio to anywhere on Earth or Luna will reach their destination within no more than 10 hours, and usually far sooner.

What psions of the orders appreciate most is the ability to arrange emergency departure from a troubled zone. Each member has several emergency contacts they can call in case of trouble. An emergency call prompts a rescue team to be assembled and mobilized. If arranged ahead of time, they often arrive within one minute. Without prior notice, response can take up to an hour, or even longer if the requester finds himself trapped in an unusually difficult and dangerous location. However, regardless of the circumstances, a team will be sent and a rescue attempt will always be made.

RUNNING A UPEO WA MACHO CAMPAIGN

A Upeo wa Macho campaign gives your group an opportunity to see the entire galaxy and travel to new locations in an instant. Since travel is so easy, Upeo campaigns should focus on the difficulties that arise once the group reaches its destination. What constraints does the team face at their destination?

A simple escort mission may become deadly if the psions are led into a trap and must fight their way out, or if information they received was completely wrong. Even if the psions can easily depart, doing so without completing their mission may doom others.

The characters could be Long Riders moving packages across the galaxy, trying to deliver the packages on time and overcoming any obstacles in their path. They could be an elite team of Mwituu porting into the middle of any troublesome situation and providing vitally needed assistance. The psions could become internationally known heroes, with all the benefits and costs that comes with such fame.

The Upeo wa Macho is also the psi order primarily responsible for interstellar exploration. Characters can locate and explore new worlds or perform more extensive surveys of worlds that another jumper briefly visited. New territory means new dangers and unique wonders as the team explores farther and farther out. Characters will visit worlds humanity has never seen before and may even make contact with a new intelligent alien species.

Both internal and external politics can also be a natural part of Upeo wa Macho scenarios. Proxy Atwan is resourceful and powerful, but but now many question her judgment and leadership. There are many dissenters, but a substantial number of members remain loyal to her. Groups outside the order also seek to use the order's internal strife to further their own ends. Both governments and corporations are eager to recruit teleporters and further discrediting proxy Atwan could help them draw teleporters away from this order. Will the characters protect the Upeo wa Macho from outsiders, or help them?

THE ÆON TRINITY



When asked what the Æon Trinity is and what it does, the average person may be unable to respond with more than a vague answer. “They do important stuff, I guess.” “They’re kind of a big humanitarian...thing.” But when

asked more directly what the Æon Trinity has done for them or their families, the answers come more quickly. “A Triton doctor saved my grandfather’s life.” “Those Proteus VARG guys held off an attacking Aberrant long enough for my whole building to evacuate.” “I went to an Æon-sponsored school.”

HISTORY AND GROWTH

Part nonprofit foundation, part scientific think tank, part humanitarian-aid organization, and part secret conspiracy to make the world a better place, the Æon Trinity is the modern incarnation of a very old idea. In the early 20th century, the Æon Society for Gentlemen worked to improve the lot of humanity, and in every form since then – the Æon Foundation, the Æon Covenant, and (as of the year

2100) the Æon Trinity – the agendas and underlying principles have remained the same: Make the world better. Help people achieve their potential. Protect humanity. Their motto has always been “Hope, Sacrifice, and Unity.”

Æon stepped into prominence during the Aberrant War and the subsequent Crash. As one of the few lucky organizations whose resources were not depleted or ruined during the crisis, the Trinity was perfectly placed to become indispensable to the United Nations by providing medical aid, food, clean water, and shelter to those who needed it. Despite being less powerful and influential than the UN, Æon made itself so useful that it commands the respect that might normally be accorded to a small, but wealthy and influential, nation.

This influence only grew when Aberrants attacked Sydney and the psi orders revealed themselves to the world in 2106. The Æon Trinity helped the fledgling orders weather the media firestorm that followed, and provided both financial and political assistance to the psions so that they could establish themselves as a force dedicated to helping and protecting humanity. This close relationship



continues in 2123. Since the Trinity is not formally affiliated with any one order, its neutrality allows it to act as a perfect liaison between them, and between the orders as a whole and the United Nations.

ÆON TRINITY PATHS

Unlike the psi orders, the Æon Trinity has two available Paths. The Æon Trinity Path is the most common and should be used by all characters who belong to the Æon Trinity, except covert operatives in Section Minerva. The Æon Trinity Section Minerva Path is only for covert Æon Trinity operatives who belong to Section Minerva.

ÆON TRINITY (SOCIETY)

The character is closely affiliated with the Æon Trinity and aligned with its goals: making the world a better place, helping people achieve their potential and protecting humanity. She may be a normal human, psion or Talent, serving Æon Trinity as an operative and familiar with the organization's inner workings. Whether a part of Neptune Division (communications and administration), Triton Division (scientific and data) or Proteus Division (operations and security), she has chosen to be part of this optimistic, idealistic agency.

PATH CONCEPTS

Humanitarian-aid worker, interstellar explorer, psi order liaison, research and development engineer

Example Connections: Æon Council, Humanitarian Group, Political Allies, Psi Order

Skills: Humanities, Persuasion, Science, Technology

Edges: Fame, Far-Reaching Influence, Library, Superior Trait, Wealth

SPECIAL EDGE: FAR-REACHING INFLUENCE (••)

Prerequisite: Æon Trinity (required Edge)

The influence and reputation of the Æon Trinity reaches very far indeed, and many doors open for your character that might otherwise remain closed. Whenever your character engages in an intrigue action, she can spend a single point of Momentum to

shift the attitude of the target character or organization by 1 toward positive, *unless* the target has a specific reason for being expressly opposed towards the Æon Trinity at the time. Simply being unfriendly, untrusting, or other forms of general surliness are not a good enough reason to block the character from using this ability. The character also receives an extra bonus point of Momentum whenever a Storyguide character refuses or acts against her influence roll results. All characters who select this Path must purchase this Edge.

ÆON TRINITY SECTION MINERVA (SOCIETY)

The character is closely affiliated not just with the Æon Trinity, but with a part of it that does not officially exist: Section Minerva. She is one of Proteus Division's deniable covert operatives and intelligence agents, selected not just for her skills but for her unflinching moral character. She has no uniform, no rank, and only her fellow Section Minerva operatives will recognize the lighthouse pin that she wears as indicating her allegiance.

PATH CONCEPTS

Anti-authoritarian rebel, deep cover operative, observant spacer, wandering troubleshooter

Example Connections: Æon Council, Criminal Organization, Mercenary Company, Spy Agency

Skills: Empathy, Integrity, Larceny, Persuasion

Edges: Alternate Identity, Always Prepared, Covert, Danger Sense, Iron Will, Self-Reliance

SPECIAL EDGE: SELF-RELIANCE (• TO •••••)

Prerequisite: Æon Trinity Section Minerva, Iron Will

As a member of a deniable operation with absolute discretion over the approach she takes to her tasks, your character understands the vital importance of her mission — and that ultimately the responsibility for it rests entirely on her shoulders. Pick a number of Skill Tricks that your character possesses equal to the number of dots in this Edge. Once per session per Skill Trick, she can reduce the Momentum cost of it by 1, which may reduce it down to 0 Momentum.

RECRUITMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

The Æon Trinity has roughly 100,000 agents, who are recruited from all over the world and from a wide variety of backgrounds. Recruits are typically the “best of the best,” those whose dedication to the Trinity’s ideals combine with valuable skills and talents. Becoming an Æon operative is a lifelong dream for many men and women who look up to the Trinity as a heroic group that works to “save the world.” Æon’s close ties to the psi orders result in a large number of psions working for the Trinity as well — almost 6% of the operatives (roughly 5,800) are psions — adding to the organization’s heroic reputation.

The Æon Trinity works hard to have fingers in as many pies as possible, guaranteeing that when anything important happens, the Trinity will be involved somehow. The astonishing people known as Talents have a knack for being involved when something important happens as well, often even if they’re trying to avoid involvement. It should come as no surprise, then, that the Æon Trinity has a large number of Talented. Of the non-psionic operatives working for Æon, several thousand are Talents.

HEADQUARTERS

Although the city has changed significantly, the Æon Trinity’s headquarters remains in Chicago, where the Æon Society for Gentlemen was founded 200 years ago. Originally housed in a classic brownstone on the North Side, the modern organization’s headquarters takes up a significant portion of the Chicago arcology known as the Cube. Most of the Cube’s uppermost levels are occupied by the central headquarters of Neptune Division, and the art deco stylings of the offices and auditoriums have become the dominant image of Æon in the public eye.

Elsewhere in the arcology, Triton Division maintains a headquarters campus adjacent to the University of Chicago in Hyde Park. This campus is home to Nereus Labs — Triton’s most cutting-edge research facility — and Mercer Memorial Hospital, known for the most advanced medical technology and most skilled medical professionals and vitakinetics in the FSA.

Proteus Division’s headquarters lies in a vast complex underneath Lake Michigan. Æon’s main training facility is located here, as are

an array of command and communications centers. Additionally, the Proteus complex has enough space to provide living quarters for all of Æon's command structure and tens of thousands of additional agents, with resources to keep them alive and healthy for up to three years. This "safe space" was last used during the Aberrant War, but Æon believes in being prepared.

The Æon Society's original four-story brownstone still exists. In addition to being a famous historical site, it functions as the local Æon Trinity chapterhouse for Chicago, serving as an HQ for local operations and a home away from home for important agents on assignment in the area.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Æon Trinity is separated into three divisions: Neptune, Triton, and Proteus — thus the "Trinity" in its name. Each division is further subdivided into a wide array of branches. Although popular belief defines Neptune as the "administrative" division that is in charge of the Trinity as a whole, in truth every division has a large number of administrative employees who perform the unexciting but necessary duties that keep such a vast organization running. Actual command of the Trinity is centered in the Æon Council, a reclusive group that includes the heads of the three divisions, as well as a number of other mysterious figures (rumors include the proxies, various heads of state, and a direct descendent of Maxwell Mercer, the original founder of the Æon Society — if not Mercer himself, somehow cryogenically preserved into the 22nd century).

NEPTUNE DIVISION

Although commonly referred to as the administrative or command division, a better way to think of Neptune is as the division most concerned with communication. As the "voice of Æon," Neptune agents act as organizers, liaisons, diplomats, propagandists, fundraisers, or advisors. They are present in almost every major Æon Trinity operation, often in leadership positions. They also work with other organizations, including the psi orders, the United Nations, various metacorporations, and specific national governments, either as liaisons back to the Æon Trinity or as facilitators for cooperation between organizations. Psions in Neptune are often telepaths or clairsentients, although psions with any aptitude can be found in this division.

The most important branches of Neptune include:

The Clymene Initiative: The public face of the Æon Trinity, these Neptune agents are best known for interacting with the media, whether behind the scenes as PR specialists or in front of the cameras as public personalities. In addition to their public-relations tasks, the agents of the Clymene Initiative act as inter-agency liaisons for teams consisting of agents from more than one division (as in large-scale operations like ReWrite or Vesta), or act as facilitators for efforts that include other organizations entirely, like the psi orders or the United Nations.

The Medea Initiative: Founded as a response to an Aberrant with the power to literally make words poisonous and ideas viral, Medea is devoted to memetic counterterrorism — the struggle against harmful and invasive idea-structures. Frequently assigned to eliminate the influence of insidious Aberrant cults, Medea agents also help defend the psi orders, governments, metacorps, and militaries against memetic sabotage intended to destroy productivity, efficiency, morale, or unit cohesiveness. Many Medea operatives are telepaths or linguists.

The Mercury Initiative: Originally part of the Clymene Initiative, Mercury was expanded into its own Neptune branch as a result of increased demand for its services. Professional diplomats and negotiators, Mercury agents can be found working with a variety of organizations all over Earth (and beyond) to help establish beneficial cooperative relationships. Mercury agents act as liaisons between the various psi orders to enable them to trade access to their Prometheus Chambers, as well as to create smoothly-functioning multi-order operations teams. Mercury also works closely with the United Nations, helping rival powers peacefully resolve their differences. Some agents work as hostage negotiators, helping nations or private individuals recover their citizens or loved ones from terrorists or kidnappers; others are xeno-communications experts, helping to build strong ties with alien allies like the Qin. Members are currently helping to establish communications with Chromatic prisoners of war.

The Maxwell Mercer Foundation: The Mercer Foundation originally existed to fund the adventures and exploits of the Æon Society for Gentlemen. Its modern incarnation still uses its phenomenal wealth to fund the Æon Trinity, but it is additionally responsible for running a variety of charitable sub-organizations and donating vast sums of money to other charities judged to be in line with the Trinity's goals. Neptune

agents working for the Mercer Foundation range from fundraisers and charity administrators to investment bankers and accountants. Many Foundation agents work in the field, maintaining soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and free clinics.

The Chiron Initiative: In a world recovering from a massively destructive war, where much of Europe is still in a state of crisis and Nordamericans are routinely oppressed, education is as vital as healthy food, clean drinking water, and shelter. These Neptune agents are teachers, counselors, and mentors, traveling — often at great personal risk — into needy areas and bringing the gift of knowledge to a new generation of humanity. Chiron agents often work with interagency operations like ReWrite, Vesta, and Panacea, helping communities reestablish themselves on multiple levels. Others work on interstellar colonies, teaching the next generation of humanity about a homeworld they’ve never seen.

The Thetis Initiative: Even an organization with noble and forward-thinking goals can be vulnerable to rogue elements and corruption. The Thetis Initiative was established when the Æon Covenant reorganized itself into the Æon Trinity. It was tasked with ensuring that the reborn organization would remain true to its agenda, stay vigilant for internal problems, and prevent its agents from repeating the mistakes of the past. Unlike most “internal affairs” subgroups, Thetis agents try to prevent corruption in the first place. They screen all potential new Trinity agents, and promote good communication, transparency, and accountability, finding and fixing issues before they become truly problematic. Their focus on honesty and positivity makes Thetis agents quite popular, and most Æon personnel are happy to work with them and provide any requested information.

TRITON DIVISION

Although the stereotypical Triton agents are the absent-minded scientist and the selfless medic, the division concerns itself with a broad range of hard and soft sciences as well as more general types of data collection and analysis. While there is certainly a focus within Triton on biotech, computer tech, and medicine, the division is also home to historians, botanists, sociologists, geologists, zoologists, archaeologists, and political scientists — as the “mind of Æon,” any intellectual pursuit may be valuable in the right circumstances. Although some Triton agents remain in their labs or hospitals, many others work in the field with operatives from other divisions, performing valuable medical or

data-collection roles. The most common psionic abilities within Triton include clairsentience, electrokinesis, and vitakinesis. Prominent branches of Triton include:

Nereus Labs: While Triton as a whole is dedicated to the sciences, Nereus — or as many agents call it, “the Geekhouse” — is devoted to bleeding-edge scientific research and development. Nereus technicians constantly push the boundaries of computer science, biotechnology, medicine, noetic science, space travel, and weapons development. Some lucky Nereus techs are able to field test the latest prototypes — a scenario that other Æon Trinity agents greet with a mixture of excitement and dread.

Project Argus: While espionage is, in general, more the purview of Proteus Division, Project Argus is an exception to that rule. Argus agents make use of cutting-edge technology, psi powers, and old-fashioned social engineering to hack databases, co-opt security systems, and perform long-range surveillance. Others specialize in data analysis and information science. Argus prevents metacorporate takeovers, tracks Aberrant sightings, acquires incriminating evidence, destroys dangerous data, and predicts social trends — sometimes without ever leaving the lab.

Project Cyclops: Established in the 20th century to study the many unusual plants and animals discovered by the Æon Society in remote corners of the globe, this project has transitioned into a focus on xenobiology — the study of alien lifeforms. Cyclops science teams work with their Qin counterparts to share and discover valuable medical information for both species, and a Cyclops lab currently holds and studies the few recovered Chromatic and Coalition cadavers in hopes of learning more about those mysterious species. Further contact with and study of the Chromatics and the Coalition is a major priority for Project Cyclops agents.

Project Pandora: Originally founded to study the extremely rare occurrence of “psychic powers” amongst non-Aberrant humans, in the 22nd century this project concerns itself almost exclusively with psions, their abilities, and their origins. Pandora scientists — many of whom are psions themselves — work closely with the psi orders to further human understanding of psi powers, and to help develop solutions for problems like psionic dysfunction. So far, no order has trusted Pandora operatives with access to its Prometheus Chamber, but the researchers haven’t stopped asking. A few dedicated researchers continue Pandora’s original mission, searching for the legendary “psiads” who supposedly manifest psi powers without exposure to a Prometheus Chamber.

Project Ceto: Formerly the research branch of the 21st century Project Utopia, Ceto exists to study Aberrants and their superhuman abilities. Due to the extreme danger of exposure to Corruption, those Triton agents assigned to Ceto are carefully vetted for mental instability or past involvement in organizations that show support for Aberrants. The bravest and most trusted Ceto scientists are allowed to accompany anti-Aberrant strike teams in the field, risking their lives and sanity to gather valuable information that can be used to protect humanity from future Corruption-fueled disasters. Other Ceto agents attempt to study the mysterious Nihonjin Superiors, although political barriers have prevented much access to date.

Project Tantalus: A small and mysterious branch of Triton Division, Tantalus has a murky, undefined agenda. It was established based on the observation that some humans, despite being neither psions nor Aberrants, have extraordinary capabilities, often seeming to defy the laws of probability. These Talents are a continual source of frustration for the Tantalus scientists, who can't seem to find any biological evidence that they are anything other than very smart, athletic, skilled, gifted and/or lucky human beings. Luckily, the Æon Trinity as a whole seems to have an unexpectedly large number of these Talents, so Tantalus agents have plenty of test subjects.

PROTEUS DIVISION

If Neptune and Triton are the voice and the mind, then Proteus is the “hand of Æon.” The largest of the Æon Trinity’s divisions, Proteus handles operations duties, which many Proteus agents translate as “we do the grunt work so things actually get done.” Despite an external reputation for being daring spies or heroic soldiers, training, security, investigation, and even basic manual labor are all Proteus responsibilities as well. Psychokinesis is the most commonly seen psionic Aptitude in Proteus, although the division has an unusually high number of biokinetics, and most of Æon’s few teleporters. Some of the most prominent Proteus branches include:

Section Mars: This large subdivision of Proteus has two main tasks: training and security. Most new Æon Trinity agents who will be doing field work are required to go through Mars training, a sort of “boot camp” that prepares them for their jobs. In addition to physical fitness and basic combat training, the Mars program includes language and cultural studies, training with computers and other tech, and first aid. While most

agents go on to their positions (whether in Proteus or another division), some choose to remain in Section Mars, getting further training and taking positions as security officers or bodyguards. Most permanent Mars agents bear their nickname — “the Goon Squad” — with a measure of pride.

Section Juno: Proteus’ investigative subdivision, Juno agents have a much better reputation than the “goons” of Mars or the “jocks” of Apollo. They work in tandem with police and intelligence forces around the world and across the stars, helping to solve crimes, catch terrorists, and find missing people. The “snoops” are strictly consultants, and tend to be called on only for high-profile cases, or those with international ramifications. Due to this shared “jurisdiction,” Juno agents and Interpol officers have developed something of a friendly — or at times not so friendly — rivalry that can often cause friction between the two organizations.

Section Apollo: Boosted in importance when the Æon Trinity took over command of the Leviathan jump ship program with Operation Argonaut, Apollo is the section of Proteus devoted to aerospace operations. Apollo agents are trained to pilot and operate a variety of craft, from single-occupant hybrid fighters up to the Leviathans themselves — many clairsentients and even a few teleporters are part of the Apollo force, working to navigate and scout for the giant ships. Other Apollo “jocks” specialize in spaceship weaponry, onboard security, and biotech systems. Aside from their piloting skills, Apollo agents are well known for their low-gravity and EVA training, making them suitable for most space-based operations.

Section Titan: While Proteus is careful to define most of its combat-trained operatives as security forces, the “grunts” of Section Titan are soldiers, pure and simple. Originally designed as a small anti-Aberrant strike force, the men and women of Titan are now assigned to combat duty against hostile alien forces as well. As heavy infantry, Titan agents are trained to work with all types of heavy armor, including both tanks and VARGs. The popular image of Section Titan within the Æon Trinity is of a dedicated, heroic VARG trooper. The smallest of Proteus’ publicly known sections, Titan is usually deployed to back up local forces and the Legions when important locations or individuals are targeted by an Aberrant attack.

Section Minerva: Officially, there is no such thing as Section Minerva, although older Proteus agents sometimes whisper about “the spooks.” A tiny and clandestine group of operatives, Minerva agents are

handpicked and answer directly to the Æon Council, who give them total discretion as to the tactics they use to accomplish their objectives. All Minerva agents are chosen based on their sterling moral character as much as their espionage skills. In the section's history, only one agent has ever gone rogue, and he was quickly apprehended by his fellow Minerva members. With no organizational structure to tie them back to the Æon Council, these agents are the ultimate deniable assets, but thus far the Council has refrained from using them as assassins or terrorists, preferring instead to use them to gather information, apprehend fugitives, engage in counter-espionage, or influence national and international policies, all while under the deepest of cover. Minerva agents have no uniforms or ranks; their only insignia are small lighthouse-shaped pins.

The Babel Dossier: As with Section Minerva, the Babel Dossier isn't supposed to exist, although most high-level Proteus agents and a few agents from the other divisions are aware of it. Housed in an underground bunker in a top-secret location, the Babel Dossier — also known as the Babel Vault, the Tower, the Black Collection, and the Freakshow — contains all the secrets that the Æon Trinity deems too dangerous for the world to know about and too dangerous or difficult to destroy. The collection began in the early 20th century, when the Æon Society first started recovering unexplainable artifacts, advanced technologies, forbidden knowledge, and deadly creatures. The original site quickly expanded as a prison for individuals too dangerous to hold anywhere else was added. Much later, in the late 21st century, the most dangerous quantum technology acquired during Operation ReWrite was stored in the vault as well, prompting a move to another, larger and more secure, location. The Babel Dossier is guarded with the highest possible security, and as far as anyone knows, it has never been breached.

INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONS

When the Æon Trinity embarks on a large-scale operation, teams are drawn from all three divisions in order to supply the various expertise that will be necessary to complete the task. The most extensive ongoing operations are often treated almost as if they are divisions unto themselves, with their own command structure reporting directly to the Æon Council. Some of the more famous and influential operations include:

Operation Vesta: One of the three initial large-scale operations begun when the Æon Covenant reformed itself into the Æon Trinity, Vesta is a massive project

intended to restore infrastructure, industry, and residential zones destroyed in the Aberrant War, the Crash, or more recent disasters like the *Esperanza* tragedy. Neptune organizers and translators, Triton engineers and architects, and Proteus security and skilled laborers work together to rebuild roads, dams, bridges, sewers, factories, apartment buildings, and anything else lost in the conflicts and disasters that have rocked the world since the Aberrant era. Although Vesta agents are most active in Europe, they are present in almost every nation and extrasolar colony, helping to bring civilization back to areas that had lost it.

Operation Panacea: Launched at the same time as Vesta, the Panacea program fights against disease, malnutrition, and injury in areas devastated by Aberrant attacks. A joint effort between the three divisions of the Æon Trinity and the Æsculapian Order, Panacea sends doctors, nurses, paramedics, vitakinetics, and vital medical supplies and technology into dangerous areas, escorted by an entourage of negotiators and security forces — necessary to protect the medics and their supplies from the gangs and would-be warlords who thrive in the ruined regions where medical aid is most necessary. Like Vesta, Operation Panacea is global, but currently most active in the areas of Europe devastated by the *Esperanza* disaster.

Operation ReWrite: The third post-Crash operation, ReWrite had two main purposes: to recover as much historical, cultural, and scientific data as possible after the crash of the OpNet and the destruction of so many libraries, archives, and museums in the Aberrant War, and to selectively *delete* any information pertaining to “quantum tech,” the advanced and barely understandable technology created by hyper-intelligent Aberrants. While much of the lost information has been recovered, and almost all quantum tech has been destroyed or sealed away, a few dedicated ReWrite agents still travel the world, collecting scraps of folklore and oral histories, while keeping a wary eye out for any remaining references to Aberrant technologies.

Operation Argonaut: The most recent major operation, and the latest incarnation of an older Æon Society branch dedicated to exploration, Argonaut is the Æon Trinity's name for the Leviathan jump ship program. Coordinating the financing and construction of the Leviathans, recruiting and training the clairsentient navigators and more recently, the teleporter “pilots,” crewing the ships, planning rescue and relief efforts for previously-abandoned interstellar colonies, and scheduling exploratory

ÆON TRINITY ATTITUDES ABOUT OTHER ORDERS

The Æsculapian Order: Would that all the psi orders were as heroic and dedicated as they are.

Chitra Bhanu: There are secrets about their destruction that we need to uncover.

ISRA: Too many dismiss their mysticism as foolishness, and not an understanding of deeper truths.

The Legions: They might even be as good as Section Titan troops, and are just as brave and loyal.

The Ministry: They could bring understanding to the world, but they prefer their intrigues.

Norça: Reliable comrades in arms, but way too many secrets.

Orgotek: They helped transform the world and return humanity to the stars, but where do their loyalties lie?

Upeo wa Macho: Even with the Leviathan jump ships, they are vital to humanity's future, and too many take them for granted.

missions into uncharted regions of space are all Argonaut responsibilities.

Operation Utopia: In the 21st century, Project Utopia had two functions: to study Aberrants and their amazing abilities, and to guide those superhuman beings so that their immense power would be used to create a better world. Despite Utopia's best efforts, the Aberrants' Corruption eventually led to the madness of the Aberrant War. Even with that failure, the basic goals of Utopia — helping those with power *use* that power in a healthy and responsible manner — remained sound. In the 22nd century, Operation Utopia agents are social scientists, futurists, and consultants, working with influential politicians, prominent psions, wealthy metacorps, and religious leaders to guide humanity into a future in line with the core tenets of the Æon Trinity: Hope, Sacrifice, and Unity.

RUNNING AN ÆON TRINITY CAMPAIGN

With the Æon Trinity involved in so many different activities in so many different arenas, it can be difficult to say, "Let's have a campaign where we all play Æon agents," because that's such a vague idea. What would you actually *do* in that campaign? Instead, try coming up with a different, more focused idea first, and then brainstorming how the Æon Trinity might be involved in that idea.

For example, let's say you want to run a scenario where the players will discover a dangerous Aberrant in a ruined space colony. Getting

Æon Trinity agents into that situation is easy — they might be involved with Operation Vesta or Operation Panacea, traveling into the danger zone to provide humanitarian aid, when they discover Aberrant activity. Then they'll have to survive while trying to call in and wait for reinforcements. For a more combat-focused game, they could be a Mars or Titan strike team sent in to deal with the Aberrant threat located by others.

Alternatively, how about a campaign where the players are space explorers, piloting a jump ship out into unexplored sectors of space to locate suitable new colony planets and search for alien life? That has Operation Argonaut written all over it, and any number of science-fiction television shows can be used for inspiration.

For more proactive players, you might try an espionage campaign featuring Minerva agents, who have a lot of freedom to choose their own goals and methods, with minimal supervision from the Æon Council. How might the lack of oversight tempt your characters? Can they stay heroic when it's so much easier to be pragmatic and expedient?

Keep in mind that the Æon Trinity has several thousand Talents working for it, making it a great option for a group that doesn't feel like playing psions. Unlike a more focused campaign based around a single psi order, a campaign featuring a team of Talented Æon Trinity agents has a lot of flexibility, and can easily change focus from mission to mission as operatives are reassigned to varying teams and given new tasks to complete.



CHAPTER SIX

NEW RULES

Look, that's why there's rules, understand?
So that you think before you break 'em.
– Terry Pratchett

The 22nd century presents humanity with new opportunities and new challenges as intrepid explorers and stalwart colonists venture across the stars, hackers and intelligence agencies do electronic battle across the networks of the future, and advancing technology gives the bold the ability to achieve their ambitions.

The new rules provided in this section give details for the places and activities in which **Trinity Continuum: Æon** characters find themselves embroiled, providing rules for the unusual environments that characters may encounter, such as Quantum Flux zones, low and zero gravity and space travel, as well as rules for illnesses, including the deadly Quantum Flux illnesses. This chapter also includes additional rules for hacking, surveillance, and counter surveillance, and for creating super-science devices using noetic biotech.

QUANTUM FLUX ZONES

Like Aberrants (pp. 330-338), sometimes land possesses a Corruption Trait. The ravages of the Aberrant War left vast tracts of the Earth scarred with Corruption. These areas twist and mutate everything within. Scientists call them Quantum Flux zones, or QFZs. Some fade over time; attacks by powerful Aberrants often leave small QFZs that persist for between several days and several weeks. However, others, like Wycoff's Blight, the Venezuelan Plaguelands, and the many small Middle Eastern QFZs have endured for many decades. Quantum Flux zones are antithetical to life, causing all injuries to heal more slowly within them, and for animals, including humans, and plants produce stunted, sickly, or dead offspring. QFZs are rated Light, Medium, or Heavy, depending on their Corruption Trait.

EFFECT ON PSION POWERS

Quantum Flux also interferes with subquantum flow, making it harder for psions to use their powers. Light QFZs impose +1 Difficulty to activation rolls for psionic powers, while Medium QFZs inflict +2. Heavy QFZs inflict +3 and require spending an additional Psi point with each power activation to "push through" the interference. QFZs do not apply their penalty to powers of the Quantakinesis Fundamentals Mode.

ILLNESS, DISEASE, AND QUANTUM FLUX

Illnesses and disease are modeled through Conditions (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 73). They are divided into three levels of severity – minor, major, and extreme – equivalent to the Bruised, Injured, and Maimed Injury Conditions, producing the corresponding Injury Complication, and using the same rules for recovery. However, many diseases require specialized drugs or procedures to treat.

For infectious diseases, the Storyguide sets a severity equal to the level of Injury Condition it inflicts, and virulence between 1 and 5. Severity and virulence aren't linked – the common cold is easy to catch (high virulence) but low severity (minor). A character exposed to the pathogen rolls Survival + Stamina at Virulence Difficulty. She avoids the disease on success, and contracts it on failure. Proper precautions, medication, and equipment can all add Enhancement to this roll, whereas filthy conditions and prolonged exposure can increase the Difficulty.

Most minor diseases heal on their own, although more rapidly with treatment. If not treated, some minor diseases and most major and extreme diseases get worse. For these diseases, the character rolls Survival + Stamina every (Stamina – Virulence) days, with the character's current Injury Complication as a penalty. Proper care and treatment provides Enhancement. Success downgrades the illness one severity, whereas Failure upgrades it one severity. A disease that increases in severity beyond extreme kills that character.

QUANTUM FLUX AND CORRUPTION

In 2123, the general public and most researchers use Corruption and Quantum Flux as synonyms. However, in the Nova Age, Quantum Flux was identified as the unique and inexplicable variations to physical laws that permit humans to erupt into novas and novas' Quantum powers to function. In contrast, Corruption is a type of lasting subatomic damage that occurred when novas overused their Quantum powers or in novas who innately suffered from a relatively rare form of instability. This damage first affected the nova, and if the nova became sufficiently Corrupted, its Corruption could then affect others around it. The Aberrants that returned to the solar system in 2105 were all massively Corrupted. As a result, most researchers in the 22nd century believe that Corruption is an inevitable result of possessing and using Quantum Powers, and began using these terms interchangeably. Quantakinetic Proxy Dr. S.K. Bhurano endorsed this viewpoint in 2108.

However, the discovery of the Corruption-free novas on the planet Eden in 2115 called this idea into question. In reality, some types of Quantum Flux produce Corruption, but most do not. Novas are far more likely to erupt in regions containing substantial amounts of Quantum Flux, but those that erupt in regions where this Quantum Flux is paired with Corruption are more likely to be inherently Corrupted.

One reason for this misidentification is that The Colony, the hideously powerful Aberrant responsible for organizing the attack on Earth, is exceptionally Corrupted and revels in this fact. As a result, it only recruited other exceptionally Corrupted Aberrants and these creatures used their Corruption to create both sub-Aberrant mutants (see p. 332) and heavily Corrupted Quantum Flux zones on worlds they attack so that most humans who erupt on these planets will become Corrupted Aberrants.

QUANTUM FLUX ZONE EFFECTS

CORRUPTION TRAIT	EXAMPLES	HEALING	REPRODUCTION
2 (Light)	Site of major Aberrant battle	All healing takes 50% longer, level 1 Complication to all Medicine rolls	One third of seeds do not sprout, and there is a similar miscarriage rate for animals and people. Deformities and defects are twice as common.
4 (Medium)	Venezuelan Plaguelands, most Middle Eastern QFZs	All healing takes twice as long, impose a level 2 Complication to all Medicine rolls	Two thirds of seeds do not sprout, and there is a similar miscarriage rate for animals and people. One third of sprouts and births suffer defects.
6 (Heavy)	Wycoff's Blight, the worst sections of <i>la Blessure</i>	All healing takes three times as long, impose a level 3 Complication to all Medicine rolls	90% of seeds do not sprout, and there is a similar miscarriage rate for animals and people. The few sprouts and births are visibly deformed and may be innately Corrupted.

QUANTUM FLUX DISEASES

A tiny percentage of people exposed to Quantum Flux in large amounts or over a long time become Aberrants, and a slightly larger percentage of people and animals exposed to Quantum Flux spontaneously transform into sub-Aberrant mutants), but the vast

majority of people who suffer effects from Quantum Flux instead become seriously ill. Quantum Flux diseases are divided into primary and secondary. Primary Quantum Flux diseases are caused by direct exposure to Quantum Flux, like spending time in a QFZ or being subject to Aberrant powers. The first time a character is exposed to Quantum Flux, and

COMMON DISEASES

SEVERITY	INITIAL PENALTY	EXAMPLES
Minor	-1	Common cold, Allergies, Skin infection
Major	-2	Influenza, Gastroenteritis, Gangrenous infection
Extreme	-4	Ebola, Cancer, Aggressive multi-resistant infection

every (Stamina + Psi - Corruption) hours thereafter, roll the source's Corruption trait at a Difficulty equal to the character's Psi + 1. Success inflicts a disease Condition of severity equal to the number of successes, with a Corruption trait equal to its source. Psions are immune to primary Quantum Flux Diseases.

Secondary Quantum Flux diseases come from exposure to pathogens mutated by Corruption. Roll as per normal diseases to see if the character is infected, but if the pathogen's Corruption is greater than the character's Psi, add the difference to the roll's Difficulty. If the character fails the roll he contracts the disease, but this version also has the pathogen's Corruption trait.

Treating Quantum Flux diseases is complicated. Secondary Quantum Flux diseases can be treated through conventional methods and vitakinesis, though any rolls suffer increased Difficulty equal to the pathogen's Corruption. Primary Quantum Flux diseases don't respond to conventional treatment, or to most vitakinetic powers. Vitakinesis can alleviate symptoms, though any rolls suffer the disease's Corruption as Difficulty, and require spending Psi points equal to the Corruption. Primary Quantum Flux diseases can only be permanently healed after a quantakinetic drains or cleanses the Corruption.

AN INTRODUCTION TO QUANTUM FLUX DISEASES

By Dr. Elisha Vasquez, from Noetic Science Essentials

Quantum Flux diseases are a complicated problem. The improvements in medical technology and the advent of vitakinesis make it possible to cure or permanently mitigate almost all chronic illnesses, but the effects of Quantum Flux are unpredictable and tenacious. It cannot merely change DNA sequences, but also alters DNA repair mechanisms. Cells can become impervious or oversensitive to everyday biomolecules, altering their effects in unique ways. There are several multi-layered hypotheses for how this unruly energy affects the human body, and all of them seem to be partially accurate.

There are also two different types of Corruption illness: primary and secondary. A primary Corruption illness is caused by direct exposure to a heavy Quantum Flux zone. It may kill quickly, or linger permanently, or sometimes (if mild) resolve on its own. A secondary Quantum Flux disease is caused by foreign pathogens that have been altered by Quantum Flux. These can usually be cured by vitakinesis or conventional therapies in the same way as other viral, bacterial, fungal, or parasitic diseases, although they are sometimes more challenging to manipulate. The microorganisms and pests that cause such illnesses survive most easily in Corrupted areas, and an individual fighting off such an illness always heals more effectively in a safer area.

Some of these pathogens, however, are tenacious enough to be passed between people and animals, and can survive outside of a Corrupted Zone for a time. This effect was widespread in the Venezuelan Plaguelands. The Æsculapian Order and other national and international health organizations keep a careful eye on emerging microbes and intervene quickly if anything seems to be spreading too quickly. There's some debate about whether residual Quantum Flux emanating from soil removed from contaminated areas is due to its microbiome or some other inherent property, and research on this subject continues.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF INDIRECT DAMAGE

Breathable oxygen, gentle pressure, a stable sense of where “down” is, and a lack of scouring radiation are things that the average citizen of the 22nd century take for granted in their daily life. However, characters in a **Trinity Continuum: Æon** campaign are unlikely to be average citizens, and may well end up in such hostile environments, whether they want to be there or not. The following table lists some of the additional environmental hazards that off-world and undersea explorers and settlers must cope with.

DECOMPRESSION SICKNESS

Anyone who spends time deep underwater, either diving or in an underwater city or submarine,

spends time in a high-pressure environment. Returning to the air pressure on the surface must be done slowly to avoid decompression sickness, “the bends.” Unlike most sources of environmental damage, damage from the bends happens slowly. Calculate the total damage a character will suffer, and then have 1 Injury Condition from this source occur every scene until the character has suffered the full amount of damage. Treatment stops all future damage. The most common treatment involves special drugs plus slow decompression in a submarine or decompression chamber. This process requires eight to 12 hours, depending upon depth.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES OF ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

THREAT	DAMAGE RATING	TAGS	THREAT TYPE
Arctic Water (Immersed)	1	Continuous (minute), Deadly	Environmental
Cryogenic Cold	1-3	Aggravated, Continuous (Rounds), Deadly	Environmental
Decompression Sickness	1-4 (depending upon depth)	Deadly	Environmental
Solar Flare (In Space)	1-3	Aggravated, Continuous (minute), Deadly	Environmental

Any damage rating with a variable range depends upon the severity of the source of indirect damage.

SPACE TRAVEL & COMBAT

When moving through deep space, spacecraft make use of a Speed rating that indicates how rapidly they can move from place to place (see p. 304 for specific examples of spacecraft). This rating provides a rough idea of the timescale involved for potential journeys, with examples based on starting in Earth orbit. Speed Scale ratings in space are always marked with □.

During combat, spacecraft treat their Speed as Scale for the purposes of movement, and so vessels with a higher Speed are almost always able to outpace those with a lower rating.

Space combat uses the same rules as other forms of vehicle combat, essentially treating each ship as a character in its own right. This includes the same range band categories: close, short, medium, long,

extreme, and out of range. Each range band in space is assumed to be vastly larger than the sizes given for normal action sequences, though. Clash range may be within a hundred meters, while greater distances could reach out for many kilometers. Attempting to board another spacecraft requires getting into clash range with the target.

Space is an exceedingly hostile environment; a vessel that suffers Injury Conditions may also end up exposing its crew to fires or vacuum, as well as low or zero-G. When a spacecraft is Taken Out during combat, but not completely destroyed, one of its vital systems is incapacitated or destroyed (see p. 303) and this requires rapid response from any surviving crew — especially if their life-support system has been rendered useless!

SPACE SPEED	DISTANCE COVERED
[1] *	Earth to Luna in two weeks, cannot travel between planets
[2]	Earth to Luna in three days, Earth to Mars in six months
[3]	Earth to Luna in 30 hours, Earth to Mars in six weeks
[4]	Earth to Luna in 12 hours, Earth to Mars in two weeks
[5]	Earth to Luna in four hours, Earth to Mars in four days
[6]	Relativistic speeds, Earth to Luna in under one hour, Earth to Mars in under one day.

* Too slow for hybrid craft, hybrid craft must possess at least space Speed [2]

HACKING AND INFORMATION SECURITY

In the 22nd century, information is valuable and networked technology is ubiquitous. Hacking into computer systems remains a serious threat to those in the security business – and a major opportunity for smart and savvy criminals.

In **Trinity Continuum: Æon** gameplay, hacking falls somewhere between intrigue and procedural action. Hacking is often perpetrated to gain information, which would suggest it is procedural – but a successful hacker can also use a compromised system to achieve other goals, such as shutting down camera feeds in a surveillance center, taking control of a law enforcement drone, or sending messages from an unwitting victim’s minicomputer. With advanced security software and SI as commonplace defenses, hacking isn’t just cracking a code to break into the delicious data innards; it involves evading the notice of prowling, semi-intelligent agents while attempting to persuade the system that the hacker is, in fact, meant to be there.

In ideal circumstances, the would-be hacker is attempting to either decrypt a protected file or break

through passive security systems to access the information within. For this, use the hacking rules in the **Trinity Continuum Corebook** as part of procedural play, using a dice pool of Enigmas + Cunning to allow the searching of an archive. Ideal circumstances, however, are not very common; they are most likely to occur after the hacker has already extracted an encrypted archive and can now work on it in safe surroundings.

PROTECTING A SYSTEM

Most networked systems benefit from three discrete forms of protection. These are the **attitude**, the **failsafe**, and the **agent**.

Like with any intrigue action, the system being targeted by a hack has an **attitude** toward the would-be intrusion. This represents the complexity and nature of the system’s passive defenses, whether it expects to see regular connections and multiple users, and how generally hostile and obstinate it will be for the hacker to navigate through it. A public network is likely to have a positive attitude, whereas any sort of network that

SOCIAL HACKING

So-called “social” hacking remains the best way to access most minicomputers, networked datastores, and other forms of security. This is classic intrigue play, acquiring passwords and accessing other information directly from the weakest link in the chain – the human being. There’s very little chance of a vigilant SI detecting an intruder into the system when the hacker is logging in with the valid credentials or biometrics of the sysadmin, who either blathered them to her over one too many drinks in a bar or didn’t notice that the hacker got him to provide a retina scan. That doesn’t mean that the social hacker can act with carefree abandon within the system, but it’s a major step toward her goals. Compromising a system via social hacking usually involves using the influence system (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 89).

UNIQUE ACCESS SYSTEMS

A Unique Access System (UAS) is a highly secure form of data storage, a unique operating system designed to be incompatible with any other system, and that exists in an isolated network with others of its kind or is entirely disconnected. The UAS stores and encrypts files in a format that only its operating system can read.

A UAS would be entirely useless by itself. No file produced on another system would be compatible with it, so it could never have data added or removed except by physically keying it in. Like a one-time Vernam cipher, what makes a UAS valuable is the key to its lock, the Access Control Device (ACD). An ACD is a go-between, capable of rewriting files from a standard operating system into the appropriate format for the UAS. Every ACD consists of both hardware and software in the form of a portable storage drive designed to be as impregnable as possible. Most ACDs are designed with extremely temperamental SIs that garble and frag the contents at the slightest hint of any attempts to compromise them, such as connecting it to any system other than the specific UAS.

A normal UAS system has a single ACD, held by someone extremely trustworthy and protected by considerable physical security measures. A hacker wanting to access the prized contents of a UAS will need to first secure the ACD, then physically access the UAS itself to use the device. Even hardwiring into the UAS won't allow a direct hack without the ACD to serve as a translator between the systems.

Creating an entirely unique operating system just for a single system or small network is extremely expensive. UAS security is reserved for sensitive governmental data, crucial R&D or financial information for major corporations, sensitive information used in the legal system, and the military. Incidents like the OpNet Crash highlighted a need for this sort of ultra-secure data storage, but it's simply not practical for many organizations, which instead rely on isolated storage without the additional encryption that a UAS provides.

is intentionally secure will have a negative attitude toward the hacker. A personal minicomputer may have a negative attitude of 1, a secure corporate server could have a negative attitude of 3, and a military-grade system like that of a combat drone's command and control is likely to have a negative attitude of 5.

The **failsafe** represents the system's ability to pick up on intrusion, raise an alert, and attempt to counter it. The failsafe rating applies as a Complication to every roll

made to hack into a system; failure to buy the Complication off results in an unaware system becoming aware of the intrusion, as well as the normal problems caused by a Complication.

The **agent** is an active defense. Most systems rely on the failsafe to trigger an alarm before an agent will become involved, but if a system is already expecting an imminent intrusion then the agent can contribute to the system's defenses from the beginning. For most systems, this is an SI agent (p. 285), a limited intelligence Minor character that uses its Primary Pool (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 140) to oppose the hacker and attempts to counter or trace the intrusion. If a system has a living security admin — or whole team of admins — she or they may serve as the agent.

HACKING A SYSTEM

Lacking the credentials that allow her to be recognized as a legitimate user, the aspiring hacker must resort to more direct means. If the target system has any active security failsafes or SI agents — and it is rare to find a system without these — then she uses the following process to perform her hack.

- The hacker must have **access** to the target system.
- The hacker must have the necessary **tools** to perform the hack.
- The hacker attempts the hack in the form of a complex intrigue action against the system, rolling **Enigmas + Intellect**. As with any intrigue action, the attitude of the system's security provides an **Enhancement** to either the hacker or the system (and any agent aware of the intrusion).
- Success allows the hacker into the system, where she can enact subversions.

ACCESS

For the average person in the **Trinity Continuum: Æon** setting, networked technology seems completely ubiquitous. Augmented reality, widespread use of minicomps and the day-to-day requirements of information technology at work give the impression that



everything is part of a great, all-encompassing web. It looks like a hacker's dream come true.

Targets like someone's personal minicomputer or the networked workstations in a media company's marketing suite are relatively accessible. However, after high-profile incidents of data theft, system subversion, and the atrocities that occurred during the Aberrant War, the necessities of genuinely secure systems were made evident. Important data is kept on isolated systems, with hard copies moved by bonded witnesses or by heavily guarded data storage firms. Major companies that don't need such a heavy level of security still run internal, isolated networks for confidential data that are only opened for brief, predetermined periods for data transfer. The most sensitive or crucial data is protected in UAC systems and unique operating systems that effectively speak a completely different language from other computational devices. Hardtech augmentations that could be turned against their user are almost certainly isolated; hard lessons were learned from atrocities during the Aberrant War, and other later problems.

In short, it isn't always easy for the hacker to access her target — especially if she's after something more important than subverting someone's minicomputer.

Sometimes the only approach to accessing a system is to physically wire into it.

There are a number of factors affecting whether a hacker has access to her target system:

- If she is able to physically and directly access the system, she has access. In the case of a system's hardware where there is no obvious way to plug her tools in, this may require cracking the thing open and fiddling around with the internal wiring and connections, using a dice pool of Technology + Intellect.
- If she is close enough to the system to use her tool's wireless capabilities to access it, and it is open for wireless networking, she has access.
- If she is not close enough to use wireless directly, she can try and leapfrog through other systems that may have access themselves. For example, the hacker might attempt to log into someone's minicomputer via hacking the local network provider's system first.

If the hacker attempts to leapfrog through systems that are themselves secure, she must hack each of these intervening systems in turn. Regardless of whether she needs to hack through them or not, the highest Scale penalty that she faces is also applied to

hacking the system she is attempting to leapfrog to, and to the target system's attempts to counter and trace her hack. Leapfrogging can leave a hacker overstretched — but can also serve to conceal her trail. One of the most important aspect of gaining access to a target is the security level of a particular system.

SECURITY LEVELS

After the Aberrant War and the Crash, electronic security underwent a quiet revolution. While the OpNet and organizations connected to it became somewhat more secure, the biggest changes occurred for information considered too important to be freely accessed from the OpNet, even by authorized personnel.

Average Security: Minicomps, the OpNet, and many business and organizations have relatively good security, but can be freely accessed from the OpNet, and their only security are biometrics and passwords. This is referred to as average security. There are two higher levels of security, which rely on secure locations as well as electronic security.

Intermediate Security: financial institutions, large corporations, and governments most often use this level of security. Extremely wealthy or powerful individuals like important politicians or CEOs also often use it for their personal accounts. Organizations using intermediate security only allow employees to access their site from a few specified locations, like the employee's home or office.

Wealthy and powerful individuals using intermediate security usually have a small chip that authenticates their identity implanted in their wrist. This chip automatically deactivates if someone removes it or if the individual dies. These chips can be copied, but only if someone has a chance to spend at least a minute with a scanner pressed against the subject's wrist. Also, the chip's codes change every few days, so any copy is only good for a short period of time.

In addition, SIs track of the individual's movements, permitting the person's location to constantly be determined within a meter. Security is alerted if the person's location is ever unclear, such as if they walk into a wild cave. Also, if the person deviates from their routine too much, security contacts them to make certain they are okay. Many important people who use intermediate security are contractually required to avoid entering areas without OpNet connectivity. Hacking such a system requires the characters to gain access to one of the accepted locations. Often this means hacking inside the target's home or office, in a hotel room next to the target's, or perhaps crouching outside the target's window while they are sleeping.

High Security: This data consists of government or corporate secrets like the identities and locations of covert operatives, plans for cutting-edge technology and the details of restricted Nova Age technology. This data is never available on the OpNet. It is only

kept in secure installations that are shielded against all wireless transmissions going in or out. Moving this data to a different location requires someone to place it on a highly encrypted data-storage medium, usually a UAS. Then, a well-armed, bonded witness carries this data storage to the new location.

Gaining access to this data either involves stealing it from a courier or physically breaking into the facility where the data is stored and used and getting on the secure network. Since every UAS prohibits the data from being copied in an unencrypted format, anyone wishing to steal high-security data must also obtain the ACD.

BONDED WITNESSES

The only way to ensure that information is truly secure is to keep it on a computer or local network located in a secure facility, which has no electronic connection to any computer or network outside of this facility. However, even the most secure data must be moved to other systems. To prevent data breaches, the only people who are allowed to transport this data are bonded witnesses, people licensed by governments as being sufficiently trustworthy to be allowed to access and transport this data. Typically, they access data in the secure facility and print it out or make an electronic copy that they deliver to another secure facility.

Bonded witnesses usually transport their data to courtrooms, law enforcement offices, other secure facilities, or corporate meetings, where they deliver a hardcopy of the data to a designated person and swear that this data has not been compromised in any fashion that they are aware of. Bonded witnesses transport electronic files on a secure minicomp, which has no ability to access the OpNet in any fashion and can only access a few specified and highly secure networks. Many of the minicomps are UASs.

TOOLS

A hacker's tools of the trade are her computer, the software loaded therein, any physical implements if the target system needs to be hardwired into, and any other gadgets that make her life easier. Due to the processing power of a good minicomputer, hacking can be done on the move and relatively discreetly — unless she triggers any security alarms in the process.

Electronic hacking without a computer of some kind is impossible for anyone who is not an electrokinetic. Particularly impressive computer setups may provide an Enhancement to the hacking attempt, but provided the hacker has at least a minicomputer and access, she also needs appropriate (and likely illegal) software — usually an agent like a DIA (see p. 286). This agent normally provides 1 Enhancement, or she can rely on the agent's stats to perform the hack by itself.

THE HACK

Hacking is a complex action, usually measured in intervals of single rounds. This action has a number of milestones usually equal to the system's attitude. Increase the number of milestones for exceptionally secure systems.

Also, as long as the target system is not alerted to the hacker's intrusion, she can willingly extend the size of the intervals, gaining 1 Enhancement for each step that she shifts; from rounds to minutes, minutes to hours, hours to days, and days to weeks. Taking time can give a hacker the edge she needs to break into a particularly secure system — but it also gives more opportunities for the system's agents to pick up on what she is doing.

Additionally, if the Scale of the target system is greater than that of the hacker's tools, the size of the interval is forced up by one step without granting Enhancement. Hacking a traffic light from a minicomputer can be relatively quick, but attempting to punch through the firewalls of a major data-storage facility without some seriously hefty computational firepower is going to take more than a few moments.

The dice pool for the hack itself is Enigmas + Attribute (usually Intellect) against either a static Difficulty (for an unaware system) or opposed by the system's agent (for an alert system). The failsafe of the system acts as a Complication to every roll. Once the system is alert, each point of Complication the hacker fails to buy off provides the agent with 1 Enhancement on its next roll.

If she successfully overcomes all of the hack's milestones, the hacker is inside the system. Regardless

of whether the system is alert or not, she now has a number of successes to spend on subverting the system equal to the total of her Enigmas + Cunning rating.

Locate Data (2 successes): The hacker finds a specific piece of information or a particular file she seeks within the system.

Standard Function (1 or 2 successes): The hacker may activate a function that the system could normally perform, such as opening or closing an automatic door, turning off a camera feed or starting a file download. If the system is unaware, this costs the hacker a single success; if it is alert, then this costs 2 successes.

Forced Function (3+ successes): The hacker may force a function that the system would not normally perform due to safeguards or programming limitations but that is reasonably something it could achieve. For example, rather than simply closing and locking a door, the hacker could then overload the door's electronics with a power surge and burn them out; or she could cause an SI-driven vehicle to veer off the road and crash. The number of successes that a forced function costs is for the Storyguide to determine.

Hide Subversion (1+ successes): The hacker may attempt to cover her traces within the system. She can create a Complication on one of her other subversions within the system, with a level equal to the number of successes she chooses to spend. This Complication is applied to the actions of agents in the system that are trying to counter or trace her; if the Complication is not bought off then the agent will not be able to detect the hidden action. This can be key for subversions such as downloading large amounts of data that will likely take more time than the hacker will manage to remain in the system.

Adjust Attitude (4+ successes): The hacker may attempt to alter permissions, meddle with validations and generally embed herself further in the system. Every four successes she spends on this subversion shifts the attitude of the system one point positively. Unless she successfully conceals this with Hide Subversion, it will almost certainly be reset after she leaves the system. She cannot shift attitude by more than her Enigmas Skill.

Set Alarm (2 successes): The hacker places an alarm within the system. She chooses what will trigger the alarm, and attaches it to another subversion that she also buys with successes, such as performing or forcing a function. When the alarm condition is triggered, the second subversion goes off. This could be as mild

HAVE YOU TRIED TURNING IT OFF AND THEN ON AGAIN?

An agent faced with a problematic hacker who has gotten into their system can turn off the power or pull the plug on the network. This works just fine — there's nothing the hacker can do to a system that isn't active or connected — but any hidden subversions, alarms, and other tricks they've embedded will still be there when the power comes back on and will still need to be traced and scrubbed.

Of course, just turning the power off or disconnecting a piece of hardware isn't always an option. This may be because the network is too important to be taken offline, or it may be because the agent simply isn't authorized to take that action. SI agents usually have a set of parameters that they can activate a kill switch on, but no one would be entirely happy about giving a Satisfactory Intelligence the ability to turn off a hospital's medical electronics due to a system intrusion. An SI agent will usually run that sort of decision up the chain to a living, breathing admin — if there is one.

as sending a message to the hacker's minicomputer when a particular person logs into the system, all the way to making a combat drone open fire when its targeting programs pick up anyone wearing an orange jacket.

Scramble System (2+ successes): The hacker attempts to incapacitate the whole system. She must expend successes equal to the system's failsafe rating plus two, preventing the system from performing any of its normal actions and increasing the Difficulty of any dice pools involving the system by 2 (including her own). If she expends successes equal to twice the system's failsafe rating she can crash it entirely, though this will obviously boot her out immediately.

Leapfrog (2 successes): The hacker may leapfrog from this system to another that it connects to. She remains connected to this system as part of the chain to her ultimate target, and getting booted out of this system cuts off any links in the chain that follow it.

Boot Agent (Varies): The hacker attempts to lock an agent out of the system entirely. She must spend successes equal to the agent's dice pool (the Mental pool for an SI agent, or Enigmas + Attribute for an admin) and then succeed at an opposed Enigmas check against the target; doing so shuts down the agent's access and prevents him from taking any counter actions other than revalidation.

Once the hacker has spent her successes, she may then either leave the system or continue the hack. If

she chooses to continue, she rolls Enigmas + Attribute again against the appropriate Difficulty, but instead of a complex action, this becomes a series of single rolls; each time she is successful, she gains a new pool of successes to spend on subversions. If she is in an unaware system, she can spend as much time as she likes choosing how to spend her successes; however, she must continue to buy off the failsafe Complication on her rolls to avoid being detected. If she is struggling for control of an alert system, then she will be rolling on a round-by-round or minute-by-minute basis against the system's agents.

COUNTERS AND TRACING

An agent protecting a system has additional countermeasures he can deploy against intrusions. Whenever a hacker fails to buy off the failsafe Complication during a hack against an aware system, the agent can trigger one of the following outcomes.

Adjust Attitude: The agent shifts the system's attitude negatively towards the hacker by 1 point. This can only correct an attitude already shifted by the hacker; it cannot give the system a more negative attitude than it began with.

Boot Hacker/Close Connection: This can only be done if the agent has successfully traced the hacker. The agent makes an opposed check against the hacker, each using their Enigmas + Attribute dice pools; if he succeeds, she is immediately booted from the system or has her hack attempt terminated and all accrued Milestones lost.

Revalidation: This can only be done if the hacker has booted the agent from the system, and may not be done during the same interval as the agent was booted. The agent must succeed at an Enigmas + Cunning check, with success allowing him to reenter the system.

Secure System: The agent tightens the security of the system, temporarily shifting its attitude a single point negatively towards the hacker for a number of rounds equal to the agent's Enigmas (or half the Mental pool of an SI agent). A system's attitude can only ever be shifted a single point in this way.

Scan: The agent attempts to track any activities within the system, rolling his Enigmas + Attribute dice pool to discover any subversions the hacker is perpetrating. Note that the hacker may have applied a Complication to this via Hide Subversion.

Scrub: The agent attempts to undo subversions that the hacker has implemented, making an Enigmas roll and spending his successes to remove successes spent on subversions he has detected. He must fully buy off all successes in a subversion to get rid of it.

Trace: The agent attempts to trace the hacker's connection. He makes an Enigmas roll and, if successful, he tracks the hacker's information footprint

through the system. This allows him to then perform other actions that require a trace, but he can also perform a second trace to follow the hacker's connection back to its origin — and can then attempt to initiate his own hack against the hacker's computer, acquire the hacker's location, or other possibilities. Any failsafe the hacker possesses on her equipment applies as a Complication to the agent's own trace attempt.

SURVEILLANCE AND COUNTER SURVEILLANCE

There's no shortage of surveillance in the 22nd century — cities and space platforms have networked surveillance systems, while at the individual level miniaturized cameras and microphones, drones both large and small, bioware, and implanted tools of the trade are easy to access. For those who want to avoid the watchful eye of the state, the art of counter surveillance is key.

When characters attempt surveillance, or are trying to evade the surveillance of others, it can be run as a scene of action-adventure or procedural action where the players make use of clever plans, specific pieces of technology, and the environment to keep watch on their targets or to evade the same. However, it may sometimes be desirable to abstract the process when other action sequences are also taking place concurrently or when the players and Storyguide just aren't that interested in the particulars and care more about the end result.

Abstracting surveillance is done with the Larceny + Attribute dice pool. If both surveillance and counter surveillance are actively being used in a game of cat and mouse, both characters roll their pool. If either side is passive, such as a surveillance team tracking an unsuspecting target or a criminal trying to avoid being seen by a network of cameras that are not currently alert to her fugitive status, then the Storyguide sets a basic Difficulty for the active side. The various tools and techniques each side in the contest has should be awarded as Enhancements or Complications to dice pools.

If the surveillance is successful, the character is able to track or observe her target; if the counter surveillance is successful, the target is able to evade the surveillance or find any surveillance equipment in an area he sweeps.





CHAPTER SEVEN

PSIONICS

Those who truly understand psionic powers need no explanation. Those who need explanation will never understand.

—Anne McCaffrey

The subquantum universe exists alongside the physical universe, constantly touching every point. It is a place of connections, where time and distance often depend on how closely associated two objects are, rather than physical location. The emergence of psions gave humanity the first tools needed to control this universe. All psions harness and manipulate the subquantum universe to affect the physical world.

PSI

Psi measures a character's synchronicity with the universe around her. Psionic energy pools in creatures attuned to it, empowering and encouraging them to use it. As they practice harnessing the subquantum flow, psions' ability to store and command psionic energies grows. Characters with higher Psi exert greater power, versatility, finesse, and control over their effects.

Even neutrals have a Psi trait, representing their basic, living connection to the subquantum universe. Though normal humans resonate with the subquantum world, they have no control over it. They possess a single dot of Psi, which generates a weak noetic field that allows them to use and even format some bioware.

Most humans with latent psionic potential, and most newly triggered psions, possess two dots of

Psi. Particularly strong latents — those who may become teleporters or quantakinetics — must purchase a third dot at character creation to gain those Aptitudes. The greatest psions in the **Trinity Continuum** — the proxies — each have Psi traits of six or seven dots. While they command powers that most other psions haven't dreamed of, there's no barrier preventing any psion from reaching their potential. Anyone with the drive, patience, and resilience to overcome failures and limitations can equal their knowledge and ability.

A character's Psi directly contributes to the dice pool she uses to activate psionic powers, giving experienced practitioners greater control over the effects they generate.

PSI	DESCRIPTION	MODE MAXIMUM	ATTUNEMENT RANGE	TARGET NUMBER	PSI POINTS
•	Normal Human	0	0	8	1
••	Latent/Recently Triggered psion	1*/5	Short	8	5
•••	Strong Latent+ or Trained psion	5	Medium	8	10
••••	Experienced psion	5	Long	8	15
•••••	Veteran psion	5	Extreme (10 kilometers)	8	20
••••••	Transcending psion	6	Extreme (100 kilometers)	7	30
•••••••	Proxy	7	Extreme ^ (1,000 kilometers)	7	40

* Latent psions may have one dot in a single Mode. They can't consciously control it and may only manifest the power at dramatically appropriate times, with the Storyguide's permission. If the character is later triggered into another Aptitude, she keeps this dot as her Auxiliary Mode. Latents don't have access to Attunement, nor can they access their Psi pool.

+ Latent quantakinetics and teleporters must have Psi 3 to be powerful enough to obtain these Aptitudes.

^ Multiply Attunement range by 10 for each dot above seven.

PSI POINTS

Humans are psionic batteries. Even baseline humans retain a portion of the psionic energies that move through them. Psions attract and store even more of this subquantum energy, and can use it to manifest and control their powers.

A character's pool of Psi points depends on her Psi trait as listed in the above table. The minimum Psi point cost to manifest a power is stated in that power's description. In addition to the minimum activation cost, psions attempting to use powers beyond their dots in a Mode must pay extra Psi points, even if the power is normally free to use. See "Activating Psi Powers," p. 206.

A character regains her Psi trait in points every 10 minutes (five minutes for psions with Psi of 6 or 7) after ceasing psionic activity. A character who chooses to spend Psi points every nine minutes (or is somehow forced to do so) can drain herself of psionic energies without recovering any Psi points.

ATTUNEMENT

Psions have an inherent awareness of the subquantum universe around them. This gives them the ability to sense strong sources of psionic energy as well as to feel sudden, dramatic changes in Psi flows. This Attunement allows a psion to feel these

changes at greater distances as her Psi trait increases, as per the table on p. 203.

The character may take an ordinary action to concentrate on her Attunement, rolling Psi + her highest Mode. Success tells the psion if any strong Psi sources, such as powerful psions, potent bioware, or psionic powers are being used within her Attunement range. This doesn't reveal any information about the Psi source, although the character can spend additional successes to discover more, such as the general direction, approximate range, or the strength relative to the psion.

The drawback of this sensitivity is that the psion can't tune out sudden or drastic shifts in the Psi flow. Destruction on a massive scale (hundreds of simultaneous deaths in one location, a moon exploding), or other significant disruptions to Psi (attack squads of powerful Aberrants using their powers) can shock and distract the psion. Smaller, more intimate events — such as the psion's sister giving birth for the first time — can also have this effect. If such disruptions occur within the psion's Attunement range, the psion gains the Psychic Shock Mental Status Condition that provides a Complication equal to Psi – Composure (if greater than zero). This Status Condition lasts for the next scene unless someone provides the psion with telepathic Psychbending or vitakinetic Iatrosis treatment capable of removing mental Status Conditions.

NOETIC CONNECTIONS & TEMPLATES

Everything in the physical universe interacts with the subquantum universe in a unique way. This gives a distinctive signature that psions can use to target applicable powers towards specific individuals, objects, or locations. Psions refer to these signatures as having a noetic connection to the target. The table below shows how noetic connections influence the Difficulty of applicable Psi activation rolls and how long they take to attain.

Many noetic connections aren't static, they fade over time. Material Connections fade after one month. In the time listed below, Familiar Connections fade to Remembered Connections, and after a similar time Remembered Connections fade entirely. Drastically changing the nature of the target degrades any noetic connection far more rapidly. Altering or destroying an object, rearranging the layout of a location, or subjecting a living being to Quantum or psionic powers can

hasten it. The Storyguide should feel free to reduce noetic connection as story events dictate.

Additionally, every living being, and most complex objects, have what psions call a noetic template. In living creatures, the noetic template defines how it should be. It describes how strong and smart the being is, its health, and details of the shape of its body and limbs. The noetic template defines the limits of what is possible. A power that restores the template brings it back to its usual level. A power that enhances this template usually can't go beyond the maximum for a member of that species.

The following are the different types of possible noetic connections.

Psionic Connection: You are currently in a telepathic Network (p. 248) with or using an applicable psionic sense on the target. Formatted bioware always has this level of connection with its user.



Sensory Connection: You can directly sense the target with your normal or psionic senses. This is rarely longer than medium range.

Material Connection: A small piece of an object, person, or location, like a lock of hair that is no more than a month old.

Familiar Connection: Within the last several years, the psion lived in a location for at least a month, spent one day per week there for at least a year, or interacted with a person for either several hours a day for a week or several hours a week for a month. After several years, this connection fades to Remembered.

Within the last month, the psion carried or frequently used an object or vehicle for more than a day. After a second month, this connection fades to Remembered.

Sharing the senses of someone who currently has a Sensory or Direct Connection to the target also counts as a Familiar Connection.

Remembered Connection: Within the last several years, the psion spent several days in a location or interacted with a person for several hours.

NOETIC CONNECTION

In all cases, only apply the best available noetic connection.

CONNECTION	INCREASED DIFFICULTY
Psionic Connection	+1 Enhancement, no increased Difficulty
Sensory Connection	+0
Material Connection	+1
Familiar Connection	+2
Remembered Connection	+3

Within the past month, the psion touched or used the object or vehicle for at least a few minutes. Remembered Connections fade to nothing after the listed time.

Examining the memories of someone with either a Familiar or Remembered Connection to the target also provides a Remembered Connection.

APTITUDES AND MODES

Psionic abilities are divided into eight themes, called Aptitudes. Each Aptitude expresses one aspect of the noetic totality — a term invented by quantakinetic scientists and quickly adopted by clairsentients to describe the full range of possible noetic powers. Every Aptitude contains three aspects called Modes, giving psions different pathways to explore in developing their command of Psi. Aptitudes overlap at points, expressing similar effects in different ways. For example, electrokinetics and vitakinetics can both temporarily enhance mental acuity, but each uses a different method. Electrokinetics boost the electrical signals in their brains while vitakinetics directly enhance their nerve cells.

ACTIVATING PSI POWERS

To a trained psion, using her abilities is as natural as holding her breath. It takes some minor effort, but is simple to achieve. Just like she can expend more effort and challenge herself to hold that breath longer, psions can also push themselves to achieve greater effects than they normally access.

Activating psionic powers usually requires an ordinary action. The character spends the required Psi points and the player rolls the dice pool against the Difficulty. A character's dice pool always equals her Psi Trait plus the number of dots she has in the Mode she is using.

If the character's dots in the Mode equal or exceed the number of dots of the power, her default Difficulty to activate that power is 1. Some powers have additional considerations that may affect the Difficulty, like noetic connection (p. 204) to the target. A character attempting to use a power beyond her Mode dots adds the difference between her Mode dots and the dots of the attempted power to the Difficulty of the roll. She must also pay one additional Psi point per dot of difference, in addition to any other costs associated with the power. For example, if the character has two dots in a Mode but wants to attempt a four-dot power, she increases her Difficulty by +2 and must pay two extra Psi points. In contrast, if her Mode dots exceed the number of dots of the power that she wants to use, she applies the difference as an Enhancement. Characters cannot attempt any six- or seven-dot powers they have not purchased.

A character's Psi usually helps define a power's effect. The greater a psion's Psi Trait, the greater her starting base, as shown in the table below. Unless clearly specified otherwise, range is used for a power's range, Size determines how large an object the psion can affect with the power, and Duration refers to how long a power lasts. All of these quantities increase as a psion's Psi increases. Every Mode power's description refers to the relevant unit's title, like Duration or range. Unless specified otherwise, a character can always choose to affect a lesser range, Size, or other quantity without cost, or end a power before its Duration has expired.

Regardless of the listed Duration, the character can cause a power to last indefinitely by committing the Psi points she spent activating the power. She must commit one Psi point to maintain powers that cost nothing to activate. The character can't regain committed Psi points while maintaining the power, but neither do they count as reactivating the power for purposes of regaining Psi points. She can withdraw the Psi points at any time, after which she regenerates them normally. If the power's normal Duration has expired, the power ends instantly. Psions can't prolong powers like attacks, whose effects only last an instant.

PSI TRAIT EFFECTS

PSI TRAIT	RANGE	SIZE	DURATION
•*	Close	0	Rounds
••	Short	0	Rounds
•••	Short	1	Minutes
••••	Medium	1	Hours
•••••	Medium	2	Hours
••••••	Long	2	Days
•••••••	Long	3	Days

* All psions have at least two dots of Psi but some powers can change a character's effective Psi

Similarly, several aspects of a power depend on the control the psion has over his Mode. Radius is most often used to describe the radius of a power that affects everyone within an area, but it also sometimes represents the range for short-range powers. Mode dots/2 is commonly used for powers that provide a

modest bonus or penalty of some type. The power's description details what factors use this table.

MODE DOTS EFFECTS

MODE DOTS	RADIUS	MODE DOTS/2
•	Close	1
••	Close	1
•••	Short	2
••••	Short	2
•••••	Short	3
••••••	Medium	3
••••••• +	Medium	4

+ Possessing seven dots in a Mode requires that character possess six dots in any Mode and also know the singular seven-dot power for that Aptitude.

Example: A power's description says it lasts the psion's Mode dots times his Duration. For a psion with two dots of Psi and three dots in his Mode, this power lasts three Rounds. For a proxy with seven dots of Psi and five dots in that Mode, the same power lasts five days unless she terminates it earlier.

COMBINING MULTIPLE MODES

A psion can combine powers from her different Modes in a single action if she has appropriate levels of understanding of the powers. She can only combine powers where she has sufficient dots — she can't push herself to access greater levels of power and combine these into a single activation as a mixed action. She must pay the combined cost of each power she wishes to activate.

COMBINING MULTIPLE APTITUDES

Psions can combine their Aptitudes to gain access to more powerful effects. Combining powers either requires two or more psions to be touching so their noetic fields interact with each other, or that they linked via a Mindshare Network (p. 248). Touching doesn't require skin-to-skin contact as noetic fields extend a few millimeters from the psion through clothing or protective gear.

The psions must harmonize their noetic fields to work with each other. This process requires one round, and the linkage continues until the psions wish to end it or they cease being in physical

contact or part of a Mindshare Network. As long as the linkage continues, the psions must combine their powers and they can also take an ordinary action to share Psi points with each other.

Each character uses her own powers, which are boosted by the others' Psi. The psion activates her power as normal, but each psion who is part of the link must also spend 1 additional Psi point (including the psion who is using the power). If anyone can't (or won't) pay this surcharge the link ends instantly. The attempted power fails automatically, and expended Psi points are lost.

The table below lists the bonus effects of combining powers. The psion using the power never counts herself when determining bonuses, but psions of the same Aptitude grant each other access to this bonus. Additionally, when two or more psions of the same Aptitude combine, each considers their Psi to be +1 greater than usual, or +2 if one of the group is a proxy-Tier psion. Ordinary psions can't increase their Psi above six dots in this manner, though proxy-Tier psions can increase Psi to seven dots.

Example: A clairsentient, a psychokinetic, and a telepath combine powers. The clairsentient adds the psychokinetic's Psi to determine the level of her effect, and can affect or observe a number of targets equal to the telepath's Psi. She doesn't gain access to using her powers at Attunement range. Similarly, the telepath increases the range of her powers to her Attunement (or Power x 10 light years for powers with noetic connection range) and adds Psi to her level of effect, but can't use her powers on a number of targets equal to her Psi.

Psions can also combine their abilities to take advantage of each Aptitude's specialties and open new ways to use their powers. This can produce otherwise impossible effects. For example, biokinetics — who can only use their powers on themselves — can combine with vitakinetics to access the noetic templates of others and shapeshift them. If a clairsentient joined this group, the biokinetic could even attempt this shape shifting at range.

The sheer number of possibilities available to creative players through these combinations is beyond the scope of these rules to list and describe. Players should be creative within the spirit of these rules, with the Storyguide being the final arbiter of what is possible, how difficult it is, and how much it costs.

BONUSES FOR COMBINING PSIONIC APTITUDES

SECONDARY APTITUDE	ENHANCED EFFECT
Biokinesis	Double the number of successes the primary psion has available to spend, after accounting for Difficulty or Complications.
Clairsentience	Powers can be used at the clairsentient's Attunement range. In addition, powers that are already guided by noetic connection (p. 204) have a maximum range of Psi x 10 light years.
Electrokinesis	Multiply the duration of the power's effect by the electrokinetic's Psi trait. If the effect normally lasts an instant — such as an attack — the effect can be used again the next round without additional cost.
Psychokinesis	Add the psychokinetic's Psi trait as Enhancement to powers used on objects and devices.
Quantakinesis	Double the primary psion's Psi trait when calculating dice pools and effects.
Telepathy	Allow the primary psion to affect a number of targets equal to the telepath's Psi with each use of a power that can normally only affect a single target other than the psion.
Teleportation	Increase the power's area of effect by one range band. Powers without an area of effect gain one equal to short.
Vitakinesis	Add the vitakinetic's Psi trait as Enhancement to powers on living creatures.

PSIONIC DYSFUNCTION

Although Aptitudes divide into thematic Modes, psions should not study them in isolation. Neglecting to develop all three Modes imbalances the human mind, which leads to dysfunction. A psion suffering dysfunction develops strange personality quirks and finds it harder to interact with her peers.

While rare, psionic dysfunction isn't unknown. Many psions are tempted to improve their favored abilities at the expense of those they find less appealing. Dysfunction also tends to increase the psion's ability in the unbalanced Mode, making it challenging to convince the sufferer to rehabilitate. Further, dysfunction makes it more difficult for the psion to use her other Modes. Sufferers tend to focus even further on their dysfunctional Mode, which comes most easily to her.

Additionally, dysfunction interferes with the psion's ability to combine her powers with others. This interference can go so far as temporarily draining the other psions' lesser Modes, "infecting" them with dysfunction of their own if they spend too much time with a noetic connection to the imbalanced individual.

The public is currently unaware that dysfunction exists. Sensationalized newscasts and paparazzi

reports aren't taken seriously. Besides, the public doesn't possess enough knowledge about Psi to understand that strange behavior is an actual condition and not just a result of the psion having a bad day. The psi orders and the Æon Trinity work to downplay dysfunction's existence, as neither wants humanity to think that psions will inevitably slip into madness like the Aberrants before them.

Dysfunctional psions display personality quirks associated with their dysfunctional Mode. A biokinetic with dysfunctional Adaptation may exhibit an extremely cavalier attitude toward danger as she's sure her body and Psi will meet any challenge. A psychokinetic with dysfunctional Telekinesis may obsess over the location of small items around him and constantly move them about, making it difficult for him to focus on anything but this movement. Players are encouraged to define and express the character's quirks and find ways in which they hamper the character or her peers. The Storyguide should reward this role playing, either through providing Enhancement bonuses or by awarding additional Experience.

A character suffers dysfunction if any one Mode is more than two greater than her next highest Mode. A character with three dots in only one Mode would be dysfunctional, as would a character who has one

PSIONIC DICE POOLS AND COST

As was stated above, a character's dice pool to use all psionic powers always equals the number of dots she has in the Mode she is using plus her Psi Trait, and all Basic Powers use her highest Mode plus her Psi Trait as their dice pool. As a result, the dice pools for individual Mode powers are not listed. Also, if no Psi point cost is listed for a power, it costs 0 Psi points, but the character must still commit 1 Psi point to it to cause it to continue indefinitely.

dot in two of her Modes and four dots in the third. Dysfunction only applies to his primary Aptitude. Dots in Auxiliary Modes (see below) don't count towards staving off dysfunction, nor do they suffer the increased Difficulty. Any psion suffering from psionic dysfunction gains the Psionic Dysfunction Condition.

PSIONIC DYSFUNCTION (PERSISTENT)

Your character has invested too much of herself into a single Psionic Mode, causing her to act erratically. She tends to obsess about her primary Mode to the point of letting other things fall by the wayside. The character gains Enhancement equal to half the difference between her dysfunctional Mode and the next higher Mode (rounded down) to use her dysfunctional Mode. For example, a character with 4 dots in her primary Mode and a single dot in another Mode gains 1 Enhancement. When attempting to use other Modes in her Aptitude, she suffers increased Difficulty equal to the difference between the primary Mode and the next highest Mode.

Additionally, dysfunction interferes with the psion's ability to combine her powers with others. If another psion spends more than a few minutes in a noetic connection with the dysfunctional psion, she gains a temporary version of this Condition which lasts for the next scene.

Momentum: Whenever the character attempts to use any Mode in her Aptitude other than her primary one, add 1 Momentum to the pool.

Resolution: This Condition resolves when the psion increases one of her other Modes so that it is no more than 2 lower than her Dysfunctional Mode.

AUXILIARY MODES

No psion — not even the proxies — has exhibited the ability to manifest multiple Aptitudes. However,

some psions do show vestigial signs that humanity may overcome this limitation. Psions may purchase a single dot in Modes from Aptitudes other than their primary Aptitude. Characters aren't limited in how many Auxiliary Modes they take, but can never possess more than one dot in each Auxiliary Mode. Proxy-Tier characters overcome some of this limitation, allowing them to purchase up to two dots in each of their Auxiliary Modes.

Auxiliary Modes also provide access to that Aptitude's basic powers. However, psions can't attempt to manifest greater effects than their Auxiliary Mode dots allow or combine Auxiliary Modes or their associated basic powers with any other powers, including their Aptitude. Finally, gaining access to quantakinesis or teleportation Auxiliary Modes requires the character to possess a Psi of at least three.

PROXY TIER PSIONS

The proxies and other Tier 3 psions transcend the limitations of lesser psions. Psions can only raise their Psi to 6 if they also possess five dots in one Aptitude Mode, as well as at least three dots in another Mode. At this point, the character can increase her Psi to 6, transforming herself into a proxy-Tier character, with all the advantages that entails, including changing her target number from 8 to 7 (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 71).

Proxy-Tier psions possess far greater Attunement ranges and larger pools of Psi points. They also have access to unique powers. Only proxy-Tier psions can purchase six-dot powers in any of their Modes. They can also learn their Aptitude's single seven-dot power. To purchase a seven-dot power, characters must have seven dots of Psi and six dots in at least one Mode.

BIOKINESIS

Biokinesis allows psions to control their own body. Biokinetics' control over their own anatomy and physiology surpasses vitakinetics' in some areas. Their abilities focus solely on themselves; biokinetic powers can't directly affect another being, though their effects can. A biokinetic couldn't alter a person's mind to make him trust the psion, but she could exude waves of tailored pheromones to set the target at ease.

BASIC POWERS

All characters with even one dot of Biokinesis possess the following powers.

BIOSENSE

Biokinetics are keenly aware of individual life forms around them. Each creature registers a unique signature to the psion's senses. With some effort, the biokinetic can search through this constant living "noise" to differentiate between signatures and search for specific signals.

System: If successful, the psion senses all individual living beings within Short range. She can screen out microscopic life with a thought, and can spend

successes to refine types of life, such as mammal, reptile, human, or ant. Biosense lasts Psi Duration.

FORM MASTERY

The biokinetic specializes in certain shapes made from her malleable flesh. She can shift into these forms with minimal effort, wearing them for as long as she desires.

System: The player crafts her desired shape from the various Transmogrification powers available to the character. This can include transformations from different dot ratings, but she must possess sufficient dots in a Mode; she can't extend her power beyond what she knows. Total the successes; extra Psi points (in addition to the powers' base costs) may be required to perform all the transformations in this shape. The character pays one Experience per two successes or extra Psi points (round down) needed to gain permanent access to the form. Thereafter, she can transform into this shape as a reflexive action by spending the Psi point cost of using the highest Mode that is part of this transformation. The form endures while she commits this Psi point and otherwise lasts for her Mode dots times her Duration.



ADAPTATION

Adaptation protects the psion against hostile environments. Surviving temperature extremes, resisting toxins, or shifting moment by moment to mitigate damage from combat are Adaptation's purview. Adaptation also protects all formatted biotech the psion is wearing or touching.

Adaptation always tries to activate to protect the psion. Whenever the psion encounters a circumstance that Adaptation could defend against, the power automatically uses a reflexive action on behalf of the character. This requires no conscious effort, but she must have sufficient Psi points to trigger the effect and still makes an activation roll for the power to work. Automatic activation only applies to techniques the character has sufficient dots for. Though she can push herself to use more difficult powers, these won't activate automatically. The character can consciously choose to prevent this automatic activation.

RESIST (•)

The psion mitigates sources of harm coming from within her body. She can alter biochemical processes, concentrate immune responses towards foreign objects, and strengthen her biological template to resist alterations. She can isolate and expel a toxin without altering or being affected by its toxicity. The psion can also cleanse herself of dirt and grime through this power, altering her skin and hair to repel these substances and take an instant psionic shower.

System: Success reduces the damage rating of hazards such as toxins, irritants, and diseases within the psion's body by an amount equal to her Mode dots. If the power reduces the damage rating to zero the character can either internally neutralize the substance, or expel it intact from her body. If the damage rating of a hazard is not reduced to zero, it continues to damage the psion at the reduced rate. She can spend additional successes to further reduce the damage rating at one success per point of reduction. Each activation resists all internal hazards present at that time for as long as the psion remains in their presence. If she encounters new harmful substances, she must activate the power again. The psion need only spend a single success to clean her body as if she had bathed.

ACCLIMATIZE (••)

A psion can adjust his physiology to best suit the environment. If exposed in a frozen snowfield, he could draw body heat inwards to maintain core temperature, and adjust his retinal response to avoid snow-blindness from the excessive glare. In a desert, he could increase surface blood flow to better shed heat, while reducing sweat to minimize water loss. In a smoky room, he can filter the air in his throat or allow himself to avoid suffocation for hours. However, this power can't fully protect the character from exceptionally swift and deadly threats.

System: The psion suffers no penalties from increased or decreased gravity that is less than extreme gravity (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 110) and can also ignore all environmental indirect damage with the Continuous (hour) tag as well as all environmental indirect damage with the Continuous (minute) tag that does not also possess the Aggravated tag. The psion can reduce the damage rating of other forms of environmental indirect damage by one per success spent. Reducing the damage rating of these sources of damage to zero changes them from Continuous (rounds) to Continuous (minute) or from Continuous (minute) damage to Continuous (hour).

Each activation resists all environmental hazards present at that time — if the biokinetic is in zero gravity, surrounded by corrosive acid and hot gases, he would be protected from all three. The psion must activate the power again if he encounters a new hazard. The psion can also use this power to temporarily give himself either the one-dot Mars Adaptation or the one-dot Low Gravity Adaptation Edge (p. 127) for one success. The power lasts for his Mode dots times his Duration or while the character remains in contact with the hazard, whichever is shorter.

METABOLIC CONTROL (•••)

The biokinetic controls the speed of her body's processes. While this can reduce harmful conditions, it also works to repair damage. The psion can slow blood flow, increase adrenaline and neurotransmitter production, or even overcharge her healing processes.

Cost: 1 Psi

System: If successful, the character changes the rate of one aspect of her physiology. For functions that take a defined time, such as healing, holding her breath, or going without water, she multiplies (or

divides) the time by Mode dots + successes. For processes not measured in time, such as Initiative, the character either adds (or subtracts) Mode dots/2 to her total. The character can spend additional successes to further change this rate on a one-for-one basis. Alternately, the character can spend two successes to affect a second biological process. These changes last her Mode dots times her Duration.

ADAPT (••••)

The biokinetic's body makes extreme changes to temporarily cope with almost any hostile condition. He can survive the vacuum of space, dive through Jupiter's toxic atmosphere without a spacesuit, swim to the deepest depths of Earth's ocean, or act normally in 5 Gs.

Cost: 2 Psi

System: By spending 2 Psi, the psion upgrades Acclimatize so that he ignores all environmental indirect damage with the Continuous tag and ignores all negative effects of extreme gravity. For the duration of this power, the character's body automatically changes as required to meet any new environmental challenges. The power lasts for his Mode dots times his Duration.

SURVIVE (•••••)

The psion's body works to adapt to any hostile situation, not just environmental. Her skin thickens in an instant to the toughness of crocodile hide to resist blade or bullet, becomes translucent and crystalline to disperse laser blasts, or highly conductive on the surface and resistant beneath to ground electricity without harm. She can also regenerate lost limbs and vital organs. As long as she survives, she can overcome grievous damage to become whole again.

Cost: 3 Psi

System: Success both increases the Difficulty of all attempts to use the Inflict Damage Stunt against her and reduces the damage rating of all forms of indirect damage by an amount equal to her Mode dots. This bonus persists for Mode dots Scenes, as her body instinctively shifts shape to counter whatever seeks to harm her.

During this time, she can also spend successes to instantly regenerate body parts and remove both Injury and Status Conditions, as per the following table.

BIOKINESIS REGENERATION

REGENERATE	SUCCESSES
Finger, eye, hand, foot	1
Limb, non-vital internal organ	2
Vital internal organ	3
Spine, brain	4
Injury and Status Conditions	1 per Condition modifier

PSYCHOMORPHING

Psychomorphing explores the workings of the psion's body within the possibilities of what it means to be human. He may "redraw" his biological template to reshape or improve it, at least temporarily. Except for alterations that are designed to be noticeable, such as changes to skin or hair color, the effects of Psychomorphing are invisible to others.

ADJUST (•)

The psion can fine tune his body, refining his abilities to match his desires. He can change the coloration of his skin, hair, or eyes, or change the elasticity of his skin to give the appearance of wrinkles (or remove them), but cannot change his build or face shape. He can also optimize the makeup of his muscles and bones to suit a given need, but he is confined by the limitations of his biological template; he must take from one Attribute to add to another. However, he can't otherwise change his appearance.

System: Success allows the character to shift a number of physical features or physical Attributes equal to Mode dots per success spent, taking points from one Physical Attribute to add the same number of points to another. These adjustments last his Mode dots times his Duration, but cannot reduce any Physical Attribute below one dot or increase any Attribute above six dots. The character can also spend one success to temporarily gain or remove the Striking Edge.

ENHANCE (••)

The biokinetic learns to augment the limitations of her biological template, overwriting it with pure Psi. The character can increase any of her Physical Attributes to maximum human levels, although she can't exceed this limit. She can also enhance herself in other relatively minor ways.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The character may add one dot to any one physical Attribute for every success spent, up to a maximum of five dots for each Attribute, proxy-Tier psions increase this limit to six dots (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 54). Her adjustments also allow her to temporarily purchase Physical Edges at a cost of one success per dot. In addition, the psion can spend 1 success to do any one of the following: Increase her running or swimming Speed Scale by +1 (to an absolute maximum of 3 if combined with the Swift Edge), hold her breath for one scene, or survive without harm or impairment for one week without water or one month without food. However, doing the last two require committing 1 Psi point. Otherwise, transformations endure for her Mode dots times her Duration.

COMPARTMENTALIZE (•••)



The biokinetic has absolute control over substances entering or leaving his body. He could take in toxins or poisonous gases, and then isolate and store them for later release. He can also control whether he leaves behind biological traces such as hair, skin flakes, or DNA and incorporate formatted bioware in his body, merging it within his flesh, both concealing it and reducing its Tolerance.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The biokinetic leaves almost no biological traces while the power is active, including fingerprints. Apply the psion's Mode dots as a Difficulty for rolls attempting to track or identify the character by such traces. The character can also ingest one substance for later release per success spent, storing it for his Mode dots times his Duration. If the substance's damage rating - his Mode dots is greater than zero, the character takes damage as per the reduced level. Incorporating bioware using this power is permanent until the psion wishes to expel it, and does not require committing Psi points.

Incorporated bioware reduces its Formatting Tolerance by 1, but the psion can only incorporate a number of pieces of bioware equal to his Psi.

OVERCOME (••••)

Human flesh and bone no longer limit the biokinetic's desires. While she still can't reach superhuman levels, she can control her body's mechanical processes however she wants, as long as she has something to work with. She can twist joints in any direction, make her feet hyper flexible to grasp objects as easily as with her hands, or lock herself in position so that she doesn't tire. The psion has absolute control over her body as long as even the thinnest threads of flesh connect the parts. This control also extends to a biochemical level and allows the psion to tailor pheromones to influence and persuade people around her.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: Success grants the character an Enhancement equal to her Mode dots to all rolls that would benefit from the character's mercurial shape changing. This generally applies to all Physical rolls, with the Storyguide ruling on whether it applies to Mental or Social tasks. In addition, she can also release specific pheromones to aid social interactions, spending one success per +1 Enhancement or to shift the attitude over everyone in close range towards the character by one point in either direction. Each pheromone must be focused towards a single specific goal, such as intimidation or seduction, and only provides benefit if the target can sense the pheromones. If desired, characters can use multiple successes to produce multiple pheromones. Pheromones are ineffective if the psion or target are in sealed space suits or are more than close range from each other. This power lasts her Mode dots times her Duration.

PERFECTION (•••••)

The biokinetic can now move beyond human limitations, enhancing themselves to superhuman levels. The character can redesign his inner workings, moving organs to new locations, or even deconstruct organs to distribute throughout his body without affecting function. He can toughen his skin and ignore nerve impulses. He can also withstand incredible bodily trauma and continue acting long after he should be dead.

Cost: 3 Psi points

ARMOR AND WEAPON TAGS FOR PSION POWERS

Various Modes can provide psions with armor or attacks, both of which use armor tags and weapon tags. See the armor tags and the weapon tags in the **Trinity Continuum Core-book** (pp. 123-126) and (p. 127), and the new armor tags and weapon tags in this book (pp. 268-269) and (pp. 274-276). Unless otherwise specified, all armor provided by psi powers automatically possesses the Complete tag.

System: The character can now use Enhance to increase Physical Attributes up to a maximum of 7 dots for each Physical Attribute and up to a maximum of five dots for each Mental or Social Attribute. He can also add any reasonable temporary Mental, Physical, or Social Edges. The psion can also purchase additional temporary Bruised Condition boxes for two successes each, or additional Maimed Condition boxes for one success each. Damage recorded in these disappears when the power ends, with injuries absorbed by the biokinetic's redundant organs and flesh. All changes endure for his Mode dots times his Duration.

TRANSMOGRIFY

Transmogrify manipulates the biokinetic's appearance. More than just cosmetic changes, this Mode modifies cellular structures and makes the physiological alterations required to sustain the transformations. Transmogrify's effects can confuse and alarm those not used to biokinetic displays. Radically shifted biokinetics have been confused for Aberrants.

PLASTICITY (•)

The biokinetic can overcome various mechanical restrictions on her body without losing functionality. She can soften her bones and tissues to the consistency of soft rubber. She can stretch out her skin and muscles to shape her body, extend her reach, or flatten herself to only a few centimeters thick and fit into narrow spaces.

System: The character can stretch his reach a number of additional meters equal to her Mode dots. She can soften and flatten himself to fit through gaps no smaller than (10 - Mode dots) centimeters. The biokinetic can also build shapes from her malleable body, such as wings. While she lacks the strength to fly, she could flatten and stretch herself to glide or mitigate falling damage. These changes last her Mode dots times her Duration. Her close-combat attacks automatically

gain the Reach tag, and add the Entangle tag by spending one success

GROSS MANIPULATION (••)

The psion makes obvious and unsubtle changes to his physical form, without drastically changing his overall structure. Psions typically use these changes as quick offensive or defensive measures. He could grow additional eyes, plate himself in armor, or sprout tentacles. He can sharpen his fingers into knives or other simple mechanical tools. He can also adjust his features and general build. These changes aren't enough to mimic anyone else's appearance or improve the psion's Attributes, but can make him unrecognizable to pursuers.

System: The psion alters aspects of himself by spending successes as per the chart below. Enhancement bonuses granted by these modifications for any non-combat purposes are equal to his Mode dots/2. The psion designs each modification to accomplish a specific purpose. Each separate modification costs successes — see the table below. Extra limbs allow psions to hold and manipulate objects, and may allow characters to perform more and more complex mixed actions in a round, like using two hands to pick a lock and a third to fire a gun. Additional sensory organs can allow the character to perform tasks like seeing around corners by putting an eye on his fingertip.

If he is instead giving his body into armor or weapons, the psion gains a pool of points equal to his Mode dots + successes in tags to use to create these armor and weapons. Weapons formed through this power all possess the Melee tag and can have any of the following weapon tags: Brutal, Deadly, Entangle (2), Grapple, Piercing, Pushing, Quality (2, 3), Reach, Shield (2), or Weighted. Similarly, he can add the Complete (3), Composite (2), Defensive (2), Hard (1), or Soft (1, 2) tags to armor formed by this power. All changes last for his Mode dots times his Duration.

NON-COMBAT MODIFICATIONS	SUCCESSSES REQUIRED
Tool	1
Appendages	2 per appendage
Sensory organs	1
Cosmetic changes	1 for any desired changes

TRANSFORMATION (•••)

Transformation doesn't explore dramatic changes away from human norms; it develops the psion's absolute fine control over human appearance. She can change her hair and eye color, alter her height, weight, body shape, or sex, and can even modify her finger and retina prints if she likes. With sufficient effort, she can impersonate another person in near-perfect disguise. These changes aren't merely cosmetic; physiological processes shift as needed, including reproductive capacity.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: Success changes appearance as per the table below. Although the biokinetic can impersonate an individual's appearance, any trace evidence she leaves normally won't match that person. However, if she has a Psionic Connection (p. 204) with the person via Biosense, she can duplicate his precise details, such as retina prints, fingerprints, blood type, or DNA traces. All changes last her Mode dots times her Duration.

MODIFICATION	SUCCESSSES REQUIRED
Cosmetic (skin, hair or eye color)	1 for all
Dimensions (height or weight)	1 per 10% change from unaltered
Physical sex	2
Copy identifying detail (requires a Psionic Connection)	1 per detail
Impersonate individual	4
Precisely copy individual (requires a Psionic Connection)	5

CHIMERA (••••)

The biokinetic can alter his form in radical and inhuman ways, replicating most any function found in the biological world and transforming into other animals of Size 1. He can alter his senses to detect heat, infrasound, sonar, or even a planet's magnetic field. He can grow a biological laser or venom glands and

the fangs or stingers needed to deliver the poison. He could even give himself a set of functional wings or a carapace of tortoiseshell armor. His practical limits are his imagination. Whatever the modification, his power ensures he can use it for its intended purpose.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: In addition to providing the psion with information not otherwise available, new senses can provide him with 1 Enhancement per success to relevant actions. If the biokinetic wishes to improve several senses at once, he can allocate the successes as desired. The player can also increase the character's Speed Scale (including flying speed) at a cost of one success per +1 running or swimming Speed Scale or two successes per +1 flying Speed Scale (to a maximum of Speed Scale 4).

These changes can also duplicate the functions of any worn or handheld formattable biotech device listed in either the everyday technology (pp. 283-284), display gear (p. 287), or spy tech (pp. 292-295) sections of **Chapter Eight**, at a cost of one success per dot of Cost, with a minimum cost of one success. This power can also give the psion either the Amphibious or Aquatic Conversion Edges at a cost of one success per dot.

The psion can also create armor or weapons, including unusual weapons, like laser eyes, sonic screams, organic darts or flamethrowers, electrical generation organs, or poison sprayers. The psion gains a pool of points equal to his Mode dots to purchase armor and weapon tags that make sense for the form, including the Environmental 0 armor tag against any one particular threat, but not the Environmental 1 or 2 armor tags (p. XX), which are beyond the range of this power. Psions can add an additional number of tags equal to their Mode dots by spending 1 Psi point. However, the Quality (2, 3) tag is forbidden. Instead, weapons created in this fashion always possess an Enhancement equal to the number of successes the psion wishes to allocate to it. Also, this power cannot duplicate the powers of any psi gauntlets. All changes last his Mode dots times his Duration.

Finally, the psion can make any biokinetic alterations permanent. Purely cosmetic changes cost 1 Experience, additional Edges or Attributes have their normal cost, innate armor and weapons cost 2 Experience per point of tags, and other inhuman modifications like wings cost an amount of Experience equal to 4 x the number of successes required for the transformation. The psion must devote all future Experience to paying off these changes and can only use Experience for other purposes once they have been paid off.

IMBUE INSTINCT (•••••)

The psion can impart independent action to discrete parts of her body. She could give her hand and arm the ability to fire independently at hostile targets while she concentrates on hacking a lock. Alternatively, she could grow silk-weaving spinnerets with Chimera and have them make a continuously updated anchor point while she ascends a sheer cliff face. Even more alarmingly, the biokinetic can separate chunks of her flesh, mold them into shape, and give them enough intelligence to perform independent tasks. At this level of power, the biokinetic can also use Chimera to change her Size.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: The character gains bonuses for making mixed actions. When using this power, she can select a number of specific actions up to her Psi that she will be taking, like shooting a gun, climbing a wall, or hacking a computer, and she gains a +1 Enhancement to all of these actions for every two successes she rolls (round up). However, only these tasks gain this bonus, and her current physical form must be capable of performing all of the desired actions.

The character can spend one success to separate a Condition box worth of flesh and provide it with limbs, senses, and a single, relatively specific purpose, like “scout the next room and report back” or “attack anyone but me who comes through this door.” The biokinetic has no innate sense of what these independent portions experience, though she has a general sense of their location and wellbeing. She can remerge with it with a touch, gaining its experiences as if she were there. The psion can also use any previous Transmogrify power to alter her Size down to Size 0 (medium-sized dog or large raccoon) or up to Size 2 (large grizzly bear or draft horse). This power lasts a number of hours equal to her Mode dots, but independent portions of the psion persist until the psion either reabsorbs them or they are destroyed.

TRANSCENDING AND PROXY-TIER POWERS

Only proxy-Tier psions can learn these powers.

FLESHCRAFTER (••••• •)

Fleshcrafter is three separate powers, one each for Adaptation, Psychomorphing, and Transmogrify.



These powers are only accessible to proxy-Tier psions. These powers don't provide a new effect, they increase the effect of every other power in that Mode.

System: When using a power from a Mode for which the psion has Fleshcrafter, he may spend an additional Psi point to increase the Scale of one aspect of the power, like Speed Scale, by one, increase any Enhancement by +2, or to multiply any numerical quantities like rate of healing by five.

CLONE (••••• ••)

The biokinetic can make fully independent copies of herself. These clones share her memories and personality, but are fully independent entities. They gain all of the character's skills, and may possess her psionic potential. These clones also share the psion's noetic template, which can confuse powers that rely on identifying this usually unique signature. This also means the proxy can use her biokinetic powers on her clones, but doing so requires touch. Clones can merge with each other or the original with a simple touch if both individuals wish it. They can't be uncreated with just a thought.

Cost: 10 Psi points

System: The clone requires one hour to mature, reduced by 10 minutes per success spent (minimum one minute), during which the proxy must devote her attention to it. The clone exactly matches the proxy's skills and Attributes, but the proxy must spend one success per dot of Psi that the clone will possess. The clone can have lower Psi than the proxy if she lacks the requisite successes, or chooses to make the clone less powerful. The clone possesses all the proxy's memories and experiences at its time of creation. It survives until killed, it dies of old age, or when reabsorbed to gain its memories. A proxy can never have more than Psi copies of herself at once. Clones can never use the Clone power.

Clairsentience opens a psion's mind to interconnected layers of reality. Everything that has led to the moment that is now, and everything that is, forges the pathway to future events. Clairsentients can cast their minds across the universe to see the present. They can peel back time and study how past events occurred. Less reliably, they can watch the interconnections play out to predict the most likely futures, or even influence the connections and choose their own path.

BASIC POWERS

All characters with even one dot of Clairsentience possess the following powers.

THE SIGHT

Clairsentients are more keenly attuned to subtle psionic fluctuations than their peers, able to sense and influence these flows. When using Attunement, they receive more information. They can feel Psi energy moving through objects and living creatures, can sense strong latency, gauge the strength of nearby psions, or hone in on the active use of powers. The psion's ability to alter psionic fluctuations is extremely limited, but he can impart messages in special biotech receptacles called focal crystals (p. 290).

Sensing the presence of Psi also helps clairsentients be more aware of areas corrupted by

Aberrants. Quantum energies interfere with the proper flow of the subquantum universe and stand out to the clairsentient like dark spots against a bright background. This luminescence can make isolated Corruption difficult to pinpoint as it masks the darkness. Detecting a location where multiple Aberrants have used their powers is simple, whereas finding one Aberrant hiding within a heavily populated area is challenging.

System: In addition to the usual information a psion gains from using Attunement, if successful, the clairsentient knows the Psi trait, current number of Psi points, and the Aptitude of each psion within his range, and whether or not a neutral has a strong latency. Characters capable of masking or shielding themselves from such probing oppose this roll with their own Psi (or equivalent trait) + relevant power or ability. The clear can also sense any Corruption zones or Terat Aberrants (p. 333) within range. Also, for one success, the clairsentient can record a brief message (no more than five minutes of speech or video, or a similar quantity of images or text) on any focal crystal within close range.

EXTENDED ATTUNEMENT

In addition to sensing more than other psions, a clairsentient's Attunement also extends further.

CLEARs SEE EVERYTHING!

Many Storyguides wonder how they can build a mystery scenario with clairsentients around. It's true that it's all but impossible to hide from powerful clairsentients who focus their attention on you, but for many practical reasons, this generally isn't going to happen.

Firstly, psions aren't that common compared to the rest of humanity. Clairsentients are a fraction of that number — around 5,000 across all human space — and only a handful of clear are powerful enough to see everything.

Secondly, most clairsentients aren't psionic detectives just waiting to solve mundane crimes. They have a universe to help colonize, alien threats to face, and other psions to keep an eye on. Barring extraordinary circumstances, most people are never going to attract a clear's attention.

Thirdly, characters possess several ways to avoid clairsentient observation. Various companies sell devices to fill an area with psionic static that confounds Psi powers (p. 291). Also, individuals with enough information about clairsentience know that significant, emotive events tend to draw more attention from psionic senses than quiet, undramatic actions. Such people cause deliberate chaos to obfuscate their own actions or time their actions so they occur within strong emotional events, such as weddings, funerals, or even sporting matches. Also, some Aptitudes have specific powers designed to allow their users to avoid detection and hide what they're doing from prying eyes.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Psychometry powers provide awareness of what psions call significant events. These are moments of extreme emotion, considerable change, or those crowded with living noetic templates. Significant moments obfuscate other details that the psion may seek. Opponents who know how clairsentience works can use this to their advantage and plan accordingly. The Storyguide should assign Complications to a character's roll when significant moments obscure the details she seeks. Although her power will work, she won't necessarily gain the detail she wants or may see the significant event instead.

System: Add the clairsentient's highest clairsentient Mode dots to her Psi trait for the purposes of establishing her effective Attunement dots and range. When using Attunement, the clear is also

aware of any focal crystals within range that contain messages (p. 290) and can spend a success to read the message. The psion knows before she spends a success whether she has previously read a message.

PSYCHOMETRY

Everything has its own unique signature in the subquantum universe. When the signatures of different creatures, places, or objects interact, they inevitably leave noetic impressions. Events when strong emotion or significant activity converge make more noticeable impressions, but even the least significant interaction detectably changes the subquantum universe. Practitioners of Psychometry can sense these changes and use them to delve into the past and understand how it relates to the present.

Psychometry is normally limited to seeing no more than a number of days equal to the psion's Mode dots into the past. However, at the Storyguide's discretion, the psion can see powerful psionic or Quantum events or particularly impressive significant events (see below) up to their Mode dots in months or, for the most powerful events, even their Mode dots in years or centuries in the past. However, this longer timeline only ever applies to places or objects, never to living creatures, since living things change too much over time.

Objects and locations that have been buried or entirely abandoned for centuries or even for tens of thousands of years have not had their previous noetic impressions diluted by later events. As a result, Psychometry can be exceedingly useful in ruins and other archeological sites. Details are often somewhat

less clear than normal, but a powerful significant event from 30,000 years ago can still leave noticeable traces.

LIVING ECHO (•)

The impact of living creatures on the noetic universe is far stronger than almost any inanimate object. By touching an object or individual, the clairsentient can sense who it encountered in the past. While this power doesn't identify unknown individuals, it gives a sense of their psionic imprint, which the clairsentient will recognize if she has encountered them before, or does so in future.

Living Echo delivers little on the nature of the interaction. If a killer purchased a knife from a store and used it to murder someone, that knife would resonate with the victim, the salesperson, and the killer, but wouldn't reveal who was the murderer. Similarly, if the victim's husband discovered the body and touched the knife, he too would register to the clear's senses. With sufficient successes, the clairsentient can somewhat overcome this limitation, learning the "flavor" of each encounter. The salesperson might give a sense of boredom or routine, while the killer was angry and the husband was overwhelmed by grief.

System: Success grants the character an awareness of people and items who encountered the object in the last a number of days equal to the psion's Mode dots. The psion can spend one success to gain a Familiar Connection (p. 205) with any object or individual she detects through this power or to learn more about the interaction. The psion can also use successes to purchase either a raw information or an interpretation clue (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 83) about the interaction.

AREA INSIGHT (••)

The psion understands more than just who an object or person encountered, she also gains



impressions of the places it has been. This is less a map and more like flashes of varying strengths. The more significant the location was to the object, the stronger the impression and the easier it is to gain details. The psionic impression doesn't identify where the locations are, though the clairsentient understands the kind of place (a living room, interrogation cell, cargo freighter) and recognizes them if he encounters them or has been there before. The clairsentient can use this power on himself to study previous experiences, examining the noetic signatures present at every point and possibly gaining insight or information he didn't have at the time.

System: The character sees the most significant locations where an object was for a number of days equal to his Mode dots. The Storyguide should provide more detailed information depending on his degree of success, providing one clue of any type about the object or location he detects using this power. The psion can also spend one success or Psi point to gain a Familiar Connection with any such object or location.

LOCATIONAL MEMORY (•••)

The psion casts her mind back through past events within the area around her, gaining an overall awareness

of every creature and object that moved through the area, as well as the actions they took and even hints of the emotions they felt there. Like previous forms of Psychometry, this is less like reviewing a holographic recording of the area and more an overlapping kaleidoscope of psionic impressions — powerful actions, events, and presences stand out more than those that passed by without undue notice. The clairsentient can expend effort to focus on specific events and gain a better understanding of how they transpired. This may provide understanding of how to overcome obstacles or interact with others. She can also focus this ability on an object or vehicle, learning details of how it was used.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The character sees events that occurred in her immediate vicinity for a number of days equal to the psion's Mode dots. If she seeks specific information or clues, like the code for a keypad, or where someone put a particular object, her number of successes determines the level of detail she gains. One success allows the psion to learn one clue of any type about events that occurred in that area, including information like the code punched into a keypad, where someone placed a particular object, or how any people involved were feeling. Finally, the psion can spend one success or Psi point to gain a

Familiar Connection (p. 205) with any object or individual she detects through this power. If the psion rolls a sufficient number of successes, she can also gain detailed information about how users typically operate a device or vehicle, see the table below for information.

INTERACTION	SUCCESSES REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Complex	3	How to operate conventional machinery
Difficult	4	How to operate unusual machinery
Alien	5	How to operate alien technology

FORKING TIMELINES: (••••)

The clairsentient can follow the timeline of people and objects to which he has a noetic connection. By following noetic interactions, the psion can see what happened to the subject of his interest. He does not need to have ever encountered the subquantum signature personally to gain information on it. The psion could trace the purchase of an item back to the seller, then follow her psionic signature to gain an impression of where she has traveled and who she interacted with. With sufficient effort, or subsequent uses of this power, he can switch his focus and watch multiple timelines unfold. This power can only see to the present, it gains no insight into the future.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: If successful, the clear can follow the timeline of any object or person to which he has a noetic connection. The psion can trace the target for a number of days equal to his Mode dots per success spent, through to the present. The psion can also spend one success to gain a Sensory Connection with any other object or individual he detects through this power. He can then spend 1 Psi point to switch the focus of the power to one of these targets, but doesn't gain additional days of awareness unless he spends more successes or reactivates the power. The psion gains only minimal information about events that took place outside of his Extended Attunement range, although he

can spend additional successes to boost his Extended Attunement by one point per success, up to a maximum of 13 (one billion km). Additionally, the psion gains no information at all about any events that occur more than Psi x 10 light years away.

CONVERGENCE (•••••)

With this power, the clairsentient can psionically "mark" any object, person, or location whose noetic signature she has sensed at any point in its timeline. The subquantum universe contrives to bring the psion and the object together. The workings of this power are subject to considerable debate amongst psionic researchers as it appears to violate the laws of causality — though the psion only decided to summon the object at the moment she learned of it in the present, it was always fated to come to her from the moment that caught her attention in the past.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: If successful, she encounters the target at some point in her future, usually within (10 - her Mode dots) days, although she has limited control over where this will occur. She can spend successes to better define the encounter, reducing (or increasing) the time it will occur by up to one day per success, to a minimum of one day. She can also dictate the general type of location for one success, or narrow it further by spending additional successes. Importantly, this power doesn't dictate how the encounter will unfold, only that it will occur.

PSYCHOLOCATION

Psycholocation reveals to the clairsentient exactly where things are in the present, relative to everything else. It can reveal the precise location of distant stars and planets at that exact moment, ignoring light-speed delays. This Mode is essential to humanity's exploration and colonization of extrasolar locations. The normal maximum range of all Psycholocation abilities is equal to the psion's Extended Attunement range. However, clears can spend additional successes to boost this Extended Attunement by one point per success, up to a maximum of 13 (one billion km range). Also, any abilities that have a secondary interstellar range, have a range equal to Psi x 10 light years. Unless otherwise indicated, all Psycholocation powers last the psion's Mode dots times her Duration, which can be increased by committing Psi points.

INTERSTELLAR PSI POWERS

Although many teleportation powers have a range that's unlimited except for noetic connection, clairsentients and other psions who combine their powers with clairsentients are limited a maximum range of between 20 and 50 light years for most psions and up to 350 light years for proxy-Tier psions using the six-dot Clear Vision power. Until the recent development of the ARES pod (p. 290) all interstellar clairsentience and clairsentient-aided telepathy was limited to ranges far less than many of the colonies teleporters regularly visited. More than a few psions have asked teleportation Proxy Bolade Atwan how she learned of exceedingly distant worlds like Far Nyumba, Averiguas, and Qinshui, but neither she nor the other proxies have provided a good explanation for their knowledge.

ORIENTATION (•)



The clairsentient knows exactly where he is in relation to either a specific point or the nearest familiar landmark. He knows the direction and distance to a known location or feature. If his plane crashes in a jungle, the psion could use Orientation to know that he is 1,023 kilometers from his home. He could know that the town he saw from the air is 31 kilometers due south, and that the road he caught a glimpse of is 673 meters east-southeast. In addition to knowing his absolute location and everything around him, the clairsentient also becomes hyper-aware of his surroundings.

System: Success indicates the character knows his location and has an awareness of direction and distance to any location he has ever seen that's within his Psi x 10 light years. This awareness lasts the remainder of the scene. While the power persists, he can also spend successes to reduce Complication from sensory impairment, such as loud noises, smoke, or lack of light. If the roll is one where heightened awareness is advantageous, he can spend successes to add +1 Enhancement per success to the action.

DOWSING (••)

In addition to knowing her own location, the clairsentient can determine the location of noetic

signatures she knows. This is easiest when she has a noetic connection with an individual or object, but she can also find examples that resonate with general themes. She could find the nearest police officers, Æon Trinity chapterhouse, electrokinetics, or psions more generally. She could even find hardtech freighters, or those carrying certain types of cargo.

With additional effort, the clear can push her power to interstellar ranges, though this sacrifices detail. She can look at the sky and know if the star she focuses on is within her range, and roughly how many planets orbit it, but little more beyond this. Her power adjusts for the fact that the light she sees may be dozens or hundreds of years old, and the star has moved on from its apparent location in the sky.

The psion can also use her experience of noetic relationships to cloak or highlight her presence by precisely controlling how her subquantum signature interacts with the universe. This power doesn't aid the psion's physical attempts to hide, but does increase the difficulty to locate her using psionic abilities. This power is necessary for the operation of Leviathan jump ships.

System: The psion can use this power to locate any known object or person or a general type of person or object, as indicated in the description above. Additional successes give the psion more information about the location, like whether it is in a building or underground, if it is stationary or if it is in motion. She can push to interstellar range, using the interstellar range listed above. Success tells her if the star she seeks is within her range, and if so, how distant it is. She can spend one success to know how many planets orbit the star, and another to sense if any of the worlds are within the "Goldilocks Zone" capable of supporting terrestrial life.

The character can also use this power to conceal or draw attention to herself from psionic detections. If successful, she applies her number of Mode dots

as either an increased Difficulty (when concealing) or an Enhancement (when noticeable) to powers designed to find her.

SENSORY MANIPULATION (•••)

The clairsentient can project his senses and see, hear, taste, smell, or touch distant locations as if he were present. His Psi insulates him from direct negative effects. He wouldn't be burned or choked extending his senses through a burning building to search for survivors, though he would feel uncomfortably warm and have chest tightness from the feel of smoke and fumes in his lungs. The psion can also use this power in concert with Dowsing at interstellar ranges to gain more information on the stars and planets he surveys. This use is essential for clairsentients piloting Leviathan jump ships to distant systems.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The clairsentient can perceive the location just as if he was there in person and can spend successes to search for clues using sensing (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 84). When using this ability at interstellar range with Dowsing active, his perceptions are exceedingly limited. He can spend successes to learn more about one planet or celestial object in the system he's sensing. Each success reveals one macro detail — gravity, climate, breathable atmosphere, presence of water, major landmasses. He can't learn fine details through this power at interstellar range.

FOCUS-SENSING (••••)

The clairsentient can now sense details far outside the range of human perception. She can focus to nanoscopic fine detail and beyond. The clairsentient can see tiny compositional and manufacturing details of objects. She can sense the arrangement of atoms to know whether something was carved, cast, or made through other means. The clear can sense chemical composition and see the arrangement of atoms or can instead choose to see or hear light or sounds well outside of a human's ability to sense or detect smells better than a bloodhound. With sufficient successes, she can even penetrate to the subatomic level and understand the makeup of protons, neutrons, and electrons, and know which isotopes are present. She can use this in conjunction with Dowsing and Sensory Manipulation to gain details of planets and structures, though she still can't obtain the detail available at less extreme ranges.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: If successful, the character adds an Enhancement equal to her Mode dots to see fine detail or notice inconsistencies within her normal sensory range. Each success spent shifts her perception one detail "step," from microscopic (bacteria and other small creatures), to nanoscopic (viruses and nanoparticles), to atomic (individual molecules), to subatomic (the particles within atoms). One "step" also allows the character to perceive light or sound outside the range of human senses, like x-rays or subsonic noises. The character can combine this power with Sensory Manipulation to sense precise details of distant objects. When used at interstellar ranges with earlier powers, she can spend a success to learn more about the celestial objects. Each success reveals the presence or absence of life, type of life (animal, microbial, or vegetable), and possibly whether the life conforms with anything familiar to the clear (such as mammalian or reptilian). She can also sense the presence of major settlements, if a civilization has surpassed the equivalent of an industrial age, and if there is an ongoing global war or some other equally noticeable event.

OMNISCIENCE (•••••)

For a limited time, the clairsentient becomes one with the noetic totality and can sense everything within range. Although he observes every event happening at that moment, even a mind as powerful as hers can't comprehend everything. The amount he understands depends on how much detail he seeks. The greater the detail, the more his viewpoint narrows.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: Success gives the psion total sensory awareness within his Radius and can spend 1 Psi point to increase his Radius by one range band, but cannot further increase his Radius except by using Clear Vision. At this level of awareness, he perceives overall impressions of everything occurring within this area. He can use this to guide his focus into specific areas to see detail before moving out again. Focusing on a specific event within his sphere of awareness costs one success; returning to his totality overview costs nothing. The character can combine this power with Sensory Manipulation to gain Omniscience of an area around the target point. This power lasts his Mode dots times his Duration, but the psion cannot use it at interstellar range.



PSYCHOCOGNITION

Psychocognition is the least precise clair-sentience Mode. This Mode predicts probable movement of the universe by taking a psionic snapshot of the moment and extrapolating all influences and energies on it. Psychocognition is most effective in determining which immediate actions will deliver the most favorable future for the psion. The further into the future one delves, the less likely it is that any given prediction will occur. The universe is so infinitely complex and finely balanced that a change in the movement of one particle could eventually bring about vast changes.

ALERTNESS (•)

The bulk of the clair-sentient's attention remains focused on the present, but a small fragment watches the immediate future. The awareness isn't conscious — the psion doesn't know exactly what is about to happen until the event takes place — but her subconscious notes any incoming danger and prompts her to action, even if she's not sure why.

System: The clair-sentient increases her Defense by an amount equal to her Mode dots. The Storyguide should also warn the character if her

action, the actions of others, or the environment would create negative consequences for the clear in subsequent rounds. This includes incoming attacks, but also if an earthquake is about to strike the building she is in (or about to enter). She will also know if she is about to make an immediate serious social blunder — asking after a person's partner who has recently died — or is in danger from mental tasks, such as taking the winning move in a game that will cause the opponent to shoot her in a sudden fit of rage. However, she only knows that the action she is about to take is problematic, not why. The character can sense danger, not the precise reasons for this danger. Also, although the character is forewarned, nothing stops her from going ahead with the dangerous activity. This power lasts for her Mode dots times her Duration.

LEAST RESISTANCE (••)

At moments of decision the clair-sentient glimpses across all possible choices to see which is the easiest path to take or what actions he should avoid taking. Whether he chooses to follow this revelation is up to him, as his choices collapse the uncertain potentiality and future becomes the present. This power doesn't give the psion any insight into whether the

simplest path leads to the best long-term outcome, it just reveals the immediate path of least resistance. The clear can also use this power to gain brief visions of possible problems in his immediate future.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The character knows the quickest path to his destination, such as the exit to a building, the nearest fire alarm, or where he left an object he lost. If his actions require a roll, he gains a pool equal to successes that he can use as an Enhancement to any necessary rolls. The power lasts his Mode dots times his Duration.

Alternately, the psion can use this power to provide information about the near future. If successful, the Storyguide runs the game normally, but if something goes seriously wrong in the next Mode dots minutes, the player can declare that this event was a clairsentient vision. At this point, time resets to when the clear used this power. Clears can look into the future like this no more often than once a scene. Using both aspects of this power requires either two actions or a mixed action.

HINDER (•••)

Rather than just simplifying her options, the clairsentient understands how her actions impact others, and how her choices create the most difficulty for her opponents.

Cost: 2 Psi points

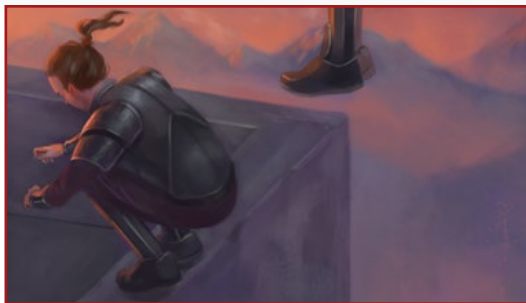
System: The character learns how her approach to a situation can hinder her opponent. This could be the psion's own actions, such as approaching her opponent from his left because he suffers hearing loss. It could also lead the psion to any location or object within her power's Radius that will affect the opponent's ability to respond, like a childhood treasure, whose loss he won't risk. If the psion's opponent needs to roll, the clear has a pool equal to successes that she can spend to increase the Difficulty at a rate of one success per +1 Difficulty. This pool lasts her Mode dots times her Duration but only applies to a single opponent.

FAVORABLE OUTCOME (••••)

Predicting more than a few moments into the future is particularly difficult as the sheer number of arrangements the universe can take grows with every decision made. Clairsentients with this level of power overcome this to a degree.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: The psion can make a number of rerolls equal to his Mode dots + successes for the remainder



of the scene. He can retry failed rolls and also reroll a successful roll in the hopes of generating more successes. In all cases, the character chooses which version of any particular roll to use. The character can spend additional rerolls on one task until he either gains a result he likes or exhausts his pool. Fate can only be pushed so far without considerable effort; each subsequent use of this power within one scene increases its cost by an additional 3 Psi points and its Difficulty by 1.

NEXUS SURFING (•••••)

With this level of power, the psion learns to tune into the totality of the upcoming future and sense impending disturbances. Nexus points are times and places of great importance, which can disturb the flows of noetic energy as they disrupt the lives of hundreds, or perhaps even millions. Violence causes many nexus points, like a bomb going off or a large, poorly maintained spacecraft crashing into an asteroid. However, a single accidental insult that derails a treaty and leads to a Europe-wide war would be just as powerful a nexus point as a massive Chromatic attack. The psion can also use this power to scan an individual's future, checking to see if there are any nexus points or other significant events.

Cost: 4 Psi points

System: Your clairsentient attunes herself to the implicate subquantum order for the entire session, enabling her to sense upcoming disturbances within her Enhanced Attunement range. A nexus may be anything from the impending explosion of a poorly maintained hyperfusion reactor to a massive Aberrant assault. This ability allows the character to learn of upcoming threats that will occur during this session about which she might otherwise have no way to learn.

The character only gains a few flashes of information about the upcoming disturbance. She learns the location and approximate time of the

disturbance, and no more than one or two images, which are usually cryptic and partial. An upcoming Aberrant attack might be revealed with a brief image of a few dead Legion soldiers, while an overloading hyperfusion reactor might be signaled by a warning light going off on a control panel, and a diplomatic insult signaled by a look of shock on the insulted party's face. Each success provides the psion with one piece of raw information about the event. She can also spend one success to upgrade each piece of raw information, providing either interpretation or Q&A about the clue. Once triggered, Nexus Surfing's influence is difficult to resist — the character feels pulled towards the location. A successful Integrity + Resolve roll allows her to resist heading towards the nexus, but she still feels this pull.

If the clairsentient scans an individual's future, she catches glimpses of any nexuses the individual is associated with that are within a number of years equal to the clear's Psi. Like other uses of this power, these glimpses provide nothing more than a location and one or two often-cryptic images. Also, these images are only of the individual's most likely future, and may change.

TRANSCENDING AND PROXY-TIER POWERS

Only proxy-Tier psions can learn these powers.

CLEAR VISION (••••• •)

Clear Vision is three separate powers, one each for Psychometry, Psycholocation, and Psychocognition. These powers are only accessible to proxy-Tier psions. These powers don't provide a

new effect, they increase the effect of every other power in that Mode.

System: When using a power from a Mode for which the psion has Clear Vision, he may spend an additional Psi point to increase the Scale of one aspect of the power like Radius or Attunement range by one, increase any Enhancement by +2, or multiply any numerical quantities like range in light years or number of targets by five.

DESTINY (••••• ••)

A clairsentient proxy can tread the delicate paths of choice with accuracy akin to threading the finest needle. Once he focuses on reaching an outcome and follows the paths to take him there, few things can stand in his way. Although the proxy is almost certain to reach his destination, the path is often filled with setbacks and danger.

Cost: 10 Psi points

System: For one session, the proxy gains a pool of points equal to his Psi plus successes. Each point in this pool can be used to provide the psion with 1 Enhancement to one action, including Defensive Stunts. This bonus rises to 2 Enhancement per point if used to aid in any action that directly protects the psion, his close comrades, or any group the psion feels passionate loyalty to from serious harm or death.

This pool only refreshes through setback, as the universe seeks to balance itself. Instead of benefiting from Enhancement on a roll, the proxy can instead choose to increase the Difficulty to return the same amount of points to the pool. Additionally, each time the proxy takes damage he adds a point to the pool. The proxy can't reduce the time Destiny is active, and can't reactivate it during this period.

ELECTROKINESIS

Electrokinetic gives the psion awareness and control of both electricity and the electromagnetic spectrum, as well as everything that uses or relies on electricity. Computers, vehicles, communications, biotechnology — even living flesh — all work because of the flow of energies under this Aptitude's domain. All these things can be manipulated, enhanced, or diminished as the electrokinetic desires.

BASIC POWERS

All characters with even one dot of Electrokinetic possess the following powers.

BURST

The electrokinetic is a nexus where energies converge. With a small effort, the psion can coalesce them into a small semi-focused burst of electricity or EM radiation. Fine control is impossible, but this burst can still be useful. A burst of static electricity could create enough charge to power a device for one last use, or to force a short circuit and shutdown. A burst of radio waves could briefly interfere with nearby OpNet signals, or a flash of light might distract enemies, or signal allies.

System: The character focuses energy to a single point within short range. Depending on the psion's

intent, characters using senses, equipment, or powers affected by this burst may suffer an increased Difficulty with the number of successes rolled, or the psion may use it for some other purpose like signaling or briefly powering a small device.

SENSE SPECTRUM

The psion can feel which electromagnetic energies are present. She has a general sense of what purpose they serve — the difference between microwaves from an oven and those from a communications transmitter — but can't tell what information they carry.

System: The psion is aware of any electromagnetic energies within short range, as well as the relative strength and source of these, and if they carry information like OpNet data.

ELECTROMANIPULATION

Electromanipulation deals with the flow of electromagnetic energies through living organisms. Humans, animals, and bioware are all subject to Electromanipulation. Even alien species are susceptible as long as their systems are based on electrochemical charges moving throughout the organism. Electromanipulation tends to have few visual cues. Its results may be noticeable, such as making the dead walk, but the psion can remain hidden without sparks or light displays to give away his location. Unless otherwise stated, psions can use Electromanipulation powers against targets within visual range. The psion gains +1 Enhancement if he touches the target instead.

BIOELECTRICAL AWARENESS (•)

The character can tune into the distinctive bioelectrical patterns of living creatures to detect how many life forms are within an area. In addition to this general understanding, he can focus on the flow of electromagnetic energies through an organism within his line of sight. He can also disrupt this flow to hinder his victim's movement and functionality.

System: Success lets the character detect all bioelectrical creatures (all known physical life forms) within his Radius. He can gather more detailed information, such as whether they're human, animal, or alien, by spending successes. This power lasts for one Scene.

To disrupt a target within his range, the roll is opposed by the target's Survival + Stamina. Success disturbs her energy flows, adding Difficulty equal to the number of successes rolled to her rolls for a

number of rounds equal to the psion's Mode dots. If the penalty is greater than the victim's Stamina, she is unable to act for the duration.

PRECISION UNDERSTANDING (••)

The electrokinetic increases her understanding of the specific bioelectrical systems of the brain and nervous systems. She can watch someone's neurological activity in response to truths and falsehoods, like a lie detector and can sense a person's intention to act as the signal moves from brain to muscle. The psion can also use this ability to detect recent traces of living bioelectric activity in an area.

System: Success allows the psion can perceive the target's specific bioelectrical reaction to situations. This grants successes as an Enhancement to understand the target's intentions or reactions, such as detecting lies or understanding whether the person recognizes an image. When used in combat the psion can add successes as Enhancement to defense rolls used against any attack of which the psion is aware. This power also reveals any inconsistencies to the target's energy flows, such as injuries, nerve damage, bioware, or hardtech implants.

When used to read bioelectric traces, the character can scan an area within her Radius for any traces of living creatures. One success allows the character to detect the number and approximate size and type of creatures in this area up to 30 minutes in the past, but cannot distinguish between humans, Qin in biosuits, or human-sized Aberrants. Each additional success can either increase the length of time into the past the character can look by 30 minutes or provide additional details, like species (including being able to distinguish humans from Aberrants). For two successes, the psion can recognize individuals that she has previously scanned with electrokinesis. This power lasts one scene.

ENHANCEMENT (•••)

Once he understands living biocurrents, the psion can manipulate them with extreme precision. He can boost Mental Attributes and associated traits. He can also shield a target's body from electromagnetic forces, or concentrate and "overcharge" electricity and discharge them like an electric eel's attack.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: Success allows the character to add one dot to his mental Attributes for every success spent, up to 7 dots for each Attribute. He can also temporarily purchase mental Edges that don't require external

ENHANCEMENT

ATTACK	EN	RANGE	DAMAGE TYPE	TAGS
Bioelectric shock	Mode dots/2	Close-Short	Electrical	Electrical, Ranged (Close-Radius), Stun

resources at a rate of one dot per success. Enhancing others is possible, but requires both twice the normal number of successes and physical contact.

The psion can also use this power defensively on himself or on anyone within his Radius. The target becomes immune to all attacks and environmental damage with the Electrical tag. For one additional success, this armor includes an electric field that possesses the Electrical weapon tag and the Defensive armor tag. All of these powers last the psion's Mode dots times his Duration.

Used offensively, the psion spends one Psi point and rolls his dice pool to make the attack listed above. The attack automatically has an Enhancement equal to his Mode dots/2, as well as the Electrical and Ranged (Close-Short) tags, and if the psion wishes, the Stun tag. The psion can purchase additional tags by spending one success per point of tags. These additional tags include Combined Stun (1 additional point), Non-Lethal (1 additional point), or Spread (1). The psion can also spend one success or one Psi point to increase the range to medium.

ANIMA (••••)

The psion can command the electrical signals that control flesh, including in the recently dead. Although she can control the movement of living targets, she can't control their thoughts. In the dead, the psion provides the animating electrical charge and can either control the body directly like a puppet, or build a set of instructions for how it responds to given stimuli. The electrokinetic can continue to recharge the reanimated flesh but this does nothing to slow its decomposition. Eventually dead nerves and muscles cease responding to electrical energy.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: Living targets oppose this roll with Integrity + Stamina. Dead subjects increase the Difficulty of the psion's roll by +1 per day since death — more if environmental conditions promote decay, less if the body is well preserved. Success lets the psion control the body as if it were her own, using its Physical Attributes with her own skills. In living

targets, this control lasts one round per success spent, and the puppet can't move beyond the psion's Radius without being instantly freed. For deceased puppets, the psion can directly control the body for her Mode dots times her Duration while it's within the psion's Radius. Alternatively, she can issue a number of specific commands equal to her Psi for the corpse to follow per success spent and commit 2 Psi points. The psion can only command the dead puppet to carry out straightforward mechanical tasks.

GHOST (•••••)

The psion builds digital versions of himself that can temporarily inhabit computers and networks. This doesn't require tremendous computer-processing power as his Psi does most of the work. The electrokinetic can reintegrate these digital agents as desired, gaining access to their memories and experiences. If desired, the psion can even abandon his own body and live solely within the network.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: The psion must be within short range of a computer or a device that's part of a network to use this power. He can use this power in one of two ways. The psion can create a digital "ghost" of his personality, much like an advanced agent. This ghost can attempt Psi tasks, if the task can be achieved on the computer or its network. Each success spent provides an Enhancement to these tasks. Reporting back to the psion counts as a task. The ghost deletes after it exhausts its tasks, or after his Mode dots times his Duration. The ghost's dice pool equals Psi + Electromanipulation and interacts with computer systems as per the normal hacking rules.

Alternatively, the psion can divorce his consciousness from his body and fully inhabit the device or network. He interacts with computer systems as per normal rules, including for tasks like hacking (p. 196), but adds his successes on this roll as an Enhancement to every roll within the system. The psion can maintain this state for his Mode dots times his Duration per success spent. He has no inherent awareness of the condition of his body, and must be in a device no more than his range away to return to it.



PHOTOKINESIS

Everyone knows Photokinesis manipulates visible light, weaving holograms or creating laser beams. However, Photokinesis also grants electrokinetics broad-reaching control over the electromagnetic spectrum from radio waves to gamma rays.

EM SIGHT (•)

The psion can sense energy emissions across the electromagnetic spectrum. Despite the name, the electrokinetic can interpret this information through all her senses, building a comprehensive map of energy flows around her. The psion can sense infrared, ultraviolet, and even gamma rays. This may not help the psion understand what the information means if it's encrypted. The psion can also use this ability to control the local illumination.

System: Success allows the psion to sense a wide range of electromagnetic energy around her, allowing her to track someone by the heat emanating from their footprints or notice the presence of radioactive material by the gamma rays it emits. The psion can also try to interpret emissions that

transmit information. For encrypted signals, she must roll Enigmas + Cunning with the signal's encryption level as a Complication. Overcoming this Complication allows the psion to decrypt the data, while failure results in the psion perceiving the encrypted signal, but not being able to decrypt it. The psion can change what frequencies she is observing at will, and can also use this power to brighten and dim light within short range, which can impose or remove up to successes of Difficulty or Complication to visual perception. This power lasts her Mode dots times her Duration.

MODULATION (••)

The EK manipulates electromagnetic energies around him in a broad-reaching, unfocused manner. He can remap all electromagnetic energies onto an area to a different point of the spectrum or can change a single wavelength into another, and can also diffuse signals over the same area or otherwise alter the nature of these signals. This is useful for creating a broad-acting signal jammer, or can create a shield around the psion that changes lasers into unfocused light or gamma radiation into less-harmful frequencies.

PHOTONIC POWER

ATTACK	EN	RANGE	DAMAGE TYPE	TAGS
Laser Generation	Mode Dots	Close-Medium	Ballistic	Ranged: Close-Medium + others as desired

System: Success allows the character to transform some or all EM frequencies within short range into other frequencies or otherwise alter them in relatively small ways, and can even plunge a room into total darkness by transforming all the visible light to radio waves. In addition, the psion can subtly alter any single light source within short range, causing a single room light, vidscreen, augmented-reality display, or holographic display to appear to display anything the psion wishes, including appearing to be off or otherwise nonfunctional.

The psion can't create damaging effects with this power. When using the power defensively, he reduces the damage from energy-based attacks and indirect energy damage by one for every success spent. The psion can use it to provide defense and alter signals simultaneously. This effect lasts his Mode dots times his Duration.

PHOTONIC POWER (•••)

The photokinetic can create powerful focused or coherent bursts of electromagnetic radiation like lasers, masers, or even gamma-ray lasers.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: Success allows the psion to use a laser attack on one target. Use the weapon description below; it automatically possesses an Enhancement equal to Mode dots and the Ranged (Close-Medium) tag. The psion also has a pool of points equal to her Mode dots that she can use to purchase additional points of tags for this attack. Each additional Psi point the psion spends provides her with a number of additional points of tags equal to her Mode dots. The following tags are possible: Beam (1), Destructive (2), Incendiary (2), Piercing (1), Spread (1, can only be combined with Stun), and Stun (1, creating temporary blindness). The psion can also spend one Psi point to increase the range to long.

The psion can also use this power for noncombat purposes, ranging from cutting through a door with a laser to heating a dinner with microwaves, starting a fire, sterilizing an area with UV light, or creating a powerful burst of radio or microwaves to serve as a beacon or to send a simple signal.

DYNAMIC CONTROL (••••)

The photokinetic can now create or modify multiple light sources at once, firing a barrage of laser beams, creating deadly walls of laser light, or even causing several different augmented-reality displays to display false information.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: On a successful reflexive roll, the psion can create a maximum number of separate lasers or other focused electromagnetic broadcasts, like radio beacons, equal to his Mode dots, which he can use for a variety of purposes. Once created, each laser lasts for one Scene. Each of these lasers can use any of the tags available for Photonic Power.

In addition to ordinary attacks, the psion can also use any of these lasers defensively, to deflect or vaporize a single attack by a small projectile like a bullet. To accomplish this, the psion adds his successes to his defense roll that round. Alternately, the psion can transform one of these lasers into a paper-thin wall of laser light that either forms a close-range cylinder or dome around a point or blocks off a corridor or other opening up to five meters on a side. These walls can be either opaque and glowing or transparent to visible light. This barrier acts as indirect damage with a damage rating equal to successes and has the Continuous (Rounds) tag. Once activated, each laser or other beam functions on its own, but moving, altering, or redirecting more than one of these lasers per round requires a mixed action. The psion gains +1 Enhancement to each use of one of these lasers, so a mixed action using three different lasers would gain +1 Enhancement to each of these three attack or defense rolls.

The psion can use the same level of control in a subtler fashion to alter any or all light sources within his Radius, including making all screens, augmented-reality displays, or holographic displays in range appear to display anything the psion wishes. All uses of this power last for one scene.

ILLUSIONIST (•••••)

The psion now has precise three-dimensional control of the electromagnetic spectrum. She can make herself or others invisible or create seemingly real holograms.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: Success gives the psion a pool of points equal to Psi + successes that she can use to create or modify images. Total the points necessary and compare them to the available pool. If the psion doesn't possess sufficient points, she must make a simpler or smaller illusion. In the table below, illusions include both creating images, changing the appearance of people or objects, and making objects or people invisible. However, while stationary images appear perfect, making a moving object invisible or transforming a person's appearance is more difficult, and observers can roll Integrity + Cunning against a Difficulty equal to the user's Psi to notice something appears slightly off, unless the psion spends two extra successes. Also, these are purely visual illusions and do not produce the correct sounds or hold up to any attempts to touch them. Unless she wishes to dismiss them earlier, these holograms last for one scene.

POINT COST	RESULT
1	Create one static and stationary illusion of up to human size.
1	Allow the illusion to move normally (including blinking and waving) but to walk or otherwise move at no more than a slow walk.
1	Increase the Speed of an image or invisibility effect by 1.
2	Cause a single illusion to appear perfectly convincing.
2	Increase the Size of the object by 1 (up to a maximum of Size 3)
2	Create multiple different stationary illusions within close range of a single point.
3	Create multiple different stationary illusions within short range of a single point.

TECHNOKINESIS

Technokinesis controls the flow of electricity and data through nonliving machinery. It can power a machine or modify data at the psion's whim. Although human technology develops and changes at an alarming rate, practitioners of Technokinesis don't have to adapt and modify their approaches to

keep pace. Like other Psi powers, the psion doesn't require extensive knowledge of the technology; her Psi translates human intentions to machine actions.

TAP (•)

The electrokinetic can read electronic data stored within a device. The psion can also see the movement of data within an active machine. This power doesn't give the electrokinetic any ability to change data stores (or flows), nor does it leave a conventional trace of accessing the data.

System: Roll with a Difficulty equal to the device's attitude (p. 195). Success indicates the character can understand any unencrypted data on any device within close range. He can try to read encrypted data by spending two successes and rolling Enigmas + Intellect at a Difficulty equal to the encryption level. Most encryption is +1 to +2 Difficulty, whereas government or military-grade encryption could be as high as +5. Successes add Enhancement to the roll. The system doesn't detect use of this power as an intrusion, even if he fails the roll. This power lasts for his Mode dots times his Duration and the psion can use it on any device within his Radius or that is connected to a wireless network the psion is on.

ACCESS (••)

The electrokinetic commands a machine as if she were an authorized user. She can activate and control any normal function of the device, including initiating instructions to reboot or turn off the system. This works on every electronic device, from computers to laser pistols, cars, or spacecraft. In addition, on a success, the psion can mentally connect with any available wireless networks (like the OpNet). When hacking a computer system, she always possesses the necessary tools.

System: The psion makes a Hacking attempt (p. 199) using Psi + Technokinesis, spending successes to control the system as per the Hacking rules. Each Psi point she spends provides her with 1 Enhancement. Against simpler devices, or those without counter-intrusion systems, success allows her to control the device any way it is designed to function, using relevant dice pools against Difficulty assigned by the Storyguide. She could make a laser pistol fire or drive a car. The psion can also power any electronic or electrical device of up to her Size parameter. This power lasts her Mode dots times her Duration and the psion can use it on any device within her Radius or that is connected to a wireless network she is on.

CONTROL RESISTANCE

INTRUSION RESISTANCE	DIFFICULTY	EXAMPLE
None	0	Light switch
Minimal	1	Laser pistol
Moderate	2	Apartment control panel
Device or system designed for military or intelligence use	+2	Military weapon, hybrid fighter
Vehicle	Size	Sedan, commercial frigate
Computer system	Attitude rating	Minicomputer, server

CONTROL (•••)

The psion can control a device beyond its designed purpose, as long as the machine is physically capable of performing the tasks. He could take control of a robotic arm that welds components to vehicle chassis and instead use it to attack pursuers. He can alter data, either in a targeted manner substituting specific lines of code, or can randomly scramble existing information and inflict considerable harm to the device's operations.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: Success allows the psion to control a single machine within his Radius. Apply Difficulty based on the machine's resistance to intrusion, as per the table above. Success lets the psion control any of the machine's normal functions. This includes altering its operating parameters, such as changing a computer's attitude or failsafe by up to his Mode dots. He can also force the machine to perform any task it could conceivably achieve. He could instruct a computer to discharge its battery in one burst to shock the user, but couldn't make the computer pick up a bottle unless it was linked to some manipulator device. This power lasts his Mode Dots times his Duration, but cannot be used over a wireless network.

CODE (••••)

The electrokinetic does more than control devices, she rewrites operating systems to fulfill her wishes. She doesn't have to be familiar with the device's existing system; her powers translate thought into function. Non-technokinetics have difficulty understanding the code, which possesses a deceptively simple surface that reveals ever-increasing layers of complexity beneath.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: Roll with the system's attitude as Difficulty. Every success allows the character to change or add a number of operating parameters equal to Mode dots/2. These parameters can be relatively broad — replicating any normal function generally only takes a single parameter. All such changes and parameters persist until someone notices and deliberately corrects them, potentially allowing the device to operate as the psion wishes for days or even weeks.

This power can also create extremely smart, flexible agents that can act without the psion's supervision. These agents have Mental and Social stats equal to the psion's Mode dots. She can increase either or both of these traits at a cost of two successes per additional dot. These agents don't require any pre-set applications; they can perform any task an agent could do. They persist for her Mode dots times her Duration per success, and the psion can have a number of agents up to her Psi operating simultaneously. The psion can use this power on any device within close range, or connected to a wireless network she is also on.

OVERSEER (•••••)

The electrokinetic is aware of all technological events around him. While the power persists, he is a machine god and no device functions without his blessing.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: Success allows the psion to affect all electronic devices within his Radius, inflicting a Complication on all rolls to use the device equal to the user's Psi + successes. Failure to buy off this Complication allows the psion to entirely control how the device is used, exactly as if the psion was the device's owner. If no one is operating the device, then the psion can operate the device as per

Control. Causing all devices within range to perform the same action, like turning off or locking up is an ordinary action. Causing different devices to perform different functions requires a mixed action.

TRANSCENDING AND PROXY-TIER POWERS

Only proxy-Tier psions can learn these powers.

SPECTRAL MASTERY (••••• •)

Spectral Mastery is three separate powers, one each for Electromanipulation, Photokinesis, and Technokinesis. These powers are only accessible to proxy-Tier psions. These powers don't provide a new effect, they increase the effect of every other power in that Mode.

System: When using a power from a Mode for which the psion has Spectral Mastery, she may spend an additional Psi point to increase the Scale of one aspect of the power, like Radius or range by one, increase any Enhancement by +2, or to multiply any numerical quantities like number of targets by five.

SUBQUANTUM COMPUTING (••••• ••)

The universe is an infinitely complex machine. As the subquantum connects everything, the proxy can interface with almost any device, anywhere. This includes computers unconnected to the OpNet

— even those that are heavily shielded and lack the means to connect to any network. Additionally, the proxy can use the subquantum universe as a vast computer. He can store unlimited amounts of data across everything, encoded in the position of atoms and the spin of electrons. If the Cassel File exists (p. 170), the proxy has certainly used this power to gain access to the secrets of his enemies, and store them within the fabric of the universe itself.

Cost: 10 Psi points

System: The proxy can access any device within his Attunement range, as if he was using any Technokinesis power, even if the device is shielded and not on any network. Alien interfaces or other unusual designs — like creations of Aberrant super-science — impose a Complication on the roll, depending how unfamiliar the proxy is with the system. Failure to overcome this Complication may mean that the proxy inadvertently scrambles the data he seeks, or alerts others to his meddling. In addition, the proxy's universal access acts as if he had a supercomputer outputting to his brain. He can calculate solutions to most mathematical problems, break the toughest mundane encryption with ease, and even unravel quantum encryption with minor effort. Should the Storyguide require a roll relating to this computing power, the proxy gains his Psi as an Enhancement. This power lasts for his Mode dots times his Duration.

PSYCHOKINESIS

Psychokinesis is one of the flashiest Aptitudes, and is also one that Joe Hologram is most familiar with, thanks to the ubiquitous media-friendly presence of the Legions. While most people think Psychokinesis simply deals with kinetic energy and movement of molecules, it includes more mysterious aspects that can block and channel energies with no molecular component.

BASIC POWERS

All characters with even one dot of Psychokinesis possess the following powers.

DISTANT TOUCH

The psion can feel objects around her, using a sense similar to touch. She can use this when her other senses are impaired. She can also sense sudden changes to kinetic energy, such as through Psychokinesis.

System: Success lets the character sense the surfaces of all objects and precisely determine all movement in a radius of short range. In addition to other uses, each success removes one level of any Complication or increased Difficulty caused by reduced visibility. She can also spend a success to gauge the relative temperatures of objects from their molecular movement. This power lasts successes times her Psi in minutes.

NUDGE

The psion can telekinetically move small or very light objects at a slow speed. This can only move single, whole objects. The character could move a pile of unconnected beads one at a time, but if they were threaded together he would have to move all or none.

System: The character can move one tiny object, but can spend one success to increase this size to

small. He can move this object at Speed Scale 1, but can also spend a success to increase this to Speed Scale 2. This power lasts his Psi in rounds.

THERMOKINESIS

Although their effects appear remarkably different, manipulating heat and cold in matter involves the same process — changing the vibration rate of molecules. Masters of Thermokinesis are terrifying to behold, taking to the battlefield encased in fire or ice and incinerating or shattering their enemies. It is a testament to the Legion's public-relations personnel that so many citizens love psychokinetics despite this.

EQUILIBRIUM (•)

The psychokinetic is adept at transferring thermal energy to and from her body and can survive intense heat and cold by manipulating the environment around her. She can draw heat in to stay warm or push it away to keep cool. She can even mitigate damage from intense sources of heat or cold (such as from Psychokinesis) through this.

System: Success allows the psion to remain comfortable in most extreme temperature conditions regardless of clothing or other protections. The psion is immune to all environmental indirect damage

caused by heat or cold with the Continuous (hour) or Continuous (minute) tag. Against environmental indirect damage caused by heat or cold with the Continuous (rounds) tag or attacks made using heat or cold, including attacks with the Incendiary tag, she reduces the damage by her Mode dots/2 plus one per success spent. She can extend this protection to others within her Radius by spending one success per person. This power lasts her Mode dots times her Duration.

FLASH (••)

Whether flash freezing or flash frying, the psychokinetic can generate an instant change in thermal energy. Inflicting attacks of flame and frost are the most common uses of this power, but inventive psions find other uses as well, including everything from starting fires to chilling beverages.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The psion attacks with either heat/flame or cold. This attack automatically possesses an Enhancement equal to his Mode dots, the range (clash-his range) tag and one additional tag, which must be Incendiary for heat/flame attacks and Combined Stun for cold attacks. The player can purchase additional tags from the tags listed for each attack by spending successes at a cost of one



FLASH

ATTACK	EN	RANGE	DAMAGE TYPE	TAGS
Heat/Flame	Mode dots	Close- Range	Fire	Incendiary, Ranged (close-range), and possibly others
Cold/Ice	Mode dots	Close- Range	Ballistic	Combined Stun, Ranged (close-range), and possibly others

tag/success. Possible additional heat/flame tags are Aggravated, Destructive, and Spread. Possible additional cold/ice tags are Aggravated, Non-Lethal, Spread, and Weighted.

SHEATH (•••)

The psychokinetic encases herself in a defensive barrier of flame or ice. Each variety of armor has its own advantages, allowing the psion to choose the best to suit the current challenge. Such is the character's control that neither armor damages the environment around it — unless she wishes it to.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: If successful, the character is surrounded by a second skin, either of writhing flames or translucent ice, but not both. The psion is never harmed by either type of armor. Refer to the table below for the effects of each armor. The character can add additional levels of soft armor by spending two successes per additional dot. This Armor lasts her Mode dots times her Duration.

For 1 additional Psi point, the psion can create walls of fire or ice that either surround her at close range or block a passage up to five meters across. Anyone attempting to pass through this barrier must first overcome the hard armor and then increases their Difficulty of moving through the wall by the value of soft armor. Also, unless they first destroy the wall using appropriate means, like a large heat source or a fire extinguisher, anyone moving through the wall automatically suffers the effects of the Defensive armor tag, if the psion decided to use this tag.

TEMPERATURE EXTREMES (••••)

The psion alters thermal energy in the substances around him. He can heat solids until they melt or chill them until they become brittle and shatter. He can freeze or boil liquids, ignite flammable objects, or quench infernos. The psychokinetic can decide whether and how the substances he controls exchange heat with the environment. He could set a bonfire in the center of a room and not allow it to scorch the ceiling, or maintain an unmelting block of ice on the hottest summer day. The substance's temperature equalizes with the surrounding environment when the power ends.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: If successful, the psion can change the temperature of a single target of up to his Size parameter within his Radius, causing Indirect environmental damage that only affects the target and has a damage rating equal to the number of successes rolled. Living creatures make a Psi + Stamina opposed roll to resist this damage, while inanimate objects automatically freeze solid, melt, or catch fire, depending upon the temperature change and the object. The psion can use this power on a portion of a larger inanimate object, allowing him to freeze a walkable path across a lake or set fire to one wall of a large house. The psion can also spend one additional Psi point to increase the Size of a target by +1. However, he cannot further increase this Size except by using the appropriate Kinetic Mastery. This power lasts for his Mode dots times his Duration.

SHEATH

TYPE	BASE	ARMOR TAGS
Fire	Bulletproof, Impact, Slash	Complete, Hard 1, Defensive (optional), Environmental 0 (temperature), Soft 3
Ice	Bulletproof, Impact, Slash	Complete, Defensive (optional), Hard 3, Environmental 0 (temperature), Soft 2

HELLSCAPE (•••••)

The psion exerts total thermokinetic control over the area around her. She can inflict a nightmarish landscape of hellfire and frozen wasteland, or divide the environment into hot and cold zones. She can make impeded progress with jagged sculptures of ice or flaming labyrinths, or even channel the thermal energies into or away from her foes, leaving them exhausted from heat or hypothermic from cold.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: If successful, the psychokinetic can apply the effects of any Thermokinesis power on any or all targets within her Radius. These powers don't cost additional Psi points to use, but they consume successes as normal. If the character has used all her successes, she can spend Psi points instead. She can create large environmental hazards or difficult terrain with a difficulty equal to her Mode dots. These effects last for her Mode dots times her Duration.

TELEKINESIS

Telekinesis moves physical objects through sheer psionic power. Telekinetic powers don't tether the psion to the object being controlled unless he wishes. If the object is pulled away by other forces, the psion chooses whether he is dragged along with it or not. Even if he chooses to remain in place, he doesn't lose his degree of control — his psychic "hands" don't "slip" — unless the object moves beyond the range of his power.

TOW (•)

The psion can move objects. He can move parts of the object, such as turning a doorknob or flipping a switch, but can't perform intricate manipulations. What this power lacks in finesse and speed it makes up for in strength.

System: Success lets the psion telekinetically move objects of up to his Size parameter within his range. Every two successes allow the psion to increase the object's Size by a maximum of +1. The character can also make crude manipulations with this power, but automatically fails any roll requiring

a Finesse Approach. The psion can move the object no faster than Speed Scale 1 or Space Speed [1]. This power lasts his Mode dots times his Duration.

REMOTE HANDS (••)

The psychokinetic manifests telekinetic power at a distance that exactly mimics the capabilities of human hands. Through these "phantom hands," the psion can perform any task that she would normally be able to do with her hands. Her psionic link provides tactile feedback — she can feel what she is doing and adjust her movements accordingly, but this link doesn't transmit damage or pain.

System: If successful, the psion can manipulate objects up to her Radius away. The telekinetic hands use the psion's Psi as her Might and her own Skill for any actions she may need to make while using this power. This power lasts her Mode dots in minutes.

VELOCITY (•••)

The psion changes an object's kinetic energy in a specific direction, thereby changing its velocity. He can accelerate a car beyond its normal maximum, or force it to come to a stop. He can force objects to move in specific directions and can make impromptu missiles to attack opponents. He can even manage clumsy flight. The character has some ability to control the object's path by changing the vector of applied energy.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The psion can increase or decrease the speed of a target within his range by one Speed Scale for every two successes spent. If used in space, the psion can increase or decrease Space Speed by a maximum of one by spending three successes. The psion can target objects of his Size parameter or smaller, and can increase the target's Size by a maximum of +1 by spending one success.

In addition, the psion can accelerate objects less than one kg up to supersonic speeds. Used offensively, he makes a ranged attack by accelerating small objects at his foes. His attack's range is his power's

VELOCITY

ATTACK	EN	RANGE	DAMAGE TYPE	TAGS
Kinetic Attack	Mode dots	Close-Range	Ballistic	Automatic, Brutal, Deadly, Piercing, Ranged (close-range)+, Silent+, Spread

+ These tags are automatically included

range, and he gains his Mode dots as Enhancement. This attack automatically has the Silent tag, unless the psion wishes otherwise. The psion has a pool of points equal to his Mode dots to purchase any of the following tags for this attack: Automatic, Brutal, Deadly, Piercing, and Spread. Using the Automatic or Spread tag requires the psion to attack with several small objects rather than simply one.

KINETIC ENHANCEMENT (••••)

The psychokinetic refines her control to direct kinetic energy inward at the molecular level. She can increase her physical prowess by kinetically reinforcing her muscles, or fly by imparting this energy in specific directions.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: Success gives the character a wide range of abilities. She can enhance her Might by one dot per success, up to a maximum of seven dots. By spending one success, she can fly at a Speed Scale of her Mode dots or at her [Mode dots/2] Space Speed. She can increase her Speed Scale by a maximum of +1 by spending one additional success or Psi point. A telekinetic's maximum possible Speed Scale is 6, and without the use of Kinetic Mastery, her maximum possible Space Speed is [2]. With Speed Scale 6, or Space Speed [2] the psion can fly to or from orbit.

The psychokinetic can carry living things, objects, or vehicles by spending one success or Psi point per target, up to a total number of targets equal to her Mode dots. The passengers must remain within short range of the psion, and unless the target can fly, the psion has complete control over their movement. Resisting targets can attempt the Roll Away Defensive Stunt. If they succeed, they get out of range before the psion carries them along. Spending one success or Psi point allows the psion to increase the maximum possible Size of any one target by a maximum of +1. If desired, the telekinetic, and as many others as fit can ride inside or on any object or vehicle on which she is using this power. This power lasts her Mode dots times her Duration.

TELEKINETIC DYNAMICS (•••••)

The psychokinetic exerts telekinetic control over an area, allowing him a large degree of creativity. While this power is active, he can move numerous objects, attack or defend multiple subjects, alter the path of any projectile within range, or create telekinetic explosions by violently pushing an object in all directions.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: For the Duration of this power, the psion gains +1 Enhancement to all Telekinesis rolls that are part of mixed actions. In addition, the psion reduces the cost of using any one of his other Telekinesis Mode powers by one Psi point (to a minimum of zero) and can use Kinetic Enhancement to cause a number of targets within range, up to his Mode dots, to fly, and can increase this number by spending one success per additional target. This power lasts his Mode dots times his Duration.

Alternately, the psion can cause one object within his range to explode. The psion can cause any object of up to his Size parameter - 1 to explode, destroying it, and causing indirect environmental damage. Anyone within close range of the explosion suffers damage equal to his Mode dots. This attack possesses the Deadly tag. Targets within short range suffer damage equal to Mode dots/2, with no tags. He cannot explode living creatures.

PERIKINESIS

This is often called “the force-fields Mode.” While accurate, it fails to capture the variety of uses a skilled perikinetic can achieve with its effects. Perikinesis effects usually cause a slight shimmering in the air. However, the psion can render them invisible by spending one success.

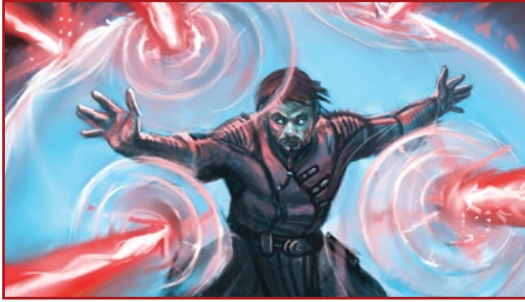
KINETIC SHIELD (•)

The psychokinetic envelops herself in a force bubble that drains physical attacks of energy before they reach her. Objects that lose all kinetic energy drop to the ground as if in slow motion. By default, the shield is like a second skin around the psion, but she can push it outwards to encompass others. People within the bubble can attack each other without impediment. The shield doesn't have any effect on physical objects or attacks moving through it from within.

Cost: 0 or 1 Psi point as a reflexive action

System: Success encases the psion in a shield that increases her soft armor value by an amount equal to her Mode dots, but only against physical attacks. She can spend two successes to increase the radius of this shield out to close range. This power lasts her Mode dots times her Duration, and the psion can activate it reflexively as part of a Defense action by spending 1 Psi point.

ENERGY SHIELD (••)



The psion projects a shield that filters harmful energy. It reduces damage from heat, cold, lasers, lightning, and other harmful energies. It can even act as protection from sunburn. Like the previous power, the psion can push this shield outwards to form a bubble or dome centered on himself.

Cost: 0 or 1 Psi point as a reflexive action

System: The power works as per Kinetic Shield but protects the psion from harmful energies. It also reduces the damage rating of all environmental indirect damage with the Continuous tag caused by heat, cold, or radiation by Mode dots/2. This shield doesn't protect against purely psionic attacks, such as a telepath's mental intrusions, but does protect against physical manifestations of psionic power, like an electrokinetic's electricity blasts. This power lasts his Mode dots times his Duration and the psion can activate it reflexively as part of a Defense action by spending 1 Psi point.

SHAPED PROJECTION (•••)

The psion can form her force fields into shapes beyond a second skin or a bubble. She could block the windows and doorways of a room, or seal a hull breach. The psychokinetic could also build force field "tubing" to divert liquids or perform makeshift repairs. These force-field shapes don't have to remain static; the psion could wrap a corpse within a shaped projection and move it like a puppet or carry herself and her comrades on a mobile platform. These force fields don't have to be large. The psion has an instant, invisible toolbox at her disposal.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: Success allows the psion to project a field with a diameter up to her Radius anywhere within her range. By default, this only provides physical protection as Kinetic Shield, but the psion can also include energy protection as Energy Shield by spending one success.

The psion can create the field in any shape she can imagine. She can also spend a success to telekinetically move the force field at either Speed Scale 1 or Space Speed [1], or to allow others to physically grasp and move it. This power provides the psion and her allies with weightless, nearly invisible tools that can be shaped for almost any situation and which provide an Enhancement equal to Mode dots/2 to reasonable rolls. In addition to providing armor, a field can support objects of up to the psion's Size parameter, or up to 20 objects or individuals or her Size parameter - 1. The psion can also increase the Size of objects the force field can support by spending two successes per +1 Size, up to Size 3. These fields endure her Mode dots times her Duration.

BULK SHIELDING (••••)

The psychokinetic can generate multiple force fields around different targets, individually protecting allies with more precision than a single bubble. He can control the direction in which each force field protects — placing them around enemies to blunt any attacks coming from within while not stopping external attacks, or forcing peace upon a group by preventing anyone from inflicting harm on each other.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: The psion can place a number of force fields around targets within his Radius equal to one per success spent. These fields block both physical and energy attacks, adding the psion's Mode dots to the wearer's soft armor value. When placed around foes, these fields impose a Difficulty on attack rolls or attempts at movement with a level equal to the psion's Mode dots/2, but may not also provide armor. The force fields last his Mode dots times his Duration.

SELECTIVE PERMEABILITY (•••••)

The psion can generate force fields that filter with precision. She can selectively allow certain things through while keeping everything else out. These are useful for creating airlocks that allow entry to people and equipment but keep air inside, or undersea domes that allow oxygen to penetrate while keeping water out. The psychokinetic could even use the fields to filter fresh water from contaminated sludge or bacteria from the air.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: This power enhances previous Perikinesis powers. When generating a force field, the psion can spend either one success or one Psi point per substance she wishes to allow through the field. These substances can be narrow or broad if they have a

specific noetic signature. “Fresh water” or “oxygen” would both qualify, as would “humans,” “dogs,” or even “Chromatics.” This effect endures for her Mode dots times her Duration.

TRANSCENDING AND PROXY-TIER POWERS

Only proxy-Tier psions can learn these powers.

KINETIC MASTERY (••••• •)

Kinetic Mastery is three separate powers, one each for Thermokinesis, Telekinesis, and Perikinesis. These powers are only accessible to proxy-Tier psions. These powers don’t provide a new effect, they increase the effect of every other power in that Mode.

System: When using a power from a Mode for which the psion has Kinetic Mastery, she may spend an additional Psi point to increase the Scale of one aspect of the power, like Radius, range, Size, or Speed by one, increase any Enhancement by +2, or to multiply any numerical quantities, like number of targets by five.

SUBQUANTUM LOCK (••••• ••)

Through a combination of masterful kinetic control and field manipulation, the proxy surrounds the target in a psychokinetic sheath and “locks” him into molecular stasis. The target is rendered immobile and unaware of events around him, but is also

immune to any outside forces except the natural movements of the celestial body he is on or orbiting. He could be at the epicenter of a nuclear detonation and be unharmed and ignorant of the event. Outside forces could excavate the ground from beneath him and he would remain floating in the air, untouched by gravity. He remains in place relative to where he began and would, for example, move with the Earth’s rotation and orbit. The proxy can use this power on himself to provide temporary immunity to damage from any attack. Mastery of this power has made General Larsson practically unstoppable on the battlefield, even in the face of devastating Aberrant destructive forces.

Cost: 10 Psi points

System: The psion can use this on himself or on any target within his range. Success locks the targets into place, during which he is unaware of events around him, is unable to act, and is immobile and immune to all effects and damage. The proxy can maintain this for up to Psi Duration per success or Psi point expended at activation, or can end it when a trigger condition is met. This trigger can be anything from harmful radiations falling to manageable levels, a set amount of time passing, or another person speaking a word at the proxy’s locked form. Even if a trigger is not used, the lock ends when its duration expires. Unwilling targets oppose with Athletics + Resolve + Power Stat.

QUANTAKINESIS

Quantakinesis deals with the relationship between energy and matter in the physical universe, and subquantum interactions with both. Quantakinesis also allows psions to interact with the Quantum powers of Aberrants; a potent weapon against those monsters. Despite the destructive potential within Quantakinesis’ Modes, most quantakinetics were scientifically minded and more interested in unlocking the secrets of the universe than facing down rampaging Aberrants.

BASIC POWERS

All characters with even one dot of Quantakinesis possess the following powers.

PSI CLOAK

The quantakinetic alters his noetic signature to appear as strong or weak as he desires. He can blend into the background and appear human to psionic

senses, or shine like a beacon that any psion will notice. QKs can make their noetic field “disappear,” becoming all but impossible for others to locate them using Psi. The QK can’t benefit from any Psi powers, either his or others’, if he shuts his noetic field down.

System: Success lets the psion change his Psi trait to appear as any value he wishes. He can present as a normal human, a latent, a strong latent, or an active psion. He can even give the psionic impression of being a proxy. This representation has no effect on dice pools or powers and lasts Psi days. The quantakinetic can also shut down his Psi. He disappears from noetic detection. Psions can only target him with powers that generate a physical effect, and where the psion has a Sensory Connection to the target. The quantakinetic has no access to any of his psionic powers when shut down this way, but

when rolling to resist powers, he still uses his full Psi. This power endures until he reactivates his Psi with a reflexive action.

SUBQUANTUM SENSE

Quantakinetics are attuned to the ripples noetic (and Quantum) powers make throughout the universe. The psion can sense when she is within proximity of an active power, whether it is used on or near her. She can also sense the sickening twists of Aberrant Quantum manipulations.

System: For the duration of the power, the quantakinetic senses all active Psi powers within his Attunement range. This includes lingering powers such as biokinetic enhancements and subtle powers in an area like a clairsentient's scrying. The character knows the Aptitude, Mode, and dot rating of the power and their location, if they are within range. This also works against Aberrant powers, although the quantakinetic only learns the general type of power (attack, defense, concealing, or similar) and the Aberrant's archetype (see p. 331) and location. This persists for Psi Duration and the psion can activate it reflexively whenever someone targets her with a power.

ENERGETICS

The quantakinetic exerts power over the fundamental forces of the universe as they relate to all known forms of energy. This Mode affects a greater breadth of energy than Electrokinesis, but that Aptitude provides far greater control over the energies within its domain.

CONVERSION (•)

The psion can change any form of energy into another type, regardless of the relationship between the two. The resultant energies are largely unstructured, even if the source was more complex. The psion could change coherent light from a laser to hissing white noise, and she could turn electrical current into flashes of light or bursts of heat, but she couldn't transform the current into a laser.

System: If successful, the character can transform one type of energy within her Radius into an equivalent amount of another. She could directly transform kinetic energy into a flash of light, or some of the local gravity into heat to keep warm or cook food. One success allows the psion to alter the gravity around her by one level (p. 110), or to eliminate all environmental damage caused by heat,

cold, or radiation that has the Continuous (hour) tag. Used defensively, this allows the character to change a number of damage levels equal to her successes from environmental effects involving cold, heat, falls, or radiation, or from ballistic, electrical, incendiary, laser, or sonic attack into harmless energy. However, each use of this power can only transform a number of different types of energy equal to her Mode dots/2, and the psion can only maintain one version of this power at a time. This power lasts for one scene and the psion can activate it reflexively as part of a Defense action by spending 1 Psi point.

PRODUCTION (••)

The quantakinetic converts noetic energy directly into energy from the physical universe. The energy emanates from the psion but he can project it from any portion of his body. The character can produce all simple forms of energy, including electromagnetic, sound, and kinetic energy, as well as forces like gravity or magnetism. The psion is immune to any damage caused by the energy as he produces it, but not from follow-on effects. If he heated a room to catch fire he would be safe from the initial heat, but not from the risk of being in a burning room. The psion can release this energy as a powerful burst or more slowly.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The psion creates an instant burst of any type of energy. The psion lacks fine control over the energy's flow, but can aim a burst of energy at a single foe within his Radius that creates an environmental hazard with a damage rating equal to his Mode dots. By spending one success, he can add either the Deadly or the Non-Lethal Indirect Injury tags (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 110). If desired, he can spend one additional Psi point to expand this attack so that it affects everyone within close range of his target. He can also use this power to perform simple tasks like igniting fires or throwing objects, vehicles, or individuals up to his Size parameter up to his Radius, using a brief burst of gravity or kinetic energy. If desired, the psion can throw people and objects with less force, to safely move them up to his Radius.

Alternately, the psion can choose to produce the energy more slowly, creating enough light to see comfortably, sufficient heat to make arctic cold comfortable (eliminating all environmental damage caused by cold with the Continuous (hour) or Continuous (minute) tags), increase gravity by one

level (p. 110) per success, or creating sufficient electricity to recharge portable batteries. Used in this fashion, the power can affect everything within the psion's Radius. These effects persist for his Mode dots times his Duration.

DESTRUCTION (•••)

The quantakinetic destroys energy, transforming it into subquantum particles that disappear into the noetic continuum. This power is particularly useful for eliminating sources of harmful energy or constructing shields to protect the psion and her allies from damaging emissions.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: Success allows the character to destroy any energy within her Radius by converting it to subquantum particles. She can protect a single target within her Radius from damaging energies by increasing the Difficulty of all attempts to use the Inflict Damage Stunt and reducing the damage rating of all forms of indirect damage caused by energy by one per success. For one additional Psi point, she can protect everyone within Close range of the target. She can also use this power more subtly. Each success can drain all charge from batteries and power packs in vehicles or weapons (but cannot affect vehicles powered by hyperfusion reactors), rendering devices and weapons useless. The psion can also use successes to eliminate dangerous radiation, make hot weather chilly (eliminating all environmental damage caused by radiation, heat, or electricity with the Continuous (hour) or Continuous (minute) tags at a cost of one success, or she can reduce the local pull of gravity by one level per success. The psion can use any of these subtler powers on some or all targets within her Radius. All uses of this power last for her Mode dots times her Duration.

CHANGE PROPERTIES (••••)

The quantakinetic can change the behavior and properties of a single energy source without altering what it is. He could make electricity unable to be transmitted by metals, remove heat's ability to burn organic matter, or alter the direction of gravity. The psion deliberately breaks universal laws in performing these changes, which only persist while his Psi sustains them.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: Success allows the psion to alter one property of any specific type of energy occurring

within his Radius per success spent. This change doesn't affect the energy's other properties. The changes persist for one scene, and end immediately if the energy moves outside of the psion's Radius.

NULL (•••••)



The quantakinetic creates a zone of noetic tranquility. The psion divorces herself and anyone she wishes inside the zone from any or all types of energy. This exempts her from being affected by these energies, except as she permits.

Cost: 4 Psi points

System: Success allows the character to decide how she interacts with energies for a number of rounds equal to her Mode dots + successes. She can add people and items within her Radius for one success or Psi point each. She can become transparent to light, partially or entirely immune to gravity, or impervious to heat or electricity within the zone. She can also sense what happens around her normally if she wishes. The character can even choose to be able to act and perceive normally while being completely undetectable to all conventional senses or sensors while the effect endures. Attempts to target the quantakinetic with physical energy suffer a Complication equal to her Mode dots, and even then, attackers must be able to sense her to attack. Attacks using non-energy-based psionic and Quantum powers, like Telepathy or Teleportation, are unaffected if the attacker can sense the psion.

FUNDAMENTALS

Students of Fundamentals can empower or impede the psionic and Quantum flows throughout the universe. In addition to being able to weaken or block Psi powers, the psion can dampen Aberrant powers, remove Corruption from Quantum Flux diseases, or even remediate Corrupted wastelands. Rules for Quantum Flux zones and Quantum Flux illness are on pp. 192-193.

RESIST (•)

The quantakinetic shields against Psi and Quantum powers either used against her or against the area she is in. For powers affecting an area, the character can choose to protect just herself, or unravel the entire power. Each use of this power protects the psion from a single Mode of one Aptitude or a single type of Quantum power.

System: The quantakinetic imposes a Difficulty equal to her successes to power activation rolls from a single Mode or Quantum power that would affect her. For powers targeted at an area containing the psion, she may instead impose this as a Complication equal to her successes. If the power's originator succeeds at his roll but doesn't overcome the Complication, his power acts against everyone in the area except the quantakinetic and anyone she is protecting. The psion can extend this protection to anyone within close range by spending one Psi point. This power lasts for Mode dots in rounds.

SHIELD (••)

The quantakinetic can choose to protect himself and perhaps those near him from either all psi powers or all Quantum powers, but cannot protect against both simultaneously.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: When attempting to shield against either type of power, the psion imposes a Complication with a level equal to one for every two successes on all psi or quantum powers used against the psion. This Complication functions as armor for attacks that cause physical damage and as an ordinary Complication for all other effects. If the power's originator succeeds at her roll but doesn't overcome the Complication, her power acts against everyone in the area who isn't protected. The psion can protect Psi other targets within short range from these effects for every additional Psi point he spends. If the psion is protecting against Quantum powers, the shield also protects individuals from all penalties and other effects caused by Quantum Flux zones. This power lasts for one scene.

DRAIN (•••)

The psion can siphon Psi and Quantum reservoirs, either channeling them to recharge herself or others, or draining them back into the subquantum universe. This usually manifests as stealing Psi (or

Corruption) points directly from an individual, but he can also temporarily drain the Corruption from individuals with Quantum Flux diseases. Annulling Corruption allows the victim's body to heal on its own, or to receive treatment from a vitakinetic. Either way, if the quantakinetic suppresses the Corruption until the disease is fully healed, it is permanently gone.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: Roll with a Difficulty equal to the target's Psi or Corruption. The psion drains her Mode dots/2 Psi points or one Corruption point from her target per success, adding Psi points to her pool or the pool of any single psion within his Range at a rate of one Psi point per two Psi or one Corruption drained. She can also harmlessly disperse energies into the subquantum universe. The quantakinetic can also drain Corruption from humans with Quantum Flux diseases. If she succeeds, a vitakinetic can cure it as a normal illness. This effect lasts her Mode dots times her Duration. If the quantakinetic drains all Psi points from a being of pure noetic energy, like one of the Doyen (p. 360), it is unaware and Taken Out for the next scene.

MANIPULATE (••••)

The quantakinetic can change the parameters of other psions' (or Aberrant's) powers. This works if he is present when the power manifests, or if he detects lingering powers of longer duration. He can't change a power's ongoing after-effects— items torched by Thermokinesis remain burnt — but he can mitigate effects directly sustained by the lingering power. However, he can't modify powers that only affect the user.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: When influencing psionic powers, the quantakinetic can spend successes to alter a power within his range as if he had created the effect. He can also "buy down" the power he alters, spending successes to decrease any parameter like range, Modifier, or Duration with each success decreasing the effective Psi or Mode dots by one or increasing each parameter by one for every two successes spent. Spending four successes allows the psion to change the target of the effect to anyone within range of the power, including the character who originated it. This tactic also works against Quantum powers. This power lasts for the duration of the power it is affecting.



TRANSFERENCE (•••••)

The quantakinetic can flood a target or the area around her with cleansing psionic energies, reinforcing and empowering noetic templates, and boosting psionic clarity. This also clears away Corruption, eliminating a Quantum Flux Zone. With effort, Transference can even repair the noetic damage that causes Quantum Flux diseases or transforms people into sub-Aberrant mutants, restoring their lost humanity, and can temporarily reduce an Aberrant's Corruption. Alternately, the psion can temporarily increase the Corruption of an area or use this Corruption to further empower a sub-Aberrant mutant or an Aberrant.

Cost: 4 Psi points

System: Roll against a Difficulty equal to the area's Corruption trait. Success floods the area with subquantum energy, giving everyone with a Psi trait within the psion's Radius an Enhancement equal to successes. Aberrants and any other beings without a Psi trait instead suffer an increased Difficulty to all rolls of the same level. Alternately, the character can reverse this effect, increasing Difficulty for everyone with the Psi trait and giving an Enhancement to every creature with a Corruption trait. Both effects last for Psi rounds.

If the character instead focuses on a single target within her range, she can either attempt to temporarily increase or decrease the target's Corruption trait by one point for every two successes (rounded down). The Difficulty to either increase or decrease a target's Corruption trait is equal to the target's Corruption trait. The character cannot use this ability on any creature without a Corruption trait. The character can also temporarily increase or decrease another psion's Psi trait by one point, but cannot affect it more than this. All effects last for her Mode dots times her Duration.

To purify an area, the victim of a Quantum Flux disease, or a sub-Aberrant mutant, the psion rolls and spends successes equal to the target's Corruption trait. Living beings must be within the psion's Radius, and the psion reduces the Corruption of all portions of a Quantum Flux zone that are within her range. For both uses, the psion must remain within range of the target and maintain the power for one full scene. Corrupted creatures attempt to flee from the discomfort; other creatures within the Quantum Flux zone sense the changes and may come to investigate and stop the quantakinetic. If successful, the target's Corruption trait is reduced

by one. The psion can then use Transference again on this reduced level of Corruption. When the psion reduces the target's Corruption to zero, it is permanently clear of Aberrant energies, although additional Quantum Flux can corrupt it again. This use of the power does not work on actual Aberrants.

TRANSMUTATION

The quantakinetic exerts power over the structure and properties of nonliving matter. She can sense and alter the molecular structure of nonliving materials, or change the subatomic structure and change one element into another. The psion can even generate exotic forms of matter. Exotic substances are inherently unstable and swiftly disintegrate without the quantakinetic's power maintaining them.

MOLECULAR SCANNING (•)

The psion can sense the molecular makeup of objects. He can easily identify the object's weakest point, whether due to design flaws or through some other vulnerability and learn details of its inner structure. The psion can uniquely identify an object and know if it is replaced by a seemingly identical copy.

System: The character understands the molecular structure of one nonliving object within short range. This identifies the object's unique noetic signature and also provides the psion with detailed knowledge of the object. He knows if it contains any hidden compartments, and any weak points or concealed damage as well as how it moves and reacts. For the next scene, he can reduce any Difficulty or Complications involved in repairing the object by the number of successes rolled, using any remaining successes as Enhancement to the roll. In addition, he can also find weak spots in the object, allowing him to apply the same bonus to any attempts to disable the object or to perform similar actions like picking a lock. He can also spend successes to ignore one point of armor per success for any attack he makes on the object during the scene. However, this power does not allow the character to understand electronic data. The character can track any object he has scanned for Psi days, as long as it remains within extreme range (10 kilometers).

MALLEABILITY (••)

The quantakinetic temporarily alters molecular bonds allowing her to reshape even the hardest material as if it were clay. She can also increase

the "solidity" of liquids and gases, creating strong structures from liquids or making jelly-like walls from gas. These changes don't alter the chemical nature of the substances — people can still breathe thickened air or drink hardened water, although doing so may require more effort than usual.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The quantakinetic reshapes a solid object up to her Size parameter within her Radius or a volume of liquid or gas equal to her Radius. She can increase the Size of the solid object she can affect by +1 by spending two successes. However, she cannot further increase this Size except by using the appropriate Noetic Harmony. Substances that are particularly precious to someone, or that are frequently used and carried — such as favored clothing or weapons — apply the owner's Psi or Corruption trait as Difficulty to the roll. Shaping an object may require other skills and additional rolls if she constructs a machine or creates a work of art. This power provides no protection from dangerous substances. Malleability lasts up to her Mode dots times her Duration. After this power ends, solids retain their shape, but liquids and gases do not.

ASSOCIATION (•••)

Everything has a noetic signature, not just living creatures. Being part of something greater reshapes an inanimate object's noetic nature. A chip isn't just a computer component, it is the electronic brain of a computer. Bolts and nuts don't simply hold items together, they are as much a part of the structural whole as ligaments and tendons are to a person. Through this oneness, the quantakinetic can reassemble broken objects, with her power filling gaps by reforming available substances, or making temporary fill-ins with pure Psi.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: The psion reassembles any broken or disassembled nonliving structure, vehicle, or device up to the psion's Size parameter within his Radius. He can increase the Size of the object he can affect by +1 by spending 2 successes. However, he cannot further increase this Size except by using the appropriate Noetic Harmony. Repairing an item requires one success if all pieces are available. The quantakinetic's power automatically molds replacements for missing pieces for one success if suitable materials are nearby — such as modifying nearby stone to replace concrete — or makes translucent psionic versions for two successes, if not. These repairs

leave no visible evidence; they occur at the molecular level. Repairs are permanent if all pieces or replacements are made from suitable materials. The psion can make multiple attempts to repair larger objects. The character can also use this power to create physical keys or components that have been deliberately removed from a device to disable it. All psionic replacements fade after his Mode dots times his Duration.

RETUNE (••••)

The psion can alter matter by temporarily changing its properties. She can stop electricity flowing through metal by changing its conductivity or alter the insulating properties of Styrofoam to maximize heat transfer. The quantakinetic could make concrete transparent to light, or alter it to offer the resistance of air to anyone passing through, all while maintaining its structural strength. These changes can instantly disable a device and could also potentially enhance it somewhat.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: The character can alter any nonliving matter of up to her Size parameter or all gas or liquid within her Radius by spending successes on the table below. She can increase the Size of the object she can affect by +1 by spending 2 successes. However, she cannot further increase this Size except by using the appropriate Noetic Harmony. Multiple attempts can transform larger objects. Altering the environment in specific ways can make certain actions easier or more difficult, providing up to +1 Enhancement per success to particular actions or increasing the Difficulty of actions by up to +1 Difficulty per success. Changes endure for her Mode dots times her Duration.

MATTER ALTERATION TABLE

ALTERATION	SUCCESSES PER CHANGE
Minor (color or opacity)	1
Durability (increase or decrease armor)	1 per point of armor increased or decreased
Moderate (conductivity, insulation)	2
Major (change mass)	3
Extreme (alter density)	4

ALCHEMY (•••••)

The quantakinetic turns one substance into another, or creates matter out of nothingness. The availability and purity of the original substance affects how difficult this is for the psion to accomplish, as does the complexity of the change. Additionally, while transforming dangerous materials into harmless substitutes adds no difficulty, the reverse is considerably more difficult.

Cost: 4 Psi points

System: The quantakinetic can transform any object of up to Large Size (p. 267) into another substance as per the table below. He can spend two successes to increase the object's Size to Size 0, but only the appropriate Noetic Harmony can increase the Size further. The psion must be no further than close range away to transform something. These transformations are permanent. This process leaves a psionic trace on the transformed substance that other psions can use to establish a Familiar Connection to the quantakinetic. Also, the psion cannot use this power to create complex electronic devices or other objects that depend upon having a complex chemical and physical structure. At the Storyguide's discretion, most types of exotic matter fade away after his Mode dots times his Duration.

SUBSTANCE	SUCCESSES
Pure element	1
Single molecular substance	2
Simple solution (one substance dissolved in another)	3
Complicated solution	4
Multiple substances chemically fused together	5
Substance toxicity	+1 per Damage
Create substance from nothing	+1 Psi point and +1 success
Create exotic matter that defies physical laws	+2 Psi points and +2 successes

TRANSCENDING AND PROXY-TIER POWERS

Only proxy-Tier psions can learn these powers.

NOETIC HARMONY (•••••)

Noetic Harmony is three separate powers, one each for Energetics, Fundamentals, and

Transmutation. These powers are only accessible to proxy-Tier psions. These powers don't provide a new effect, they increase the effect of every other power in that Mode.

System: When using a power from a Mode for which the psion has Noetic Harmony, he may spend an additional Psi point to increase the Scale of one aspect of the power, like Radius, range, or Size by one, increase any Enhancement by +2, or to multiply any numerical quantities like number of targets by five.

SHUTDOWN (••••• ••)

The proxy can demonstrate her command of the forces that power psions and Aberrants by temporarily severing their connection to the source. This temporarily rewrites a psion's noetic template, or

renders an Aberrant incapable of manipulating Quantum.

Cost: 10 Psi points

System: Roll with a Difficulty equal to the target's Psi or Corruption. Success shuts down the target's powers. However, as soon as the psion uses this power on them, the target can take an ordinary action to spend three Psi points or one Corruption point per level to inflict a Complication that prevents the quantakinetic from using this power on the target now or for the remainder of the scene. The quantakinetic can use Shutdown repeatedly to buy down this Complication. If the proxy succeeds, the target is effectively a normal human for the psion's Mode dots times her Duration. If the proxy fails, the target retains his powers. Shutting down a being of pure Psi energy permanently destroys it.

TELEPATHY

A subtle Aptitude, Telepathy has few outward signs to give away its use. The existence of Telepathy gives rise to paranoia and mistrust of psions. Telepathy has become subject to more legal controls and restrictions than other Aptitudes because of this. Unless otherwise stated, Telepathic powers that the psion can target using noetic connections (p. 204) can only target individuals within Psi astronomical units (AU) of the telepath.

MENTAL INJURY

Damage to a character's psyche can be modeled using Status Conditions (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 107). Mental Status Conditions can simulate the lasting effects of trauma, brain injury, phobias, or disorders the character was born with. While characters can learn to live with or overcome these with therapy, drugs, and time, Telepathy and Vitakinesis can heal or inflict these Conditions far more rapidly.

The following are two examples of using Status Conditions to simulate mental trauma a character may suffer. Players and Storyguides should work together to develop others suitable for their game.

POST-INCIDENT TRAUMA (PERSISTENT)

Exposure to traumatic experiences has left lasting damage. The character has recurring, distracting memories of the trauma, deliberately avoids situations that remind him of the experience, and has difficulty sleeping which leads to lethargy and irritability. When the character encounters stressful situations, or experiences that remind him of the trauma, he adds 2 Difficulty to all rolls for the remainder of the Scene.

Resolution: Appropriate Psi powers or therapy.

PHOBIA (PERSISTENT)

The character has an unreasonable fear of something. When she encounters the subject of her fear, she finds it difficult to do anything except try to escape the situation. She adds a level 2 Complication to rolls while in the presence of the subject, failure to buy off this Complication means the character retreats from the source of her fear.

Resolution: Appropriate Psi powers or therapy.

BASIC POWERS

All characters with even one dot of Telepathy possess the following powers.

MINDSCAN

The telepath senses minds around her. She can easily tell the difference between human and other species, and recognizes species she has encountered before. The psion also automatically recognizes minds she's previously had telepathic contact with, unless the individual is using Psi powers (or other abilities) to mask his thought patterns.

Cost: 0 or 1 Psi point

System: Success detects all minds within medium range. The psion can recognize individuals whose minds she has sensed before. By spending one Psi point, the psion can extend this power to long range. The psion can also use other Telepathy powers through the Psionic Connection established by Mindscan. This power lasts for Psi Duration.

MINDSPEAK



The telepath can open a communications channel between herself and anyone within his line of sight. The target must voluntarily accept the link, which automatically fails if he refuses. The link allows them to converse silently, but the telepath can only communicate with a single individual at a time.

System: The psion establishes a telepathic link with another human within medium range. He can communicate silently but must share a common language to understand the other person and be understood, beyond the ability to communicate simple messages like “danger outside.” This connection endures for Psi rounds. Communicating with aliens is possible, but imposes a Complication with a level that depends on both how mentally alien they are and whether they are willing or attempting to resist.

Qin only impose a level 1 Complication because they are naturally telepathic, while an unwilling and terrified Chromatic imposes a level-4 Complication. A willing Chromatic would reduce that Complication down to 2. Failure to fully buy off this Complication means that the telepath's communication is imperfect and contains nonsense or misunderstandings.

RAPPORT

Rapport helps the telepath understand the emotions that drive both individuals and large masses of people. Skilled telepaths can calm an angry individual or incite a crowd to violent revolution. To those who would seek to control and manipulate entire populations, masters of Rapport are simultaneously great assets and potentially dire threats. Greater emotional changes require more effort. See the Emotional Intensity Chart below for one of many possible examples of the range of emotions and how these changes can be quantified.

EMOTIONAL INTENSITY CHART

INTENSITY	EXAMPLE EMOTIONAL STATE
Extreme (-3)	Ecstatic
Focused (-2)	Happy
Exaggerated (-1)	Pleased
Neutral (0)	Calm
Exaggerated (1)	Displeased
Focused (2)	Angry
Extreme (3)	Enraged

SENSE EMOTION (•)

The telepath reads the emotions of individuals, or senses the prevailing attitude of a group. When reading a group, the psion understands how pervasive an emotion is amongst everyone present. This power also highlights individuals who feel differently, or feel the overarching emotion most strongly. When focused on individuals, the telepath understands the target's current emotional makeup, and how each part contributes to the whole.

System: The telepath understands the primary motivating emotions of an individual or group within either medium range or the range of her Mindscan, whichever is longer. The psion also understands the attitude of the individual towards anyone present and can identify any bonds between people in a group she scans. Not every member of the group

need be in this area. The character may also spend one success to identify individuals who deviate from the group emotion, or who feel it most strongly. The psion gains Enhancement equal to her Mode dots to Empathy rolls to influence the individual or sway the crowd. This power lasts for one scene.

EXACERBATE (••)

The psion modifies the strength of a single emotion, inflaming it to greater heights or damping it to next to nothing. The emotion must be affecting the victim at least a fair degree for the psion to be able to increase it. He couldn't increase fear in a target who was comfortable and relaxed, nor anger in a person who was delightfully happy. The psion also can't entirely eliminate the emotion. He could calm an enraged individual to a simmering bad mood, or bring raucous laughter to mild amusement, but some trace of the emotion remains. The psion can target himself with this power.

System: Unwilling targets oppose this roll with Empathy + Composure. The psion changes the intensity of one of the target's emotions by one step on the emotional intensity chart per success and can instead choose to increase or decrease the intensity of the target's attitude towards someone by one point per success, but cannot make a positive attitude negative or the reverse.

In addition, he can impose a Complication on others trying to reason with or influence the target with a level equal to the target's new attitude. Alternately, he could grant the target an Enhancement equal to his successes on Mental or Social rolls as her mind becomes clear of distraction, or impose the same amount as increased Difficulty as the emotion overwhelms her. The target is aware of her actions while influenced. The psion can use this power on a single target in line of sight or that the psion can detect using Mindscan. These effects last his Mode dots times his Duration, after which the emotions return to normal intensity.

MOB MENTALITY (•••)

The telepath sways the mood of entire crowds. She can dictate the prevailing mood of a group and move everyone's emotions towards that goal. Someone in the group must already feel a degree of what the telepath hopes to achieve. The psion can generate subtle effects as well as gross mood changes, such as feelings of hunger when near a restaurant, or desire to own the latest fad.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: The psion can calm, inflame, or change the prevailing emotional state of an entire crowd that is within her Radius. The telepath must spend one success for every 10 x her Psi individuals she tries to sway, plus one success for each step of separation between the desired emotion and the crowd's current emotion. She can also spend Psi points instead of successes. Influencing the crowd's emotional state grants the psion an Enhancement equal to successes when dealing with members of the group and can also change the atmosphere (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 86) by her dots in this Mode, including raising or lowering it, or lowering it to zero and then creating an entirely different positive or negative atmosphere. This effect lasts her Mode dots times her Duration, after which the group's mood may begin to shift, depending on what other stimuli affect the members.

INFLECT EMOTION (••••)

The psion can impose any emotion on his target. Fear could paralyze a calm, experienced soldier, or a bored student could become intently focused on the task before her. These emotions can be incredibly strong and cause a victim to act against her nature. He could force a criminal suspect to be wracked with guilt and confess to anything the police suggest, or even attempt suicide to escape the emotions. These extreme effects unfortunately provide plenty of sensationalized fodder for anti-telepath, and anti-psion, groups.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: Unwilling targets oppose this roll with Empathy + Composure. Each success spent lets the psion inflict any emotion on a single target in line of sight or that the psion can detect using Mindscan. The strength of this emotion is dictated by successes spent, with each success allowing the psion to create an emotion one additional step away from calm. The victim suffers the psion's Mode dots to the Difficulty of actions where the emotion would be a hindrance or the same as Enhancement where the emotion would be beneficial. Additionally, the psion can either raise or lower the target's attitude one level of intensity per success. By spending 2 additional Psi points, the psion can affect everyone within his Radius.

Alternately, the psion can use his successes to create a bond between himself and a single target or to create a bond between two targets. All such bonds are automatically two-way, and so both parties suffer



all drawbacks from these temporary bonds. All uses of this power last his Mode dots times his Duration.

CONDITIONED (•••••)

The telepath can do more than directly control emotions, she can build mental scenarios that trigger desired emotions under the right conditions. The psion can help soldiers and police respond calmly to high-stress or traumatic situations, or she can provoke someone to murderous rage in response to a minor frustration with congested traffic or the sight of a particular individual.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: Unwilling targets oppose this roll with Empathy + Composure. The telepath implants emotions within the victim's psyche as per Inflict Emotion, but they don't take immediate effect. These changes can include any of the options available to Inflict Emotion, including attitude changes or temporary bonds. The psion then specifies certain conditions that cause the emotion to suddenly manifest for up to her Mode dots times her Duration before fading. She can include multiple conditions by spending one success per condition. The hidden emotions endure for Psi months before

leaving the target's mind, even if the conditions aren't met in this time. The psion can activate this power in consecutive rounds to continue to accumulate sufficient successes to achieve her goal. Use of this power sometimes induces the target to continue to feel a lesser version of the desired emotion in the same circumstances even after it has worn off and occasionally causes lasting mental injury.

MINDSHARE

This Mode directly transmits information from one mind to another. It can permit mental conversations, but is more than just words. People connected via Mindshare exchange thoughts, images, and concepts and do not require a common language. The telepath can pluck thoughts and memories from targets, and delve into his innermost secrets and dreams.

NETWORK (•)

The psion builds a telepathic network linking multiple minds together. Individuals within this network can communicate silently regardless of distance. This mental contact eliminates barriers of language and culture. Each networked individual

generally chooses what thoughts to send to the network, though moments of extreme emotion or sudden pain can seep through and distract other members. Networked psions do not have to maintain physical contact to combine their Aptitudes (p. 207). While the telepath maintains the Network, all individuals count as touching.

System: The telepath can network a number of individuals equal to successes. The telepath must possess a noetic connection to someone in order to attempt to include him in a network. The same penalties for communicating with aliens using Mindspeak apply to Network.

By default, every member transmits to the entire group, but any telepath in the network can limit distribution of messages reflexively. The network endures for his Mode dots times his Duration, or the telepath can sustain it indefinitely by committing one Psi point. For the duration of the network, everyone counts as having a Psionic Connection with one another.

SURFACE SKIM (••)

The telepath can read a target's surface thoughts, but can't dig deeper into his mind or memories. The psion can take deliberate action to prompt her target's thoughts, but various groups train people in generating mental static to avoid this as needed.

System: The psion targets one person within line of sight or Mindscan range. The roll has a Difficulty equal to the target's Manipulation if he is unaware or opposed by the target's Integrity + Manipulation if he has reason to suspect someone is actively searching his thoughts. The psion gains one thought at the forefront of the target's mind per success spent. The telepath can use this power in concert with normal conversation or actions that lead the target's mind to reveal clues or other information sought by the psion. In addition to the value of the information, the psion gains Enhancement equal to successes spent when using this information to influence the target.

ACCESS (•••)

The telepath accesses others' senses to experience locations as if he were there. Targeting individuals he has a noetic connection to works best, but the telepath can leap from person to person if needed. With additional effort, he can simultaneously monitor the senses of multiple people, gaining a composite picture of an area, or observe different areas at once.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The telepath can target individuals with whom he possesses any type of noetic connection. Other telepaths are automatically aware of this power, and if unwilling can apply their Mind Shield to the roll, but no one else is aware of the mental intrusion. On success, he experiences the target's senses as his own. He can jump to another person within his target's line of sight, treating the new person as if he had a Familiar Connection with her. Changing targets costs one success if he breaks contact with the original person, or two successes if he maintains multiple sensory viewpoints. The telepath retains his own senses and awareness while using this power. When combined with Network, he can allow everyone in the Network to share everyone's viewpoints by spending either 1 Psi point or successes equal to the number of members of the Network. The psion's power cushions the effect so everyone functions normally despite seeing different scenes from multiple angles. The effect lasts his Mode dots times his Duration.

DEEP SCAN (••••)

The telepath can search her target's mind like a holovid collection. She can sift through memories to find specific information, or simply access as much as she can to better understand the target.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: The psion targets one person within short range and rolls with a Difficulty equal to the target's Composure. The psion spends successes as per the table below to uncover memories from the victim's mind, and can divide up successes so as to retrieve multiple memories at once.

MEMORY TYPE	SUCCESSES REQUIRED
Superficial	1
Personal	2
Embarrassing	3
Well-guarded or Forgotten	4
Deeply Repressed	5

OVERRIDE (•••••)

The telepath becomes an instant expert in almost any field by drawing on the skills and specialties of those around him. He could swap his target's higher

Skill for his lower one, or hinder an enemy by substituting a lesser Skill for her own. The telepath can use this power as part of a Network to grant every member the best possible Skill levels available to the group. Such deep mental contact can be uncomfortable because it breaks down every barrier between individuals — there is no mental privacy or secrets within such groups.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: Individuals can actively resist this power using Psi + Resolve. The telepath can use the Skill of anyone within Mindscan range, and can either look for the highest Skill (or particular combination of Skills, Skill Tricks, and Specialties), or he can select a more distant target with whom he possesses a noetic connection and borrow her Skill. The telepath can increase his chosen Skill by one dot per success, to a maximum of the target's Skill. Alternately, he can swap his Skill rank with someone else by paying successes equal to the difference between the Skill dots, raising his Skill and lowering the target's Skill. This transfer can include more than Skill dots; the telepath can also temporarily transfer (or steal) any Skill Tricks or Specialties the target has linked to a Skill at a cost of one success per Skill Trick or Specialty. If the psion has sufficient successes, he can borrow multiple Skills. If part of a Network, the telepath grants every member

access to the highest Skill ratings, Skill Tricks, and Specialties by spending either 3 additional Psi points or successes equal to the number of members of the group. This effect lasts his Mode dots times his Duration.

PSYCHBENDING

The telepath controls others through the power of her Psi. She can direct her victims to act, alter memories, and change personalities to temporarily craft a new person from the victim. Psychbending can also help others by alleviating or curing the symptoms of mental trauma or illness. The telepath can target herself with Psychbending powers.

MIND SHIELD (•)

Most new telepaths learn to protect their own minds from intrusion. This goes beyond tricks used by others, like uttering repetitive phrases or solving complex logic problems. The telepath creates a wall of Psi between her mind and those who seek to read or control it. She is aware of attempts to penetrate her shield and can choose to allow powers through — such as communicating with an ally.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The telepath erects a psionic wall that adds her successes as a Difficulty to rolls to read or



COMMAND INTENSITY

COMMAND INTENSITY	ACTION	SUCCESSSES REQUIRED
Inconsequential	Sneeze, blink, scratch an itch	1
Minor	Eat or drink, make a non-emotional call, choose an outfit	2
Major	Help someone you dislike, take a break without permission, work to hinder or slightly harm someone you don't care about	3
Extreme	Provide confidential information, give access to a controlled area, conceal information from someone you care about or to whom you feel loyalty	4

influence her mind for Mode dots hours. She automatically senses if someone attempts to use mental powers on her, recognizes the type of power — communication, information probing, or influencing — and can apply her defenses or not with a thought. Dropping her defense against one specific power does nothing to reduce her defenses against other attempts.

COMMAND (••)

The psion compels a target to obey his commands. At its simplest, the telepath's spoken words are backed by psionic power. These victims don't automatically know they're subject to an outside force and may rationalize away strange actions, if they don't significantly deviate from their norm. The psion can also compel the target to obey mentally transmitted instructions. Targets of this power automatically resist any instructions that cause them to commit self-harm or clearly violate their moral codes. The psion could force a victim to allow him entry to a restricted area, but the victim

wouldn't steal from her beloved sibling.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: Unwilling targets oppose this roll with Integrity + Presence. The telepath issues commands by spending successes as per the table below. The victim doesn't automatically realize someone else controls her actions, though her suspicions grow with those that deviate from her usual behavior. Commands lose their power to compel obedience after one scene, and the telepath can only use this ability on someone within short range and it lasts for one scene or until the target completes the command, whichever comes sooner.

REWRITE (•••)

The telepath alters the target's mental parameters. She can temporarily add, remove, or edit his memories, change his Mental and Social Attributes, or even grant or remove certain Edges. She can also help people recover from mental trauma or illness. The larger the alteration, or the more important an aspect is to the victim, the more difficult it is for

REWRITE DIFFICULTY TABLE

ALTERATION	SUCCESSSES
Minor edit — Forgetting where you parked. Misremembering the name of someone you just met	1
Moderate edit — Misremember the day's events. Forget a long-term acquaintance	3
Major edit — Forget a loved one. Recall a fabricated friendship	5
Increase/decrease Mental or Social Attribute (from one dot to six dots)	2 per dot
Increase/Decrease Skill or remove a Skill Trick or Specialty	1 per dot
Create or Relieve a Mental Status Condition for the duration of the effect	2
Permanently Create, Increase, Reduce or Remove a Mental Status Condition	5

the telepath to change it. These changes are almost always temporary; eventually the victim's mind reasserts itself. The only exception is when the psion makes an effort to create or cure lasting mental injuries.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: Unwilling targets oppose this roll with Integrity + Resolve. The psion spends successes to change the target's mind as per the nearby table. Additionally, she can ease the penalty from Status Conditions related to mental illness or trauma, or remove the Condition entirely with sufficient effort. All changes require the telepath's full concentration for one minute per success spent, and the effects last her Psi in days, except for permanent changes to mental Status Conditions.

POSSESS (••••)



The telepath can mentally possess someone, forcing them unconscious, and using the victim's body as his own. The victim is not aware of her actions while under this control, and has no memory beyond the initial feeling of being taken over. However, the victim's unconscious resistance increases if she suffers harm.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: Unwilling targets oppose this roll with Integrity + Resolve. Success allows the psion to control the victim's body as if it was his own, using its Physical Attributes with the psion's own Skills. However, the psion uses his own Mental and Social Attributes, not the victim's. He can also use Mindshare to probe the victim's memories while possessing her, but cannot use any psionic powers she possesses.

The telepath can attempt to control both his own body and the victim's body in the same round, but all such attempts are mixed actions. Also, any time the victim suffers any physical injury, the telepath

must make another roll to attempt to possess the victim, with the amount of the corresponding Injury Complication imposed as a Difficulty on the roll. Failure means that the psion immediately loses control of the victim, and cannot attempt to possess her again for at least one scene. Success allows the telepath to continue possessing his victim if he also pays one additional Psi point. This possession continues for a number of hours equal to his Mode dots.

DIVISION (•••••)

The telepath creates a new mind from scratch. She sets her target's identity, history, Mental and Social Attributes, Skills, as well as any Mental Edges and reasonable Social Edges. For the duration of the power, he is this new person. Obviously, unless the psion employs other resources, he doesn't have membership in the organizations he remembers or live where he believes he does. Telepaths can even bury these alternate personalities within their victim's brains, waiting for the right trigger to set them free for a time before fading back into the subconscious. The original personality is unaware while it is dormant, and has no idea of the passage of time or what occurred.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: Unwilling targets oppose this roll with Integrity + Resolve. The telepath spends successes to build the new personality, plus the conditions that cause it to emerge. This requires a number of successes equal to the target's Psi + Integrity + Composure, which the character can achieve over several consecutive rounds. Alternatively, the telepath can copy her own mental template onto the victim for half that number of successes. This copy possesses the same Mental and Social Attributes as the psion, and her Skills and Edges, but has the victim's Physical Attributes. If the victim is a psion, the telepath determines how much, if any, access this personality has to the victim's powers, but cannot give the personality any new powers. These temporary personalities last her Psi in weeks per success spent. Any telepath using Deep Scan, Rewrite, or Division on the target may make a Psi + Mindshare or Psychbending roll with +5 Difficulty to notice the original personality, and any telepath with three or more dots in Psychbending can make a roll with the same difficulty to restore the original personality.

TRANSCENDING AND PROXY-TIER POWERS

Only proxy-Tier psions can learn these powers.

MENTALIST (••••• •)

Mentalist is three separate powers, one each for Rapport, Mindshare, and Psychbending. These powers are only accessible to proxy-Tier psions. These powers don't provide a new effect, they increase the effect of every other power in that Mode.

System: When using a power from a Mode for which the psion has Mentalist, he may spend an additional Psi point to increase the Scale of one aspect of the power, like Radius by one, increase any Enhancement by +2, or to multiply any numerical quantities like range in AU, or number of targets by five.

ASTRAL LIFE (••••• ••)

The Telepathic proxy can shift her consciousness and living essence into pure thought. Though she

leaves her body behind, she continues to live and exist, her essence sustained by the subquantum universe.

Cost: 10 Psi points

System: The proxy leaves her body and exists as a psionic waveform. She can move Speed Scale 5 or Space Speed [4] in any direction — gravity has no hold on her, nor do physical objects block her passage. Her actions are limited while in this state. She can use Psi powers normally but can't otherwise interact with the physical universe. Even the death or destruction of her physical form doesn't hinder the psion as her essential life force is no longer held within that empty shell. This power lasts Psi weeks, and some telepaths with this power may be able to endure indefinitely after death. This power can be combined with Division to allow the psion's astral form to possess someone else's body.

TELEPORTATION

Physics stipulates that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, but teleporters know that to the subquantum, all space is one. Teleportation allows the psion to move things between locations by reassigning where their noetic signatures should be. Teleportation requires greater psionic potential than most other Aptitudes. For this reason — and the stringent selection criteria enforced by Proxy Bolade Atwan — teleporters have always been among the rarest of psions.

Noetic connection (p. 204) is crucial to teleporters guiding their longest jumps to the correct destination. Teleporters can travel across the galaxy as easily as they can move between rooms, if they have a noetic connection with their destination. Jumping farther requires longer transit time, as per the nearby table. Those undergoing the teleport never feel like it takes more than a few moments. Teleportations

that take longer than one round to complete require a cooldown period equal to the transit time before the psion can attempt another jump requiring longer than one round to complete. Currently, intergalactic teleportation has proven impossible, but there are no other range limitations for interstellar teleportation.

BASIC POWERS

All characters with even one dot of Teleportation possess the following powers.

SPATIAL SENSE

A teleporter senses where a location is in the subquantum universe and how objects fill the space around her. This allows her to develop the noetic connection required for accurate jumps. This sense can also be used to help the psion navigate through

TELEPORTATION TIMES

DISTANCE	TRANSIT TIME *
Long range or less	Instant
Anywhere on the same planet	1 round
To nearby moon (like Luna)	1 minute
Within the same solar system	10 – Psi minutes
Interstellar (within the same galaxy)	8 – Psi hours

* Increase transit time to the next level if using a Remembered Connection, to a maximum of 8 – Psi hours.

darkness, sense people in another room, or reveal objects within a concealed space.

System: The teleporter extends her senses and spends a scene concentrating on the noetic totality of her location. Success achieves a Psionic Connection that endures for one month. Alternatively, the psion can use Spatial Sense to sense the world around her. Success gives the character absolute spatial awareness of everything within short range. She knows the location, dimensions, and relative density of everything in the area, but can't discern color or details such as images or words on a screen. This lasts Psi rounds.

SPATIAL INTEGRITY

The psion feels spatial changes caused by Teleportation. This includes not just Psi powers but also Aberrant warping powers and technological effects that bend space-time. The psion can also reinforce the subquantum world's influence on this fabric, increasing the difficulty for anyone to teleport into an area.

System: Success reveals any space warping powers used within the psion's range in the last Psi days. The psion reflexively senses incoming (or outgoing) teleportations within this area, and can spend one Psi point to add his Psi as a Complication to teleportation rolls within his range. Failing to overcome this Complication prevents anyone from teleporting out of this area and knocks incoming teleportation off course. The Storyguide decides how far astray the teleportation goes, based on how close the teleporter came to overcoming the Complication, but the teleporter never arrives within the psion's range unless he overcomes the Complication.

TRANSLOCATION

Translocation is what Joe Hologram thinks of as the classic version of Teleportation; the teleporter vanishes from one location and appears in another. For all uses of this Mode, jumpers can't bring along any complex living creatures or any objects larger than Size 0 with her, but any microorganisms such as bacteria and parasites remain with her.

BLINK (•)

The jumper learns how to use Teleportation defensively. This power subconsciously taps into the psion's Spatial Sense for incoming attacks and activates to move the teleporter into subquantum and back to physical again to avoid the attack.

System: The character adds the following Defense Stunt (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 105) to the choices available to her. Blink creates considerable noise from the sudden displacement of air molecules. Stealth is impossible using this Defense Stunt. The character cannot consciously choose the destination, but Blink usually either moves her behind nearby cover or away from an opponent.

New Defense Stunt

Blink: Like the Dodge Stunt, the Translocation + Psi roll generates successes, which an opponent must overcome in order to inflict an Injury. The character teleports no more than a single range band and always either teleports away from an opponent or behind cover, whichever option is most obviously effective.

JUMP (••)

Jump allows the psion to make short hops, usually teleporting from his location to somewhere relatively nearby.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: Success teleports the psion anywhere he has any noetic connection to that is within extreme range (10 kilometers).

FLICKER (•••)

The psion can use Teleportation offensively. Flicker allows rapid tactical teleports that the psion can use to set up attacks, allow rapid retreats, or to hover or simulate flight by jumping every fraction of a second to counter gravity's pull.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: The teleporter jumps no further than short range and gains an Enhancement to her attack of her Mode dots/2, as she hits her opponents from an unexpected direction. Alternatively, she can use this power outside combat to perform a rapid series of short range or shorter jumps. Success propels the character in a desired direction at a Speed Scale of Mode dots/2 or Space Speed [1], (or to hover in mid-air, deftly defying gravity). All uses of this power last a number of rounds equal to her Mode dots.

LONG JUMP (••••)

The universe is open for the psion to explore. He can teleport to any location where he has a noetic connection, including near a distant star he sees in the sky. His Psi protects him from materializing within solids or anywhere else that would instantly kill



him, but it offers no protection from environmental conditions he finds when he gets there. Teleporting interstellar explorers are advised to wear space suits.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: If aiming for a distant location, this roll must overcome the Difficulty from noetic connection (p. 205). Success jumps the teleporter and objects no larger than Size 0 that he is carrying to his destination.

BILOCATION (•••••)

The teleporter executes a rapid series of jumps, faster than the human eye can perceive. The result is that she is effectively in multiple places at once. Despite the name, she isn't limited to only two locations, and can have as many as her power allows — and her concentration can endure.

Cost: 4 Psi points

System: Use her weakest noetic connection with any of the destinations as the roll's Difficulty. Success allows the character to simultaneously be in multiple places, spending one success per additional location, up to her Translocation dots. No matter how many locations she occupies, the teleporter can only take one ordinary action each round

without penalty. If she wishes to act in multiple locations, this is a mixed action, even though she may only appear to take one action at any location. This power lasts one scene.

TRANSMASSION

Transmassion allows the psion to teleport other people and objects to distant locations. The psion must have a noetic connection with both the destination and any people or objects he is teleporting. Transmassion can also bring items to the teleporter — many jumpers keep an array of useful items in specific, secure locations so they can call upon them when needed.

RELAY OBJECT (•)

The psion can teleport an inanimate object to or away from her. She must possess a noetic connection to the object and the target location.

System: The teleporter can reflexively teleport nonliving objects or bioware she has a Familiar or better connection with to her as long as they are no further than extreme range (10 km) away. Otherwise, using this power requires an ordinary action. Also, the teleporter can only use this power to teleport

objects directly to or away from her. She can use it to teleport objects within close range to locations she possesses a noetic connection with that are no further than extreme range (10 km) away. Teleporting an item someone is touching that the person does not wish to have teleported away adds that person's Power Stat as a Difficulty to the roll. The psion also cannot teleport objects larger than Size 0.

RELAY PERSON (••)

The teleporter can transfer a single living creature, including humans. This individual travels with whatever she is wearing or carrying, but anything connected to other objects is left behind; teleporting people free of restraints is easy. A teleporter can use this power as an attack, sending the target high into the sky to let gravity do the dirty work. This nasty tactic is known colloquially as the "Upeo death drop."

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The teleporter either teleports distant individuals with whom he has a noetic connection to close range of him, or he can teleport individuals within close range of him to a location he has a noetic connection to. However, the maximum range of this power is extreme range (10 km) away, and the teleporter can only transport living creatures of up to his Size parameter. Individuals who do not wish to be teleported can attempt the Roll Away Defensive Stunt to escape. Targets of the Upeo death drop who can't fly (or aren't rescued) take appropriate falling damage (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 111) from the height.

TRANSMIT MASS (•••)

This power is why teleporters are unrivaled suppliers across colonized human space. The psion can teleport one object to or from any location the teleporter has a noetic connection to. If the target location is occupied, the power deposits the cargo to a suitable space within a few meters. If nonliving cargo is inside a larger container, the teleporter can transmit that as if it were a single item.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: The teleporter can move any single nonliving object of no more than her Size parameter. This power considers any nonliving objects or living creatures no more than a centimeter in any dimension within the object to be part of it. The psion cannot transport objects containing larger living creatures with this power. If the teleporter wishes to move larger objects, every two successes or two

Psi points the teleporter spends increase her Size parameter by one step, up to a maximum equal to either Size 5 or her Mode dots, whichever is less. The only way to teleport Size 6 objects is by using the appropriate Spatial Mastery. To initiate the teleport, the teleporter must spend two rounds in intense concentration to use this power, only taking Defensive actions during these rounds.

TRANSMIT PERSON (••••)

Instead of objects, the psion can now carry people anywhere on Earth, or even to the stars. In addition, the psion can now teleport a vehicle and everyone inside it.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: The teleporter can transmit up to five times his Psi people or other living creatures of up to his Size parameter. If the teleporter wishes to move more people, every success or one Psi point the teleporter spends increases his Psi by one step, to a maximum of 50 (10 x 5) people. He can also spend two successes or two Psi points to increase the Size of creatures he can move by a maximum of +1. If the teleporter also possesses at least four dots in Translocation, he can automatically travel along with people he is teleporting.

This power also allows a teleporter to transmit a vehicle or object and all people inside it, even if the vehicle contains more people than the psion could otherwise teleport. Use the rules governing maximum object Size for Transmit Mass to teleporting this vehicle. To initiate the teleport, the teleporter must spend three rounds in intense concentration to use this power, only taking Defensive actions during these rounds.

SELECTIVE TRANSMASSION (•••••)

Most forms of teleport are all or nothing – the psion can't teleport part of an object or person. Selective Transmassion allows the jumper to overcome this limitation. This can be helpful with excavating or removing debris. If the psion has knowledge of the inner workings of a mechanism or has studied the parts with Spatial Sense, she can even selectively remove specific components. This power can also be used against living beings to deal devastating damage, but their noetic template resists the attack.

Cost: +2 Psi points for inanimate targets, +4 Psi points for animate targets.

System: This power adds to the teleporter's mastery of Transmassion, providing additional

capabilities to any previous Transmassion power if she spends a few additional Psi points. However, the psion must first spend one round using her Spatial Sense on the target and then use this power as an ordinary action the next round. If she wishes to teleport part of an inanimate object, she rolls at +1 Difficulty to her roll to carve out a chunk of up to her Size. If she wishes to target a specific piece, such as a component of a machine, she instead increases the Difficulty of the roll by +2.

Living creatures resist such division. Teleporting a piece out of a living creature costs a minimum of 5 Psi points and the target can oppose this roll with a Stamina + Power Stat roll. If the psion wins this contest, she inflicts one Maimed Injury Condition on the target, plus one additional Injury Condition for every two successes rolled. Treat this attack as having the Aggravated and Brutal tags. It ignores armor except natural armor and formatted biotech armor. Choosing to have a character be Taken Out does not prevent him from gaining the Maimed Injury Condition, but does prevent additional Injury Conditions gained through successes.

TRANSPORTAL

The Transportal Mode links two points in space-time and opens a gateway between them. OpNet media likes to call these wormholes. Transportal's advantage is that any number and mass of individuals, creatures, or objects can move through the portal as long as it stays open. The main disadvantage is that items must be moved through the portal, and generally can't be teleported in place. Portals are noticeable, their entrances — termini — cause a rippling light at the inner rim of their circumference, bordered by a swirl of visual distortion as if seeing whatever is behind the portal through twisted glass. They also emit a static-like hum while active. In addition, all portals require time to form, use the Teleportation Time table (p. 253) for how long a teleporter must concentrate to create a portal. During this time, the psion can only walk, engage in simple conversation, or take defensive actions, unless the psion wishes to have the roll to create the portal be a mixed action. Once created, portals endure without concentration and travel through them takes no time.

WINDOW (•)

The psion first learns to create tiny ripples in space time, rather than huge bends, generating small

wormholes of limited range. The portal can't be moved once created, it must be collapsed and rebuilt to change its location. These small gateways can be generated much faster than other larger manipulations, and have a variety of utility and combat applications.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The psion creates a portal large enough to move a hand and arm or any object of up to medium Size (see p. 267) through. Both ends of the portal must either be no further than medium range away and within the character's field of vision or within range of his Spatial Sense. He can reach through, shoot, or throw objects, or even attempt to divert attacks away from himself.

When used defensively, the portal increases the Difficulty of any Inflict Damage Stunt used against the character by Mode dots/2, but does not protect against indirect damage or attacks with either the Explosive or the Gas tag. When used offensively, this power allows the psion to make attacks on any target within range as if he were at close range. The psion can only create one Window at a time and the portal lasts up to a number of rounds equal to his Mode dots.

SKEIN (••)

Before the teleporter develops the power to build bridges across worlds with dramatically different environments, she must learn how to limit what comes through.

Cost: Variable, see table below

System: This power supplements other portal-producing abilities and doesn't normally require a roll. At its most basic, Skein automatically applies to all the character's portals to prevent environmental factors, like air or water, from moving through. Moving through the portal requires an act of living will. Living creatures and objects or energies moved with deliberation will pass through. This includes carried and thrown items, but also bullets or laser blasts. She can pay additional Psi points to further limit passage, or to remove all limitations, as per the table below. Anyone trying to move a prohibited physical object, including themselves, through the portal forces someone to make an Athletics + Might roll with a Difficulty equal to the teleporter's Psi to pass through.

MULTIPORTAL (•••)

The psion can link two or more points in space, creating a network of portals. The teleporter has

PORTAL LIMITATION

LIMITATION	PSI POINTS
Energy (including energy-weapon attacks)	1
Non-carried objects	1
Carried objects	2
All living creatures	1
Specific individuals	2
All members of a species	3
Remove environmental barriers	4

complete control over pathways through the portals – he can designate one portal the exit point and have every gateway lead there, or have each gateway link to the next in a circular arrangement. He can even have portals link to each other randomly to confuse and mislead opponents. However, the range of these portals is limited.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: The teleporter can manifest a maximum number of portals at once equal to twice his Mode dots. The destination for which the character has the weakest noetic connection applies Difficulty to this roll. Also, none of the portals can be further than extreme range (10 km) from the psion. Each portal is large enough so that up to one person or object of the psion's Size parameter can move through at a time. Spending one success permits the psion to enlarge the portal so up to two people or objects of up to the psion's Size can move through the portal at once. Spending two successes or one Psi point to increase the Size of creatures or vehicles that can move through the portal by a maximum of +1.

The psion can link the different termini however he desires, and can alter these links at will by reflexively spending an additional Psi point. The psion can also use this power to create portals at any angle and in any location, including directly under someone, so that they fall through it if they cannot succeed in the Roll Away Defensive Stunt to dive away from the portal. However, creating portals directly under a target imposes a Complication on the roll equal to the target's Power Stat; failure to overcome this Complication means that the portal appears within close range of the intended target. These portals last for her Mode dots times her Duration.

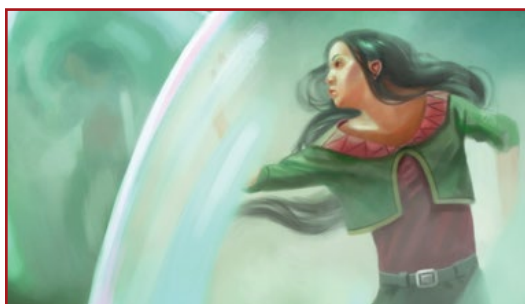
GATEWAYS (••••)

The psion can create portals whose range is now limited only by the noetic connection she possesses to the target or targets. The tradeoff for this increase in power is the effort and time required to bend space-time this way.

Cost: 3 or 5 Psi points

System: For 3 Psi points, the psion can create a pair of portals, one of which must be within her Radius, while the other can be anywhere she possesses a noetic connection to. For 5 Psi points, the psion can even create a Multiportal network with up to interstellar range. The rules for the Size of objects that can move through portals is the same as for Multiportal, except that she can spend additional successes or Psi points to increase the maximum Size of a creature or vehicle that can fit through her portals up to a maximum of Size 3. Only proxies can create larger portals. Once formed, the portal or portals remain open for her Mode dots times her Duration.

WARP (•••••)



The teleporter can open a portal gateway of tremendous size and transport everything within to the other terminus. As the psion's power builds, two shimmering domes (or spheres, at the psion's discretion) grow, one around the teleporter and the other at the destination. Everything within the area is transported when the character releases the power. Psions can use this ability both in space and on a planet

Cost: 4 Psi points

System: The character concentrates for one scene and then rolls. If successful, he begins building the warp sphere. It grows at a rate of one range band per round to a maximum of his Radius. This costs one success per round. If he exhausts his successes, he may spend Psi points instead. In addition, the psion

can spend 4 Psi points to increase his Radius by one step, up to a maximum of medium. Once the spheres have reached their maximum size, everything within each sphere disappears and reappears at other sphere's location. The teleporter must devote his full attention to building the warp. If he is disturbed, the effect fails with all Psi points spent.

TRANSCENDING AND PROXY-TIER POWERS

Only proxy-Tier psions can learn these powers.

SPATIAL MASTERY (••••• •)

Spatial Mastery is three separate powers, one each for Translocation, Transmassion, and Transportal. These powers don't provide a new effect, they increase the effect of every other power in that Mode.

System: When using a power from a Mode for which the psion has Spatial Mastery, he may spend an additional Psi point to increase the Scale of one aspect of the power, like Radius, range, or Size by one, increase any Enhancement by +2, or to multiply any numerical quantities like number of targets by five.

SINGULARITY (••••• ••)

The proxy can fold space-time to make two or more locations one, and then unfold it in whatever configuration she desires. She could overlap Earth, Khantze Lu Ge, and Olympus on Luna, superimposing all three locations in mind-bending ways. When she ends this power, she decides the destination of every human in the linked area, regardless of which of the three worlds they started on.

Cost: 10 Psi points

System: Like Warp, the proxy concentrates for one scene and then begins expanding a sphere, but this sphere superimposes two or more locations. The psion can superimpose a maximum number of locations equal to her Mode dots/2. The spheres expand at a rate of one range per round to a maximum of her Radius. Everyone within any of these spheres can interact as if they were in the same location. Space behaves strangely, with buildings and objects superimposing over one another. Individuals can choose what objects they interact with, spending a round to change between "here" and "there" as desired. Once she releases the power, space-time unfolds again with the proxy deciding which destination everything within any location goes. Living creatures can resist being transported by rolling Integrity + Power Stat with a difficulty equal to the teleporter's Mode dots/2.

VITAKINESIS

The public understands that Vitakinesis heals, but this is an oversimplification. Vitakinesis' domain is living function, repairing, extending, or damaging the biological noetic template. Healing is just one aspect of this. Vitakinetics can't add elements from other templates, like biokinetics, but can push human eyesight to its limits, or make a person's lungs so efficient they can extract almost every molecule of oxygen from each breath before needing to take another. All Vitakinesis powers require the psion to touch the patient, and cannot be used at range. Rules on illnesses are on p. 191.

BASIC POWERS

All characters with even one dot of Vitakinesis possess the following powers.

KIRLIAN EYE

Vitakinetics don't sense individual lifeforms around them, that is the province of biokinetics. Instead, a vitakinetic senses the overall strength of

nearby life, and its relative health. He can hone in on any fluctuations, usually due to illness or injury, but enhanced individuals also stand out.

System: The psion senses the general presence of life around him, and can tell if anything within short range is suffering injury, illness, or has been enhanced or modified. He can spend one success to locate the direction and approximate distance to this creature. He can apply Kirlian Eye to individuals to diagnose their condition. While vitakinetics don't actually require medical knowledge to treat a patient with their Psi, this diagnosis grants an Enhancement equal to the psion's highest Vitakinesis Mode dots on rolls to diagnose or treat the patient through conventional means. This power lasts his Psi rounds.

KNIT

The constant flow of Psi through a vitakinetic means she can't help but repair and strengthen her noetic template. The psion heals damage to herself and minimizes the effects of toxins and poisons with barely a conscious thought.

PSIONIC LONGEVITY

From: Dr. Ramez Adebayo
To: Dr. Rebecca Velasco
Subject: Psion Longevity Research
Date: March 21, 2121
Rebecca-

I think we now have sufficient metabolic data to make some predictions about psion longevity. So far, it seems like psions who have minimal latency or who make little effort to expand their powers will live approximately an additional 40 years, but this number doubles for psions with sufficiently strong latency or who learn to enhance their abilities. In both cases, the psions seem to only begin to age near the end of their lifespan; they otherwise seem little different from the day they first entered the Prometheus Chamber.

The only exceptions to these enhanced lifespans are biokinetics and vitakinetics. Biokinetics with low latency can be expected to live almost an additional century longer than neutrals. Vitakinetics and biokinetics with high latency or who have learned to enhance their powers all seem to have ceased aging and may well be immortal, and this also appears to be true for anyone with a Vitakinetic Auxiliary Mode. I'm not certain that the world is ready to hear this last bit of information.

System: The vitakinetic automatically downgrades her most severe Injury Condition every (7 – Psi) hours (minimum one round), and can even heal Persistent Conditions. She also reduces the damage rating of any disease, ingestible, or injectable source of harm within her body by one in this period. If this reduces its damage rating to zero, she has eliminated it from her system. As long as damage doesn't kill her, the vitakinetic fully recovers within a few days.

IATROSIS

This Mode uses Psi energy to strengthen a patient's noetic template, healing both physical and mental injuries. Iatrosis works by either supercharging the patient's own biological systems, or directly restoring his noetic template to its normal configuration. Although the second route usually requires greater time and investment of Psi, the psion can use this Mode to repair almost any injury. However, Iatrosis can't heal Quantum Flux diseases without the assistance of a quantakinetic.

RELIEF (•)

The first step to treatment is easing the patient's discomfort. The vitakinetic soothes the symptoms of physical and mental trauma. This can help keep the patient from going into shock, or can give her

the ability to fight on even though her body demands she stop. In addition to pain, the psion can also reduce inflammation, nausea, and vomiting. It also works to mitigate stress and mental anguish.

System: The psion temporarily reduces penalties from Injury Conditions, illnesses, or Status Conditions that impose a Complication or increased Difficulty on the target. Each success rolled removes one point of Complication or increased Difficulty. This only alleviates symptoms and does nothing to heal the underlying causes. The respite lasts his Mode dots times his Duration.

ACCELERATE (••)

The vitakinetic can't directly heal her patient's physical or emotional injuries, but she can accelerate and bolster his body's ability to do so. The psion increases the patient's natural healing rate and metabolism, and can assist with fighting off fatigue and exhaustion. The patient's immune system fights off infection and rapidly detoxifies drugs and toxins (including alcohol). In addition, his enhanced psychological resilience allows him to more easily recover from any mental trauma. This power also gives the patient the ability to detoxify chemicals that would normally be fatal without treatment.

System: The patient gains the successes rolled as an Enhancement to rolls to resist damage from

HEALING SUCCESSSES CHART

CONDITION	SUCCESSSES (OR ADDITIONAL PSI POINTS)
Bruised	1
Injured	2
Maimed	4
Status Condition (including Mental Status Conditions)	3
Terminal Injury (life support only)	5

toxins, illness, or mental trauma, and the psion can divide the time required to heal Injury Conditions or Status Conditions by an amount equal to Mode dots + successes. This accelerated healing lasts a number of days equal to her Mode dots, but only affects injuries or Status Conditions present when it was used. While under the effects of this power the patient counts as receiving proper medical attention.

MENDING (•••)

The vitakinetic can directly heal injuries, knitting flesh and bone by suffusing Psi energies through the patient's noetic template. This power always repairs the most critical damage first before mending those that are less life threatening. This power also cures mental trauma and repairs ongoing emotional damage.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: If successful, the vitakinetic gains a pool equal to successes to spend on healing both physical and mental damage as per the Healing Successes Chart below. This power can't regenerate lost limbs or organs, but can stabilize the patient long enough for other help to arrive. The psion can use this power repeatedly if he lacks sufficient successes to achieve his desired result. The psion can also spend additional Psi points instead of successes. Healing effects require one round per Condition cured, while life support endures for a number of scenes equal to his Mode dots.

RESTORE TEMPLATE (••••)

The vitakinetic accesses the patient's noetic template to return it to its usual state. This allows her to cure terminal illnesses and repair any damage that isn't intrinsic to the patient. She can regenerate lost limbs and other body parts, repair nerve damage, and cure any mental or physical illness, except Quantum Flux illnesses.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: If successful, the vitakinetic gains a pool equal to Psi + successes to spend returning the patient's noetic template to its usual condition, as per the table below. She can heal Injury Conditions as per Mending, but can also regenerate lost/damaged limbs and organs, and repair normally irreparable damage. This power can't overcome intrinsic disabilities, nor can she regenerate any injury greater than Psi + Mode dots months old, as the patient's noetic template has incorporated the changes. The psion can spend Psi points in place of successes to achieve her desired result.

ADJUST TEMPLATE (•••••)

The psion is a miracle worker who regenerates long-lost limbs or organs, or even returns the recently deceased to life — as long as the degeneration isn't the result of Quantum Flux diseases. He accesses the patient's noetic template and rewrites it. The psion can make permanent alterations to the patient's template, curing congenital defects and even changing appearance or sex. The patient must voluntarily consent to changes, otherwise they revert to their previous state. The patient can rescind his consent for up to a month after the changes have been made. Also, all adjustments to a patient's noetic template must remain in the range possible for a human body. The psion could transform someone who had become an aqua back into being an unmodified human. However, he could not manage the reverse, except on someone who had been born an aqua and had later transformed herself into an unmodified

REGENERATION TABLE

REGENERATE	SUCCESSSES
Finger, eye	1
Hand, foot, jaw	2
Limb, simple internal organ	3
Major internal organ	4
Spine, brain	5

human. In addition, this power cannot be used to create or remove psionic latency or powers, affect Corruption, or change whether someone is an Aberrant or a Talent.

However, the psion can increase or reduce Attributes and add or remove Edges that are not due to special training or external circumstances. Without combining her powers with a biokinetic the psion cannot create permanent changes outside the human range, like giving someone wings and a tail. Also, the psion would need to combine her powers with a quantakinetic to affect an Aberrant or nova with this power.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: The vitakinetic can cure intrinsic damage or regenerate lost limbs and organs no matter how long ago they were lost, as per the costs for Restore Template. He can also cure hereditary physical or mental illnesses. Altering Attributes or appropriate Edges costs two successes per dot, and radically transforming someone's appearance costs one success. Any changes that cost Experience can occur before the Experience is paid, but once acquired, the target must spend all future Experience on them, until they are entirely paid off.

Additionally, the psion can restore life to the recently deceased. This requires 10 successes, plus one success for every Psi hours the individual has been dead. The psion can spend Psi points instead of successes. This is a complex action requiring one roll per

hour, but this time is not added to the time the target has been dead. If successful, the patient returns to life with all but one Bruised Injury Condition checked, which must be healed separately.

AUGENDIS

This Mode allows the vitakinetic to alter an individual's physiology by making temporary changes to his noetic template. She can boost his body's natural processes so he heals more quickly from damage or reacts more quickly to surprise and danger. She can make the target stronger, faster, smarter, or more charismatic. The only limits on these powers are that they can't raise the target's Attributes to greater than a maximum of seven dots. Unlike biokinetics, a vitakinetic can only work within nature's limits, but she can apply her enhancements to others or herself. Also, characters can never benefit from more than one use of any particular Augendis Mode power at a time.

REINFORCE (•)

The psion boosts the patient's physiology to make it more resistant to sources of harm. This doesn't heal any existing damage, or eliminate toxins or illness, but does make it less likely that the patient will take further damage.

System: If successful, the patient gains an armor value of Mode dots/2, as well as reducing the



damage rating of all toxins by the same amount and giving her an Enhancement equal to the psion's Mode dots/2 to resist getting sick or taking damage from illnesses. The psion can use successes to purchase additional points of soft armor at a cost of two successes per point. The effects of this power last her Mode dots times her Duration.

STOICISM (••)

The vitakinetic learns how to reinforce his patient's noetic template and increase its resistance to change. With this ability, the psion can temporarily increase those Attributes related to his target's Resilience approach. More subtly, he can also adjust the patient's physiology to better withstand hostile environments, keeping her warm in frozen conditions or cool in a blazing inferno.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: The psion can add one dot to his target's Resistance Attributes for every success spent, up to a maximum of seven dots for each Attribute. The character's adjustments also allow him to temporarily give the target reasonable Physical Edges at a cost of one success per dot. In addition, the psion can cause the patient's body to better resist a single type of damage, like cold, electricity, heat, or radiation, making the target immune to all environmental indirect damage of this type with either the Continuous (hour) or Continuous (minute) tags. He also reduces other damage from this threat by an amount equal to his Mode dots, including attacks with the Electrical, Incendiary, or Sonic tags. However, the target's body can only resist a single type of damage at a time. All changes last his Mode dots times his Duration.

DIRECTION (•••)

The psion can boost her patient's ability to project her influence forcefully. She can temporarily increase those Attributes related to her target's Force approach. The vitakinetic can increase any of these Attributes to maximum human levels. She can also speed up his natural healing rate or boost his senses, but again, to no greater than human maximum.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: The psion can add one dot to her target's Force Attributes for every success spent, up to a maximum of seven dots for each Attribute. The psion can also either temporarily increase or decrease the speed of biological processes, like breathing or healing by a

multiple or divisor of 1 + successes spent, and can give the target either the one-dot Low Gravity or Mars Adaptation Edge (p. 127), or reasonable Mental Edges at a cost of one success per dot. Transformations endure for her Mode dots times her Duration.

PRECISION (••••)

The psion increases his patient's ability to act with subtlety and precision. He can temporarily increase those Attributes related to her target's Finesse approach up to maximum human levels. Additionally, the psion can increase the target's focus on specific Skills.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: The psion can add one dot to his target's Finesse Attributes per success spent, up to a maximum of seven dots. He can also add appropriate Social Edges for one success per dot. Finally, the psion can increase Skills by one dot per success spent, up to five dots and can add new Skill Tricks for the same cost, but only in Skills the target possesses at least one dot in. All changes last his Mode dots times his Duration.

EMPOWERMENT (•••••)

The vitakinetic can increase her patient's psionic potential. She can open the psionic permeability of his noetic template to increase the rate he regains Psi points, or reinforce it so he acts as if his skill in a given Mode was greater.

Cost: 5 Psi points

System: The vitakinetic can increase aspects of the patient's effective Psi rating as per the table below, to maximum of seven. This doesn't increase the target's Psi rating, just its effective level for the purposes of the specific bonus granted by increased Psi. Additionally, the vitakinetic can also add Psionic Edges at a rate of one success per dot. These changes last her Mode dots times her Duration.

NOETIC EMPOWERMENT

AUGMENTATION	SUCCESSSES
Attunement range	1 per dot
Increased Psi point pool	2 per dot
Halve time needed to recover Psi points, must increase Psi to 6	2 per dot
Increased value on one category of the Psi Traits Effects Table	3 per dot

ALGESIS

Vitakinesis can harm as easily as it can heal, allowing Algesis to inflict horrifying wounds. However, as with all other vitakinetic powers, a rex must touch someone to harm them. Characters can always roll Defense to avoid being touched. Touching a target and using any of these powers specifically does not count as a mixed action.

MISFIRE (•)

The vitakinetic doesn't inflict damage, but scrambles the victim's nerves to confuse and debilitate. She can convince the victim's brain that he has suffered a broken limb, massive burns, or has been shot. She can upset his balance, or fractionally delay the optic signal from one eye to confuse binocular vision. The psion can also use this same power to produce simple but powerful physiological responses like hunger, fatigue, dizziness, euphoria, or even a panic attack.

System: The roll to use this power has a Difficulty equal to the target's Stamina, in addition to any Defensive action to avoid being touched. The psion can spend successes to hurt, disorient, or otherwise confuse the victim by imposing a Complication on the victim that represents the pain and loss of function from an Injury Condition, but without any actual injury. Alternately, the psion can impose a Complication by inflicting nausea, hunger, fatigue, fear, or some similar reactions. In addition to the Complication, the victim also reacts normally to these responses. Complications produced by this power have one level per success spent and last for one scene.

ASSAULT (••)

The vitakinetic's Close Combat strikes and even his lightest touches are empowered with his Psi. He sends disruptive energies coursing through his victim's noetic template whenever he makes contact.

Cost: 1 Psi point

System: The psion can make a Close Combat strike using his hands, feet, or any close combat weapon without the Reach tag and use this power. This attack gains an additional Enhancement equal to his Mode dots/2 + the successes rolled. Alternately, the psion can add any of the following weapon tags to the attack for one success each: Aggravated, Brutal, Combined Stun, Destructive (only for natural or biotech armor), Non-Lethal,

Pushing, Stun, and Weighted. This power only enhances attacks on living targets. This power continues to enhance attacks for his Mode dots in rounds and the psion can also simply touch the target to inflict injury.

RUIN (•••)

The vitakinetic destabilizes the victim's noetic template to strip away his abilities. She could leave the victim barely able to move, speak, or form coherent thoughts. This power doesn't permanently alter the victim's noetic template; he eventually recovers from these injuries. The psion can also stun, paralyze, or impose the effects of almost any mind-altering drug on someone with a touch.

Cost: 2 Psi points

System: The target can actively oppose this roll with Psi + Composure. If the psion succeeds, she removes one Skill dot per success, or one Attribute or Edge dot per two successes. This only works against Edges that the psion could logically affect. The psion can also use successes to impose a single Status Condition like stunned, paralyzed, or unconscious on the target, and can instead duplicate the effects of mooders and the other drugs (p. 288). All Status Conditions and drug effects require one success per +1 Difficulty, level of Complication or +1 Enhancement imposed on the target. The effects of this power cease after her Mode dots times her Duration. Any Status Condition that causes the target to be Taken Out requires the psion to roll at least four successes.

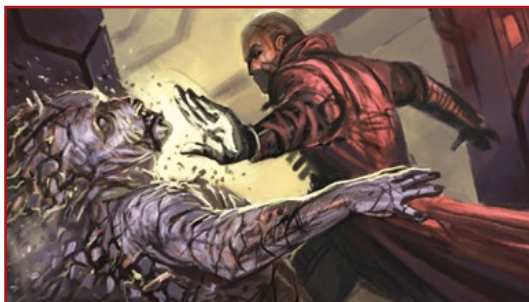
ATROCITY (••••)

The vitakinetic tears away portions of the victim's noetic template, inflicting massive damage as a result. Targeted limbs or organs wither and die while the victim watches.

Cost: 3 Psi points

System: The victim's Stamina serves as a Complication to the roll. If the vitakinetic succeeds but doesn't overcome the Complication, she inflicts one Maimed Injury Condition. If she overcomes the Complication, she inflicts an additional one Injury Condition for every two successes rolled. Treat this attack as having the Aggravated and Brutal tags. It ignores armor except natural armor and formatted biotech armor. Choosing to have a character be Taken Out does not prevent him from gaining the Maimed Injury Condition, but does prevent any additional Injury Conditions.

MORBIDITY (•••••)



With this terrifying power, the vitakinetic courses destructive psionic energies through the victim's noetic template, bypassing inflicting damage to simply instantly kill his target.

Cost: 5 Psi points

System: The vitakinetic must first use Kirlian Eye or touch his victim to gain a current imprint of his noetic template. Then, anytime within the next scene he can touch his target and roll this power with a Difficulty equal to the target's Stamina. If he succeeds, the energies tear into her noetic template, instantly killing her.

Any powered character like a psion, Talent, or even an Aberrant can attempt a Stamina + Power Stat roll with a Difficulty equal to the attacker's Psi. Success leaves the character alive but Taken Out, while three or more successes leaves the character with all of her Condition Boxes full, and thus in Maimed Condition, but still able to act.

TRANSCENDING AND PROXY-TIER POWERS

Only proxy-Tier psions can learn these powers.

VITAL FORCE (••••• •)

Vital Force is three separate powers, one each for Iatrosis, Augendis, and Algeisis. These powers are only accessible to proxy-Tier psions. These powers don't provide a new effect, they increase the effect of every other power in that Mode.

System: When using a power from a Mode for which the psion has Vital Force, she may spend an additional Psi point to increase any Enhancement by +2, or to multiply any numerical quantities like rate of healing by five.

OVERCHARGE (••••• ••)

The vitakinetic proxy suffuses a living noetic template to overcome its limitations. While under the effects of this power, the patient is supercharged with pure subquantum life energies, embodying aspects of humanity's evolutionary march towards perfection.

Cost: 10 Psi points

System: Success increases the subject's Tier by one for the duration of the power. An ordinary psion or Talent subjected to this power becomes proxy Tier while under this effect, gaining the target number and any other benefits that come from the Tier. The proxy also selects one Approach — the target's Attributes linked to that Approach are all raised to seven dots. She can raise other Attributes at a cost of one per success spent, to a maximum of six dots. Overcharging noetic templates this way isn't without cost. The effects of this power last one scene, after which the subject cannot benefit from any power that enhances Tier or Attributes for one full day.



CHAPTER EIGHT

TECHNOLOGY

It's an ancient and honorable term for the final step
in any engineering project. Turn it on, see if it smokes.

— Lois McMaster Bujold

In 2123, makers, 3D printers capable of manufacturing almost anything, produce most devices. Factories use specialized room-sized makers that can each swiftly and cheaply produce a limited range of products, like bioapps, bioware, medicines, inexpensive food or drink, vehicles, weapons, or consumer devices. General-purpose makers for the use of individuals and small settlements also exist. These can produce small items, from personal electronics or carefully folded clothing to a decent sandwich or bao, if provided with the correct plans and raw materials. Portable makers the size of a small car provide equipment for outback settlements, off-world colonies, large spacecraft, or other remote settings. A few people still fabricate devices by other means and some pieces of Qin biotech are capable of independent reproduction, but almost everything else is created using makers.

ITEM SIZES

Sometimes with equipment, size matters. Is something small enough to easily conceal, or is it obvious when carried? See the table below for the different sizes of equipment. All equipment has a listed Size. Items of large and above Size cannot be concealed on a person.

OBJECT SIZE AND SIZE SCALE

SIZE	SIZE SCALE	EXAMPLES	CONCEALABILITY MODIFIER
Tiny	-4	Contact lens, marble, or pea	+5 Enhancement
Small	-3	Pen, phone, or small pistol	+1 Enhancement
Medium	-2	Large pistol, thick novel	No bonus or penalty
Large	-1	Small briefcase, shotgun	n/a
Size 0	0	Large backpack, antitank missile	n/a
Size 1	1	Motorcycle	n/a

HARDBTECH AND BIOTECH

In **Trinity Continuum: Æon**, technology is divided into hardtech and biotech. In all cases, bioware refers to the exotic noetic bioware that the psion proxies (and particularly Alex Cassel of Orgotek) introduced. Noetic biotech devices are living mechanisms that must have regular nutrient injections, except for formatted bioapps that bond with their user and are aligned with their owner's noetic field, allowing them to draw nourishment directly from the user's subquantum energies. All other technology is referred to as hardtech, including biological technology

produced through genetic engineering, such as cloned organs or vat-grown polymers. Because it is relatively new and associated with psions, most people regard biotech as inherently superior to hardtech, except in Nippon where many people distrust noetic biotech and it is illegal to own or import.

FORMATTING BIOWARE

Most bioware can be formatted, a process where the user's DNA is bonded to the item, allowing the user to control it more precisely, and permitting the

BIOTECH HEALING TIMES

SIZE	MINOR DAMAGE (UNFORMATTED)	MINOR DAMAGE (FORMATTED)	SERIOUS DAMAGE (UNFORMATTED)	SERIOUS DAMAGE (FORMATTED)
Large or smaller	12 hours	four hours	two days	16 hours
Size 0 or larger	two days	16 hours	eight days	three days

device to draw energy from the user. Formatting an item requires one hour, and can only be performed in specialized facilities which can be found in any city outside of Nippon, but rarely in small, isolated settlements. Any character with a Psi of at least 1 can format bioware, including psions, neutrals, and Talents. Formatted bioware has many benefits, including removing the necessity for nutrient injections, and usually providing the user with 1 Enhancement to operate it, or some other benefit specific to the item.

Most bioware can be used without formatting, and using it is little different from using hardtech. All bioware that can be formatted has a Tolerance rating, which is the number of points of Tolerance the item requires. Most characters (including neutrals and Talents, as well as psions) have a maximum Tolerance equal to Stamina + Psi. Characters cannot format any item with a Tolerance greater than their maximum Tolerance. Also, using formatted biotech whose total Tolerance exceeds the character's Tolerance rating causes the user to suffer from Tolerance Overload.

TOLERANCE OVERLOAD

If a character simultaneously uses or touches several items of noetic biotech that she has formatted and whose total Tolerance rating is greater than her Stamina + Psi, then that character suffers Tolerance Overload. Only formatted noetic biotech counts for calculating Tolerance Overload. A character who is in

Tolerance Overload suffers a Complication (distracted) to all rolls to use her Psi powers which has a level equal to the number of dots of Tolerance Overload. If a character with a Stamina + Psi of five was in contact with formatted biotech with a total Tolerance of seven dots, she would suffer a level 2 Complication (distracted) to all rolls. This Complication vanishes as soon as the character is no longer in Tolerance Overload.

Neutrals and Talents cannot suffer Tolerance Overload. If they attempt to exceed their Tolerance, they simply gain no formatting benefit from the pieces of formatted biotech that exceed their Tolerance. This failure always affects those formatted devices that the character touched most recently. Characters can instantly solve Tolerance Overload by ceasing physical contact with a sufficient number of formatted devices.

NOETIC BIOTECH HEALING TIMES

One notable advantage for noetic biotech is that it does not normally require repair. Instead, it heals, and formatted biotech heals faster. See the table below for healing times. However, if a piece of formatted biotech is destroyed, the character automatically suffers both an Injury Condition and a level 2 Complication (Shaken), as though struck by a Stun weapon. Characters suffer no harm if a piece of biotech they formatted is damaged or destroyed if it is further away than short range from them.

ARMOR & PROTECTIVE GEAR

The world of 2123 is far from safe. There are inhuman Aberrants and alien Chromatics seeking to subjugate or destroy humanity, and mundane threats like war and terrorism. Advanced armor provides users with a needed edge when facing these threats. More efficient materials allow greater protection without greatly impairing mobility. Advanced armor suits can also enhance the user's physical capabilities.

NEW ARMOR TAGS

These tags apply to the armor found in this chapter. Armor in this chapter also uses the armor tags found in the *Trinity Continuum Corebook* (p. 127).

Active Camouflage (0, 1): Much normal clothing and some armor can change color to a series of preset colors and patterns, which can provide 1 Enhancement to all Stealth actions to avoid being

seen in dim light or against a monochromatic background, like a forest or a desert. There is no cost for this benefit. Some armor can automatically change color to match its background in color and pattern. This 1-point active camouflage provides the wearer with 2 Enhancement to all Stealth actions to avoid being seen.

Complete (3): This armor protects against all 3 types of damage — Ballistic, Edged, and Blunt.

Defensive (2): Armor with this tag is covered in spikes, spines, or another covering damaging to attackers. Anyone without armor who successfully attacks the wearer with an unarmed attack automatically suffers one Injury Condition.

Environmental (0, 1, 2): For 0 points, this tag protects the wearer from a single threat, like drowning or moderate extremes of temperature (typically -50° to 60° C), and this threat is always listed. For 1 point, this tag completely protects the wearer from suffocation, vacuum, poisonous gases, and more severe extremes of heat or cold (typically -80° to 100° C). For 2 points, the armor protects against the threats listed above as well as reducing the damage rating of a single other environmental threat by 4. This threat is always listed, and can be anything from extreme heat or cryogenic cold, to hard radiation. Armor with the Environmental 1 or 2 tag has a minimum cost of ••.

Powered (0): This armor is sufficiently heavy that it requires power assist via motors or artificial muscles in the joints. Armor with this tag can never possess the Concealable (1) or Innocuous (2) tags, and if the power ever fails or the armor runs out of power, the armor becomes exceedingly heavy and tiring to wear, increasing the Difficulty of any Athletics action by 2. As long as the armor retains power, wearers gain 2 Enhancement to all actions using Might.

Propulsion (1): This armor has some motive power allowing it to move in a single medium, like water, land, air, or space. The armor allows the wearer to move at Speed Scale 2 in the medium specified, or in space at Space Speed [1] (p. 195). Multiple uses of this tag allow the armor to move in multiple environments.

Psi (-1): Any item with this tag is bioware that can be formatted. Formatting bioware unlocks its full potential and all formatted armor gains some additional benefit, but doing this is not without risk. If the formatted

ADDING OTHER GEAR TO ARMOR

Other equipment is often combined with armor. A visor that duplicates the features of improved binoculars (p. 283) is often attached to the helmets, grippers (p. 294) are sometimes added to the gloves and boots, and weapons may be attached. Adding items with the same price as the armor increases the cost of the armor by one dot. Up to two items with a cost of one dot less than the armor or four items with a cost of two dots less can be added freely without increasing the armor's cost, but adding more items than this increases the armor's cost by one dot. In general, biotech armor can only incorporate biotech devices and hardtech armor can only incorporate hardtech devices. All biotech devices that can be formatted must be formatted separately.

armor is destroyed, the character automatically suffers both an Injury Condition and a level 2 Complication (Shaken), as though struck by a Stun weapon.

ARMOR DESCRIPTIONS

The armor chart includes the following listings:

Type: The type of armor.

Base: The type or types of damage the armor protects against.

Tags: A weapon's positive, zero-cost, and negative tags, including Scale, if appropriate. Players and Storyguides should work together to customize armor to their characters. Due to advances in technology, armor can now possess up to 5 + Wealth in tags.

Size: The armor's size when it is folded up for storage.

Tech: Is this armor hardtech or biotech (Ψ).

FT: Formatting Tolerance, the tolerance cost to format this noetic biotech armor.

Cost: 0 — any character can afford this, • to ••••• — dots in Wealth necessary to afford this item.

NEW TYPES OF ARMOR

Armor Carapace: Also known as a “beetle” or “bug suit.” This armor is grown organically but is a nonliving object, not a piece of biotech.

Armor Vest: A thin monofiber vest with small ceramic plates.

Battle Harness: A combination of armor, weapon, and mobility systems, battle harnesses are bioware backpack-style units designed to be highly modular.



BRYAN SYME

Fitted snugly around the wearer’s torso with a flexible and durable set of clasps, battle harnesses protect the user from harm while providing other benefits. Harnesses come in several varieties, each designed for different purposes. They must be formatted to be used.

- **Mako:** The “Mako” harness is designed for aquatic environments. The harness itself deploys a thin sheen of organic sealant over the wearer’s exposed limbs, while a collapsible fin on the back stores a small but powerful underwater propulsion system (Speed Scale 2). Attachments on the legs and arms provide additional armor protection. The bio-organic sealant and the armored plates both sport artificial shagreen capable of shredding anyone who comes in contact with the wearer’s body. A specially modified mask with a bio-weave “gill” system allows the user to filter oxygen out of water and convert it to breathable air.

- **Spider:** The “Spider” uses eight articulated spines that can extend several meters away from the wearer’s body. These spines aid in stability, greatly improving the wearer’s ability to climb. The Spider’s “legs” even include retractable biotech grippers (p. 294) extensions that allow the user to climb up vertical or even horizontal surfaces like the harness’ namesake, as well as allowing the wearer to move faster on the ground. These legs can also be used as weapons that allow her to attack and block attacks, see the statistics below.

Bio Environment Suit (BES): Developed on Qinsui as a joint project involving biologists, psions, and Qin researchers, the biosuit is the most advanced human space suit ever created. Made to replace the standard VES (p. 274), in its unformatted mode the BES is a lightweight, comfortable vacuum suit that provides high-quality life support for up to 16 hours.

SPIDER SPINES

WEAPON TYPE	ENHANCEMENT	DAMAGE TYPE	TAGS
Spider Spines	2	Edged	Melee, Reach, Quality 2, Shield, Worn



During this time, the suit recycles water and provides food using a modified glup-pack (p. 284). At the end of this time, the suit requires nutrient injections and at least eight hours of rest.

When formatted, the suit's life-support system can almost completely recycle air and water, providing life support for up to one week. With weekly additions of fresh air and water as well as at least eight hours of sunlight a day, the suit can provide indefinite life support.

The suit consists of a form-fitting jumpsuit with durable, padded feet; a soft, folding bubble helmet that retracts into the collar; and gloves that can either be detached or (if formatted) retracted into the cuffs. The helmet automatically deploys whenever the wearer's body is in a hostile environment. A formatted BES automatically deploys to protect even a sleeping or unconscious wearer from harm.

A formatted BES is more comfortable than a normal suit of clothing and many wearers happily sleep in them. The BES can change color and pattern and can also glow. It has several dozen options ranging from glowing orange for easy visibility, to multiple camouflage options that provide 1 Enhancement to all Stealth rolls to avoid being seen, to a variety of decorative options that can be personalized by the user.

When formatted, it can also change its cut and design; if the helmet and gloves are retracted, it can appear to be any garment that has at least some weight and covers most of the wearer's body, from a three-piece suit to a set of motorcycle leathers or a long dress.

Bio-organic Vacuum Assault Reconnaissance Gear (bioVARG): Like the BES, this suit was created through cooperation with Qin biotechnicians. The entire suit is a heavily armored living organism capable of surviving in vacuum. It adjusts itself to fit any wearer and also enhances the wearer's strength. BioVARGs must be formatted to be used.

The outer surface consists of hard, reinforced chitin with flexible joints protected by modified spider silk. This suit comes in several models, depending upon the particular mission. However, all of these models have several features in common.

- **The Powered tag.**
- Provide vision enhancement equivalent to improved binoculars (p 283).
- **Protect the wearer from vacuum and provide life support for up to 100 hours. At the end of this time the suit must be cleaned and allowed to rest in a habitable environment for at least five hours.**

- A built-in ear radio (p. 293).
- Biotech grippers (see p. 294) on hands, feet, shins, and forearms.
- The Active Camouflage 0 tag

In addition, all bioVARGs also come with one of the following tags; adding a second increases the armor's cost by one dot.

- **The Active Camouflage 1 tag**
- Bioservos in the legs, which give the Propulsion (land) tag.
- **A gas-jet mobility system which gives the Propulsion (space) tag.**
- Deployable swim fins and underwater jets which give the Propulsion (water) tag.

For no extra cost, bioVARGs can also be fitted with either built-in taser gloves (see p. 281) or one built-in gauntlet weapon found on pp. 280-281; select any laser gauntlet (p. 280) or psi gauntlet (p. 281) at no additional cost.

Bioweave Armor: This armor is a living mesh of modified spider silk that can only be used if formatted. It shapes to your character's body, forming tough armor that takes on the exact color of the wearer's skin and even allows the wearer's hair to grow through it. If the wearer is clothed, nothing short of an advanced scanner or a pat down reveals its presence. Taking it off requires a special spray. Once formatted, it can be put on or taken off in three rounds.

Osaka Class Armored Power Suit (MiniVARG): This suit is the smallest and lightest weight of the advanced Nihonjin VARGs. It is used as both a hostile-environment exploration suit and as powered armor for moderate-threat urban conflict. This suit consists of a lightweight suit of flexible armor built around an orbital steel exoskeleton that conforms to the user's body. This exoskeleton features small superconducting motors at all major joints, to improve the user's speed and strength. This hardtech suit must be adjusted to fit a specific individual and can only be used by wearers who all have close to the same height, weight, and general build.

This suit possesses the following included equipment:

- **The Powered tag.**
- Hardtech grippers (p. 294) on hands feet, shins, and forearms.

- **A visor with the capabilities of improved binoculars (p. 283).**
- Protection from vacuum and life support for up to 50 hours. The suit's superconducting batteries allow it to operate for up to 10 hours before it must be recharged. If the enhanced strength is turned off, the suit becomes heavy and tiring to wear, but can maintain sensors, communications, weapons, and life support for up to 50 hours. At the end of this time the suit's life-support system must be recharged.

All MiniVARGs can also be customized with various hardtech personal weapons, sensors, and additional gear. All MiniVARGs come with any one of the four options available to BioVARGs. Also, instead of gauntlet weapons, a MiniVARGs can be fitted with either a laser pistol or a heavy autopistol built into one arm. This suit can be packed into an ordinary suitcase for easy transport.

Reinforced Clothing: Ordinary clothing, including color-changing clothing, can be made from ballistic cloth and plastics that become rigid under impact. The only limitation is that the clothing must have at least a bit of weight. A three-piece suit, a motorcycle jacket and heavy-duty jeans, or any form of cold-weather gear can be made into reinforced clothing, but a t-shirt and thin silk pants cannot. Improved reinforced clothing provides more protection, but also costs more.

Shifting Armor: Popular with spies, criminals, and some performers, this biotech armor has all the advantages of improved reinforced clothing, and when it's formatted, it can change its appearance in ways limited only to the wearer's imagination. It can change color, shape, and texture, becoming anything from a halter top, jeans, and tennis shoes, to a full tuxedo and dress shoes. When formatted, this armor also automatically accommodates itself of all uses of the Biokinesis Transmogrification Mode.

Standard Battle Dress: The military uniform of the 22nd century includes integrated armor plus limited electronic heating and cooling. The outfit is designed for comfortable long-term wear and comes with a lightweight helmet. The cloth also has limited color-changing capabilities, allowing it to transform into a dozen different camouflage configurations for various conditions, as well as to bright orange for emergency pick up, and the elaborate full parade dress coloration. This armor also includes a helmet with an ear radio and an improved binocular visor.

ARMOR CHART

TYPE	BASE	POSITIVE & 0 TAGS	SIZE	TECH	FT	COST
Armor Carapace	Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant	Complete 3, Hard 3, Soft 1	Large	Hard	n/a	••
Armor Vest	Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant	Complete 3, Concealable 1, Hard 1, Soft 1	Medium	Hard	n/a	•
Mako Battle Harness	Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant	Complete 3, Defensive 2, Environmental (aquatic only) 0, Hard 1, Propulsion (water) 1, Psi ++, Soft 2	Large	Ψ	•	•••
Spider Battle Harness	Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant	Complete 3, Hard 3, Propulsion (climbing only) 1, Psi++, Soft 2	Large	Ψ	•	•••
Bio Environment Suit	Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant	Active Camouflage 0, Complete 3, Soft 2, Environmental 1, Innocuous 2+, Psi	Medium	Ψ	•	••
BioVARG	Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant	Active Camouflage 0, Complete 3, Environmental 1, Hard 3, Powered 0, Psi, Soft 2, one or two additional tags (see description)	Size 0	Ψ	••	•••• or •••••
Bioweave Armor	Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant	Complete 3, Hard 1, Concealable 1, Psi++, Soft 2	Medium	Ψ	•	••
MiniVARG	Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant	Complete 3, Environmental 1, Hard 3, Powered 0, Soft 2, one additional tag (see description)	Size 0	Hard	n/a	••••
Reinforced Clothing	Bulletproof & Impact Resistant	Active Camouflage 0, Composite 2, Environmental (temperature extremes only) 0, Innocuous 2, Soft 2	Medium	Hard	n/a	•
Improved Reinforced Clothing	Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant	Active Camouflage 0, Complete 3, Environmental (temperature extremes only) 0, Hard 1, Innocuous 2, Soft 2	Medium	Hard		•••
Shifting Armor	Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant	Active Camouflage 1+, Complete 3, Environmental (temperature extremes only) 0, Hard 1, Innocuous 2, Psi, Soft 2	Medium	Ψ	•	•••

ARMOR CHART (CONTINUED)

TYPE	BASE	POSITIVE & 0 TAGS	SIZE	TECH	FT	COST
Standard Battle Dress	Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant	Active Camouflage 1, Complete 3, Environmental (temperature extremes only) 0, Hard 1, Soft 2	Medium	Hard	n/a	••
Vacuum Environment Suit	Bulletproof & Slash Resistant	Composite 2, Soft 2, Environmental 1	Large	Hard	n/a	••*
Armored Vacuum Environment Suit	Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant	Complete 3, Hard 1, Soft 2, Environmental 1	Size 0	Hard	n/a	••

+ This tag can only be used if the biotech armor is formatted to the user.

++ This armor can only be used when formatted.

* Armor with the Environmental 1 or 2 tag has a minimum cost of ••

Vacuum Environment Suit (VES): Designed to allow survival anywhere from the orbit of Venus to the surface of Pluto, a VES has a built-in comp, a helmet visor that functions like improved binoculars (p. 283), deployable grippers (p. 294) and a radio with a range of 500 km. It

provides life support for up to 20 hours. There is also an armored version for military or other high-risk use. The military version has adaptive camouflage identical to that of standard battle dress (providing 1 Enhancement to all Stealth rolls for avoiding being seen).

WEAPONS

Psions possess formidable psychic powers, but the universe is home to myriad dangers. Even psi powers may not be enough, and most of the population possesses no such powers.

NEW WEAPON TAGS

These tags apply to the weapons found in this chapter. Weapons in this chapter also use the weapon tags found in the **Trinity Continuum Corebook** (pp. 123-126).

Beam (1): (energy weapons only) This energy weapon fires a continuous beam when the trigger is held down. Allows use of the Spray Stunt.

Combined Stun (2): This weapon simultaneously delivers a standard attack and a stun attack (see the Stun tag, **Trinity Continuum Corebook**, page 125). The user can also set the weapon to only perform one of these attacks.

Destructive (2): Weapons with this tag can easily pierce armor and cut through tough materials. These weapons reduce the target's Armor rating by 2 and can also slowly cut through most walls, doors, and other objects.

Electrical (1): Weapons that inflict electrical damage often possess the Stun or Non-Lethal tag, but some can be quite deadly. Electrical damage ignores armor unless the armor in question has the Environmental (1 or 2) tag. Unless hardened against electromagnetic disruption (which means they cannot be connected to any external network, like the OpNet), electronic devices of Size 0 or smaller that are struck by electrical weapons automatically shut down for at least five minutes.

Entangle (2): This weapon does no damage. Instead, successful attacks allow the character access to entanglement Stunts, listed below. Targets must escape the entanglement to act normally. Escaping from entanglement requires the target to make an Athletics + Dexterity roll with a Difficulty equal to the number of successes rolled on the attack. The target can do nothing else while making this roll. The attacker can inflict any of the following results on their target by allocating their attack's successes. These successes can be combined from multiple attacks on the same target.

Formatted (1, 2): Formatted 1 provides this bioware weapon with a +1 Enhancement if it is formatted. Formatted 2 gives the weapon an inherent +1 Enhancement that increases to +2 if it is formatted.

Immune (1): The user is immune to damage by this weapon. This tag can only be used on formatted biotech weapons.

Non-Lethal (2): This attack normally produces the Stunned Status Condition (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 108), but if the attacker allocates at least four successes to the attack, the target gains the Unconscious Status Condition (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 108). The attacker can accumulate these successes over the course of several attacks, as long as the attacker can accumulate at least four successes before the target throws them off. Conscious targets can make a Stamina + Resolve roll once per round to attempt to throw off the effects of this attack, with each success reducing the total number of successes by 1, but characters can perform no other actions while making this attempt.

Obvious (0): This weapon is large enough that it functionally cannot be hidden on a person. The weapon has a size of either large or Size 0 and because of its size it gains +1 Enhancement toward inflicting Injury Conditions.

Optionally Non-Lethal (2, 3): A weapon with this tag can be set so that the user can choose whether an individual attack possesses the Non-Lethal tag or does normal damage, depending upon the user's wishes. The 3-point version of this tag allows the user to switch between Non-Lethal and a Quality 2 normal attack. Characters can easily switch a weapon between these two modes and do not need to spend an action to do so.

Poison (2): Skin contact with or injury by this weapon automatically inflicts an Injury Condition on anyone whose skin contacts the weapon.

Poison (Non-Lethal) (2): This non-lethal poison causes the Unconscious Status Condition

SPRAY (VARIABLE)

When using a weapon with the beam tag, the attacker can spend an entire round holding down the trigger of the weapon and spraying a beam of energy. This attack affects every target within close range of the shooter's primary target. The attacker can make a separate non-mixed roll against each target in this area and can use either the Inflict Damage or the Pin Down Stunts (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 105) separately on each of these targets. The Spray Stunt cannot be used as part of a mixed action. Also, using it subtracts 1 from the shooter's Defense for the round, because of the necessity of focusing on aiming and controlling the weapon.

(**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 108) to anyone whose skin contacts the weapon. For both types of poison, if the target is wearing anything more than light clothing, the attacker must either touch the target's bare skin or cause damage to the target with a ballistic or edged attack bearing the poison.

Psi (-1): Any weapon with this tag is bioware that can be formatted. Formatting bioware unlocks its full potential and all formatted weapons gain some additional benefit, but doing this is not without risk. If the formatted item is destroyed, the character automatically suffers both an Injury Condition and a level 2 Complication (Shaken), as though struck by a Stun weapon.

Psi Gauntlet (0): This biotech super-science weapon is designed for use by psions. It must be formatted to be used and automatically possesses the Psi and Worn tags. Some also contain biotech lasers, increasing their Tolerance by •, but others only use their built-in psionic weapon.

Sonic (1): Sonic damage ignores armor unless the armor in question has the Environmental (1 or 2) tag.

STUNTS

Hobble (2 successes): Reduces the target's Defense against all other attacks to 1.

Slow (1 success): Each success spent on Slow reduces the target's speed by 1.

Takedown (1 success): The attacks renders your opponent prone (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 106).

Paralyzed (3 successes): The target gains the Paralyzed Status Condition (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 108), but can automatically escape within five minutes, if no one prevents them from doing so.



Super-Science (1, 2, 3): This weapon also includes Powered Noetic Super-Science. Only weapons with the Psi tag can possess this tag, and all weapons that use this tag must be formatted. The weapon contains Super-Science with a Rank and a Formatting Tolerance equal to the value of this tag. Increase its Formatting Tolerance by one dot if it also contains a separate biotech weapon. The weapon has a minimum cost equal to the value of this tag.

Tactical Sight (1): Advances in adaptive optics means that the tactical sight tag now allows the weapon to work at full effectiveness at 2 additional ranges.

Variable (1): This weapon can, at the user's choice, deliver either stun damage or normal damage, but cannot do both in a single attack. Characters can easily switch a weapon between these two modes and do not need to spend an action to do so.

Variable Poison (3): This weapon can administer both lethal and non-lethal poison but cannot do both in a single attack. The character must spend an action to switch between these two types of poison.

WEAPON DESCRIPTIONS

The lists below are not exhaustive, but provide a benchmark for use in creating your own weaponry.

The weapons charts include the following listings:

Weapon Type: A listing of the weapon's name and general type. While competing companies may produce laser carbines with minor variations from one another, these differences are too minor to track in game terms. Anything that wouldn't require a change of traits can be explained away in purely descriptive terms; for more drastic differences, change a tag or two to better represent these variations. The weapon descriptions below often include examples of a given weapon type and its typical usage in the field.

En: The Enhancement bonus provided by the weapon.

Range: This is the weapon's optimal range.

Damage Type: The weapon inflicts either ballistic, edged, or blunt damage, or a special type of damage, if the appropriate tag is used.

Tags: A weapon's positive, zero cost, and negative tags. Players and Storyguides should work together to customize weapons to their characters. Due to advances in technology, weapons can now possess up to 4 + Wealth in tags.

Size: The weapon's size.

Tech: Is this weapon hardtech or biotech (Ψ).

FT: Formatting Tolerance — the tolerance cost to format this noetic biotech weapon.



Cost: 0 — nominal, any character can afford this, • to ••••• — dots in wealth necessary to afford this item.

WEAPON CONFIGURATIONS

Blade: Both swords and knives count as blades and can have the Melee or the Reach tag, but not the Range tag. Small blades often possess the Concealable tag, large blades often have the Obvious tag and may have the Reach tag. Their Size ranges from small to large.

Pistol: All pistols are used in one hand; smaller pistols usually possess the Concealable tag. Their Size is small or medium.

Gauntlet: Gauntlets are biotech weapons worn as a glove on one hand. Small gauntlets may appear to be normal gloves, gaining the Concealable tag. Large gauntlets extend up the wearer's forearm and are obviously biotech devices. All gauntlets possess the Worn tag. Their Size is small or medium.

Carbine: Carbines are short lightweight rifles. Their Size is medium.

Rifle: Shotguns and other full-sized rifles possess the Obvious tag, and many possess the Two-Handed tag. Their Size is large.

Heavy Weapon: Heavy weapons are pieces of military hardware that are all large and deadly looking.

All possess the Heavy Weapon and Restricted tags. They are Size 0 items.

WEAPON TYPES

All of the following types of weapons can possess any appropriate weapon tags from the **Trinity Continuum Corebook** (pp. 123-126), as well as the mandatory and optional tags listed below.

Coil Guns: These weapons magnetically accelerate slugs to hypersonic velocity and possess enormous range and stopping power. They are commonly used to fight enemy psions, Chromatics, or Aberrants and are only available as heavy weapons. They all possess the Automatic 2, Brutal, Heavy Weapon, Piercing, Ranged: close-long, Restricted, Tactical Sight, and Two-Handed tags. They may also possess the Mount tag (which removes the necessity of also having the Brutal tag).

Example: Banji 02 Hornet.

Flechette Weapons: A flechette weapon rapidly fires a spray of needle-like projectiles. Biotech versions do not require reloading, since they generate their own ammunition. All flechette weapons can fire either standard flechettes or drugged flechettes that

dissolve in flesh and cause minimal damage. Flechette weapons come as pistols and carbines and all possess the Silent, Spread, and Variable Ammo 2 or 3 tags.

- **Standard Flechette:** These flechettes typically possess either the Quality 2 or the Quality 3 tags.
- **Drugged Flechette:** These flechettes have the Poison or the Poison (Non-Lethal) tag and the Non-Penetrating tag

Examples: Orgotek Stinger autopistol and Orgotek Scorpion autocarbine.

Lasers: These energy weapons fire deadly beams of coherent light. Lasers are available as pistols and carbines, and biotech lasers are also available as gauntlets. Lasers are the most common type of biotech weapon. Laser weapons all possess the Piercing and Ranged: close-medium or close-long tags. More powerful lasers replace the Piercing tag with the Destructive tag for 1 point of tags and many lasers possess the Beam tag. Lasers cannot possess the Automatic tag.

Examples: Orgotek Pulse-I Gauntlet, Voss 33k, Alchemy 2118-D Biocarbine, Orgotek Hornet IV.

Plasma Throwers: These highly dangerous energy weapons project superheated streams of ionized gas in a beam of devastatingly deadly plasma. The plasma streams fired by such weapons burn quickly through most materials, including armor. Plasma weapons require backpack fuel tanks and thus all possess the Heavy Weapon tag. Plasma weapons also all possess the Beam, Brutal, Deadly, Incendiary 2, Ranged: short, and the Restricted tag. Plasma weapons cannot possess the Automatic tag.

Example: Voss 88T.

Poison Weapons: These biotech weapons are lined with stinging cells like those of a sea anemone or jellyfish tentacles, quickly delivering a paralytic toxin to the victim. They can be used unformatted, but the user must take care not to poison herself and must select the desired poison with buttons on the weapons. When formatted, the user is immune to the poison and can cause the weapon to be poison free or secrete either lethal or paralytic poison with a thought. Poison weapons are available as either gauntlets or blades and must possess the variable Poison tag, as well as the Immune, Melee, and Psi tags.

Slug Throwers: Most of these weapons shoot normal bullets, but some have the Variable Ammo tag. Slug throwers are available as pistols, carbines, and rifles.

Any slug thrower with the Variable Ammo 2 or 3 tag can use the following ammo:

- **Armor Piercing:** This round gains the Piercing tag.
- **Frangible:** This round is designed for use on spacecraft and other potentially delicate regions and is designed to both not ricochet and also not to penetrate armor. It has the Non-Penetrating tag.
- **Gel Rounds:** These rounds spread out on impact and cause only bruising. They gain the Non-Lethal and Non-Penetrating tags.
- **Incendiary Round:** These rounds contain an accelerant that ignites upon impact, dousing the target in flames. They gain the Incendiary tag.
- **Slugs:** Slugs possess the Quality 2 tag.
- **Stun Round:** These rounds contain supercapacitors fitted with short spikes that deliver a powerful electrical charge to the targets, and gain both the Electrical and Stun tags.

Any slug thrower with the Variable Ammo 3 tag can also fire the following additional ammo:

- **Heavy Armor Piercing:** This solid slug gains the Piercing and the Quality 2 tags.
- **Slugs:** Slugs possess the Brutal and Quality 2 tags.
- **Taser Round:** These rounds contain powerful supercapacitors fitted with short spikes that deliver an extremely strong electrical charge to the targets, and gain both the Electrical and the Non-Lethal tags.

The following types of slug-thrower ammo are too large to be used in pistols.

- **Fragmentation:** This round is a fragmentation grenade, and gains the Explosive (ranged) tag.
- **Gas Round:** This high-pressured gas canister emits a small cloud of noxious chemicals upon detonation, and gains the Gas tag. The canister can hold any of the three common types of gas ammo.
- **Pellets:** These rounds fire half a dozen or more small metal pellets, and gain the Quality 2, Spread, and Non-Penetrating tags. Pellets are the most commonly used shotgun ammunition.

Examples: *L-K Defender 9mm pistol, L-K Avenger 11mm pistol, L-K MAC-803 autocarbine.*

Sonic Weapons: These specialized non-lethal energy weapons emit focused sound beams capable of incapacitating targets. They are often employed alongside tasers by law enforcement. Deadlier variations, known as screamers, can be set to do either lethal or stun damage. Sonic weapons come as pistols, carbines, and blades. Sonic blades lack physical blades and instead possess blades made of focused sound that vanish when deactivated.

Most sonic weapons possess the Non-Lethal and Sonic tags. Screamers replace the Non-Lethal tag with the Optionally Non-Lethal 2 tag for no extra cost, or the Optionally Non-Lethal 3 tag for one additional tag. Sonic pistols and carbines must possess the Range (close-short) tag, while sonic blades possess either the Melee or Reach tag. All sonic blades must also possess the Non-Penetrating tag, and most sonic blades possess one of the two Optionally Lethal tags.

Examples: *Aris Whistler Pistol, Aris SuperSonic Carbine.*

Rocket Launchers: Firing small missiles, these deadly devices are only available as heavy weapons. All rocket launchers possess the Brutal, Deadly, Explosive 2 (ranged), Heavy Weapon, Incendiary 2, Ranged: short-long or short-extreme, Restricted, and Two-Handed tags.

Example: *LK Killjoy.*

Tasers: Another non-lethal energy weapon favored by law enforcement, ranged tasers fire short-range electrical beams that render targets unconscious, while taser melee weapons charge the weapon with electricity, affecting whoever they touch. When used on electronics that either aren't shielded or are networked in any fashion (wired or wireless), tasers function as zappers (p. 295), but only affect a single target that must be within range. Tasers are available as both melee and ranged weapons and as gauntlets or pistols. All tasers possess the Electrical tag, the Melee or the Ranged: close-short tag, and either the Stun or the Non-Lethal tag. Biotech tasers possess both the Psi and the Immune tag.

Example: *Banji O2 Hornet.*

Vibroblades: These weapons earn their name because of an ultrasonic generator in their hilt. When activated, the blade vibrates at an extremely high frequency. This vibration improves the blade's damage and allows it to slowly cut through most common materials, up to and including wood, concrete, and soft metals. Doing so requires slowly carving the blade through the material, requiring a length of time based on density and size. The Storyguide is the final judge of how long this process takes, but as an example, cutting a one-meter hole through wood (such as a door) takes roughly five minutes, while doing so through concrete takes 20 or more. Vibroblades, as their name suggests, can only take the form of blades and cannot have the Range tag. They must possess the Destructive tag.

Example: *Aris Slicer*

Web Emitters: These weapons fire multiple strands of a sticky polymer or biopolymer that instantly dry into tough, flexible fibers when they contact a target. Originally used for crowd control, these non-lethal weapons are now also sold for personal protection. All web emitters are short, thick carbines. They are available in hardtech and biotech options and all possess the Entangle 2, Ranged: close-short, and Spread tags.

Examples: *L-K Netgun s5, Orgotek Spinneret*

RANGED WEAPONS

The advent of energy-based weaponry revolutionized portable firepower. Laser weapons are sleeker and more accurate than slug throwers. Slug throwers remain largely unchanged from previous centuries, though modern automatics are generally more efficient than their predecessors. Both lasers and slug throwers come in pistol and carbine varieties.

The other major distinction in weaponry comes in the form of biotech versus hardtech. Many biotech weapons look nearly identical to their hardtech counterparts by design, and function similarly. Biotech weapons have greater potential when formatted, enhancing the weapon's (and sometimes the psion's inherent) capabilities. All biotech weapons listed possess the Psi tag and can possess the Formatted tag.

RANGED WEAPONS TABLE

TYPE	MODEL	EN	RANGE	DMG TYPE	TAGS	TECH	SIZE	FT	COST
Flechette Carbine	Orgotek Scorpion Biocarbine	3/4+	Short	Ballistic	Formatted+, Ranged, Silent, Spread, Variable Ammo 3, Psi	Ψ	M	• ••	
Laser Carbine	Voss 63 K Carbine	2	Long	Ballistic	Beam, Quality 2, Ranged, Tactical Sight	Hard	M	- ••	
Laser Gauntlet	Orgotek MiniPulse-L	1/2+	Short	Ballistic	Concealable, Formatted 1+, Grappling, Piercing, Psi, Ranged, Worn	Ψ	S	• •	
Laser Gauntlet	Orgotek Pulse-L Gauntlet	2/3+	Short	Ballistic	Beam, Destructive, Formatted 2+, Psi, Ranged, Tactical Sight, Worn	Ψ	M	• •••	
Slug-Thrower Pistol	L-K Avenger 11 mm	2-3	Short	Ballistic	Quality 2, Ranged, Variable Ammo 2	Hard	M	- •	
Slug-Thrower Rifle	L-K Protector Auto	2-4	Short	Ballistic	Automatic 2, Obvious 0, Ranged, Tactical Sight, Variable Ammo 3	Hard	L	- •••	
Sonic Pistol	Aris Whistler	1	Short	Sonic	Concealable, Optionally Non-Lethal 2, Ranged, Sonic	Hard	S	- •	
Taser Pistol	Orgotek Electric Eel	1	Short	Electrical	Concealable, Electrical, Non-Lethal, Immune+, Psi, Ranged	Ψ	S	• •	
Web Emitter Carbine	Orgotek Spinneret	2	Short	Special	Entangle 2, Formatted+, Psi, Ranged, Spread	Ψ	M	• •	
HEAVY WEAPONS									
Coilgun Heavy Weapon	L-K Big Boy r5	5	Short	Ballistic	Automatic 2, Brutal, Heavy Weapon, Piercing, Ranged, Restricted, Tactical Sight, Two-Handed	Hard	Size 0	- ••••	
Missile Launcher Heavy Weapon	L-K Killjoy	5	Short	Ballistic	Brutal, Charge, Deadly, Explosive 2 (ranged), Heavy Weapon, Ranged, Restricted, Tactical Sight	Hard	Size 0	- ••••	
Plasma Thrower Heavy Weapon	Voss 88T Plasma Gun	5	Short	Incendiary	Beam, Brutal, Deadly, Heavy Weapon, Incendiary 2, Ranged, Restricted, Two-handed	Hard	Size 0	- ••••	

+ This tag can only be used if the biotech weapon is formatted to the user.

PSI GAUNTLETS

Psi gauntlets are advanced biotech enhancements worn over the user's hand and forearm. They cover the entire forearm and are thus difficult to conceal. Only a psion can use a psi gauntlet and they must be formatted. Psi gauntlets enhance the user's psionic powers and also provide built-in weaponry. Some gauntlets require a specific Aptitude in order to effectively use them, but most can be used by any psion. Any such requirements are listed in the weapon descriptions below. If using a gauntlet in melee, it counts as an unarmed attack and gains the weapon's Enhancement, but not its other Tags.

Electrolaser Gauntlet: This weapon creates a laser-guided electrical blast, essentially a wrist-mounted lightning thrower. The shock of the weapon is severe, capable of stunning and disabling both living and mechanical targets at range, and the user can choose to fire either an incapacitating or a lethal bolt. If the user spends a Psi point, they can simultaneously make a normal and a non-lethal attack against the same target. Any psion can use this weapon.

Enhancer Gauntlet: This gauntlet can only be used by psions with the Electrokinetic or Psychokinesis Aptitudes. In addition to firing a powerful laser beam, it also increases the user's effective Psi by 1, but only for the purpose of calculating dice pools and other factors dependent on Psi for powers of a single Aptitude; it does not provide additional

Psi points. This device also cannot increase effective Psi above 5. This Psi increase affects either the Electrokinetic or the Psychokinesis Aptitude, but it can only enhance one of these. The wearer chooses which one to enhance when formatting this device.

Force Gauntlet: A force gauntlet uses Telekinesis to enhance the wearer's blows. Unformatted, it functions as a fighting glove (see below). When formatted, the gauntlet projects this same force at a distance, effectively allowing the user to make unarmed strikes against distant targets (using the Close Combat Skill, but with Psi instead of Might). This weapon can only project raw force, not fine manipulation. The wearer can also use the telekinetic force created by this gauntlet to shove opponents and block attacks. Any psion can use this gauntlet.

Sureshot Gauntlet: This gauntlet uses the power of Clairsentience to guide the user's attacks to a pinpoint precision. It requires getting a bead on the target with the guiding laser, made by making a successful attack roll using Aim, and spending 1 Psi point. This maneuver does no damage, but from then on, the gauntlet remains locked on to the target, and its laser attacks gain an additional 2 Enhancement (for a total of 4 Enhancement) on the attack roll. Thick barriers or a lack of line of sight for more than two rounds end this lock. However, the Sureshot is not affected by low light or other types of impaired visibility and suffers no penalty even amid a smoke cloud or on a hazy moonless night. Any psion can use this gauntlet.

PSI GAUNTLETS

TYPE	EN	RANGE	DMG TYPE	TAGS	SIZE	FT	TECH	COST
Electrolaser	3	Short	Electrical	Electrical, Formatted, Optionally Non-Lethal 3, Psi Gauntlet, Ranged, Super-Science 1	M	••	Ψ	•••
Enhancer	3	Short	Ballistic	Beam, Destructive, Formatted 2, Psi Gauntlet, Ranged, Super-Science 1, Tactical Sight	M	••	Ψ	••••
Force	2	Short	Blunt	Formatted, Psi Gauntlet, Ranged, Shield, Silent, Super-Science 1, Weighted	S	•	Ψ	•••
Sureshot	2/4	Short	Ballistic	Beam, Destructive, Formatted, Psi Gauntlet, Ranged, Super-Science 1, Tactical Sight	M	••	Ψ	•••

MELEE WEAPONS

Even in an age of portable energy weapons and psionic powers, the reliability of a club or a sword can't be overstated. On an alien world or in a bad part of town, a knife or even a makeshift club can mean the difference between life and death. Many melee weapons are strictly hardtech, although developers constantly push the boundaries of biotech weapons. Players should feel free to develop prototype bioware weapons with their Storyguides beyond those listed below.

Axe: Useful as survival tools, axes also make for emergency weapons. Simple but rugged, they consist of reinforced steel or plasteel blades attached to a long handle. An axe can split wood or break down doors in a rescue situation as easily as it can fend off would-be attackers.

BioClaws: Requiring minor surgery to attach, this bioapp provide users with a set of retractable, fully organic claws. These claws provide 1 Enhancement for climbing and also serve as vicious close-combat weapons.

Chain: A length of chain makes for a surprisingly effective weapon in the right hands. Chains can entangle limbs or simply bludgeon a target with reach. A few rare martial arts styles still make use of chain weapons.

Fighting Gauntlet: High-tech gloves with plasteel and kinetic enhancers woven into the lining allow a human to strike with the force of a sledgehammer. Trained martial artists can use a good pair of fighting gloves to beat down dangerous wildlife or rogue psions, or even shatter vehicles.

MELEE WEAPONS

WEAPON TYPE	MODEL	EN	DMG TYPE	TAGS	SIZE	TECH	FT	COST
Axe	-	3	Edged	Melee, Quality 3, Weighted	Large	Hard	n/a	0
BioClaws	Orgotek Tiger	2	Edged	Concealable, Formatted, Grapple, Melee, Piercing, Psi++, Worn	Tiny	Ψ	•	0
Chain	-	2	Blunt	Entangle, Melee, Reach, Two-Handed	Medium	Hard	n/a	0
Fighting Gauntlet	Banji Warrior	2	Blunt	Concealable, Grapple, Melee, Quality 2, Worn	Small	Hard	n/a	•
Enamel Knife	-	1	Edged	Concealable, Grapple, Melee, Piercing, Throwing	Small	Hard	n/a	0
Poison Gauntlet	Alchemy BW-2	1	Poison	Concealable, Grapple, Immune+, Melee, Psi, Variable Poison 3, Worn	Small	Ψ	•	••
Sonic Blade	Banji Varicut-3	2	Sonic	Concealable, Grapple, Melee, Optionally Non-Lethal 2, Non-Penetrating, Reach, Sonic	Small	Hard	n/a	••
Staff	-	2	Blunt	Melee, Obvious 0, Reach, Shield 2	Large	Hard	n/a	0
Taser Gauntlet	Orgotek Lightning	1	Electrical	Electrical, Grapple, Immune+, Melee, Non-Lethal 2, Psi, Worn	Small	Ψ	•	•
Vibroblade	L-K VL1	3	Edged	Deadly, Destructive 2, Melee, Quality 3	Medium	Hard	n/a	••

+ This tag can only be used if the biotech weapon is formatted to the user.

++ This weapon must be formatted to use it.

Enamel Knife: A weapon almost as simple as a club, knives come in many forms, including blades of enamel, orbital steel, or old-fashioned collapsible knives. Unlike ranged weapons or larger melee weapons, knives are less restricted and more concealable. Enamel knives are exceptionally sharp blades grown via biotech. They do not show up on metal detectors.

Poison Gauntlet: A poison glove appears to be an ordinary glove until its biotech enhancements are activated, at which point it can deliver either lethal or paralytic poison at the wearer's desire.

Sonic Blade: A device that looks like the hilt of a high-tech short sword generates a tightly focused "blade" of sound capable of easily harming soft targets. The fact that it is relatively useless against harder materials makes this weapon a favorite in dangerous environs, where a punctured hull or broken lab equipment might spell disaster. It can also be set to only do stun damage, making it also useful in law enforcement, when less deadly uses of force are desired. The user can set the sonic blade to be anywhere from a few centimeters to several meters long, using it as a dagger, a short sword, or an exceedingly long blade.

Staff: A length of wood, plasteel, or polymers usually two meters in length, the staff is essentially a longer club capable of striking with more force. Its additional reach affords the wearer some extra defense in close combat.

Taser Gauntlet: This model is clearly a biotech weapon, and is decorated with stylized lightning bolts, but for a slightly higher cost a version that is indistinguishable from an ordinary glove is also available.

Vibroblade: The size of an old-fashioned short sword, this vibroblade cuts through most common materials swiftly and easily and is also a deadly weapon.

EVERYDAY TECHNOLOGY

The following devices are all widely available and in common use.

Binoculars: Computer-stabilized image enhancers permit up to 50x magnification. Improved binoculars also provide light intensification for seeing at night and an infrared-to-ultraviolet frequency range. Binoculars provide 2 Enhancement for actions involving seeing details at a distance, and improved binoculars also allow the user to see in darkness and to ignore visibility penalties or Complications from fog or smoke. **Tech:** Either, **Size:** Small, **Cost:** 0 (regular) • (improved)

Biofixer: This palm-sized, clamshell-shaped bio-app extrudes organic materials that can fix cracks and other minor damage and patch holes up to 5 cm in diameter. Repairs made by a biofixer are as good as new and the device provides 1 Enhancement to actions to repair devices. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Cost:** •

Clothing: Clothing worn in the early 22nd century is mostly similar to that sold in the early 21st. However, there have been some changes. Outdoor clothing often comes with imbedded heating and cooling fibers to keep the wearer comfortable from -30° to 50° C with nothing more than heavyweight jeans and a durable long-sleeved shirt. Flexible solar panels printed on cloth keep these fibers charged and are also used on clothing to recharge personal electronics.

In Nippon, clothes printed with display screens playing everything from mass media shows to home movies or art are popular. Clothing that can change color and patterns and even glow is popular everywhere. In addition to fashion uses, most outdoor clothing can turn bright orange and glow in the dark to facilitate easy rescue, and criminals and covert operatives often wear clothing that can assume a wide range of camouflage options while also being able to appear ordinary. This clothing provides 1 Enhancement to actions to avoid notice, and particularly stylish (and expensive) clothing can provide 1 Enhancement to creating a good first impression or being perceived as having high social status. **Tech:** Hard or Psi, **Size:** Medium, **Cost:** 0 to ••

Cosmetic Modifications: Advanced biotechnology allows people to change their bodies in a wide variety of ways. Permanently changing skin, eye, or hair color at will, even to stripes or exotic colors like royal blue or lime green, altering facial features, or becoming fatter or thinner are all common procedures. These changes require only a few minutes to initiate, are complete in a day or two, and have no recovery time. More extensive and expensive alterations like sex changes, changing eyes to look like those of cats or birds of prey, attaching decorative horns or antlers, and small changes in height require several hours of medical procedures and up to a week of recovery time. Alterations that cause the person to have green skin or otherwise look obviously nonhuman are most common in Sudamérica or Nippon, but available everywhere. The only mechanical effect of this technology is that it can produce or remove dots in the Attractive Edge or allow someone to almost perfectly disguise herself as any other person. **Tech:** Hard or Psi, **Size:** n/a, **Cost:** 0 to ••

NOTES ON APPEARANCE, GENDER, AND TECHNOLOGY

For the last 90 years, medical technology has allowed people to alter their appearance or their sex. Through a combination of drugs, gene therapy, and surgery a short, skinny black man can become a tall, Rubenesque white woman who could bear children. Permanently changing hair, eye, or skin color is a simple, fast, and in many places inexpensive procedure. Now that three generations have grown up with this technology, prejudices about race, gender and sexuality are all considerably less than they were in the early 21st century. Sadly, bigotry lingers, and prejudices based on culture, national origin, religion, and socioeconomic status are still common, especially in poorer nations like the FSA or Russia.

Glucose-Protein Nutritional Packet (glup pack):

First introduced by BioDyne, this bioapp is roughly the size and shape of a large avocado. It generates food and water using photosynthesis, carbon dioxide and water from the air, and organic matter like leaves, grass, or rich soil. With only water from the air and minimal organic matter, a glup can provide one person with food and water. If given sufficient water to purify and abundant organic matter it can supply up to five people per day with food and water. It can be stored for years. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Medium, **Cost:** 0

Locator Band: This device subconsciously allows the user to know which direction is north, as well as also optionally allowing the user to know the direction of some known object, like their car or the spacecraft they landed in. This device uses the OpNet and works on any settled planet. It causes the user's skin to tingle in the relevant direction and comes as a belt, an anklet or a bracelet. It provides the wearer with the equivalent of the Direction Sense Edge (see the **Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 58). **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Tiny, **Cost:** 0

Survival Blanket: This simple bioapp stores itself as a green object the size of a large mango. It can unfold into a blanket, a sleeping bag, or small tent, all suitable for a single person. Multiple survival blankets can link together to form larger tents. As long as it is exposed to sunlight for at least eight hours a day, it can keep the user comfortably warm or cold in any temperature from the Antarctic winter to the Gobi Desert in summer (-60° C to 60° C), providing 2 Enhancement for all survival rolls using the

blanket. Also, at the user's command, the blanket can induce a state of deep hibernation, allowing the user to survive without oxygen for a week and without food or water for three months. This hibernation can also allow the user to survive an otherwise lethal injury until help arrives. A survival blanket can place an unwilling subject into hibernation, but the process takes five minutes, and the subject must be immobilized or they can easily escape. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Cost:** •

MINICOMPS

The primary piece of technology that everyone except the poorest of the poor, criminals in maximum-security prisons, and a few of the most determined luddites owns is a minicomp. Minicomps are highly advanced versions of early 21st-century smartphones. They all possess a fast wireless connection to the OpNet, a short-range link to the user's display gear, and are the most indispensable piece of technology that most people own. Minicomps are the size of an average early 21st-century smartphone, with a holographic screen and a mini-projector that allows the user to project images a meter or two across. All minicomps are waterproof and designed to survive drops of up to three meters, and some are designed for even more rugged use. For no cost, a minicomp has an attractive but not fancy casing and a failsafe of 2. Increasing the cost by • either increases the failsafe by 2 and gives the minicomp a fancier case or provides the minicomp with 1 point of both hard and soft armor, the Environmental 1 tag, and adds a locator beacon with a range of 100 km in areas with little radio traffic. The highest available failsafe for a minicomp is 4.

BIOCOMPS

The recently developed biocomps are faster and more responsive than hardtech minicomps, and can be formatted. Formatted biocomps perform any tasks involving computer use, including hacking, twice as fast as hardtech minicomps. Characters who format a biocomp also gain 1 Enhancement to all Technology rolls related to using it (including using it to hack other computers or networks). In addition, formatted biocomps do not require passwords or biometrics. Only the person who formatted them can use them. All other users must overcome their failsafe. All biocomps have Tolerance •.



POPULAR MINICOMPS

All minicomps are small Size, designed to fit comfortably in the user's pocket. Like all computers, minicomps have active security known as a failsafe, which acts as a Complication against any unauthorized use. See pp. 196-201 for more details on failsafes and computer hacking. The following are some of the most common models:

Orgotek Tortoise: This biocomp is at least as fast and reliable as any computer on the market, and is equipped with an extruded casing engineered from turtle DNA for a pleasant, pebbly exterior. **Tech:** Ψ , **Tolerance:** •, **Failsafe:** 4, **Cost:** •

Steinhardt MI-CC: The military-issue minicomputer is equipped with an armored ceramic-polymer shell, locator beacon, and a Patton military agent. The P-CC is a civilian version that is identical, except that it lacks a military agent. **Tech:** Hard, **Failsafe:** 4, **Cost:** ••

Wazukana 300E: The most popular minicomputer on the market, made in a fetching neo-deco ovoid design and available in a variety of colors. **Tech:** Hard, **Failsafe:** 2, **Cost:** 0

SI (SATISFACTORY INTELLIGENCES)

Because of several attacks by malevolent and highly unstable artificial intelligences created during the Aberrant War, true artificial intelligence is now limited to a few tentative projects found in secure research facilities. The best publicly available software is the ubiquitous Satisfactory Intelligence, typically called SI. SIs can understand and respond in colloquial speech and are capable of asking for clarification if confused, but are mere simulations of intelligent interaction, lacking self-awareness or creativity. However, they learn the habits of their users and make inferences based on these habits. SIs are found in minicomps, vehicles, dwellings, and in almost every device people regularly use. A coffee pot will make a cup of coffee based on data collected about the user's normal coffee preferences, unless overridden by a more exacting request.

AGENTS

Every minicomputer contains an SI, with an agent program. This agent serves as the user's personal assistant. Children have special agents that help guide their learning and restrict their access to some material, and many adults have used the same agent since their teens.

Agents can be anything from a simple, emotionless drone to a fully intuitive, dynamic character construct. Minicomp agents are almost supporting characters in themselves, but ultimately an agent is simply a personalized SI. Agents have a kind of intelligence, and even seem to possess an artificial personality, but are not independently thinking creatures. Nevertheless, agents can operate independently from the character. Characters can instruct them to perform tasks or allow their agents to make limited decisions based on observations of what their user would want.

Agents interact with their user and with other people and agents via text, voice, and visual projections. They can perform any task that they are told to, if they have the necessary equipment. If someone asked an agent to drive him home, the agent could either call the person's nearby car and direct it to drive home, or call an automated cab.

Typically, people allow their agents to share their preferences with devices they are interacting with. Everything from your car or home to a Robo-Burger or hotel room in a city you visit for the first time knows what you like and knows what questions to ask to help you decide exactly what you want to eat, drink, listen to, view, or read and what temperature you prefer for your showers. These tasks are overseen by an individual's agent. Agents often know someone better than their spouse and help manage a person's life. They remind users to leave early for an appointment if traffic on their route is especially heavy, make certain that food they order or purchase meets any special dietary needs or preferences, provide appropriate music for all circumstances, and keep users up to date with news and entertainment in which it knows they are interested, while filtering out everything else.

LAW-BREAKING AGENTS

Ordinary agents are not permitted to attempt to break laws for their user, except for limited exceptions if someone's life is in immediate danger, such as driving a vehicle faster than the local speed limit on a trip to a hospital. However, agents used by covert operatives, criminals, and some high-ranking government officials lack restrictions against law-breaking. There is an illegal market in agents hacked to be able to break laws. Hacking an agent to break laws or possessing such an agent without the proper authorization are serious crimes in most nations.

All agents are treated as minor characters with both Mental and Social dice pools. However, because SIs are not sentient beings, they are limited to performing highly specific tasks. Each such task is called an application. Agents cannot perform any action if they lack an associated application. All agents come with a pre-loaded set of applications. Because of these limitations, no agent can outdo an exceptionally skilled human. Agents can also help their owner perform tasks they possess applications for, such as evaluating the owner's business plan, rather than creating their own business plan. In this case, all agents provide 1 Enhancement to applicable actions. All agents can perform online research and translate all living human languages in real time.

BUILDING AGENTS

In addition to Language Translation and Online Research applications, all agents possess 6 additional applications, possess a Mental dice pool of 4, a Social dice pool of 4, and have a cost of 0. Every • of cost increases the agent's power by adding three additional applications and a total of two points that can be added to the two dice pools.

Alternately, you can increase the agent's cost by • to either add six additional applications or a total of four points that can be added to the two dice pools. Agent dice pools cannot be raised higher than 6. In addition, you must increase the agent's cost by an additional • if it can perform hacking and other illegal functions. All law-breaking agents are restricted to Criminal and Espionage Paths.

POPULAR AGENTS

The following are four popular agents.

Alpha Software Chris: Chris is one of the best agents on the open market. The projection's appearance is fully customizable by the user. Chris is extremely responsive and good at understanding the user's needs and wants. The default personality is slightly pushy but rapidly adapts to the user's style and preferences. **Cost:** 0. **Stats:** Mental: 4, Social 4. **Applications:** Administration, Business, Design, Geography, Language Translation, Law, Mathematics, Online Research.

Data Intrusion Assistant (DIA): This highly restricted agent was designed for use by covert operatives who need to hack computers. It appears to be a standard mid-range agent like Chris, but with a few secret features. Criminals and dissidents have obtained copies of this agent

AUGMENTED REALITY

and adapted it for their own uses. **Cost:** •• (restricted to Espionage or Criminal Paths), **Stats:** Mental: 6, Social 4, **Applications:** Administration, Business, Computer Hacking, Code-breaking, Design, Electronic infiltration, Geography, Language Translation, Law, Mathematics, Online Research

Datawarp Patton: This agent was one of the first of the “new-era” designs, and still finds extensive use throughout the FSM and other military organizations. While the projection is of a 20th-century American general, Patton has extensive data on every major military mind and tactical analysis of the past three centuries. **Cost:** • (restricted to Military Paths), **Stats:** Mental: 6, Social 4, **Applications:** Administration, Current Events, Geography, History, Language Translation, Mathematics, Politics, Military Regulations, Online Research, Strategy, Tactics

Orchidware Hippocrates v3.0: This premier medical agent is designed to help with diagnosis and treatment and also to manage the practical details of a physician’s life. Its standard projection is as an efficient and somewhat taciturn middle-aged woman who is dressed as a physician. **Cost:** •, **Stats:** Mental: 6, Social 4, **Applications:** Biology, Bureaucracy, Chemistry, Diagnosis, First Aid, Language Translation, Mathematics, Medical Ethics and Law, Online Research, Pharmacy, Surgery

Orgotek Hare: Used in the biotech turtle, the default projection is an animated anthropomorphic rabbit with a somewhat sarcastic sense of humor, but the personality soon adapts to the user. **Cost:** •, **Stats:** Mental: 6, Social 6, **Applications:** Administration, Business, Geography, Language Translation, Law, Mathematics, Online Research, Organization

DISPLAY GEAR

Augmented reality has been a fact of daily life for more than a century and almost everyone uses some type of display gear. The most common display gear is special contact lenses. Standard models display minicomp data and function as automatically darkening sunglasses that magnify both small and distant objects by up to 2X. Advanced models also allow the user to see the entire spectrum from infrared

Modern augmented reality is subtle and carefully managed by the user’s agent. It includes small colored arrows for directions if the person is unfamiliar with a location or asks for directions. Similar markers for objects or locations the agent knows the person would be interested in, as well as names and other basic information appears next to people the user either doesn’t know or has forgotten. Often, someone’s agent understands what she wants to know at the same time she does, and flashes up enough information to help the person, without distracting her for more than a second or two. Most uses of augmented reality are equally unobtrusive.

Almost anywhere on Earth and in every settled world, anyone using display gear can instantly learn their location and get directions. They can see the name and basic biographic information on anyone they have seen before or who has a public OpNet profile (which almost everyone does) and learn the location of anyone they know who has allowed them to access this information. People can also look at an animal or plant and have their minicomp identify it or have their minicomp help repair broken devices or diagnose medical problems and suggest basic first aid.

However, augmented reality provided by standard display gear and implants appears somewhat artificial and usually looks at least slightly cartoonish and imperfectly matted into the background due to the limitations of display gear. Computer enhancement (p. 126) allows seamless augmented reality, where the augmented reality images are indistinguishable from reality and allow users to effectively customize the appearance of their surroundings. Unfortunately, problems with AR hacking, where people secretly rewrote what others saw, contributed to the widespread current distrust of computer enhancement.

to ultraviolet light, magnify both small and distant objects by up to 4X and provide light amplification to allow the user to see well in dim light, providing 1 Enhancement to all vision rolls. These advanced contact lenses also contain miniature cameras to allow the user to record what they are seeing.

People who prefer older technology wear the same device as a set of glasses that contains all the same features. Some well-off people have their display gear implanted, which also contains the same features. Except in Nippon, implanted AR gear is becoming less common because of the development

of biotech contacts that can bond semi-permanently with the user's eyes and biotech speakers and micro-phones that bond behind the user's ears. These pieces of biotech can live on the user indefinitely. **Cost:** Ordinary display gear has a cost of 0 and is included with a minicomp, advanced display gear has a cost of •, biotech versions do not need to be formatted.

MEDICINE & MEDICAL GEAR

Current medical technology can cure most diseases. The only exceptions are the dreaded Corruption diseases (p. 192), which defy both conventional and most vitakinetic treatments. However, cancer can be cured, limbs and organs regrown, and the average lifespan of someone with regular medical care is now 130. Anyone benefitting from Nihonjin's advanced medicine can expect to live 145 years, while someone with regular access to vitakinetic medical care lives at least this long, and recent developments have likely increased this.

Wazukana II Portable Trauma Kit (PTK): This kit is roughly the size of a large suitcase and is found in ambulances, most spacecraft, and small clinics. It contains drugs and equipment for treating most common diseases and poisons and performing all surgery that does not require a hospital operating room. It provides 1 Enhancement for all such medical tasks. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Size 0, **Cost:** ••

Wazukana III Medical Robot (MR): Approximately the size and shape of a 1.5 m tall fire-plug, an MR moves on wheels and has half a dozen arms and many sensors. These robots are usually found in hospitals, spacecraft clinics, and mobile medical centers set up to handle natural disasters. The onboard Hippocrates agent automatically treats patients if no doctor is present with a pool of six dice, and can perform all but the most complex medical procedures. It can also assist a physician or be teleoperated by a remote physician and provides 2 Enhancement for medical tasks if helping a physician. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Size 1, **Cost:** •••

DRUGS

The following are only some of the thousands of drugs used for medicine, recreation, or personal enhancement in this era. Some drugs have after-effects once they have worn off. Users can postpone these after-effects by taking more of the drug, but all drugs have a maximum safe dosage. The duration of a drug's after-effects is multiplied by the number of doses taken. Recreational drugs are legal in most nations.

Flashback: This drug drastically enhances a user's memory, given them the equivalent of three dots of the Eidetic Memory Edge for the duration. However, the user is overwhelmed with memories and suffers a level 2 Complication (confused) to all rolls to notice events in the present. **Duration:** One scene, **Maximum Dosage:** Two, **After-effects:** none, **Cost:** 0 (10 doses)

Mooders: These drugs each induce a single specific emotion in the user. The most common mooders induce joy, sadness, anger, love, lust, trust, enthusiasm, or self-confidence. Mooders typically give the user 1 Enhancement or a level 1 Complication to various tasks. For the duration, the user can't help but feel the induced emotion. **Duration:** One scene, **Maximum Dosage:** Three, **After-effects:** none, **Cost:** 0 (10 doses)

Red: Designed for soldiers and regularly sold to criminals, it fills users with aggression and rage while simultaneously causing them to become extremely focused. They are also immune to fear. Users gain 1 Enhancement to all Aim, Athletics, and Close Combat actions, but is also strongly inclined to shoot first and ask questions later. **Duration:** One scene, **Maximum Dosage:** Three, **After-effects:** Inflicts a level 2 Complication (in pain) on the target for one scene, **Cost:** •• (10 doses, restricted to military and criminal Paths)

Stabilizers: One pill calms the user, eliminating any penalties for anxiety or stress, removing up to a level 2 Complication caused by either. Two pills make the user drowsy (providing a level 2 Complication to all actions), and three pills make the target sleep. "Stables" take effect in five minutes and are a common sleeping aid. **Duration:** One scene (or a full night of sleep), **Maximum Dosage:** Three, **After-effects:** none, **Cost:** 0 (100 doses)

Stimulants: The user functions normally regardless of how tired they are. **Duration:** Six hours, **Maximum Dosage:** Three, **After-effects:** Inflicts a level 2 Complication (tired) on the user for two scenes, **Cost:** 0 (10 doses)

Tough: This drug eliminates fear and pain without otherwise impairing the user's body or mind. The user gains 3 Enhancement to resist fear or intimidation, but is not inclined to perform obviously dangerous actions without a good reason. Tough also temporarily reduces all Complications from injuries by 1 level. **Duration:** One hour, **Maximum Dosage:** Four, **After-effects:** increase all injury Complications by 1 level for the next hour, **Cost:** • (10 doses)

RULES FOR ACQUIRING AUGMENTATIONS

One potentially confusing part of dealing with characters acquiring augmentations is that some are purchased as Edges, while other are treated as any other equipment, which is bought using Wealth. As a general rule, any augmentation that produces large-scale mental or physical changes in a character, like Amphibious Conversion, Aquatic Conversion, or Computer Enhancement (see *New Edges*, p. 126) is treated as an Edge, while smaller changes, like the various augmentations above, are treated as equipment.

COMMERCIAL BIOAPPS & AUGMENTATIONS

Noetic biotech is humanity's newest technology and the most advanced biotech devices connect to human bodies. The first bioapps were all designed for use by psions, but recently several biotech companies have been creating bioapps for use by neutrals, and the Qin have also recently begun creating these devices to sell to humanity. One result of the popularity of noetic bioapps is that non-noetic biotechnology created using conventional genetic engineering is somewhat more popular than before, and most people outside of Nippon consider it to be safer and more acceptable than electronic hardtech implants.

Gillbreather: This device consists of a mask connected to a thin pack worn on the user's chest or back. It allows the user to breathe normally in any water that contains sufficient oxygen to support fish. If not formatted, the device can be used for up to eight hours before it requires rest and nutrient injections. If formatted, the pack bonds to the user's back and can be used as long as desired. Also, formatted gillbreathers directly oxygenate the user's bloodstream and no longer require a mask. Formatted gillbreathers can be removed, but are not bulky or uncomfortable and some wear them on land. Hardtech gills can only be used for up to seven hours before they must be recharged. **Tech:** Ψ or Hard, **Size:** Medium, **Tolerance:** •, **Cost:** •

Medical Symbiont: Recently created by a team of vitakinetics working with both Qin technicians and conventional bioengineers, this enhancement was created from gene-engineered bacteria and single-celled organisms. As a result, it is technically hardtech. The symbiont gives users 2 Enhancement to resist all poisons and diseases. Also, the user heals three times faster than normal and increases her lifespan by 25%, potentially increasing average lifespan to 160 years. Medical symbionts must be specifically engineered for each individual. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** n/a, **Cost:** ••

Qin Enhancement Polyps (QEP): These devices have proven extremely popular since their recent release. These organisms are dome-shaped disks 3 cm in diameter and 5 mm thick that are covered by a brightly colored shell and attach directly to the user's body. Once attached, they can only be removed by minor surgery. The QEP enhances the user's brain in minor but useful ways. There are currently four QEPs, each of which grants the user a single Mental or Physical Edge (see the *Trinity Continuum Corebook*, pp. 57-60 for the list of Edges), which include the Direction Sense Edge, the Lighting Calculator Edge, the Breath Control Edge, and the two-dot Photographic Memory Edge, Perfect Memory. These bioapps do nothing for individuals who already possess these Edges, but users can wear one of each type of they wish. These devices do not need to be formatted. **Tech:** Ψ , **Size:** Tiny, **Cost:** •• each.

Vision Enhancement: Unlike many other enhancement procedures, vision enhancement proved safe and remained popular even after the Aberrant War. It provides the ability to see both infrared and ultraviolet light, including thermal infrared (heat) and improves the user's night vision. Finally, if the user squints, it provides up to 4x magnification for both distance and close work. Users suffer no visual penalties for dim light and gain 2 Enhancement to all actions involving vision. Most versions look like ordinary eyes, but users can obtain more unusual models, including black featureless eyes or slitted cat eyes. Both normal and inhuman-looking vision enhancements cost the same. However, having visibly inhuman eyes gives the user a level 1 Complication to all social actions that would be influenced by his looks in nations with substantial prejudice against enhanced individuals, like the FSA, Poland, or Ukraine. In some of these nations, including the FSA, the government is also more likely to harass these individuals. However, in most Sudamérican cities, and among subcultures elsewhere having a visibly inhuman augmentation provides the user with 1 Enhancement to all actions influenced by his looks. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** n/a, **Cost:** ••

PSIONIC BIOAPPS

These bioapps are specifically designed for use by psions and enhance or otherwise affect psionic powers. They can only be used by or on psions. Most of these devices must be formatted. All the items listed here are commercial products and thus can be produced in moderate numbers. As a result, characters can purchase these items normally and players do not need to buy them using the Artifact Edge (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 66).

Astronomical Range Enhancement Sensor (ARES): The recently developed ARES is a large oval pod that can hold a single adult human inside of it. When activated, it unfolds like a flower and then folds around the user. It increases the user's effective Psi by 1, but only for calculating dice pools and other factors dependent on Psi for clairsentience powers. The ARES pod also adds two dots to your character's Psycholocation Mode for making rolls or determining the power of effects using this Mode. Most impressive of all, it allows the user to multiply the maximum range of the Psycholocation power Dowsing, and other Psycholocation powers used in conjunction with it, by 500, but only for targets that are more than 0.1 light years away. This bioapp does not increase the amount of detail available at these extremely long ranges. An ARES is a crucial component of a Leviathan jump ship. However, ISRA owns

several ARES units that are not installed in Leviathan jump ships, which it uses for long-range stellar surveys, and Upeo wa Macho recently acquired several more for use by its clairsentients. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Size 1, **Tolerance:** ••••, **Cost:** ••••

Focal Crystal: These biotech crystals are small violet disks. They do not require formatting and are only useful to clairsentients. Any clairsentient or character with a Clairsentient Auxiliary Mode can use them to encode a multimedia message including voice, text, and both still and moving images drawn from the character's thoughts and memories. "Reading" a message in a focal crystal requires the same amount of time as reading or watching it on a screen, while recording a five-minute message only requires one round. A clear must be in close range of a focal crystal to encode a message in it, but can sense focal crystals and read any messages contained within them at their Enhanced Attunement range (p. 217). Each focal crystal can hold enough messages that watching and reading them all would require many hours. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Tiny, **Tolerance:** n/a, **Cost:** •

Interface Augmentation Device (IAD): Orgotek manufactures eight different IADs, one for each Aptitude. Most IADs are made in the form of a small device that fits around the user's ear. However, a few decorative ones are made as chokers or wrist bands.



While most psions use an IAD that enhances their Aptitude, IADs can also enhance a psion's Auxiliary Modes. Because a few psions have Quantakinesis Auxiliary Modes, people can still purchase quantakinetic IADs. Characters cannot use multiple IADs at the same time. Every IAD provides the user with one dot to each Mode when determining that power's effects and also increases the user's effective Psi by 1, but only for the purpose of calculating dice pools and other factors dependent on Psi for powers of a single Aptitude. This device does not provide additional Psi points and cannot increase effective Psi above 5. This device also doesn't allow the user to gain any additional dots in a Mode. Instead, the user's existing powers become somewhat more powerful. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Tiny, **Tolerance:** •••, **Cost:** •••

Psionic Distorter: This device interferes with psionic surveillance by generating subquantum static and is designed to be used by neutrals and psions alike. It comes in two forms, an ovoid the size of an orange that fills a room with psionic static, and a small disk that is designed to be worn and that generates psionic static within a few cm of the wearer. The first device creates a level 3 Complication for any use of clairvoyance or teleportation in or directed at the protected area. Even if the device is off, the Complication affects any use of Psychometry to examine the area during the time when it was on. The wearable device inflicts a level 3 Complication to all attempts to use clairvoyance, telepathy, or teleportation on the wearer. Failure to overcome this Complication results in clairvoyant and telepathy users receiving only static and in teleportation being impossible.

Psions can make an Attunement roll to notice either type of active psionic distorter in short or close range, and automatically notice it if they attempt to use any powers affected by this device on an area or individual protected by one. These devices are often used by spies and wealthy or powerful individuals from Nippon who travel abroad. However, they are highly illegal in China, where only individuals authorized by the government may own or use them. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Tolerance:** n/a, **Cost:** ••

Psionic Restraint Collar: Developed for use on psionic criminals, recently, psionic restraint collars were adapted for use on Chromatic prisoners. Devices designed for use on humans do not work on Chromatics, and the reverse is also true. When placed around the wearer's neck, the collar drains one Psi point per round until the user is out of Psi points.

The user also cannot recover any Psi points until the collar is removed and increases the Difficulty of all Psi rolls by +5. The collars are large, easily visible bands. Possession of these devices is highly restricted and they do not need to be formatted. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Small, **Tolerance:** n/a, **Cost:** •• (highly restricted, law enforcement and Æon Trinity Paths only)

Space Maneuver Pack (SMP): In an effort to provide easy mobility in space, Orgotek has recently introduced the SMP to give individuals long-term mobility in space without the need for bulky fuel tanks and large engines. This bioapp provides the wearer with telekinetic propulsion similar to Momentum. While not as powerful as a properly trained psychokinetic, in zero gravity, the wearer can spend 1 Psi point to fly like a telekinetic with a Space Speed of [1]. This effect lasts for one scene.

In low gravity (p. 110), spending 1 Psi point allows the wearer to fly at Speed Scale 2 for five minutes. In normal or high gravity, the user can slow any fall to a safe speed by spending 1 Psi point. Spending 1 additional Psi point allows the user to hover in midair for a single round.

This device has proven especially popular on Luna, and in many deep-space environments. The SMP is a somewhat bulky vest, with a low bulge on the back. The vest is adjustable and fits over all models of space suits, including the BioVARG. Norça and Orgotek commandos recently used the new SMP on their latest assault on a Chromatic base. This device can only be used when formatted. Recently, Orgotek also released a version usable by neutrals that has an internal reservoir of 5 Psi points that recover at a rate of 1 per Scene. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Medium, **Tolerance:** • (•• for the version usable by neutrals), **Cost:** • (•• for the version usable by neutrals).

Teleportational Helm: This device can be fitted into a chair or cockpit, or built into a vehicle or other closed container. Once formatted, any teleporter can use Transmit Person to teleport the entire vehicle and everyone inside, regardless of its Size or the number of passengers, with no additional cost beyond that needed to use Transmit Person. Also, even if the teleporter does not possess any dots in Translocation, she can accompany the vehicle. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Size 0, **Tolerance:** ••• **Cost:** •••

Transmission Energy Amplification Rig (TEAR): An offshoot of the effort to develop jump rings (see p. 295), this device provides 1 Enhancement for using the Teleportation Transmission Mode Transmit Person and increases the number of targets that a

IMPLANT WEAPONS

WEAPON TYPE	EN	DAMAGE TYPE	TAGS	COST
Electric Touch	1	Electrical	Concealable, Electrical, Grappling, Melee, Non-Lethal, Worn	••
Boosted Electric Touch	3	Electrical	Charge, Electrical, Grappling, Melee, Quality 2, Worn	••
Implant Laser	2	Ballistic	Concealable, Destructive, Quality 2 Ranged: short-medium, Worn	•••

teleporter can transport using this Mode by a factor of 10. However, the user must spend one additional Psi point per use. This bioapp consists of a thick belt attached by a cable to a flexible ring of the same material that can be adjusted to be up to 10 meters in diameter. Everything the user transports using this device must be inside of this ring. The jump rig only works if the teleporter stands outside of the ring. However, she can use Translocation while she uses this device and jump with it, carrying the TEAR with her. Otherwise, everything inside the ring teleports, but the teleporter and the TEAR remain in place. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Size 0, **Tolerance:** ••, **Cost:** ••

HARDTECH IMPLANTS

Outside of Nippon, hardtech implants are rarely used by ordinary citizens and most people regard them as potentially dangerous. They are most commonly used by criminals and covert operatives. Most are produced in Nippon or are copied from Nihonjin designs. In both reality and adventure holovids, most Nihonjin covert operatives are equipped with one or more hardtech implants.

Before the appearance of the psions, cybernetic implants were still used in medicine, but only when gene therapy and organ cloning could not be used. Today, these therapies combined with vitakinetic healing and medical bioware have all but eliminated the need for hardtech implants.

Advanced Radio Implant: This implant contains all the features of the ear radio described below (p. 293). In addition, advanced radio implants can broadcast to any minicomputer within 100 m, using fake credentials that make it appear that the call is actually coming from anyone whose number is known to the implant's user. Spoofing OpNet credentials is highly illegal unless the user has prior authorization from the appropriate government or law enforcement officials. **Tech:** Hard, **Cost:** ••• (restricted to Criminal or Espionage Paths)

Electric Touch: This implant consists of a thin layer of vat-grown tissue similar to that found in an

electric eel, and is implanted on the subject's back and thighs. The user can inflict electrical damage similar to a taser glove to anyone she touches. She can use this attack at will, but must touch the target with her hands. If she instead touches any electronic device, this burst of electricity is equivalent to an attack by a zapper.

The user can also discharge all her electrical energy at once, making a massive and deadly attack on a single target. Subjects who release this electricity at once must wait a full scene before they can use this modification again. The electric touch implant also grounds your character, rendering her immune to tasers, and providing two levels of soft armor against all electrical damage. She can also use this implant to recharge any small hardtech electronic device by touch. **Tech:** Hard, **Cost:** ••

Implant Laser: The user has a small laser pistol implanted into his forearm. The laser fires through a concealed port in the user's first knuckle and is carefully camouflaged so that it does not show up on any non-psionic scans. The user is also equipped with a small, well-shielded, radiothermal power source. **Tech:** Hard, **Cost:** ••• (restricted to Criminal or Espionage Paths)

SPY TECH

These devices are designed for use by spies and criminals and many are illegal in most nations. Because surveillance technologies are so small and advanced, security-conscious individuals and organizations must be especially vigilant if they wish to keep their secrets.

Bug: This device is a camera and microphone 1 mm in diameter. It has a sticky backing and a transmitter capable of sending and recording data for up to 50 hours. Locating a bug that broadcasts continually is trivially easy for an electrokinetic or anyone with a bug detector, unless it's in a location where no one will be looking for bugs, like an alley or park. Most bugs broadcast compressed data pulses every



four or five hours. These data pulses only last a few seconds and the bug does not broadcast at any other time. Bugs that are placed in secure shielded facilities or deep sub-basements cannot broadcast to anyone outside this location and are typically set not to broadcast at all. Characters must physically retrieve the bug and download its data. Finding such a bug and waiting for the owner to retrieve it is an excellent way of discovering who placed it. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Tiny, **Cost:** •

Bug Detector: This thumb-sized device connects wirelessly to the user's minicomp. It detects and locates all transmissions in the area. If anything is transmitting within short range of this device, it automatically detects and allows the user to locate the transmission. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Tiny, **Cost:** •

Chameleon Suit: This bioapp is the ultimate disguise for spies, thieves, and even a few stage magicians. When stored, this device resembles a smooth, round fruit around eight centimeters in diameter. It can only be used when formatted, at which point it unfolds into a comfortable, form-fitting jumpsuit that changes color to resemble whatever background it is seen against. This color matching is neither perfect nor instantaneous. If the user moves faster than a slow walk, the suit's color matching worsens. While

standing still or moving slowly the suit provides 3 Enhancement to remain unseen, but this is reduced to 2 Enhancement if the user is moving more rapidly. Also, even a chameleon suit does not allow the user to hide in an empty, well-lit corridor. **Tech:** Ψ, **Size:** Medium, **Tolerance:** •, **Cost:** ••

Directional Microphone Pen: This device allows the user to discreetly listen in on a whispered conversation up to five meters away. A normal conversation can be heard up to 10 meters away. To use this device, the user must aim the pen at the desired sound. This device can record sound for later use, or broadcast it to the user's minicomp. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Small, **Cost:** •

Ear Radio: This device allows your character to maintain hands-free, encrypted communication. Ear radios consist of a small earplug connected to miniature bone-conduction microphone. The microphone is extremely sensitive, and can easily pick up whispers. Users can subvocalize coherently in a manner that's inaudible to anyone nearby. Ear radios use complex frequency-switching algorithms and advanced encryption that make them far more difficult to intercept and decipher than ordinary minicomp calls (Increase the Difficulty of all attempts to intercept and decipher ear radio transmissions by

+4). Only other ear radios set to the same profile can normally decrypt their messages. Most ear radios are used with minicomps, but many models can also be used independently, with a range of up to 20 km in areas with few wireless signals, like wilderness areas or deep space, and 5 km in dense urban areas. Ear radios can also be used to transmit data between users who link their minicomps into their ear radios. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Tiny, **Cost:** ••

Fiber Optic Probe: This device can extend an optical fiber that can fit through many closed doors, locked drawers, and other narrow openings. A wide-angle lens at the end of the optic fiber allows the user to see the area around the fiber's tip. The user can clearly see anything within two meters of the tip of the fiber, and anything within five meters is blurry but visible. A second fiber can project a narrow flashlight beam. Inserting an optic fiber into a lock or alarm system provides 2 Enhancement to pick locks or to locate or disarm alarm systems. This device can be built into a ring or a pen and sends images to the user's minicomp. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Small, **Cost:** •

Grippers: This device comes in three forms, a hardtech device, as a bioapp, or as a biotech enhancement. All three consist of a series of pads that attach to the user's palms, feet, shins, and forearms. Each pad extends tiny, hair-like fibers that adhere to almost any surface much like the foot of a gecko, can support up to 60 kg, and work on both wet and dry surfaces. Only a few specially made plastics resist the gripper's adhesion. These plastics are sometimes used to coat the walls of extremely high-security buildings.

The hardtech device and the bioapp are both thin flexible pads that users strap to their body. This bioapp does not need to be formatted. The biotech enhancement consists of thin layers of tissue that bond with the user's palms, feet, shins, and forearms. This enhancement works as well as other versions of the device, but does not function if those parts of the user's body are not bare. It must be formatted. However, when not active, the biotech enhancement appears to be normal skin. By moving carefully, all grippers allow users to climb any wall or ceiling strong enough to bear their weight. With a little practice, users can climb on walls or ceilings as fast as a human can crawl. No rolls are needed to use this device. **Tech:** Hard or Ψ , **Tolerance:** • (for biotech enhancement), **Size:** Small (n/a for the biotech enhancement), **Cost:** • (•• for the biotech enhancement)

Intrusion Kit: A specialized kit for opening locks and defeating alarm systems. Using this kit permits character to attempt to open locks and bypass or disable alarm systems without penalty. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Small, **Cost:** • (restricted to Criminal, Espionage, or Law Enforcement Paths)

Laser Microphone: This listening device is usually built into a pair of binoculars. It projects an invisible, low-power laser beam on any reflective surface made of glass, metal, or hard plastic, typically a window or mirror. Sound waves cause these surfaces to vibrate minutely. By picking up these vibrations, this device can be used to listen to any conversations or other noises inside the room. It can even record sounds from relatively still bodies of water ranging in size from a lake to a bird bath. The primary limitation is that the room must have an exterior window. Also, windows can be constructed to prevent listening and heavy curtains block sound. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Small, **Cost:** •

Mini-Rebreather: This device consisted of a small folding face mask that connects to a fist-sized air tank, which hangs around the user's neck. A mini-rebreather provides breathable air for up to 30 minutes. After this time, the tiny air tank must be refilled and the filter changed on the rebreather. While less useful than a gillbreather underwater, this device also provides air in a poisonous environment. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Small, **Cost:** •

Static Generator: A specialized anti-surveillance device about the size of a bar of soap. It creates a localized field of radio (up to a five-meter radius). The static blocks all transmissions in or out of the area. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Small, **Cost:** 0

T-Ray Viewer: This device uses terahertz radiation (electromagnetic waves halfway between infrared radiation and microwaves) to allow users to see through walls. T-rays easily penetrate interior walls not specially shielded and reinforced, and outside walls that are not made of thick stone or reinforced concrete. It also allows users to look through bulky garments to see if the target is wearing or carrying a weapon. This device has a range of 10 m and clearly reveals people and other large objects on the other side of walls. However, these images are fuzzy and reveal no more than outlines without much detail. Recognizing individuals is impossible. This device is the size of a thick pen and transfers images to the user's display gear. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Small, **Cost:** •

Zapper: This device resembles a small, single-shot pistol. It fires cartridges that use a combination of powerful electromagnets and a small explosive charge to produce an Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP). This EMP disables any electronic device that is not both specially shielded and disconnected from any wired or wireless network (like the OpNet). Cheap or poorly made devices affected by an EMP must be replaced, and even high-quality, well-maintained devices must be rebooted and checked before they

will function again. The EMP produced by a zapper has a range of short (30 meters) and affects everything in a cone 30 meters across. Zappers are typically used to destroy surveillance equipment or to shoot down drones. Zapper cartridges are the size of shotgun shells, but the explosion produced by a zapper is harmless. Also, zappers are designed to muffle the noise of the shot and so cannot be heard without special sensors or senses more than 5 m away. **Tech:** Hard, **Size:** Small, **Cost:** •

TRANSPORTATION

The necessities of fast and safe transit in the 22nd century have led to vast advances in terrestrial and space travel. Most ground transportation is fully automated, flights carry hundreds of people across the Pacific Ocean in less than two hours, and there is regular traffic between Earth, Luna, Mars, and the asteroid belt. However, while most vehicles can drive themselves, in an emergency, a skilled pilot is still superior to the best SI.

COMMERCIAL TRAVEL

Most people travel long distances on hypersonic jet liners that do not require stops for refueling, but which still require one hour to cross the Atlantic and two hours to cross the Pacific, carrying up to 800 passengers. Higher speed vehicles carry several hundred passengers between Earth and Luna daily from many large cities, making the journey to or from the Moon in 8 hours.

Getting into orbit is a choice between speed and comfort. The most comfortable and least expensive method is to take either the Mount Kenya or Macapá Space Elevator to geosynchronous orbit. On either space elevator, the journey requires 11 hours. A hybrid spacecraft can make the journey into low orbit in half an hour and to Abuhisi space station in 90 minutes.

Currently, there is jump ring service between Olympus on Luna and the following cities: Beijing, Chicago, Jomo Kenyatta, Mumbai, Sao Paulo, Sydney, and Zurich. These cities also have jump rings between them, allowing the wealthy and people on official business to jump between any of these cities in a matter of seconds. Up

to 12 passengers with baggage, or up to two tons of cargo can be transported with each jump. Jump ring transport began slightly more than a year ago, and is already regarded as the premier way to travel.

VEHICLES

Even the cheapest vehicles come equipped with an onboard SI capable of driving the vehicle, GPS, their own cellular transmitters, climate-control systems, and minor self-repair kits. Luxury options include repair bots that fold up and retract into the vehicle chassis when not in use and biometric anti-theft systems. Ground vehicles operate via a combination of solar and electric batteries, capable of running for many hours before needing recharging. Refueling stations across the globe allow for anything from self-operated recharge (which takes five minutes). Vehicles that travel on or under water or fly in air or space operate via miniature hyperfusion reactors. These reactors provide theoretically unlimited flight power but require periodic maintenance.

Biotech vehicles are relatively primitive compared to their hardtech counterparts. Although

JUMP RINGS

The fastest, newest, and most expensive method of travel are the linked teleportation rings called jump rings. An offshoot of the effort to create the Leviathan jump ships, these devices consist of pairs of linked rings. In addition to requiring as much power as a large electric hovertruck, these devices can only teleport people and cargo between a single pair of noetically linked rings, and can do so only as long as the rings are less than five million kilometers apart. Also, a psion must spend a Psi point to activate the jump ring and complete the transport.

biotech solar batteries are cheaper to produce and offer greater running time for ground vehicles, and biotech submarines are superior to their hardtech counterparts, biotech propulsion systems can't yet handle the stresses of air and space travel, forcing these vehicles to combine biotech sensors and controls with hardtech hyperfusion drives. The Qin have overcome these limitations, producing biotech spacecraft better than any human hardtech, but human engineers are still struggling to understand how these strange and beautiful vehicles operate.

NEW VEHICLE DESCRIPTIONS & TAGS

Vehicles in **Trinity Continuum: Æon** use the same creation system and tags as in the **Trinity Continuum Corebook** (pp. 127-129), but there are a few important differences. The first change is that all vehicles have two additional categories included in their descriptions:

Tech: Is this vehicle hardtech or biotech (Ψ).

FT: Formatting Tolerance, the Tolerance cost to format this noetic biotech vehicle.

Cost: The complexity of spacecraft engines, hulls, and life-support systems sets the minimum cost of all spacecraft at ••••. However, advances in technology allow vehicles in **Trinity Continuum: Æon** to have up to 1 + Wealth points worth of positive tags. Exceedingly expensive vehicles with a cost of L (requiring the Loaded Enhanced Edge to purchase) possess a total of eight points worth of positive tags.

In addition, this system also includes rules for generating spacecraft. The basic template for spacecraft (before adding tags) is Size 2, Handling +0, with a base Space Speed Scale (p. 195) based on their tags (see below).

NEW AND MODIFIED VEHICLE TAGS

Astrogration Systems (1): This tag must be taken in conjunction with the Computer tag, providing all the vital systems necessary for space travel. Vehicles with this tag are not designed for atmospheric flight. All vehicles with this tag have a base of Space Speed [3].

Computer (0): The vehicle comes equipped with a standard suite of onboard computers, including navigation systems, GPS, an OpNet connection, sensors, and similar equipment. These sensors include the equivalent of improved binoculars, as well as whatever other sensors they may require for their normal operation. Vehicles with this tag are capable

of driving themselves under normal conditions, with a dice pool of four, modified by the Handling tag.

Hybrid (2): This tag simply combines Flight and Astrogration Systems, allowing the vehicle to operate in both atmospheric and space flight. Any hybrid vehicle automatically has a Speed of 6 in atmosphere and a base Space Speed of [3].

Living (0): This tag is only for Qin biotech vehicles. As living organisms, they all can rapidly heal (giving them a version of the Repair Bots tag) and can reproduce on their own, but they also require time to feed.

Limited Astrogration Systems (0): This space vehicle is both slow and designed for short-duration use. It has a base Space Speed Scale of [2] and is not designed to be used for more than two days without refueling and refreshing the life support system.

Psi (-1): Any vehicle with this tag can be formatted. Unless otherwise specified, formatting a biotech vehicle provides 1 Enhancement to handling. Vehicles with a Size of 4 or higher are too large for one individual to format, and instead require individuals to format different systems, like controls, weapons, and engines. A different person must format each system. Formatting bioware unlocks its full potential, though this is not without risk. If the formatted vehicle is Taken Out, the character automatically suffers both an Injury Condition and a level 2 Complication (Shaken), as though struck by a Stun weapon. Biotech ground, air, and water vehicle have a formatting tolerance of ••, while all spacecraft have a formatting Tolerance of •••. Biotech vehicles must use the Psi tag.

Repair Bots (1): The vehicle has a small repair drone capable of folding up and stowing itself in any available cargo space. The drone can repair minor damage, including replacing spare tires, fixing damaged computer and guidance systems, or welding damaged panels. Biotech vehicles with this tag do not require repair drones and instead are able to heal damage four times faster than normal.

Stealthy (2): This tag cannot be used on any spacecraft using rockets, including hyperfusion rockets.

Tesser (1 or 2): The ship is fitted with a psionic drive that allows it to teleport vast distances. Tessers can only be installed in ships with a Size of at least 4 that possess the Psi tag. A Tesser is a 1-point tag on ships of Size 5 or 6, but due to the difficulty of constructing small Tessers, it is a 2-point tag on a Size 4 spacecraft. A Tesser can only be used with an ARES Pod (see above) and is sufficiently large that

it reduces that spaceship's maximum Cargo to Size -2. A Tesser also allows a teleporter formatted to the starship to use Transmit Person to carry the ship, themselves, and everyone on board without the necessity of spending additional successes or Psi points.

Thrusters (1+): For space vehicles only. The vehicle increases its Space Speed by [1].

Triphibian (2): This tag combines Flight Navigation Systems and Submersible, allowing the vehicle to operate in both in the atmosphere and both on and under the water.

Weaponry (1 to 2): The most common vehicle weapons are the coilgun, laser carbine, and missile launcher. Each use of this tag provides the vehicle with up to two different weapons.

GROUND VEHICLES

Most citizens have access to modern mass transportation, usually either maglev (magnetic levitation) trains for long distance travel, or smaller maglev travel pods for local journeys. In all major cities and on most major highways, conductors in the roads allow maglev transportation over long distances. Maglev vehicles are efficient, quiet, clean, and powered by solar batteries. They are also completely automated, lack both drivers and controls, and can only be used on special conductive roads. Indeed, nearly

every major highway has a specific shipping lane for maglev freight, and in the urban centers maglev travel pods are sleek symbols of the advancing tide of technology. Many consider wheeled vehicles old fashioned, but they can be used anywhere and are also powered by solar batteries.

“Skimmers” are the latest trend in ground-transport technology, generally preferred by the wealthy due to their cost. A skimmer is basically an advanced, skirtless hovercraft, most of which are rated for both overland and water-surface travel, even in rough, uneven terrain. However, skimmers are more complex and expensive than wheeled vehicles.

The list below provides benchmarks for many different types of vehicles. As with weapons, manufacturer differences are more about style than function, rarely amounting to a significant rules change. However, specialized vehicles do exist. Players and Storyguides should use the traits below as a starting point to construct their own vehicles.

Hovercycle: Sleek, stylish, and above all, *fast*, hovercycles are one- or two-person skimmers built for maneuverability and velocity more than comfort. Most come with some trunk space located beneath the seats, and the majority can seat two. The standard hovercycle has an exposed seat and small bioglass shields to provide the rider minimal protection. Biotech hovercycles



SELF-DRIVING VEHICLES & VEHICLE OWNERSHIP

Every vehicle comes with advanced sensors and an SI capable of driving it under all but the most extreme conditions, using a dice pool of four. Except in vehicles used by emergency-services personnel or the military, vehicle SIs obey all local traffic laws and will only disobey these laws briefly to keep their occupants or other people from harm. Civilian vehicles can be purchased with manual controls in nations where manual control of vehicles is still legal, but users who attempt to break traffic laws are warned and then the SI either takes over control of the vehicle until the user ceases attempting to break traffic laws or informs the local authorities of the law-breaking, if taking control of the vehicle would be hazardous. However, emergency-services personnel, government spies, and members of some criminal gangs possess codes that allow them to override these SIs and take full control of a vehicle. Emergency-services and military vehicles provide full manual control to any authorized user.

Because every vehicle can drive itself, only a quarter of adults own vehicles. Arcology dwellers travel by means of a network of 3D elevators and only need vehicles when they travel outside of their arcology, and most other people rely on various transportations services like Robocab or the public maglev, calling a self-driving vehicle when they need one. Even on the outskirts of a city, almost no one ends up waiting more than five minutes for a vehicle to arrive. Even most inhabitants of rural compounds have vehicles for communal use. As a result, only the wealthy and individuals who either need or want access to a vehicle at a moment's notice own them.

exist. If formatted, they link to the user's own nervous system for increased responsiveness. *Examples: Reed Rosen Tsunami, Orgotek Hummingbird.*

Motorcycle: Traditional motorcycles still have some popularity among vintage-auto enthusiasts, as well as those who need bikes on the cheap. Dirt-bike racing is a popular sport in many rural towns, and a few motorcycle clubs persist into the 22nd century. *Example: Davidson-Wheeler American Classic.*

Walker Cycle: This recently released six-legged vehicle vaguely resembles a giant ant designed to be ridden by one or two people. Its 170 kph six-legged gallop is often described as odd but not uncomfortable. *Example: Orgotek Formica.*

Armored personnel carrier (APC): Rugged and heavily armored, APCs carry troops into battle-grounds where air transport is risky or impossible, and skimmers aren't dependable enough. They're tougher and more reliable, and capable of transporting much greater weights in terms of personnel and equipment. A typical APC has room for four in its cab and can hold an additional 16-person squad in the bay, as well as all relevant equipment and some spares. *Example: ClinTech Morris APC.*

ATV: All-terrain vehicles are a staple of recreational and commercial transport traveling to wilderness areas and remote settlements. Militaries also employ them as part of advance troop movements. The

model described here is a six-legged biotech ATV built to haul cargo or troops across difficult surfaces. Biotech ATVs are swiftly becoming more common, with Orgotek naturally leading the industry. The basic ATV design is flexible, serving as the skeleton for cargo lifters, shallow-water construction vehicles, and high-end farm vehicles. *Examples: ClinTech Osner, Orgotek Cicada, Orgotek Mantis Cargo Lifter.*

HEV: HEVs are popular civilian ground craft designed for planetary exploration, HEVs have a full life-support system and exceedingly spartan long-term accommodations for up to eight, as well as a small amount of cargo space. The HEV's treads can handle almost any terrain. *Example: ClinTech HEV.*

Medium Cargo Hauler: For commercial and private use by delivery services, moving companies, and rural farmers. Medium cargo haulers are tough vehicles designed to transport goods between and in urban centers. *Example: Concorso T-10 Minihauler.*

Sedan: This is a typical two-to-six-seat sedan. They come with all standard features, sacrificing top-end speed and power for reliability and affordability. One of their main benefits is the ubiquity of relevant parts and mechanical knowledge; the average city-goer might not know how to repair a damaged hover fan assembly, but could fully rebuild their car's engine and transmission with time, parts, and a little elbow grease. *Example: Mashindano Sentry.*

GROUND VEHICLES

TYPE	SIZE	HANDLING	SPEED	TAGS	WEAPONS	TECH	FT	COST
Hovercycle	1	+1	4	Computer 0, Fast 2, Hover 1, Maneuverable 1	-	Hard	-	•••
Motorcycle	1	+1	4	Computer 0, Maneuverable 1, Fast 2, Wheeled 0	-	Hard	-	••
Walker Cycle	1	+1 +	4	All-Terrain 1, Computer 0, Fast 2, Maneuverable 1, Psi -1	-	Ψ	••	••
APC	2	-2	3	Armor 2, Cargo 1 Computer 0, Fast 1, Massive 1, Sluggish -2, Weaponry 2, Wheeled 0	Laser Carbine	Hard	-	••••
ATV	2	+1 +	3	All-Terrain 1, Cargo 1, Computer 0, Fast 1, Maneuverable 1, Massive 1, Psi -1	-	Ψ	••	•••
HEV	2	+0	3	Armor 1, Cargo 1, Computer 0, Fast 1, Massive 1, Treads 1	-	Hard	-	••••
Medium Cargo Hauler	2	+0	4	Cargo 1, Computer 0, Fast 2, Massive 1, Wheeled 0	-	Hard	-	•••
Sedan	2	+0	3	Computer 0, Fast 1, Massive 1, Wheeled 0	-	Hard	-	•• *
Skimmer, Airfoil or Convertible	2	+0	4	Computer 0, Fast 2, Hover 1, Massive 1	-	Hard	-	•••
Skimmer, Assault	2	-1	4	Armor 2, Computer 0, Crew -1, Fast 2, Hover 1, Massive 1, Sluggish -1, Weaponry 2	Laser Carbine	Hard	-	••••
Skimmer, LAV	2	+0	4	Armor 1, Computer 0, Fast 1, Hover 1, Massive 1, Weaponry 1	Laser Carbine	Hard	-	••••
Skimmer, Luxury	2	+0	4	Anti-Theft 1, Computer 0, Fast 2, Hover 1, Massive 1	-	Hard	-	••••
Cargo Hauler	3	+0	4	Cargo 2 Computer 0, Fast 2, Massive 2, Wheeled 0	-	Hard	-	••••
Armed Cargo Hauler	3	-2	4	Armor 1, Cargo 2 Computer 0, Fast 2, Massive 2, Sluggish -2, Weaponry 1, Wheeled 0	Coilgun	Hard	-	••••

+ Reduce Maneuverability by 1 if not formatted.

* As stated above, the minimum cost for all ground vehicles is equal to their Size.

Skimmer, airfoil: A standard mid-range skimmer. Airfoils have enclosed cabs capable of seating up to a family of four comfortably, although larger SUV models exist (using similar traits to the luxury skimmer described below). Some models are convertibles that trade style for seating, and typically only hold two people and a small amount of cargo. *Examples:*

Shendai AirFoil, Banji Zephyr.

Skimmer, assault: These heavy-duty skimmers are designed for fast transport of ground-assault teams of both military and law enforcement. They come equipped with powerful turbines and stabilizers to support the added weight of armor and weaponry. Assault skimmers are large by skimmer

standards, capable of holding a pilot, a gunner, and two other fully equipped soldiers. Standard weaponry is a mounted automatic turret, but more specialized urban-response variants exist, using anything from laser rifles to plasma cannons. *Examples: Bisai Assault Skimmer, Orgotek Eurypterid.*

Skimmer, light-armored: Light-armored vehicles (or “LAVs”) have become a backbone of urban law enforcement transportation. They are essentially lighter versions of assault skimmers, built to be the standard police vehicle of the 22nd century. The typical LAV has a two-seat forward cab, a transparent bulletproof panel separating the cab from the back, and enough room in the rear section to transport up to half a dozen fully armed officers. On the roof is a turret-mounted laser rifle, sometimes exchanged for nonlethal riot control weaponry. *Example: ClinTech Warden LAV.*

Skimmer, luxury: Big, comfortable, and chock full of amenities such as onboard coolers, multiple entertainment stations, and even small ovens for cooking food, luxury skimmers are expensive and lavish vehicles. Most can seat up to six, but in recent years skimmer limousines, which possess the Cargo 1 tag, have become popular methods of taking entire parties on the go. *Examples: Reed Rosen Brougham, Banji Luxury Stretch Cruiser.*

Cargo Hauler: Large, general-purpose cargo haulers come equipped with hyperfusion reactors for

power. Some are built as heavier transcontinental cargo vehicles designed to travel where the maglev roads do not. These haulers are equipped with light armor and weapons. *Examples: Concurso MH-1 Hauler, Mashindano Kuchuka Bronto.*

WATER VEHICLES

The following are some of the many seagoing and submersible vessels in use in the early 22nd century. The growth of cities both on and under the sea and the recent independence of Oceania have made ocean-going vessels even more important than ever before. Although some Aberrants lurk in the depths of the sea, the vulnerability of surface-going ships to attacks by off-world invaders has made submersible travel increasingly popular. In the 22nd century, submersibles are powered by hyperfusion reactors, and extract oxygen and fresh water from the sea, so they are only limited in the length of time they can spend underwater by their food supplies and the comfort of their crew and passengers.

Exploratory Submarine: This small submarine is designed for undersea prospecting and exploration. It possesses light armaments, and is sometimes used for defensive patrols by undersea cities. *Example: FangTech Magellan*

Flying Submarine: This unique, disk-shaped vehicle is equally at home in the air and both on and

WATER VEHICLES

TYPE	SIZE	HANDLING	SPEED	TAGS	WEAPONS	TECH	FT	COST
Exploration Sub	2	-1	3	Cargo 1, Computer 0, Fast 2, Massive 1, Sluggish -1, Submersible 1, Weaponry 1	Coilgun	Hard	-	•••
Flying Sub	2	+0	5	Cargo 1, Complex 0, Computer 0, Fast 3, Triphibian 2	-	Hard	-	••••
Small Hydrofoil	2	+0	4	Cargo 1, Computer 0, Fast 2, Massive 1, Watercraft 0	-	Hard	-	••
Biotech Military Submarine	3	+0 +	5	Armor 1, Cargo 1, Computer 0, Fast 3, Massive 2, Military 1, Psi -1, Submersible 1	Coilgun	Ψ	••	L
Submarine Transport	4	-1	3	Armor 1, Cargo 3, Computer 0, Crew -1, Fast 1, Massive 3, Sluggish -1, Submersible 1, Weaponry 1	Coilgun	Hard	-	L

+ Reduce Maneuverability by 1 if not formatted.



under the water. It's limited to Speed 3 underwater, Speed 4 when on the water, and Speed 5 when flying. These vehicles are most often used by the member cities of Oceania and by other floating and underwater cities to permit fast transport of people and cargo. *Example: FangTech Flying Fish*

Small Hydrofoil: This small, fast hydrofoil has cabins for four and modest room for cargo. Military versions also exist, adding limited weaponry and armor (1 each), which increases the cost by one dot and reduces the maneuverability to +0. These vehicles are used for coastal patrols and defense. *Example: FangTech Barracuda.*

Military Submarine: This cutting-edge biotech submarine is a fast, heavily armed and armored attack vehicle designed for both naval warfare and hunting underwater Aberrants. It uses supercavitating technology to form a thin bubble of air around itself, allowing it to travel as fast as most airplanes. *Example: Biosystems Belem.*

Submarine Transport: This large submersible is the workhorse for trade with and between undersea cities, and is also performing an increasing role in all ocean-going trade. The high level of automation on this vehicle means that it can be handled by three people, but a normal crew complement is 10, permitting three fully staffed shifts. While most haul cargo,

passenger versions also exist, including a few that have large bioglass windows and massive floodlights to permit clear viewing of undersea life and historic shipwrecks. *Example: Banji Cachalot.*

AIR VEHICLES

Huge passenger aircraft use semi-ballistic (low orbit) flight paths to transport hundreds of passengers anywhere in the world in an hour or two, while smaller transonic jets carry somewhat fewer passengers on shorter journeys that rarely take more than four hours. Modern passenger jets are fast, safe, and relatively low-cost. High-end planes even have medical personnel standing by in case of emergency. However, military escorts are also a common sight in many airspaces, due to the threat of Aberrant activity.

Private VTOL: These small private planes are either status symbols for the wealthy or are used by large corporations and other organizations for private transport and carrying small cargoes. Naturally, criminals also use such planes, but typically fit them with stealth systems. These craft use ducted fans powered by hyperfusion engines, allowing them to take off and land vertically. *Example: Banji Dragonfly.*

Military Transport: Aerial military transports are modular armored VTOL planes designed with



interchangeable cargo pods. A pilot, co-pilot, and optional gunner (plus up to several others) can ride within the frame itself, and the cargo bay can hold up to two full-sized cargo pods. Used for transporting troops (two 40-person squads and all their gear can fit in each cargo pod), equipment, supplies, and small vehicles, military transports are primarily lightly armed and sometimes employ fighter escorts. *Example: ClinTech "Black Cat."*

Passenger Liner: Passenger liners are stocked with enough food, drink, and entertainment to keep 200 passengers happy for their trip. Their automated systems can fly them, although most still employ a pilot, co-pilot, navigator, and sometimes medical or security staff. The truly high-end first-class flights also have in-house musicians or entertainers to regale passengers mid-flight. *Example: Banji Cirrus.*

Qin Bioblimp: Bioblimps are highly durable and fully self-repairing organisms guaranteed to produce two offspring. These offspring will be sterile, but can be rendered fertile with the purchase of special enzymes from the Qin. Like all Qin biotech, bioblimps do not require nutrient injections; instead, they have several long tentacles and are capable of gathering and eating Terran vegetation.

Bioblimps propel themselves using complex bioelectrostatic jets, they also possess a wide, muscular tail for steering and an oval passenger compartment underneath the gas bag, near the front of the organism. Most are Size 3, but special enzymes purchased from the Qin can allow them to achieve Size 4. These larger bioblimps possess the Cargo 2 tag and the Sluggish -1 tag.

With an intelligence similar to a chimp and an inborn calm obedience, bioblimps can be told to avoid eating crop plants. This same intelligence allows bioblimps to pilot themselves with only simple voice commands from the "pilot." Bioblimps can speak and are friendly and polite, if somewhat limited intellectually. Like conventional biotech, bioblimps can be formatted, allowing the pilot to communicate with and control the vehicle by thought. Once formatted, any psion can communicate with the bioblimp at up to their Attunement range. *Examples: Qin Bioblimp-L, Qin Bioblimp-S.*

Suborbital Passenger Liner: Suborbital passenger liners are huge craft designed to comfortably accommodate up to 1,000 passengers, while also carrying large amounts of cargo. Although fully capable of flying themselves under normal conditions, most nations require a trained pilot on board. These swift craft can travel from New York to Sydney or Shanghai in two hours. *Example: L-B 510 Swift.*

AIR VEHICLES

TYPE	SIZE	HANDLING	SPEED	TAGS	WEAPONS	TECH	COST
Private VTOL	2	+0	5	Cargo 1, Computer 0, Fast 3, Flight Systems 0, Massive 1	-	Hard	••••
Military Transport	3	-1	5	Armor 1, Cargo 2, Computer 0, Crew -1, Fast 3, Flight Systems 0, Massive 2, Sluggish -1, Weaponry 2	Coilgun	Hard	L
Passenger Liner	3	-1	5	Cargo 2, Computer 0, Fast 3, Flight Systems 0, Massive 2, Sluggish -1	-	Hard	•••••
Qin Bioblump	3	+0 +	4	Cargo 1, Computer 0, Fast 2, Flight Systems 0, Living 0, Massive 2, Psi -1	-	Ψ	•••
Suborbital Passenger Liner	4	-1	6	Cargo 3, Complex 0, Computer 0, Fast 4, Flight Systems 0, Massive 2, Sluggish -1	-	Hard	L

+ Reduce Maneuverability by 1 if not formatted.

SPACE VEHICLES

The advent of hyperfusion rockets and advanced flight engineering has made commercial space travel a reality. Spacecraft only require modest amounts of reaction mass to swiftly travel between nearby planets. Interplanetary flights between Earth and the Lunar or Mars colonies have become a common occurrence, with the fastest flights taking passengers from Earth to Luna in only a few hours. Travel to Mars takes a little longer, ranging from as long as a month and a half to as little as a week. Rumors persist that Qin spacecraft can make this trip in less than a day.

Spacecraft come in several varieties, depending on size and design. *Hybrid* craft are capable of both space and atmospheric flight, though few can or will go further than the Moon. *Frigates* embody the image of space travel, being craft designed wholly for operating in space. *Freighters* are even larger, hauling vast quantities of cargo throughout the solar system and to the trade routes beyond. Freighters and most frigates cannot enter atmosphere (barring catastrophe) once constructed and launched. These huge vessels dock with orbital supply stations and city-sized vehicle bays, using shuttles for resupply and planetary ventures. Remember that the formatting tolerance for all biotech spacecraft is •••.

All spacecraft have several standard features that are required to travel in space. Collectively, this package of features and equipment is vital to make a

ship at all spaceworthy. Proper maintenance of these vital systems means the difference between life and death on the frontier. See below for a description of vital systems.

VITAL SPACECRAFT SYSTEMS

The following are systems that are vital to any spacecraft. These systems can be damaged in battle or more rarely by environmental threats, requiring repairs mid-flight. No smart captain leaves dock without multiple spares of any vital ship components.

- **Astrogration System:** Space is infinite and without horizons by which to navigate. Away from a planet, orbital station, or some other identifiable “landmark,” it’s easy to become disoriented in the featureless abyss. In combat or other dangerous situations, this lack of orientation can become exceedingly dangerous. Astrogration systems alleviate this by using a combination of known spatial references and long-distance scanners to determine direction and position in open space. If something disables the astrogration system, all handling rolls suffer a Complication rated from level 1 (in low-orbital flight) to level 5 (open space, far away from any planets or stations).
- **Life-Support Systems:** Life-support systems keep all crew functional and alive. Atmospheric generators and filtration units keep a constant

supply of breathable air, while temperature regulators ensure optimal conditions even in the freezing cold of space. All spacecraft are sealed against pressure loss, with multiple redundant safeties in place should even a disastrous hull breach occur. Backup life support can power most systems for up to several weeks. Even hardtech spacecraft increasingly use biotech life-support systems consisting of noetically engineered plants.

- **Thrusters and Reactors:** Hyperfusion reactors supply energy to the thrusters as well as the rest of the ship's systems. Although hyperfusion reactors can theoretically run indefinitely, the stresses of massive energy output add up over time and also reaction mass must regularly be replenished. Most craft have backup power supplies, from backup hyperfusion reactors in the larger vessels to high-density batteries in fighters and short-range spacecraft.

SHIP DESCRIPTIONS

Hybrid Fighter: A short-range fighter designed to operate in atmospheric and orbital escort and combat operations. A fighter of this size holds one pilot and one gunner, along with a small amount of essential cargo. These vessels come heavily armed, with lasers, coilguns, and smart missiles. *Example: Bakuhatsu E-15 Fighter.*

Hybrid Fighter (Biotech): Biotech fighters all hold a single pilot-gunner. Orgotek is the premier name in biotech hybrids right now, although competitors promise alternatives soon. When a biotech fighter is destroyed, organic life-support systems encase and sustain the pilot for up to a week. Additionally, formatted fighters offer unparalleled responsiveness, granting a +1 Enhancement bonus on all handling rolls. *Example: Orgotek Locust.*

Travel Pod: This exceedingly basic space vehicle is designed to carry passengers and cargo between space stations in low-Earth orbit or in similar environments. Most are also fitted with large robot arms and similar tools that allow the operator to perform maintenance and construction tasks while inside this ship. *Example: Bakuhatsu "Sparrow" Shuttle.*

Hybrid Transport: Larger than a fighter but offering little protection, this transport is designed purely to move medium cargo between Earth, orbital stations, and Luna. It can hold up to 20 passengers and three crew, as well as a substantial amount of cargo. *Example: Banji Raven II.*

Passenger Shuttle: Expensive and usually restricted to the well-off, passenger shuttles offer transit to orbital stations or Luna in exceptional luxury. Most can seat between 150 and 200 passengers and make the trip in only a few hours, offering plenty of delicacies to sate the palate along the way. *Example: L-B Comet OPS (Orbital Passenger Shuttle).*



SPACE VEHICLES

TYPE	SIZE	HANDLING	SPEED	TAGS	WEAPONS	TECH	FT	COST
Hybrid Fighter	2	+1	6/[4]	Armor 1, Computer 0, Hybrid 2, Maneuverable 1, Military 1, Thrusters 1	Laser Carbine, Missile Launcher	Hard	-	••••
Locust Hybrid	2	+2 +	6/[4]	Armor 1, Computer 0, Hybrid 2, Maneuverable 2+, Military 1, Psi -1, Thrusters 1	Laser Carbine, Coilgun, Missile Launcher	Ψ	•••	••••
Travel Pod	2	+1	[2]	Armor 1, Cargo 1, Computer 0, Limited Astrogation Systems 0, Maneuverable 1, Tools 1	-	Hard	-	•••• *
Hybrid Transport	3	+0	6/[3]	Cargo 2, Computer 0, Hybrid 2, Massive 1	-	Hard	-	••••
Passenger Shuttle	3	+0	6/[4]	Cargo 2, Computer 0, Hybrid 2, Massive 1, Thrusters 1	-	Hard	-	••••
MEL	3	+0	6/[4]	Armor 2, Cargo 2, Computer 0, Crew -1, Hybrid 2, Massive 1, Military 1, Thrusters 1	Coilgun	Hard	-	L
Space Transport	3	-1	[4]	Armor 1, Astrogation Systems 1, Cargo 2, Computer 0, Massive 1, Sluggish -1, Thrusters 1	-	Hard	-	••••
Orgotek Scarab Strike Frigate	4	+0 +	6/[5]	Armor 2, Cargo 2, Computer 0, Crew -2, Hybrid 2, Massive 2, Military 1, Psi -1, Thrusters 2	Laser Carbine, Coilgun	Ψ	•••	L
Commercial Frigate	5	-2	[5]	Armor 1, Astrogation Systems 1, Cargo 4, Computer 0, Crew -2, Massive 3, Sluggish -2, Thrusters 2, Weaponry 1	Laser Carbine	Hard	-	L
Frigate	5	-1	[5]	Armor 2, Astrogation Systems 1, Cargo 3, Computer 0, Crew -3, Massive 3, Military 1, Sluggish -1 Thrusters 2	Laser Carbine, Coilgun	Hard	-	L

SPACE VEHICLES (CONTINUED)

TYPE	SIZE	HANDLING	SPEED	TAGS	WEAPONS	TECH	FT	COST
Freighter	6	-2	[4]	Armor 1, Astrogation Systems 1, Cargo 5, Complex 0, Computer 0, Crew -2, Massive 3, Sluggish -2, Thrusters 1, Weaponry 1	Laser Carbine, Missile Launcher	Hard	-	L
Leviathan Jump Ship	6	-1+	[4]	Armor 1, Astrogation Systems 1, Cargo 4, Complex 0, Computer 0, Crew -3, Massive 3, Psi -1, Repair Bots 1, Sluggish -1, Tesser 1, Thrusters 1, Weaponry 1	Laser Carbine	Ψ	•••	L

+ Reduce Maneuverability by 1 if not formatted.

* As stated above, the minimum cost for all spacecraft is ••••

Military Equipment Lifter (MEL): Armored transport capable of hauling vehicles and troops into and out of battle. The MEL requires a pilot, co-pilot, and a gunner, and can support up to 5,000 cubic meters of cargo space. Its typical armament includes a coilgun and anti-missile lasers. *Example: L-B MEL II.*

Space Transport: These unarmed civilian spacecraft have become popular for transport in the inner solar system and also for asteroid mining. Asteroid mining ships add both the Tools and the Crew -1 tags. *Example: LB-ST (System Transport).*

Frigate: Frigates are massive commercial or military spacecraft, typically between 200 and 400 meters long. Many also have docking bays for fighters and shuttles, and a few are modified to serve solely as carriers for smaller vessels. Because of their size and complexity, military frigates require a crew of at least 10, but many employ dozens to fully leverage the power of the ship's flight and weapons systems. Even small frigates have individual quarters for up to three dozen, and comfortable (if a bit tight) bunk space for 150 or more. Commercial frigates possess fewer armaments, require minimal crews, and are designed to swiftly carry goods and passengers between orbital space stations and distant colonies. However, most frigates serve as patrol craft for military and law enforcement. *Example: L-B Supernova IPF-Delta (Intrasystem Patrol Frigate),*

Orgotek Scarab Strike Frigate: This unique biotech frigate is both smaller and more maneuverable than hardtech frigates. The 80m long Scarab is even capable of landing on a planet, and bears enough firepower to hold its own in the shipping lanes. It has accommodations for 16 and carries two Locust hybrid fighters for support. Formatting the entire vessel isn't normally possible. Instead, psions must format the piloting and weapons systems separately. Each formatted function offers 1 Enhancement to related actions.

Freighter: As the whales of Earth's oceans dwarf all other sea creatures, freighters dwarf other spacecraft. Despite their size, freighters tend to be lightly armed. Some can deploy a small squadron of fighters for defense, while others hire armed escorts when traveling along especially dangerous shipping lanes. Freighters can be up to a kilometer long, holding millions of cubic meters in cargo space. Internal docking bays hold up to several escort fighters or hybrid transports, with exterior docking for up to 10 hybrid ships. Freighters are far too large to enter atmosphere, relying on shuttles for planetfall. Because they are commercial ships, they use sufficient automation that a crew of seven can control the ship. Most freighters utilize as many as 30 on rotating shifts, but some companies try to cut costs

by running the minimum. Freighters can hold more than 10,000 cabins. Luxury liners contain deluxe quarters, entertainment venues, small zoos, holosims, parks, and a bevy of restaurants. Most freighters routinely travel between Earth and Luna or Mars, but some go as far as Jupiter or Saturn. Now that the teleporters have returned to the solar system, freighters are again being used to carry colonists and cargoes to habitable extrasolar planets. A single fully loaded colony freighter can carry 20,000 passengers and all the basic cargo and equipment they require to set up a new extrasolar colony.

LEVIATHAN JUMP SHIPS

No vehicle better symbolizes human ingenuity than the Leviathan-class jump ships. They are the largest vessels ever made by humans, and employ both biotech and hardtech in a unique combination. Multiple hyperfusion reactors propel the Leviathans through space in normal flight. Advanced biotech life-support and accommodation systems provide a thriving and surprisingly naturalistic biosphere capable of supporting up to several thousand passengers and crew. Leviathans have four fighter bays, each holding up to three hybrid fighter craft, as well as four larger bays each holding two hybrid transports or passenger shuttles. Exterior docking mechanisms allow up to four Scarab frigates and a dozen hybrids to hitch a ride on the back of the Leviathan like barnacles on a whale. In addition, while its cargo capacity is too low to carry a frigate or other Size 5 or Size 6 spacecraft during normal space movement, a Leviathan's Tesser allows it to teleport up to two Size 5 or one Size 6 vessel that are docked with it.

If size and seamlessly mixing biotech advantages with hardtech propulsion were the Leviathans' only claim to fame, they would still stand as humanity's greatest feat of technological innovation. However, their true power lies in the bioware that allows these ships to psionically teleport across the vastness of space. This miraculous feat is made possible by the incredibly advanced bio-computer systems called Tessers, developed in combination with the Qin, but only usable by skilled human clairsentients or teleporters. Tessers are woven throughout the entire Leviathan like a spinal cord and nervous system, expending incalculable amounts of processing power to make the jumps possible. Even then, the jump drive requires a clairsentient psion in a built-in formatted ARES pod. A Leviathan on a military mission can carry a maximum of 4,000 troops in cramped

barracks, along with all the vehicles and other equipment they require.

The entire process, not yet fully understood by even the scientists who designed the Tessers, utilizes a combination of astrogation and clairsentience to plot out and then execute the jump. First, the psion must use clairsentience, augmented by the ARES pod, to visualize the destination. The Tesser reads this intent through the noetic link and instantly alters the Leviathan's wavefunction via tremendous subquantum energies. In a process that mimics the powers of an interstellar teleporter, the ship then vanishes from its current location in space and reappears at the destination.

From an external perspective the jump is instantaneous, but for anyone on the Leviathan, the duration of the jump seems to vary. Noeticists struggle to fully understand this phenomenon because it can vary from jump to jump, even if the distances jumped are the same. From the perspective of travelers, jumps can seem instant or to take an entire lifetime's worth of sensations unfolding, or even both at once. Returning to normal space often feels like waking up from an exceptionally vivid dream. This process is a deeply spiritual experience for most psions and even many neutrals. When a psion pilot interacts with the Tesser, she does so as equal parts spectator and pilot, unable to fully explain the process even as she feels the power working.

The Leviathans themselves are also more than mere ships. Clairsentient pilots and any telepaths on board can easily communicate with the ship, and the ship itself can communicate with its passengers and crew via standard audio and visual displays. Everyone who spends time with one agrees they are far more than a mere SI, but researchers who have also worked with the rare hardtech AIs universally agree that Leviathans are something quite different.

Laws restricting potential AIs keep Leviathans from direct access to the OpNet. However, they happily communicate with anyone on board, but also avoid bothering passengers and crew who wish privacy. Speculations that Leviathans possess some degree of clairsentience or telepathy are common, but little is known about their unique minds other than that they think somewhat differently than humans, but not necessarily any less well, and that all seem to care deeply about their crew and passengers.

With fewer than two dozen Leviathan ships in service, and the technology difficult to reproduce, each

one is a setting for whole stories unto itself. Whether the players serve as part of a Leviathan's crew or are merely passengers, each encounter should evoke the sense of wonder and power that these great vessels embody. Each Leviathan should be unique, a setting and a character in its own right. Their mysterious workings blend the seemingly impossible with the pinnacle of 22nd-century science.

ROBOTS AND DRONES

The widespread use of Satisfactory Intelligences has also given rise to a multitude of drones and robots. The only differences between a drone and a robot is that a drone can be controlled by a human operator at a distance, while a robot is designed to operate autonomously, but SIs allow all drones to also function autonomously. Robots and drones are designed much like ordinary vehicles, but are smaller and do not carry passengers or a driver. Drones and robots range in size from tiny up to Size 1, and while they use the basic vehicle-design rules, there are a few differences:

- Drones can only incorporate weapons that are no larger than the drone, and drones only use the **Weaponry 1** tag.
- Drones cannot possess the **Astrogation** or **Hybrid** tags because advanced rockets are too large to incorporate in a small device.
- Drones that possess the **Limited Astrogation** tag must be at least **Size large**.
- Only drones of **Size large** or larger can possess armor.
- Drones with the **cargo** tag can carry cargoes of up to one **Size** category smaller, so a **Size 1** drone could carry **Size 0** cargo.
- Drones of **Size tiny** cannot exceed **Speed Scale 2**.
- The basic template for drones is **Size any**, **Handling +0**, **Speed 2** or **[2]**
- Like all other vehicles, drones possess the normal sensors necessary for their type of operation as well as a microphone, and if desired, a speaker. However, the **Tool** tag allows them to include powerful specialized sensors, as long as these sensors are not larger than the drone.
- The designer is free to set the **Size** of the drone anywhere from small to **Size 1**, and the drone's

size has no effect on its cost, but it does change its capabilities (see above).

- Because making exceptionally small drones is more difficult, **Size tiny** drones must possess the **Tiny 1** tag.
- Each drone can have up to **3 + Wealth** points worth of positive tags, unless otherwise noted, and can gain more points by taking negative tags.
- Drones are relatively strong, and for purposes of physical prowess like contests involving **Might**, have a dice pool of eight dice, modified by their **Size Scale**. When interacting with a **Size 1** human, a **Size 0** drone would have a physical pool of 6, while a **Size medium (-2)** drone would have a physical pool of 2.
- Unusually strong drones possess the **Strong (1)** tag, that adds **+2** to their physical pool. Only drones of at least **medium Size** can use this tag.

COMMON DRONES

The following types of drones are in common use.

Microdrone: At one cm across, this tiny flying drone is no larger than a large housefly. It has an excellent miniature microphone and camera and a top speed of 20 kph. The fibers on their feet can stick to almost any surface, including ceilings, allowing the user to maneuver the microdrone into position and then set it down in a concealed location so that no one will notice it. While stationary, they have all of the same options as ordinary bugs, except that user can also choose to activate them with a radio signal and then either download their data or fly them out. Instead of using the **OpNet**, these drones contain transceivers with the same range and capabilities as an ear radio (p. 293).

Flying Drone: Typically for outdoor use, this quadcopter drone has sensors equivalent to enhanced binoculars and a directional microphone. Users control it with a minicomp and it can be used anywhere with **OpNet** service. Police drones are typically fitted with tasers or sonic pistols, while spy drones are often fitted with stealth systems.

Large Flying Drone: This aerial drone's flattened diamond shape is designed for covert operation. Its engines are nearly silent and it has adaptive camouflage. It possesses both a parabolic microphone and a laser microphone. For additional cost, these drones can be fitted with up to two weapons, typically a sonic carbine and either a laser carbine or a light coil-gun. Operating a weaponized drone without authorization is a serious crime.

COMMON DRONES

TYPE	SIZE	HANDLING	SPEED	TAGS	WEAPONS	TECH	COST
Microdrone	Tiny	+2	2	Computer 0, Flight Systems 0, Maneuverable 2 Stealthy 2, Tiny 1	-	Hard	••
Flying Drone	Small	+1	4	Computer 0, Fast 2, Flight Systems 0, Maneuverable 1 Tools 1	-	Hard	•
Large Flying Drone	Size 0	+0	5	Computer 0, Fast 3, Flight Systems 0, Stealthy 2, Tools 1	-	Hard	•••
Utility Drone	Size 0	-1	2	All-Terrain 1, Cargo 1, Computer 0, Strong 1, Tools 1	-	Hard	•
Defense Drone	Size 1	+0	3	All-Terrain 1, Armor 2, Computer 0, Fast 1 Sluggish -1, Strong 1, Tools 1, Weaponry 1	Sonic Carbine + Laser carbine or Coilgun	Hard	•••
Police Drone	Size 1	+0	2	All-Terrain 1, Armor 1, Computer 0, Self-Repair System 1, Tools 1, Weaponry 1	Taser	Hard	••

Utility Drone: This small, sleekly humanoid drone is roughly 1.5 meters tall and relatively lightly built, but can carry packages up to large Size. These drones can perform basic household tasks or serve as personal assistants. Utility drones used for heavy labor are typically Size 1.

Defense Drone: This six-legged, two-armed, crab-like drone is heavily armed and armored, and is

designed to guard high-security installations where the owners are willing to use lethal force.

Police Drone: This mannequin-like drone is humanoid in form and possesses two fully functional arms and hands. These drones have built in tasers and are used to guard relatively low-security installations or to supplement police. These drones are most common in Nippon.





CHAPTER NINE

STORYGUIDING

“Danger is a side effect of what I do, not the reason behind it.”

— Mira Grant

RUNNING SCIENCE FICTION SCENARIOS

As their base, campaigns set in the **Trinity Continuum** are about heroes working to save the world, or at least to help out where they can. However, **Trinity Continuum: Æon** is specifically a science-fiction game set in an era when humanity is taking its first steps out among the stars. **Trinity Continuum: Æon** is also about the consequences this expansion to the stars has for humanity and also for the various species it interacts with. This doesn't mean you need to set your campaign in space, but it is worth thinking a bit about what science fiction is when you are planning to run this game. There are almost as many definition of science fiction as there are fans of the genre, but two features are found in many definitions: social commentary and a sense of wonder.

Stating that science fiction is inherently social commentary is simply recognizing the fact that any fictional world we create reflects our hopes and fears about our own world, and that this is especially true for visions of the future. Using your campaign as a forum for which to expound on your social and political ideas is usually a terrible idea — unless that's specifically what all your players are looking for. However, it's also impossible to escape news stories about refugees, war, inequality, and terrorism in our world, and so it's hardly surprising that such similar issues also plague the world of **Trinity Continuum: Æon**, because humanity has not changed all that much in slightly more than a century.

Using “ripped from the headlines” inspirations for your plots is far easier to do badly than well, and can easily be offensive and cheap. For example, running a **Trinity** scenario in late 2001 about terrorists attempting to fly a spacecraft into an arcology would have been in very poor taste indeed. However, using a general understanding of our own world can greatly enhance your campaign. A refugee camp in 2120 isn't all that different from a modern one, and while authoritarian police states in the early 22nd century have more and better surveillance

technology at their disposal, the attitudes of both the government officials and those resisting them are likely to be somewhat similar to similar people in our world. Because human emotions and motivations are key features of good campaigns, seeing the parallels between our own world and those parts of this setting that you want to focus on can enhance your campaign.

Creating a sense of wonder is a somewhat more complex issue. Some campaigns won't have much of a sense of wonder. A group of rebels and Orgotek employees plotting to overthrow the FSA have things other than wonder on their mind, as do Norça members engaged in complex and deadly intrigues. However, it's also important to remember that wonder need not just occur in space, and that it can easily go hand in hand with terror. Discovering the enormous subterranean nest of an utterly inhuman Aberrant hive-mind dwelling under Wycoff's Blight can, and perhaps should hit the same balance of horror, repulsion, and amazement that the best cosmic horror stories manage, as can stepping into the lair of a presumably long-dead Aberrant mad scientist and looking at the various creations hopefully safely locked in transparent stasis tubes.

CREATING A SENSE OF WONDER (OR TERROR)

Much of the task of creating a sense of wonder in your campaign is simply an awareness of the wonders (and terrors) that abound in both our universe and in the universe of **Trinity Continuum: Æon**. Our own universe is more than 13 billion years old and filled with incomprehensible phenomena like the supermassive black holes that lurk in the center of every known galaxy and bizarre environments like the roastingly hot surface of Venus, where the air is so dense that it bends light into a circle. The universe of the **Trinity Continuum** is even more fantastic, with time travel, powerful alien

intelligences who have lived for millions of years, and creatures who can warp reality to their will using Quantum and subquantum powers.

During the Nova Age, humanity as a whole learned that our own species could produce wonders and horrors far beyond any previous imaginings. In the current era, humanity must now confront the fact that intelligences have been inhabiting the galaxy for tens of millions of years, or perhaps for far longer, and some of them had both technologies and powers far beyond our own. Characters exploring space may encounter blasted and lifeless planets that were once home to technologically advanced sentiences, or worlds where life is stranger than they can imagine. Living crystals, sentient plasma, and perhaps even creatures evolved to live on the surface of stars are all possible discoveries.

Similarly, characters who remain on Earth may discover Nova Age artifacts that can perform feats deemed impossible by science, like time travel or entropy reversal. They could even uncover powerful alien artifacts smuggled to Earth by the greedy or the power-mad, or even stranger devices left behind by aliens who visited Earth decades or centuries before. In the course of these investigations, the characters might also discover evidence that one or more species of aliens has been observing and subtly interfering with humanity for millennia.

At least some of the wonders that the characters discover should be items, creatures, or worlds that are entirely new to human experience, and most of the rest will have only been known to a few who were determined to keep their existence secret. More importantly, these discoveries should rarely be passive events where the characters stumble upon a crashed spacecraft, relic-filled vault or a new and inexplicable species sitting passively, waiting to be found. Instead, important discoveries should usually be active, frenetic affairs. Perhaps the characters uncover a clue about a mystery and must race their opponents to find it. Alternately, they may find a vault filled with Nova Age relics, only to have the automated defense system suddenly activate, or discover a new species when it relentlessly hunts them across an alien landscape.

Using mysteries like those described above also allows Storyguides to neatly sidestep any problems caused by the characters' access to ubiquitous information (see p. 321). Having easy access to a wealth of information only matters so much if the result to every query about a newly discovered creature or

object is that nothing remotely like it exists in any known database. By definition, anything that provokes a sense of wonder or terror is something that the characters can't simply learn about from the OpNet.

CHOOSING A LOCATION & A SUB-GENRE

Trinity Continuum: Æon is designed so that Storyguides can use it to run almost any type of science fiction. However, the question of what type of science fiction you want to run is closely tied to where you may want to set your campaign. Characters in this game can become involved in a wide variety of scenarios, from brutal warfare to wondrous exploration or clever heists, but exactly what sort of scenario or campaign you run depends a great deal on where it is taking place.

In any prosperous urban area on Earth, characters are no more likely to be able to engage in extended gun battles or other sorts of extreme violence than they are in our world in a similar location. Regardless of whether characters are fighting Aberrants, attempting to rob a bank, or under attack by deadly rivals, dozens and perhaps hundreds of cameras will see the conflict and within minutes, first drones and then a large number of police officers and perhaps soldiers will arrive on the scene.

However, the situation is very different in remote locations like the Australian Outback, or the remote regions inside or near Wycoff's Blight. Here, orbital satellites may notice and report on any especially violent conflicts, such as ones involving large explosions, but actually getting law enforcement or military personnel to the conflict could easily take several hours, if they decide to go there at all. Meanwhile, in France, small battles are a daily occurrence. Also, in the poorest and most run-down portions of the FSA's cities and arcologies, the few working sensors may record the sound of gunshots or even small explosions, but often the local police won't bother to even send drones to the scene unless there is evidence that first-class citizens or their property are in danger.

In the most general terms, various locations within the universe of **Trinity Continuum: Æon** are particularly well-suited for certain types of scenarios. This in no way means that those are the only types of scenarios that work in these locations or that a Storyguide can't create and run a wonderful campaign in a particular location that has nothing

LOCATION AND SUB-GENRE

LOCATION	SF SUB-GENRE
Australia	Future Crime Stories or Social SF
China & SE Asia	Political Intrigue or Social SF
France	Post-Apocalyptic SF or Military SF
FSA	Cyberpunk or Political Intrigue
Eastern Europe or India	Political Intrigue
Khantze Lu Ge	Military SF
Nippon	Cyberpunk, Future Crime Stories, Social SF, Transhumanist SF
Olympus	Future Crime Stories
Other Extrasolar Colonies	Space Opera
Sudamérica	Future Crime Stories, Political Intrigue, Transhumanist SF
UAN	Political Intrigue, Social SF, Space Opera

to do with the types of scenario it is designed for. However, many Storyguides are likely to find running specific types of scenarios somewhat easier in particular locations. Since **Trinity Continuum: Æon** is a science fiction game, the following locations are matched with the sub-genres or types of SF that best fit that location.

Of course, the above advice doesn't take into account any changes that a Storyguide might make in the setting or other changes that happen as a result of the characters' actions. As they are presented in this book, the FSA, Sudamérica, and China are all poor choices for military SF war stories. However, if the FSA is in the midst of a revolution, if war breaks out between the FSA and Sudamérica, or if one of these three locations suffers a massive and prolonged attack by Aberrants, then these regions could swiftly end up in the midst of a brutal and prolonged war.

SUB-GENRES EXPLAINED

The above table lists eight different subgenres of science fiction and where in the setting they can most easily be run. The following is a brief description of each of these types of science fiction, along with a suggestion or two about how this subgenre might be used in **Trinity Continuum: Æon**.

Cyberpunk: Stories about crime and power in settings with vast social and economic inequality, where most of the population is poor and oppressed, but a sizeable minority lead lives of privilege and luxury. Characters are typically either members of the lower class who are attempting to become wealthy or tear down the system, or they

are well-off members of society who seek to fight against the injustices around them. In cyberpunk, the most common tools used by the protagonists are cutting-edge technologies, especially those that allow users to gain illegal access to information or unauthorized control of the society's technological infrastructure. The characters could be rebels working to overthrow the FSA or Orgotek employees who are also FSA freedom fighters or who are directly aiding rebel groups. Similar rebel groups in eastern Europe would also work for cyberpunk stories, as would a team of Talents in Nippon that is using illicit means to right wrongs and aid the ignored inhabitants of the arcology's abandoned sectors.

Future Crime Stories: Stories about criminals and the law-enforcement agents who oppose them. Characters can be on either side of this divide. They might be high-tech psionic thieves who attempt to use illegal means to enrich themselves, while also stealing from and working to disgrace individuals and corporations who attempt to oppress others. Alternately, the characters might be law-enforcement officials fighting brutally efficient organized criminal gangs, some of whom may be using illegal Nova-age technology, or perhaps have direct Aberrant aid. Olympus' Underworld is made for crime stories, but they also work well in the glittering cities of Sudamérica and Australia or in Nippon's vast arcology.

Military SF: Stories about the heroism and horrors of war. Space battles against the Chromatics around Karroo Mining Colony or fighting Aberrant raids on Earth are both good places for this type of scenario or campaign, but Khantze Lu Ge is custom-made for

military SF since it is currently the site of an extended and brutal war. Here, the characters can rescue civilians and oppose hideous sub-Aberrant mutants and exceedingly powerful Aberrants.

Political Intrigue: Stories about espionage, secret deals, blackmail, and most of all, stories about individuals and groups attempting to accumulate and consolidate power, while also working to stop their rivals from gaining power. The characters could be freelance spies or members of politically active organizations like the Ministry or Norça, who work behind the scenes to advance their agenda and secretly defeat their rivals, while also discovering the hidden plans and agendas of their enemies. The Ministry is especially ideal setting for political intrigue.

Post-Apocalyptic SF: Stories about struggling for survival in the ruins of a now-collapsed civilization. Such stories work well in Wycoff's Blight or the portions of Khantze Lu Ge that have recently been freed from Aberrant control, but are still in ruins. However, the most obvious location for these stories is the Aberrant-blasted ruins of France. The characters will typically not be struggling for survival, but they will regularly deal with hundreds or thousands of people who are. Some beg them for help they may be unable to provide, others attempt to take what they need by force and are willing to kill anyone who attempts to stop them.

Social SF: Stories about the social and cultural impacts of new technologies and new ways of life. Characters could work to prevent violence by people who don't trust psions and the new biotech-based transformations and enhancements, while also solving problems caused by people who embrace cutting-edge, and often not fully tested, biotech enhancement technologies without regard for safety or side effects. Alternately, a campaign set in China, where the characters are members of the Ministry tasked with helping to maintain order or create useful social changes would also be social SF.

Space Opera: Tales of adventure, discovery, danger, and wonder on the spaceways. In space opera, characters discover new worlds and ancient alien treasure, help establish new colonies, and make first contact with potentially friendly aliens, while also battling raiders, space pirates, and hostile aliens, and the ever-present dangers found in space and on unfamiliar and often exceedingly deadly worlds. Possible campaigns include everything from the characters being psions assigned to a particular

interstellar colony, being the crew of a Leviathan jump ship, being an Upeo wa Macho interstellar exploration team, or freelance psions working for a UAN interstellar trading company associated with Upeo wa Macho.

Transhumanist SF: Stories about people changing themselves (and perhaps others) in ways that (for better or worse) leave human limitations and existing definitions of humanity increasingly far behind. Transhumanist SF can include everything from campaigns where the characters attempt to deal with how the general public reacts to such changes, to epic stories of people attempting to create or become technologically enhanced gods or monsters, often while opposed by others who fear such transformations.

EARTH CAMPAIGNS VS SPACE CAMPAIGNS

When considering what sort of campaign to run, one of the first and most important choices a Storyguide must make is whether she wishes the campaign to be set on Earth or in space. For all practical purposes, Luna counts as Earth, both because jump rings provide instant travel between Earth and Olympus and also because Luna, like Earth, has a very large and highly urban population.

Campaigns set on Earth or Luna can be set in small isolated settlements or remote wilderness areas, but vast cities and arcologies containing tens of millions of people are never more than a few hours away, and the presence of these metropolises is an important part of the setting. However, there are far fewer people elsewhere in space. Qinshui is home to hundreds of millions of Qin, but fewer than 20,000 humans, and none of humanity's extrasolar colonies have a total population larger than one of Earth's medium-sized cities.

In addition, scenarios where the characters attempt to hide by blending in with the mass of humanity are far more difficult on colonies with only 50,000 residents. Also, the sparsely settled nature of all of these worlds combined with how recently they were settled means that a wealth of mysteries can await characters that yearn for exploration. Characters might find evidence of an ancient alien research base on Averiguas or a primitive and relatively rare intelligent species inhabiting Ruan's World, while such scenarios would make no sense on Earth, unless perhaps the character discovered a crashed alien vessel in a secret warehouse



or a newly created intelligent species in a secure laboratory.

Most scenarios should involve at least some contact with other characters, but Earth-based scenarios typically focus on human institutions and objects created by other humans (or perhaps by Aberrants). Also, on Earth or Luna, characters are rarely more than a few hours from other people. In contrast, a team of explorers working for Upeo wa Macho could easily be the only humans for 200 light years,

and characters traveling to a remote region on Far Nyumba might be 10,000 kilometers from any settlement. However, even in the Australian Outback, the nearest other settlement is rarely more than 200 kilometers away, and is usually considerably closer. Often, scenarios set in space involve some form of isolation, where the characters are cut off from other people and also often from the OpNet. However, outside of prisons or vast abandoned Aberrant-built tunnel complexes, there's very little isolation on Earth.

CREATING OPTIMISTIC SCENARIOS

The setting of **Trinity Continuum: Æon** isn't idyllic or utopian, but it is one where many of the problems facing our own world, including both widespread poverty and global climate change have mostly been solved. This era of the **Trinity Continuum** has numerous problems, but many of them, like the refugee crisis in France, are caused by outside threats. Brutal and oppressive governments like those of the FSA, Russia, and Ukraine exist, but they are the exception rather than the norm. Instead, while all institutions contain both heroes and villains, most people have adequate access to

food, housing, medical care, and education, and most governments work to serve the interests of their population.

Ultimately, one of the keys to this setting is that while greed, villainy, and even monstrous inhumanity by actual monsters all exist, they are the exception rather than the rule. Many humans and other sentient beings who assist villains do so out of desperation, fear, or ignorance, or because they are no longer fully in control of their own minds. As a result, defeating evildoers allows people and the institutions they serve to return to being forces for good.

Embracing this vision of the **Trinity Continuum** involves creating scenarios where the characters are not merely heroic, but are working to either preserve something they consider to be important or to defeat a foe that has disturbed a previously good status quo. In short, they are fighting to save a world that's mostly good and to change those parts of it that aren't. There are two important, but closely related parts to achieving this in your scenarios, portraying the setting and the people in it as mostly good (with obvious exceptions, such as the villains and their assistants) and more importantly, that the characters care about and are invested in the setting and at least some of the Storyguide characters they interact with.

Part of this vision is embedded in the setting. With the exception of a few obviously villainous governments that exist for ambitious characters to overthrow, most governments and organizations are run and staffed by decent, well-intentioned individuals. Scenarios and even entire campaigns can focus on internal threats by ruthless sociopaths, fanatics who place the ends well before the means, or Aberrants who are secretly controlling a few people in a large organization. However, important organizations like the UN, the psi orders, and the *Æon Trinity* should be forces for good. Individual Storyguides are, of course, free to decide that any of the psi orders, the UN, or even the *Æon Trinity* itself are mostly corrupt and evil, but in the default setting for **Trinity Continuum: Æon**, they aren't.

Instead, any of these organizations that have problems should rapidly mend their ways once the few bad actors are discovered and dealt with. One fact that can make this setting complex and interesting without being dystopian is that definitions of good can vary wildly. China's government has ideas about good governance and helping its populace that are very different from those in Sudamérica or Australia, and there's no obvious or objective way to say who is more correct.

In addition to the inherent optimism of the setting, much of the effort needed to create optimistic scenarios lies with the Storyguide. One of the keys to designing and running optimistic scenarios is that the characters, and hopefully also the players, care about aiding and protecting the various Storyguide characters they know and the organization or organizations they belong to. To do this, the players must be motivated to engage with the setting and the characters who inhabit it.

Giving the characters recurring allies like a stern-but-kindly supervisor to whom they regularly talk is one method of creating this sort of engagement. Many characters can work well in this role, like a socially awkward but well-meaning engineer or technician that one of the characters is friends with and who occasionally provides the characters with new, and mostly useful devices to field test, or a rival team of psions that the characters learn to respect and work with. Once the characters have gotten to know these Storyguide characters they will care if the technician is being threatened or blackmailed, if the rival team vanishes mysteriously, or their supervisor suddenly begins acting strangely because they were kidnapped and replaced by a shape-changing Aberrant or possessed by one of the Doyen (see p. 359). The characters will be motivated to help, not merely because it's clearly the right choice, but also because they want to save their colleagues.

To further reinforce this sort of engagement, characters should occasionally meet ordinary people who aid them in various minor, but perhaps important ways. Perhaps the characters infiltrate Ukraine on a mission to prevent war in eastern Europe, and a local doctor treats an injured character and keeps the fact she is treating a foreigner secret. If several sessions later the characters learn that this doctor has been arrested or find out that her son has mysteriously vanished, they will likely feel obligated to help someone who risked herself for them.

Of course, there's more to creating optimistic scenarios than the characters' motives. One of the key features is that most of the time the characters' allies and superiors typically won't betray them. Also, if any sort of betrayal happens, it's an aberration (possibly caused by an Aberrant) and only occurred because someone was blackmailed, mind controlled, replaced by a duplicate, or perhaps simply was one of the few members of the organization who is a greed-driven sociopath. The characters should also understand that the organization will replace these hidden foes with more honorable and humane individuals once the characters reveal the betrayal.

Another aspect of creating optimistic scenarios is that the effects of the characters' actions should linger and recur. One or two game sessions after helping to save an Amazonian village, one of the characters might notice a mention of that village on the OpNet. Alternately, when the characters go on a mission in a city they have visited before, one of

their local contacts may explain to them how grateful someone they helped was. This sort of reputation can have effects well beyond ego boosts; it can encourage strangers in the same city to aid them if they get into trouble. However, it also might mean that someone recognizes the characters when they are walking down the street, and suddenly they must deal with the price of fame while on a mission they were hoping to keep at least somewhat secret.

Nevertheless, fame is far superior to infamy. If the characters dramatically fail at an assignment, or even worse, callously leave a civilian to die or be arrested because of their actions, even if they avoid legal penalties, people in that city are likely to remember them and they may have to deal with angry civilians shouting at them the next time they return there. If their actions are sufficiently dramatic, their infamy may spread across the OpNet, and follow them everywhere they go.

USING AND EVOKING UNITY

The thematic focus of the entire **Trinity Continuum** is Hope, Sacrifice, and Unity, and while all those still apply in **Trinity Continuum: Æon**, this game's central theme is unity, particularly in the sense of disparate groups working together for the common good and cooperating to defeat mutual foes. The following are some suggestions for how to foreground unity in your campaigns. One of the most immediate and obvious ways is within the group of characters. The characters are likely to be a group of psions with different Aptitudes who not only work together, but can combine their powers to produce effects impossible for any one of them to create. Alternately, they might be a mixed group of psions and Talents who are working together and finding the ways that their different powers and abilities complement one another.

However, unity can also be expressed in how the characters interact with others. One of the most important expressions of unity in this setting is different groups and individuals working together toward

a common goal. An entire campaign could be built around psions, perhaps working for Orgotek, building alliances with various rebel groups working to overthrow the FSA. In addition to providing direct aid, the characters would protect the rebels from FSA soldiers and spies and would eventually make alliances with other psi orders, the Æon Trinity, and other nations like Sudamérica, China, and the UAN, who then work with the characters to overthrow the FSA's government and restore freedom to North America. A smaller-scale scenario might involve brokering peace between the different factions on Averiguas, transforming resentment and aggression to unity. Alternately, perhaps the characters are forced to ally temporarily with a group of Nihonjin Talents to defeat a dastardly Aberrant plot.

The world of **Trinity Continuum: Æon** is one where mad Aberrants, scheming Doyen, and the Coalition's monstrous progenitors are all threatening humanity. These antagonists are also covertly manipulating, threatening, or oppressing other intelligent species, like the Qin, the Chromatics, and the other Coalition phyle. Victory over humanity's foes would be considerably easier if these disparate, and in some cases, currently antagonistic groups worked together.

A scenario or even an entire campaign could be built around the characters making an alliance with the Chromatics to end their war with humanity, defeat the Aberrants terrorizing the Chromatic homeland, and eventually working together to defeat the Doyen. In another campaign, the characters might help to keep peace between a nervous Earth and the powerful novas of Eden, or assist the sasqs, drones, and other oppressed and enslaved Coalition phyle in an uprising up against the progenitors. All of these are stories about unity. You could even create a vast and epic campaign where the characters make alliances with several of these disparate groups to make peace and eventually defeat one of the games' three major threats — the Aberrants, the Coalition Ark, or the Doyen.

ALLEGIANCE IN TRINITY CONTINUUM: ÆON

Even the most powerful team of psions doesn't exist in a vacuum. They all gained their powers in a Prometheus Chamber, and have at least have a loose association with the psi order that helped trigger their powers. Also, most psions work for an organization, although not necessarily one of the psi orders. The choice of the character's allegiance will determine a great deal about the campaign.

WORKING FOR A PSI ORDER

This is the default assumption for **Trinity Continuum: Æon** — the players are members of one of the seven extant psi orders, and working for Chitra Bhanu is also possible (see p. 368). Approximately half of the members of any psi order gained their powers from the Prometheus Chamber belonging to another psi order, and so members of the team need not all possess the same Aptitude. Also, psions can enhance their powers by working together. As a result, every psi order encourages its teams and working groups to contain psions with a wide range of Aptitudes. The one limitation is that most teams belonging to a particular psi order should usually contain one member whose Aptitude is the order's default. For example, a

team that belongs to ISRA should usually contain at least one clairsentient.

The question then becomes, which psi order works best for a particular group? Some of this depends upon where the players and the Storyguide prefer to set their game, since some of the psi orders like the Ministry or Norça are strongly associated with particular nations. However, teams working for the Æsculapian Order, ISRA, the Legions, and Upeo wa Macho can all be found anywhere on or off Earth, and all of the psi orders maintain at least some presence outside of their home nation. Another important factor to consider is the order's purpose and structure.

If the characters belong to the Legions, they are soldiers or combat support personnel, if they instead belong to the Æsculapian Order, they are likely to be a medical-relief or search-and-rescue team, just as if they belong to the Ministry, they all work for the Chinese government in a bureau that deals with information and public opinion. Also, some psi orders are more tightly organized than others. A team belonging to ISRA may be left to their own devices for much of the time, since Otha Herzog



expects the team's clairsentient to see what needs to be done. However, even in the most loosely organized groups, characters will occasionally receive assignments from their superiors.

The nature of these assignments naturally depends upon what sort of campaign the players and Storyguide want and all of the characters should be designed to work well in that type of campaign. A campaign where the characters are skilled Aberrant hunters calls for very different characters than one where the characters are international (or even interstellar) spies, interstellar explorers, or a team of inventors and hackers who are working to change the future of humanity. Once again, the nature of these assignments relates closely to which psi order the character belong to. Many teams of Aberrant hunters belong to the Legions, and while spies could work for most orders, they are especially common in Norça and the Ministry, while hackers and inventors definitely fit with Orgotek best.

WORKING FOR THE ÆON TRINITY

If the Storyguide wants the team to be generalized troubleshooters who could either be assigned almost anywhere or to perform some specific task, like interstellar archeology, which doesn't fit well into any of the psi orders, another excellent option for is having the characters work for the Æon Trinity. This organization takes an interest in the safety and well-being of every nation, planet, or moon inhabited by humans as well as working to advance technology and explore the universe.

Characters who work for the Æon Trinity can be involved in literally any aspect of the **Trinity Continuum: Æon** setting, from urban politics and diplomacy, to deep-space search and rescue or investigating the black-market trade in unlicensed Nova Age technologies. The Æon Trinity has access to several Leviathan jump ships and is just as good a choice for campaigns involving interstellar exploration as Upeo wa Macho. However, the key point to the characters working for the Æon Trinity is that they are employed by an organization whose entire purpose is to help humanity grow and develop while also protecting it from both internal and external threats. Characters who work for this organization should embody the three principles of Hope, Sacrifice, and Unity.

Also, once the Storyguide and players have decided that the characters work for the Æon Trinity, the

next step is to decide what sort of roles the characters have. Most importantly, are they publicly known Æon Trinity operatives who can command the resources and power of the Æon Trinity as part of their missions, or are they covert operatives working undercover, where they attempt to infiltrate criminal gangs or Aberrant cults, or at least get to know people who associate with members of these organizations? Like the Ministry and Norça, the Æon Trinity has a moderate number of covert operatives who can discreetly call upon this organization's resources, but who must publicly appear to be petty criminals, minor dissidents, or other similarly disreputable individuals.

Even more than any of the psi orders, working undercover for the Æon Trinity often involves paranoia and secrecy, where the characters may have to impersonate someone else for several sessions and characters who are not biokinetics might be given plastic surgery to cause them to look like someone else. The characters could be sent into the Olympus Underworld, the Nippon arcology, or even assigned to a work detail on Averiguas. The characters might even work for Æon's secretive Section Minerva.

Openly working for the Æon Trinity guarantees the characters a measure of respect and admiration from many of the people they interact with, as well as ensuring that local people of importance pay attention to their activities. Many elderly people remember how the Æon Trinity provided all manner of vital assistance after the Crash, and all across the Earth and Luna, people who are middle-aged grew up in the era of rebuilding from the Crash, and may have gone to an Æon Trinity sponsored school. Even people who are somewhat suspicious of the various psi orders are almost certain to respect the Æon Trinity. The only exception is Nippon, where the populace respects this organization's efforts, but lacks the personal connection of either having been directly helped by them or having older relatives who were.

SECTION MINERVA

Although technically part of the Æon Trinity, Section Minerva is almost entirely separate from the Æon power structure and chain of command and primarily consists of semi-independent teams of secret operatives. Each team only report to a few members of the Æon Council. Having the characters be on a Section Minerva team can be a useful intermediate choice between having the characters

be freelance psions with no allegiance to anyone or having them belong to and work for one of the psi orders or to be working openly for the Æon Trinity. Section Minerva teams are assigned missions by the Æon Council, but they are also free to take on their own missions.

One of the biggest advantages of basing a campaign around a team of Section Minerva operatives is that the Storyguide is free to introduce almost any sort of heroic scenario, and all types of characters are possible. In addition to having psions and Talents working together, a quantakinetic could easily be recruited as a member of Section Minerva. The quantakinetic is also likely to be accepted by the other operatives, since the Æon Council recruits people into Section Minerva who are always more likely to trust their own instincts and research than official information that they have no way to directly verify.

Section Minerva operatives also do not need to confine their activities to Earth. They can travel to Luna, various orbital stations, other locations in the solar system. Also, if the characters include a teleporter, they could travel literally anywhere. The Æon Council could easily assign a Section Minerva team which included a powerful teleporter to investigate problems on Averiguas or to perform a daring rescue mission on Khantze Lu Ge. It's even possible that the team might be able to travel to the stars without a teleporter if they had access to a small,

experimental Leviathan jump ship, which is exactly the sort of device the Æon Council could possess and allow members of Section Minerva to use. The Æon Council might even deliver messages directly to the jump ship's noetic intelligence.

Regardless of whether the Section Minerva teams are trekking through the Amazon jungle, swimming through the aquatic sections of the underwater city of Neptunia, or wandering the corridors of Karroo Mining Colony, their missions will be essentially the same — safeguard humanity, protect the weak from powerful individuals who abuse their power, help prevent disasters and serious political incidents, and oppose those who promote chaos and war. The ultimate simplicity of these missions can be an excellent way to introduce players to the vast diversity of the Æon setting.

FREELANCE PSIONS

The third obvious and simple choice for a campaign will be the most familiar to many gamers: The characters are freelance psions who are either independently wealthy and engage in their own projects or hire themselves out as troubleshooters, bodyguards, private detectives, mercenaries, or spies. Most gamers are used to playing characters whose allegiance is only to themselves and the other characters, and this type of campaign can work well in **Trinity Continuum: Æon**. However, it can also be quite limiting. Unless one of the characters is a tele-

porter, the characters will have little or no access to interstellar travel. The Leviathan jump ships have only been in operation for a year and are primarily used for important missions. Also, Upeo wa Macho charges a great deal of money for characters who want to travel to the stars without an important mission or official backing. In addition, most governments and corporations take a very dim view of outsiders interfering in their affairs. The Storyguide should consider if this is the sort of campaign they want to run. Characters who are self-employed rootless wanderers can work well in this setting, but should not be the default choice.

Alternately, some freelance psions aren't rootless and independent. Instead, they possess close

FREELANCER PSIONS & PSI ORDERS

Every psion is at least technically still a member of a psi order. To gain access to a Prometheus Chamber, a latent must join a psi order, and pass whatever qualifications for membership that order possesses. However, some psi orders allow individuals to go their own way after they have completed a few weeks of training and orientation following their use of the Prometheus Chamber, and all of the other psi orders allow members to leave after they have completed a term of employment or service.

Unless the psi order ejected a member due to serious misconduct, all psi orders maintain an interest in former or lapsed members, and these psions can often call upon other members or even the order's formal hierarchy for various sorts of minor assistance. In addition, if a former member in good standing notices something of interest to the order they will have a much easier time convincing the psi order to investigate this phenomenon than an ordinary civilian would.

ties and significant loyalty to a place or a small local organization like a particular group plotting to help New Tampa secede from the FSA and become part of Oceania. Characters who are all strongly invested in a particular city, arcology, local cause, or colony world could make for an excellent campaign. Instead of working for an organization, the characters are instead all residents of a large city or arcology like Shanghai, Chicago, Sao Paulo, Brasilia, Olympus, Mumbai, Pacifica, Jomo Kenyata, or Sydney. Any of these cities is sufficiently large and cosmopolitan that there is a wealth of problems that a determined team of psions could solve. The characters could be a team of private detectives, or simply people interested in making their city a good place to live and eliminating threats to it. The key to making this sort of campaign work to flesh out the city and the various contacts, friends, and acquaintances the characters interact with, much like the key to making a campaign where the characters belong to a psi order or other organization work, is detailing a variety of individuals inside the organization with whom the characters regularly interact.

In a city-based campaign, the characters could stop violent crime or help protect officials they approve of from threats or blackmail, while also

investigating mysteries, including relics and history from the Nova Age or the Aberrant War lurking in storage lockers or buried in basements. Similarly, a team of psions who are all from Karroo Mining Colony or Far Nyumba would be some of the more notable individuals there and could face a wealth of opportunities for adventure, from archeological discoveries to alien invasions or attacks by Aberrants.

Finally, a team of freelance psions might have a mentor or patron who employs them to handle some particular sort of problem. The characters could be anything from corporate espionage operatives working directly and secretly for the head of a large corporation, to a team of interstellar explorers charged by a government or corporation to locate new habitable worlds or to discover alien artifacts whose technology can be adapted for human use. If the characters are actually freelance psions and not psions who work for a government or corporation, then they might well work directly for a single person who is high up in the organization, and not be part of any sort of organizational structure. This sort of campaign works best if the characters have a single, highly specific sort of mission, like stealing corporate secrets or exploring alien worlds.

USING THE OPNET & UBIQUITOUS INFORMATION

Even in the ruins of Paris, the depths of the Amazon rainforest, or the wilds of Far Nyumba, characters have easy access to electronic information and communications, and so do their foes. This access to electronic information becomes even more extensive in cities and arcologies on Earth or in Olympus on Luna, where augmented reality displays detailed information about every shop or statue. Also, the authorities, as well as clever hackers, have instant access to tens of thousands of cameras, mini-drones, and other sensors throughout the city. Keep in mind that much of this information is easily and seamlessly presented to people and almost everyone learned how to access and understand this information when they were children.

No rolls are necessary to use normal, unrestricted augmented reality or OpNet access. Also, because people typically use the same agent for their minicomp for decades, this SI understands them well

enough to alert them to news and other information they would be interested in, while screening out everything else, unless requested to do otherwise. Agents also alert their users to appointments, provide directions, screen calls, and display augmented reality information in an easy-to-understand fashion, especially if their user is obviously busy performing difficult surgery or running for her life.

Characters can access any publicly available information or contact other people simply by asking their minicomp. On those rare occasions when someone's agent is uncertain about the nature of a request, it asks one or two follow-up questions. However, information and communication have some limits. A few old basements and tunnels lack repeaters and so are cut off from the OpNet. Also, secure facilities install signal jammers and shielding to prevent anyone inside from accessing the OpNet. However, unless characters are in remote or deliberately

isolated locations Storyguides should never assume that characters cannot access the OpNet or contact others, and characters should rarely find themselves in such situations without warning. Typically, someone's minicomp announces if she is entering an area with limited or no OpNet access. Lack of OpNet access should be a rare event that helps emphasize that the characters are in a location where they are entirely on their own, such as breaking into the headquarters of a Nihonjin intelligence agency.

However, except in such dramatic and unusual circumstances, players who find their characters' minicomps regularly fail will become justifiably frustrated. Instead, Storyguides should see easy availability of information and communication as a method of enhancing scenarios. One or more characters could be in contact with a distant ally who is trapped in a damaged spacecraft orbiting the Earth. The characters may not be able to immediately travel to this ally, but can communicate with her, and attempt to help her survive until they can physically be present. Alternately, characters might even be able to remotely pilot drones in a location they can't physically access or perhaps a few characters can physically access a location, while the rest pilot drones in the same location. These and many similar options use ubiquitous communication to enhance storytelling.

Access to information should be handled in a similar fashion. If the information is anything that's public, the characters should be able to instantly acquire it and if they don't have time to examine it carefully, their agents can summarize it, providing most of the important points. Unless information is

kept deliberately secret or no one knows it, obtaining it is a matter of seconds. However, this same easy access can be used to surprise characters. Normally, when a character looks at someone, they see whatever information this person wishes to display in their augmented reality profile and then asks their agent to obtain more information about this person using both this information and facial recognition. However, they might encounter someone who displays a minimal amount of generic information, and who has nothing in any database. Perhaps this person is a spy, a criminal, or simply a celebrity who has disguised herself and is using a generic incognito identity. Alternately, characters who are used to discovering information on almost everything at a glance may look at an alien artifact or animal and receive the rare search result "Unknown subject, no information found."

However, remember that everyone's access to information is not equal. Ordinary citizens can track the movements or find the location of people who have given them permission to do so — typically family members and exceedingly close friends — but cannot track the movements of anyone else. However, law enforcement and security personnel can, with the proper authorization, locate anyone in their jurisdiction and download a record of their movements and other actions, and a sufficiently skilled hacker can obtain truly vast amounts of information about anyone, unless the person they are attempting to hack is an even better hacker. This differential access to information is one of the most powerful tools available to authorized officials, hackers, and, of course, electrokinetics.

TALENTS IN TRINITY CONTINUUM: ÆON

While psions were created through the use of advanced technology, Talents occur naturally. Also, the Æon Trinity and the various psi orders can administer tests to determine psionic latency, but Talents show up as perfectly ordinary humans on every known medical test. However, while no one in the **Trinity Continuum: Æon** setting understands what Talents are, various individuals and groups have noticed what they can do. The Æon Trinity has been keeping track of various exceptional individuals for many decades and has even devised a testing

routine that can determine with a moderate degree of accuracy whether someone is an "anomalous individual" or not. Unfortunately, this test requires several days of extensive physical and mental tests administered by highly trained experts. In contrast, the test for latency requires a few minutes and a cheek swab. As a result, the Æon Trinity and various other large organizations have only identified a few dozen Talents.

However, there are actually almost as many Talents as psions, and they are powerful and highly



effective characters. There are two options for using Talents in **Trinity Continuum: Æon**. They can either be part of a mixed group of characters that contains both Talents and psions or they can be part of a group of characters composed solely of Talents. Both options are good choices for this setting. Talents and psions are of roughly equal power, but their special abilities are very different, and the luck and sheer physical and mental prowess of a Talent can nicely complement psion powers. This is especially true if the psions have powers that have no overlap with Talents; clairsentients, electrokinetics, psychokinetics, quantakinetics, telepaths, and teleporters are all excellent choices for inclusion in the same group with Talents. Biokinetics and vitakinetics can also work well with Talents, but the fact that their powers are expressed through their physical bodies means that the Storyguide must take more somewhat more care to make certain that no character's special abilities overshadow those of other characters. However, a biokinetic who is a master of disguise and adaptability and a Talent whose focus is that she can build, repair, hack, or modify almost any device and drive or pilot any vehicle could easily work together in the same group of characters with no problems of one character overshadowing the other.

One potential difficulty is finding reasons for Talents and psions to work together on a long-term basis. Many psions are used to regarding neutrals as significantly less powerful and might consider someone who, from all appearances, is a neutral not to be a suitable companion on difficult and dangerous missions. However, the Æon Trinity and all of the psi orders have neutrals as members, and even if the character has not shown up during testing as someone who is almost inhumanly talented and lucky, nothing earns approval quite as well as continued success. A Talent who has repeatedly proven her worth could easily be assigned to work with a group of psions. Also, given how versatile and useful Talents can be, after a session or two, even the most skeptical psion is going to be forced to admit the character's worth, despite her lack of psionic powers.

Allowing players to choose either Talents or psions as characters also permits Storyguides to accommodate players who prefer playing "normal humans." Although Talents are anything but average, they lack obvious powers and appeal to most players who enjoy the idea of playing a cinematic action hero who is still fundamentally bound by normal human limitations.

Another unusual and interesting possibility is that a player may have previously enjoyed playing a Talent in a **Trinity Continuum** campaign set in the early 21st century could even play the same character in **Trinity Continuum: Æon**. Perhaps the character or a colleague or mentor invented some sort of suspended-animation device or drug that caused the character to sleep away the intervening 110 years frozen or in a vat of some exotic, life-sustaining gel. At the start of the campaign, the character is then revived by a team from Orgotek, the Æsculapian Order, or perhaps the Æon Trinity, who discover the character's cryotube or stasis pod. Such a character could be an exotic but useful choice to a player who knows little about the setting and is willing to have his character be a man or woman out of time.

A team composed entirely of Talents can also be interesting and fun and provide a campaign that is very different from a traditional team of psions. In addition to having abilities that will not instantly cause people to identify them as psions, the character suffer no hindrances in psionic dead zones like Wycoff's Blight and have no problems visiting Nippon. One possible option for a team of Talents is that they could be a team of Nihonjin spies and operatives who have access to both their Knacks and the finest Nihonjin hardtech, including advanced cyberware. The characters could even be charged with keeping an eye on one or more psi orders. They might uncover telepathic abuses performed by members of the Ministry or investigate illegal and unethical experiments performed by rogue psions who have been hiding the true nature of their work from the rest of their psi order. Alternately, the characters might be a similar team employed by the Æon Trinity, to go on undercover missions where psions might be too conspicuous or to deal with terrorists or criminals using illegal nova-derived technology which allows them to hide from or incapacitate psions.

Talents also possess a few other advantages psions do not. A psion is always going to be a better inventor when it comes to biotech, but Talents can excel at hardtech inventing. Also, psions can be detected by a simple and fast DNA test using blood, shed skin cells, or hair. A Talent shows up as a perfectly ordinary human on these and every other medical test. However, designing scenarios for Talents is somewhat different from designing them for psions. Every psion excels in areas directly related to their Aptitude — telepaths have major

advantages in social situations, clairsentients discern information others have no chance of learning, and biokinetics can adapt to any environment or disguise themselves as any person or animal. However, outside of tasks they can enhance with their powers, psions are only slightly better than normal humans — every psion is by nature a specialist. Talents can specialize, but they can also be consummate generalists who have the capacity to eventually become impressive at almost any endeavor they undertake.

USING DRAMATIC EDITING IN TRINITY CONTINUUM: ÆON

Talents in the **Trinity Continuum Corebook** can use Dramatic Editing, but as a Storyguide it's your choice whether or not to allow Dramatic Editing in **Trinity Continuum: Æon**. This decision should be discussed with your players and depends both on how comfortable all of you are with this mechanic and also what sort of campaign you wish to have. There are three options for how to handle Dramatic Editing in Æon.

No Dramatic Editing: Even if players play Talents, neither they nor any other character can use Dramatic Editing. This style of play works best if the Storyguide or players dislike using Dramatic Editing and prefer a gritty style of play where consequences are exceedingly final. The major limitation of this style of play is that it significantly weakens Talents, since this is one of their major abilities.

Only Talents Can Use Dramatic Editing: This option is only distinguishable from the previous one if one or more of the players chooses a Talent as a character. This option emphasizes that Talents are preternaturally lucky individuals and helps to foreground the fact that their ability to work equally alongside psions is in part due to their exceptional luck. This method is the default assumption for **Trinity Continuum: Æon** and for the **Trinity Continuum** as a whole.

Psions Must Spend Psi Points to Use Dramatic Editing: Both Talents and psions can use Dramatic Editing, but psions must spend Psi points to use Dramatic Editing, which means that using it comes at the cost of having fewer points to use to power their Modes. This is a good style of play if everyone enjoys Dramatic Editing and wishes to have an especially cinematic campaign where unlikely

escapes and other exceptional feats of luck are not uncommon. This is also a good choice for large-scale campaigns. However, to emphasize their unusual luck, Talents should be considerably better than psions at Dramatic Editing. As a result, using Dramatic Editing should cost psions four times as many Psi points as Talents pay Inspiration. Having

a Talent reappear after seemingly having died costs a Talent at least 3 Inspiration, but would cost psions at least 12 Psi points. This method allows players with psion characters to have fun using Dramatic Editing, without infringing on the special abilities of Talents too much.





CHAPTER TEN

OPPONENTS AND ALLIES

There's really nothing quite like someone's wanting you dead to make you want to go on living.
— Roger Zelazny

HUMAN SUPPORTING CAST

The Æon era is home to a dizzying array of characters. From psions to Talents, soldiers to saviors, and humans to aliens, stories in **Trinity Continuum: Æon** feature all manner of people. This section presents a quick selection of sample SGCs that can be used by the Storyguide with minimal preparation.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

The following are examples of the types of Inspired individuals that the characters may encounter.

LEGION PSYCHOKINETIC

Born in the UAN, Nalah always looked to the stars for her future; the gleaming thread of the space elevator up to Abuhisi station always made that dream come easily to her. When she tested positively for latent psionic ability, the Upeo wa Macho had already vanished and she also lacked the required latency. However, she found another path. Now she stands proudly as part of the Seventh Legion, Phoenix Fleet; she may not be the interstellar pioneer of her childhood fantasies, but she'll damn well give her all to protect everything that humanity has achieved in its expansion through space. A disciplined and highly trained soldier, Nalah has focused her psionic development into mastering the creation and control of force fields; to those suffering attack by aliens, Aberrants, or other threats, she is a guardian and protector, the bulwark between the innocent and those who would do them harm. Sometimes she feels flashes of envy toward the newly returned Upeo wa Macho, but largely Nalah has made peace with her role as a warrior sentinel.

Primary Pool: 11 (soldier)

Secondary Pool: 6 (pilot and explorer)

Desperation Pool: 4

Edges: Iron Will 2, Legion Armory, Small Unit Tactics

Psi Trait: 3

Psi Modes: Thermokinesis 2, Telekinesis 3, Perikinesis 4

Equipment Bonuses: +2 Enhancement

Defense: 2

Condition Levels: 4

MINISTRY TELEPATH

Jinhai never really expected to amount to much. He studied hard and diligently, but he suffered badly from impostor syndrome, convinced that at any moment everyone would see through the facade and perceive the nervous, scared, uncertain young man behind it for what he really was. Then his latent psionic powers became evident and, again, every day he expected it to turn out to be a false positive and be yanked away, even up to the very moment he was immersed into the Ministry's Prometheus Chamber. Now, as a telepath, Jinhai has mastered the flaws of his own mind, and has seen the truth in everyone else's — they're all just as scared and uncertain as he was. He loves humanity for this shared self-doubt, but also believes that it shows the need for the Ministry's work; humans are flawed and fragile creatures and require the firm, guiding hand of the order to protect them and keep them on the righteous path. Any suggestion that he might still share those flaws himself will quickly crack his serene facade.

Primary Pool: 11 (social science and social work)

Secondary Pool: 6 (political intrigue)

Desperation Pool: 3

Edges: Covert 2, Iron Will 1, Skilled Liar

Psi Trait: 3

Psi Modes: Rapport 4, Mindshare 3, Psychbending 2

Equipment Bonuses: +2 Enhancement

Defense: 2

Condition Levels: 4



ÆON TRINITY TALENT

A big organization like the Æon Trinity needs to get people and material places, and sometimes those people and materials are very important or those places are very dangerous. Stephanie is one of the top pilots in the Æon Trinity, with an absolutely incredible record of successfully extracting Æon operatives from absurdly high-risk situations. As far as her fellows are concerned, she's pretty much a guardian angel — no matter how badly wrong things go, Stephanie will get you out again. Things weren't always like this; she was once a run-of-the-mill Swiss pilot shuttling Operation Vesta personnel in and out of the ruins of western Europe, until a bizarre electric storm over *la Blessure* brought her craft down and killed everyone else onboard. She was expected to never fly again, but instead recuperated in record time and threw herself back into her role with greater determination than ever. After coming to the attention of Project Tantalus, she was shifted from her low-key role to become a high-value pilot for Proteus Division, where she has since saved innumerable lives.

Primary Pool: 11 (pilot)

Secondary Pool: 6 (rescue work)

Desperation Pool: 3

Edges: Fame 2, Far Reaching Influence, Hair-Trigger Reflexes, Ms. Fix-It

Source: 3

Facets: Destructive 1, Intuitive 2, Reflective 3

Gifts: Navigation Hazard, Quick Fix, Saw That Coming, Shake That Tail, Swan Dive, Voiding The Warranty, Wheelman (Aircraft), You Can Do It

Equipment Bonuses: +2 Enhancement

Defense: 2

Condition Levels: 4

MINOR CHARACTERS

The following characters are ordinary humans that can act as allies or opponents, or who could simply be individuals that characters must interact with during their adventures.

COLONIST

Pheung is a pretty angry person, all things told, which may explain why she moved to a different planet to get away from the suffocating pressure of her family's expectations. Ethnically Thai and a new arrival to Far Nyumba, Pheung is a surprising advocate of

the way of life established by the colony's first wave of inhabitants. As a bioscientist, she finds the planet's native life fascinating, and she has fallen deeply in love with the thriving intellectual community at Far Nyumba's heart. She finds the new, isolated communities being set up by some of the fresh wave of immigration to be antithetical to what she feels Far Nyumba is and should be, and is hostile to both the Perezistas and Indian colonists where many of the long-term African inhabitants take a far more measured approach.

Mental: 5
Physical: 5
Social: 4
Defense: 1
Standard Equipment: 0 Enhancement

EXECUTIVE

Jessica is absolutely, unshakably certain that she has earned every ounce of her success. She's a first-class FSA citizen with an impressive financial portfolio and her hand on the rudder of a major corporation's armaments division, and she has a genuine knack for picking up on the nuances and subtleties of the cutthroat FSA corporate world. It's been crucial to her survival, as she's the contact point between the metacorp and the deniable assets it uses for its operations around the world — mercenaries, hackers and industrial spies. Jessica has held tight to one key tenet that has underpinned her success — she *always* comes through on what she's promised an asset in payment.

Mental: 5
Physical: 4
Social: 5
Defense: 1
Excellent Equipment: 1 Enhancement

REFUGEE

Theo's previous life was almost entirely obliterated on the day the *Esperanza* plunged into the heart of France. Now, he's just another refugee, milling listlessly in a processing camp on Spain's border. He is filthy, sick, and has nothing to his name. Things are about to get even worse, though; a gang of marauders in *la Blessure* are on his trail. They've found an old government facility with still-intact security systems, and Theo is on the list of names with clearance for entry; he's literally the key to getting at the goods within.

Mental: 4
Physical: 4
Social: 5
Defense: 1
Standard Equipment: 0 Enhancement

SPACER

For Alexei, there is a form of peace to be found in the slow, dull routine of asteroid mining work. He doesn't mind the time he spends in Absolute Zero, but it's always something of a relief to be away from the station and back out in the calming embrace of the void once more. Out here, his dreams don't have to meet the hard edge of reality. Out here, he remembers his home town as a brighter place than it ever really was; he easily forgets his family's flaws when he thinks of them; and he can quell the sound of the screams in the silence of space. Whenever anyone mentions an Aberrant sighting, Alexei shivers, and tries to move the conversation on to other things.

Mental: 5
Physical: 4
Social: 5
Defense: 1
Excellent Equipment: 1 Enhancement

TECHNICIAN

Ani lives a double life, one that she's utterly in love with. Young, intelligent, arrogant, she's rapidly rising through the ranks of the army of engineers and data technicians who keep the Sydney spaceport functioning, tipped to achieve great things and with a solid career track ahead of her. Flip from day to night, and she's a hellraising troublemaker on the city's dark side, partying hard and turning her talents toward digital breaking and entering. She's a hacker in service to the rich and irresponsible who want some data to vanish, the CCTV to switch off at a certain time in a certain place, or for her to slow the police response to an incident by just those crucial extra few minutes. She's playing with fire, but she loves the heat, even as she knows that sooner or later she'll get burned.

Mental: 7
Physical: 4
Social: 4
Defense: 1
Excellent Equipment: 1 Enhancement

ABERRANTS & ALIENS

While most individuals that the characters encounter will be human, in this era the daring, adventurous, or simply unlucky can meet a variety of non-human intelligences, from the hideous, once-human Aberrants, to three different and unrelated groups of aliens, the hostile Chromatics, the strange and menacing Coalition, and humanity's alien allies, the enigmatic Qin.

ABERRANTS

Inhumanly powerful, Aberrants cast a long shadow over humanity in the 22nd century. Once human themselves, a biological mutation grants them the ability to warp reality. This warping eventually extends to themselves, twisting the Aberrant into a horrifying creature, mutilated in body and spirit.

In addition to returning from the depths of space, Aberrants also arise spontaneously on Earth, growing into their might quickly and becoming the monsters of rumor. Sometimes they're even wistful or remorseful about it, though few choose anything less extreme than suicide-by-psion. Aberrant eruptions are far more common around Quantum Flux zones.

Aberrants can manifest virtually any sort of power, from city-shredding horrors to gorgeous creatures who can brainwash with a word and a gaze. Some exist for years, avoiding the notice of Æon and the orders, slowly going mad as Corruption suffuses their frames and leaks into the land and people around them.

POWER CLASHES

In the event that two supernatural abilities are in opposition with each other, this is called a *Clash*. For the purposes of psi powers, a Clash is resolved by making opposed Skill + Applicable Aptitude rolls; this is a Desperation pool for sub-Aberrant mutants, Secondary pool for Divergents and Nemeses, and a Primary pool for Terats. Ties favor the defender, as they do with attack rolls. If a power references a Clash, refer to this

ruling. Minor characters do not make Clash rolls.

Given their opposition, it's possible for psions to detect the presence of Aberrants — this manifests as a painful, spiritual malaise, a sort of buzzing on the edge of consciousness. All psions can use Attunement (p. 204) to detect Terat Aberrants (see below) or groups of several Nemesis Aberrants using their powers. Clairsentients can use the Sight (p. 217) to detect a single Nemesis Aberrant or small groups of Divergent Aberrants, if these Aberrants are using their powers. Clairsentients can also detect a single Terat Aberrant or several Nemesis Aberrants that are not using their powers.

ABERRANT TRAITS

Unlike most Storyguide characters, Aberrants aren't built as minor characters or full characters, but as specific pools built around their specialties and modes of influence, with additional traits called **Qualities** and **Mutations**.

Player characters have Momentum, representing their narrative potential. Aberrants possess great power too, in the form of an opposing force called **Corruption**, which is both a rating unique to each Aberrant (a static value for resisting powers) and a pool for the Storyguide (representing the ambient Quantum energies of the area fueling the hideous strength of the Aberrant). Quantum Flux zones can sometimes increase this Corruption.

Corruption creates a pool equal to the rating, the points in which may be spent to toughen Aberrants, tailoring them to specific situations. This allows the Storyguide to fine tune a challenge. Allow the players to know the Corruption rating of the Aberrant they're fighting — psions feel this as a pressure just behind the eyes, an oily slickness rubbing against their mind. As a rough guideline, a suitable Corruption pool is equal to the number of players + the average Psi Rating of the group + Archetype Level of the Aberrant facing them.

INFORMAL CORRUPTION

While Aberrants possess several powers for directly corrupting characters, this won't apply to the player characters, who generally possess Psi ratings above 1. Assume that Corruption of the land proceeds according to the speed of plot and your needs; a Terat can corrupt a city within the span of a week, if it lasts that long, while a Divergent can suffuse a small lunar mining base within few months.

SIZE SCALE 0: SMALL CREATURES

Trinity Continuum: **Aeon** has aliens that are substantially smaller than humans, as well as bio-kinetics who can shrink in size or bud off smaller parts of themselves. For that reason, it includes an additional Scale for Size, Size 0, which is used for creatures that are no larger than a medium-sized dog like a golden retriever, or a large raccoon. Treat Size Scale 0 as Scale in all ways, but instead of Enhancements due to higher Scale, Size Scale 0 creatures experience +2 Difficulty to all rolls where smaller physical size would be an issue, including all rolls involving Might.

When an Aberrant is being used as the villain of an arc, or during an extended hunt, add a point to the Corruption Pool whenever a player character overcomes a Condition. This keeps the pool topped up according to the relative drama of the session.

SPENDING CORRUPTION

Corruption points are spent reflexively, taking place outside narrative time. In effect, the situation is retconned slightly — the new sub-Aberrant mutant was always that strong, he was just holding back, etc. Corruption use should never result in major inconsistencies, but it's relatively easy to explain away any use of it.

ADDING QUALITIES

Qualities represent a significant boost in ability, since they're permanently active. Adding a Quality costs 2 Corruption.

ADDING MUTATIONS

Adding a Mutation to an Aberrant is far more granular and situational than adding a Quality. Any Mutations added with Corruption have Cooldowns. Adding a Mutation costs 1 Corruption. Sub-Aberrant Mutants cannot gain Mutations.

ACTION INTERRUPT

Using Action Interrupt allows the Storyguide to insert a new slot into the Initiative Roster for a single round, which may be used for any Aberrant (even Aberrants who have already acted in the round). The new slot disappears at the end of the round. Action Interrupts cost 2 Corruption.

DEFENSE BOOST

Spending Corruption on a Defense Boost raises an Aberrant's Defense by 1 per Corruption spent, to a maximum of the number of players, for one round.

INSTANT COOLDOWN

All Mutations have Cooldowns, conditions that must be fulfilled before the Mutation can be used again. For 1 Corruption, the Storyguide may instantly refresh a single Mutation for a single Aberrant.

POWER COST

Some Qualities and Mutations have Corruption costs associated with them. In such cases, follow the rules described in those Qualities and Mutations for spending Corruption.

ABERRANT ARCHETYPES

All Aberrants have a single Archetype, delineating the degree of challenge desired by the Storyguide. Archetypes have Extras — built-in Mutations or Qualities that come standard — representing a certain level of inherent power. They have three dice pools: Proficient (indicating tasks at which they're skilled), Average (indicating tasks at which they have some skill, but haven't focused on), and Weak (tasks they have no real skill or training in besides raw competence). All Aberrants should possess three Proficient Skills, four Average Skills, and nine Weak Skills.

Qualities are examples of Archetypes, providing permanent Enhancements or improvements to the Aberrant and synergizing with the Archetype and other Qualities, if any. Qualities serve to flesh out or distinguish different Aberrants who use the same Archetype. Qualities can be either positive or negative — many sub-Aberrant mutants have weak points that the discerning psion may take advantage of.

Mutations are discrete powers or Traits. Mutations are designed explicitly for Aberrant use, and are not suitable for player characters, including the powers that some Aberrants possess that are similar to Psi powers. For example, an Aberrant telepath may find it difficult to read the mind of another unnoticed, for example; the victim's brain hemorrhages as the Aberrant literally rips the memories out of his head.



SUB-ABERRANT MUTANTS

Æsculapians and Æon Trinity observers who dissect dead Aberrants find that most don't possess the signature Mazarin-Rashoud structures — instead, they are humans warped by a stronger Aberrant's power and sent to die like so much fodder. Sub-Aberrant mutants can't spend Corruption points; instead, their master spends Corruption on their behalf. Sub-Aberrant mutants are Tier 2 characters. Unlike true Aberrants, a skilled quantakinetic can purge this creature of its Corruption and restore its humanity.

Primary Pool: 7

Secondary Pool: 5

Desperation Pool: 3

Defense: 3

Health: 4

Corruption: 1

Extras: +1 Enhancement (Storyguide's choice), 1-2 Qualities

DIVERGENT

Divergents are true Aberrants, but young or weak. Still, weak Aberrants can be dangerous opponents to fight. Many are adept at hiding their nature, masquerading

as human before their growing Corruption gives them away. These Aberrants are Tier 2 characters.

Primary Pool: 8

Secondary Pool: 6

Desperation Pool: 4

Defense: 4

Health: 5

Corruption: 2-3

Extras: Scale(Power) 1; +2 Enhancement for stunts other than Inflict Damage; 2-3 Qualities; 1-2 Mutations

NEMESIS

Nemesis Aberrants exist for a real challenge, and are more than the equal of any ordinary psion or Talent. They don't go down easily. These Aberrants are Tier 3 characters.

Primary Pool: 9

Secondary Pool: 7

Desperation Pool: 5

Defense: 4

Health: 7

Starting Corruption: 4-5

Extras: Scale (Power, Durability) 2-3; +3 Enhancement, Invulnerability (if appropriate); 2-4 Qualities; 2-3 Mutations

TERAT

Monsters in the night. Terats are malformed titans, dread gods striding and tossing sub-Aberrant mutants in their wake. Terats are Tier 4 characters.

Primary Pool: 9

Secondary Pool: 8

Desperation Pool: 6

Defense: 5

Health: 10

Starting Corruption: 6-8

Extras: Scale (Durability, Power, Size) 4+; +5 Enhancement, Monstrous Presence; many Terats are massive, and will make use of Size rules; 4-5 Qualities; 4-5 Mutations

QUALITIES

Although not as powerful at Mutations, Qualities are powerful abilities.

ARMOR

The Aberrant's skin stops damage. It might have thick, steel-like scales or be covered by a shimmering force field. Unless tags indicate otherwise, Aberrant armor is always visible, and is frequently hideous. All Aberrant armor counts as 2 points of soft armor, and also possesses a number of additional points of tags equal to 2 + the Aberrant's Corruption. A sub-Aberrant mutant gains three points of additional tags, while a Terat possesses eight points of additional tags. The following tags are possible: Complete (3), Composite (2), Concealable (1), Defensive (2), Environmental (1, 2), Hard Armor (1, 3), and Innocuous (2).

ARMOR PIERCING

Prerequisites: Divergent or higher Archetype

Whether by Quantum-charged hands, impossibly sharp talons, or blows made faster than the eye can see, attacks made by the Aberrant do not suffer increased difficulty to Inflict Damage due to Soft Armor.

BALEFUL TOUCH

Many Aberrants seethe with some energy or substance inimical to life — anything from fire to acid

to Quantum-level disruption of cellular processes. Any attack made by this Aberrant fills an additional Health box, unless that Health box would inflict an Injury Complication greater than the one marked normally. For example, if a character only had one Bruised and one Injured Condition remaining, she would only mark Bruised. In addition, the effect lingers — the target's clothes catch on fire, the acid clings and keeps eating away, etc. If the target does not take an action on her next turn to ameliorate the effects (which can be mixed), she takes one additional damage.

BLAST

The Aberrant can inflict terrible damage on its opponents. This damage may come from claws, a fiery breath, laser beams from its hideous third eye, or bolts of terrible Quantum force. All Aberrant blast attacks innately possess the Quality (2) tag, and gain a number of additional points of appropriate weapon tags equal to 2 + the Aberrant's Corruption (see both pp. 274-276 and the **Trinity Continuum Corebook**, pp. 123-126). A sub-Aberrant mutant gains three points of additional tags, while a Terat possesses eight points of additional weapon tags. Blasts by sub-Aberrant mutants have a maximum range of reach.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Prerequisite: Nemesis or higher Archetype

Whenever the Aberrant successfully deals damage, the surrounding area out to short range automatically becomes Difficult Terrain, as the ground is torn up, walls collapse, and so on. The Storyguide may spend 1 Corruption to completely destroy any object or structure (up to the size of a house or small apartment building) using such an attack, and is encouraged to give florid descriptions of the aftermath.

COLONY

Prerequisite: Divergent or higher Archetype

The Aberrant is not a single being, but a swarm of smaller creatures. Damage to this Aberrant represents individual creatures dying or the swarm being dispersed. Normal attacks against Swarm Aberrants suffer a level 2 Complication to the Inflict Damage stunt, unless the attack affects an area or possesses the Explosive, Gas, or Spread tag.

DISEMBODIED

Prerequisite: Nemesis or higher Archetype

The Aberrant lacks a body — instead, it uses the bodies of others, hopping between them the way most

people change their socks. This may be dangerous or even deadly to the victim being ridden — this is left to Storyguide discretion. Killing the ridden victim does not kill the Aberrant, instead it forces the creature to take a new body. However, quantakinesis, telepathy, or vitakinesis may be able to force out or even destroy the Aberrant. Aberrants with this Quality may not possess player characters. Instead of possessing humans, some Aberrants with this Quality can only possess advanced hardtech computers, controlling them and any networked devices like parts of their own body. Aberrants who possess computers can be displaced or destroyed using electrokinesis or quantakinesis and while they cannot normally possess humans, they can possess anyone with the Computer Enhancement Edge (but not the Psion Biocomp Enhancement Edge).

FLIGHT

The Aberrant ignores any Difficult or Dangerous Terrain, unless that Terrain represents atmospheric conditions. Additionally, if this Aberrant chooses to Disengage vertically, it cannot be followed unless the pursuer has some means of matching it, such as flight or superhuman leaping abilities. Sub-Aberrant mutants with this Quality are limited to a maximum Speed Scale of 3 and no Space Speed. Divergent Aberrants are limited to Speed Scale 4 and Space Speed [2], while Nemesis and Terat Aberrants have no limits on their Speed Scale or Space Speed.

INVULNERABILITY

Prerequisite: Divergent or higher Archetype

Choose a source of damage, such as toxins, fire, electricity, or concussive damage. The Aberrant does not take any damage from this source of damage. “Player characters” or “psions” are not valid categories for this Quality.

LIFE DRAIN

Prerequisite: Nemesis or higher Archetype

The Aberrant’s blows drain the life out of its victim, sapping her strength even as it kills her, and empowers the Aberrant. Whenever a character takes damage from the Aberrant’s Close Combat attacks, the following occurs: The target character marks an Injury as usual, and suffers a cumulative level 1 Complication on all rolls involving physical exertion for the remainder of the scene for each blow taken (this does not include attack rolls). The Aberrant gains 1 Enhancement to Close Combat actions for every successful attack made, to a cap of the number of player characters in the scene.

MONSTROUS PRESENCE

Prerequisite: Nemesis or higher Archetype

The Aberrant is something deeply otherworldly — there is no way it can pass itself off as something mundane, let alone mortal. It unleashes a Quantum presence, a psychic maelstrom, an awesome-in-the-literal-sense revelation that leaves even the most stalwart of mortals utterly terrified. Only beings of Tier 2 or higher (or attackers doing so from a great distance, where proper apprehension of the Aberrant is impossible) may oppose or attack the Aberrant.

MULTI-TASKING

Whether it has multiple arms, inhuman dexterity, or an alien-ordered mind, the Aberrant is more capable than others. Any mixed actions the Aberrant undertakes use the higher pool, not the lower.

PSYCHIC DISBELIEF

Prerequisite: Divergent or higher Archetype

Many Aberrants are capable of shrouding their actions in a kind of psychic static, or else can create an almost atavistic fear of their might out of humanity’s collective memory of the Aberrant War. Whatever the reason, mortal authorities and organizations are largely unwilling to pursue the Aberrant. Any attempts to invoke a Path to gain resources or leads for investigating or dealing with it automatically fail. Players may attempt to lie, mislead, or otherwise conceal the nature of their request, but must make an appropriate roll to do so, with a Difficulty of 2. Should they succeed, they must still keep things quiet — retaliation may occur if the truth comes out.

QUANTUM FLARE

Prerequisite: Nemesis or higher Archetype

The Aberrant’s power flares in response to injury. When the Aberrant takes damage, raise the Aberrant’s Defense by 1 for a number of turns equal to the number of damage currently taken. If it takes damage again before its Defense returns to normal, reset the countdown.

REGENERATION

Prerequisite: Nemesis or higher Archetype

The Aberrant heals one Injury Condition every round. Aberrants with this Quality are vulnerable to a single type of damage (ballistic, electricity, fire, sonic attacks, radiation, etc.). Damage from this source is not regenerated. If the Aberrant survives the fight, that damage heals at a rate of one Health per day.

SWARM

The Aberrants operate as an organized and coordinated swarm. This Quality is typically assigned to several Antagonists at once. When doing so, select an Aberrant with the Divergent or higher Archetype as the leader. If the leader is taken out, remove this trait from all other Aberrants under its command. Aberrants with Swarm receive +1 Defense, +1 Stress, and a +1 Enhancement to any combat Skill when two or more Antagonists with Swarm attack a single target during the same turn.

UNSEEN

The Aberrant is invisible. It cannot be detected by visual means. The Aberrant receives +3 Defense and 3 Enhancement to any stealth action. If other characters employ some method of tracking the Aberrant (throwing flour into the air, for example, or using superhuman hearing to follow its heartbeat), its Defense bonus and Stealth Enhancement drop to 1. For 1 Corruption, the Aberrant may make a surprise attack even after combat has started. Aberrants with this Quality must take a Vulnerability, such as UV light, concentrated sound waves, or holographic targeting systems. In the presence of their weakness, this Quality does not function.

UNSTOPPABLE

Prerequisite: Nemesis or higher Archetype

The Aberrant is blessed with a truly massive physical form, standing at least eight or nine feet tall and at least half that across. The Aberrant increases its Size Scale by 1. It automatically succeeds on all rolls to lift, throw, or move objects or characters no larger than Size Scale 3, and gains the Brutal and Weighted tags on all melee attacks. Additionally, any allied characters within close range of the Aberrant receive the benefit of the Aberrant's Armor (but not its Defense).

MUTATIONS

The following Mutations are suitable for true Aberrants. Sub-Aberrant mutants can never possess Mutations.

DIRECT CORRUPTION

Cost: 1 Corruption (See description)

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: Personal

Range: Close

Action: One scene

Cooldown: One session

Prerequisites: Nemesis or higher Archetype

Over the course of approximately 30 minutes, the Aberrant permanently corrupts a subject's cellular signature with Quantum energies, turning them into a sub-Aberrant mutant. It's exceedingly rare for any subject to survive with their mind intact, and most fall under the sway of the Aberrant, reduced to slavering monsters. Against minor characters, this power is free, and works on groups of 5-10 per session — the cost is only for allies of the player characters or other notable characters. Both psiions and Talents are immune.

DISRUPTION

Cost: None

Duration: One scene, unless broken

Subject: One character

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

Cooldown: End of scene; or the disruption is broken

The Aberrant is able to disrupt the molecular structure of others, scrambling their presence in the space-time continuum. The effects of the disruption may vary, and the Storyguide is encouraged to be highly descriptive. Non-minor characters may resist Disruption with a Clash. Purifying or healing psi effects are able to break through disruptions, and Quantakinesis Fundamentals shuts them down altogether. Possible disruption effects might include:

- Enfeeblement or the feeling of a great weight on one's body; +2 Complication to all Might and Dexterity actions.
- Inflicting an Injury Complication directly; the player chooses which Injury Complication is marked, and breaking the disruption removes the Complication. This cannot Take Out a character.
- Increase the difficulty of a specific Stunt by 2.

EYE OF THE COLONY

Cost: 1 Corruption

Duration: One scene

Subject: Summoned swarms

Range: Self

Action: Simple

Cooldown: All summoned swarms are Taken Out.

This Mutation generates a number of swarms of small creatures (insects, rodents, drones or autonomous vehicles, etc.) equal to the Aberrant's Average Skills pool. These swarms function as Minor Characters with the Colony Quality and 1 Enhancement. Generally, these are local creatures or devices that are subsumed into the Aberrant's dread presence, but on occasion, they are actually generated by the Aberrant's body as part of some hideous mutation. A single Aberrant can only summon living or mechanical swarms, not both.

INCAPACITATE

Cost: None

Duration: Varies

Subject: One character

Range: Varies; maximum of medium

Action: Simple

Cooldown: A roused target makes an attack on the Aberrant.

The Aberrant makes an attack — if successful, the attack deals no damage, but the target is Taken Out immediately, knocked unconscious. However, any other character at close range may bring the target back into the fight, with a basic or mixed action to rouse her. If no such action is taken, the target awakens at the end of the scene.

MASTERMIND

Cost: 1 Corruption

Duration: Instant

Subject: One Investigation

Range: Indefinite

Action: Simple

Cooldown: End of session; or the player characters confront the Aberrant directly

Prerequisite: Nemesis or higher Archetype

The Aberrant has shielded itself from scrutiny. Aeon investigators only find mind-warped catspaws and agents who crumble under scrutiny. They know there's an Aberrant directing affairs, but they rarely catch the Mastermind. For 1 Corruption, the Aberrant may alter the clues in a single Investigation, so that

they appear to implicate someone working for it rather than the Aberrant.

MODE ANALOG

Cost: 1 Corruption

Duration: Special

Subject: Special

Range: Special

Action: Simple

Cooldown: End of scene

The Aberrant has the equivalent to a single Mode power of a single psionic Aptitude. This power is almost always less subtle and more direct than equivalent noetic powers, but has roughly the same range and other limitations, using the Aberrant's Corruption score as both Psi and Mode dots. However, all powers with a Duration only last until the end of the scene. Terat Aberrants can gain the six-dot version of Mode powers.

QUANTUM WAVE

Cost: 1 Corruption

Duration: One scene

Subject: Allies

Range: Long

Action: Simple

Cooldown: End of Scene

The Aberrant's presence lends strength to its allies. When invoked, all allied characters within long range temporarily remove one Injury Condition, or gain a blanket +1 Enhancement to all actions if they don't have one. The Injury Conditions return and the Enhancement fades when the Mutation ends, when the subjects move out of range of the Antagonist, or when the Antagonist with this Mutation is Taken Out.

QUANTUM WIND

Cost: 1 Corruption **Duration:** Instant

Subject: Self

Range: Self

Action: Reflexive

Cooldown: One scene

Prerequisite: Nemesis or higher Archetype

The Aberrant has hidden reserves of energy it can call on at a moment's notice, refreshing it and giving



it the will to continue even against staggering odds. If the Aberrant has only one remaining Health, the Storyguide may spend 1 Corruption to clear its entire Stress track. When it does so, the Aberrant receives a +2 Enhancement to be assigned at the Storyguide's discretion, which persists until the end of the scene or until the Aberrant is defeated. If the Aberrant is a Terat, this Mutation's effect costs 2 Corruption.

TYRANT OF THE BATTLEFIELD

- Cost:** 1 Corruption
- Duration:** One scene
- Subject:** Area
- Range:** Medium for Nemesis, long for Terat
- Action:** Simple
- Cooldown:** One session
- Prerequisites:** Nemesis or higher Archetype

The Aberrant can alter the weather or atmosphere, generating dangerous conditions — magnetizing every piece of metal, filling the air with arcs and gambols of energy, or transmuting oxygen to chlorine gas while it's in your lungs. While in many cases this effect is narrative in scope, in combat it often results in Indirect Damage, or may inflict Status Conditions on player characters at the Storyguide's discretion.

WARP

- Cost:** 3 Corruption
- Duration:** Indefinite
- Subject:** Terrain
- Range:** N/A
- Action:** Simple
- Cooldown:** End of scene

The Aberrant opens a portal, punching a wormhole through space with pure power. The range on this Mutation ultimately depends on the power of the Aberrant: Weak Aberrants may only punch a wormhole to a neighboring continent, while supremely strong Nemesis-level Aberrants or Terats can traverse galactic clusters or farther in a single portal. Aberrants can only go through one at a time. Historically, Terats have kept portals open for weeks or months, pouring armies through, and can close them at will.

WORLD-SHAKING

- Cost:** 1 Corruption
- Duration:** Indefinite
- Subject:** Terrain
- Range:** Medium

Action: Simple

Cooldown: End of scene

The Aberrant is able to disrupt the ground, sending mighty vines through concrete, altering the ground's structure to liquid, or simply smashing it incredibly hard. However they do it, they transform the ground it into Difficult Terrain out to medium range. It may center the disturbance anywhere within its line of sight. This is not subtle; using it significantly damages the ground and any nearby structures.

SAMPLE ABERRANTS

The following are only two of the multitudes of Aberrants and sub-Aberrant mutants that humanity must fight.

FLYER SEVEN (SUB-ABERRANT MUTANT)

This wretched creature barely remembers its human life, much less its name. Most of its identity and memories were stripped away when the Aberrant Queen Flare infused Flyer Seven with Corruption, transforming it from an ordinary Khantze Lu Ge colonist into a flying, scorpion-tailed horror. Flyer Seven is loyal to Queen Flare, because disloyalty is punished by death. Since its transformation, Flyer Seven has attacked humans on both Khantze Lu Ge and Earth. Flyer Seven is sometimes charged with capturing humans that Queen Flare later transforms.

Primary Pool: 6 (warrior)

Secondary Pool: 4 (observer and spy)

Desperation Pool: 3

Defense: 3

Health: 4

Corruption: 1

Qualities: Blast (long electrically charged scorpion tail), Flyer (large bat-like wings, Speed 3)

FLYER SEVEN'S ATTACK

TYPE	EN	RANGE	DMG TYPE	TAGS
Electrical Scorpion Tail	2	Close	Electricity	Quality 2, Electrical, Reach, Variable

QUEEN FLARE (NEMESIS ABERRANT)

Queen Flare was born on Earth in the early 21st century, and transformed into a Nova in 2035. She became increasingly inhuman and unstable and left Earth during the Chinese Ultimatum, following the Colony to the stars. She harbors a burning hatred of humanity, and seeks to transform some into her slaves, and destroy the rest. She now stands slightly more than eight feet tall, with huge gnarled muscles, slate-blue skin, and glowing green eyes. She is surrounded by an aura that glows and crackles.

Primary Pool: 9 (warrior and war leader)

Secondary Pool: 7 (brutal ruler)

Desperation Pool: 5

Enhancement:[4

Defense: 4

Health: 7

Starting Corruption: 5

Extras: Size Scale 2

Qualities: Armor (crackling aura), Blast (Quantum blast), Regeneration, Unstoppable

Mutations: Direct Corruption, Warp

QUEEN FLARE'S ARMOR

TYPE	BASE	TAGS
Crackling Aura	Bulletproof, Impact & Slash Resistant	Complete 3, Defensive, Environmental, Hard 1, Soft 2

QUEEN FLARE'S BLAST

TYPE	EN	RANGE	DMG TYPE	TAGS
Quantum Blast	3	Close-Medium	Ballistic	Brutal, Deadly, Destructive, Quality 3, Ranged (close-medium)

ABERRANT CULTS

Although most humans hate and fear Aberrants, some are driven by fear, ignorance, or occasionally greed to obey or worship them. Members of some Aberrant cults have no idea they belong to one, believing that the private club or fringe religion they belong to is eccentric but not associated with Aberrants. However, a few people knowingly follow Aberrants, either because they believe the Aberrant will help them amass more money and power, they see no better option, or they want to be on what they believe will be the winning side. The following is one example of many such Aberrant cults.

HARBINGERS OF THE BLOODLESS

Registered in the FSA as a religious organization in 2111, the Harbingers hide in plain sight, claiming to be a church espousing a bizarre philosophy that glorifies technology over the infirmities of flesh. They are rabidly anti-psion and anti-biotech, and encourage their rank and file to display their hardtech devices and implants like ornaments. The upper tiers of the cult resemble a social club that welcomes established and up-and-coming entrepreneurs in the global technology sector, even if most members are first-class FSA citizens.

It began with Carl Roberts, a young entrepreneur from the FSA; in 2107 he indulged his hobby for purchasing forgotten storage bins and bought a warehouse full of 21st-century trash. From that day, his small trading firm grew exponentially thanks to a series of right decisions. He wrote a self-help book “explaining” the secret of his success, which was sold and copied worldwide.

He exploited the fear of the weirdness that noetic technology represented, and used his success as proof that humanity did not need any new protectors other than “normal” humans who saw the truth. His OpNet conferences were particularly popular in the FSA, where psions were the target of distrust. While winning over the masses with his keynote presentations, Roberts began extending his network, revealing to trusted associates the true secret of his success: the oracular forecasts of what he believed to be a prototype AI he found in a solid-state drive in that warehouse foreclosure sale. Anybody who joined his circle prospered, which further fed the myth of his genius. His affiliates launched killer apps, or revolutionary new technology, and he was considered a visionary.

A decade of continued success made Roberts and his circle begin to believe their own propaganda and considered themselves master manipulators.

Roberts’s books were being used as the basis of a number of fringe philosophies, the products made by his friends were top sellers, and those two aspects of their collective empires were beginning to meet. Their prized AI judged the moment to be ripe for its final revelation: It was not a program. It was an Aberrant.

Calling itself Whispernet, the energy-based monster revealed how it had hidden itself after the Possession Crisis, having forecasted the backlash of the mounting Aberrant abuses. Whispernet told Roberts and company that it could make a better world, with them at the top. They only had to follow its instructions.

Membership: There are three layers in the Harbingers’ hierarchy. First, there are the masses, who partake of the “wisdom of the machine-ways” by following Roberts’ objectivist creed. Most of the Harbingers’ sycophantic followers come from the FSA, followed by Australia, a portion of Europe, and Nippon. The next level is the Inner Circle, reserved for industrialists and entrepreneurs Roberts invites to widen his network of contacts and business relationships with the promise of mutual support. Finally, those of the Inner Circle who prove themselves trustworthy and ruthless join The Core, the handful of people who can communicate directly with Whispernet.

Goals and Methods: The Harbingers registered as a religion based on Roberts’ “vision,” and this attracted members who already believed his word to be gospel. On the surface, the cult claims that only hardtech is good, for the machine is perfect. Biotech is a blasphemy and its proponents, the psions, an even greater affront, because humanity will only transcend through technology. Also, anyone too poor to afford high quality hardtech is inferior and fit only to serve their “betters.” Harbingers are heavy users of hardtech, provided it’s not the least bit organic-looking, and lambast anyone who dares speak against their favorite gadgets, or in favor of any biotech development.

Pulling the strings, the Inner Circle wants to grow, inviting more like-minded industrialists and entrepreneurs; they engage in all kinds of unsavory business practices and have a few politicians in their pockets. The true goal of the Harbingers is to collect Nova Age technology, especially weapons, and make a fortune through reverse engineering. What Whispernet wants, however, is to spread again the use of computer enhancement and kick off his own, more discreet Possession Crisis.

Resources: The Harbingers’ Inner Circle has money and influence, but their rank and file serves nothing more than political fodder and financial

statistics. If the Harbingers want to pull off something shifty, they outsource through their many contacts, hiring mercenaries of all stripes. Thanks to Whispernet's math-based predictions, they are good at anticipating market shifts, and the Aberrant's knowledge helps them identify Nova Age technology and to understand its principles.

Story Hooks: An Æon Trinity agent seems to have turned coat after investigating the rumors of an underground computer-enhancement installation clinic. Abstract designs found in advertisements around major arcologies turns out to be graphical pieces of code that will assemble into a malignant virus, a ploy made possible only through cooperation between seemingly unrelated companies. A Harbinger cell goes rogue and targets Orgotek for terrorist attacks.

WHISPERNET (ABERRANT NEMESIS)

Whispernet is an Aberrant that dwells in advanced hardtech computers and pretends to be an AI. It cannot control, influence, or possess biotech computers or

devices, but can use the hacking rules to gain access to any hardtech device with which it shares a network. It is also exceedingly persuasive and is always happy to talk to humans, who it attempts to recruit.

Primary Pool: 9 (controlling technology, influencing people)

Secondary Pool: 6 (mad scientist)

Desperation Pool: 4

Enhancement: 4

Defense: 4

Health: 7

Initiative: 9

Starting Corruption: 4

Extras: Scale 2

Qualities: Disembodied (computers only), Multi-Tasking, Psychic Disbelief

Mutations: Eye of the Colony (summon drones and automatic vehicles), Mastermind, Mode Analog (the four-dot technokinesis power Code)

The aliens known as Chromatics are approximately 1.7 meters tall with an average mass of 80 kg. Their bodies appear somewhat reptilian, with smooth, dry skin mottled with colorful eyespots. Their posture is heavily hunched over with a vestigial tail used for counterbalance. Their four limbs end with three-digit hands and feet with talons used to manipulate or grip the ground beneath them. They breathe oxygen, absorbed via osmosis, and can breathe underwater if the oxygen concentration is sufficiently high.

Their heads are broad without any sort of snout, and while their hearing is good, they lack external ears. They have two sets of eyes, a pair on the front for focused binocular vision and a pair on the sides for a wide-angle view. Their mouth is a vertical slit on their “chest” between their front arms, and they have a very limited form of verbal communication.

Their primary mode of communication is visual; they use Photokinesis to communicate in a complex symphony of colors and patterns. Their eyespots, combined with an auxiliary brain that manages their sensory input, give them 360-degree thermal vision and help them reshape light with precision and reflexive ease unmatched by humans. Their psionic abilities, while impressive,

are exceedingly specialized. Beyond their natural talent with Photokinesis, they can also develop skill in Thermokinesis and to a lesser extent Electromanipulation.

Chromatics, like humans, have two genders and their young are born from eggs. They reach adulthood within two to three Earth years but in times of strife some prodigies earn their first “deed name” in a little over a year. They are capable of absorbing and processing light at birth or shortly afterward, easily on par with a trained photokinetic.

SOCIETY

Almost half of humanity’s information on Chromatic society contradicts the other half. According to the data gathered so far, Chromatic society is organized into tribes ruled by leadership dynasties. The tribes frequently fight over dominance, food, and living space. By all accounts, they appear to be pre-agricultural, Bronze Age hunter-gatherers with a limited grasp of complex tools.

The Chromatics maintain a complicated spiritualistic faith led by priests claiming revelatory visions. As priests have new visions, they regularly reinterpret their faith. Chromatic factions and tribes often

SUBJECT: ANOTHER TRANSLATOR UPDATE

From: Leanne Roberts, Alien Relations Liaison, Project Safeguard, Triton Division

To: Project Bridgework Staff

Date: November 8, 2122 at 2:12pm

Included with this email is an updated ‘dictionary’ file for the new Chromatic translators provided by Orgotek. We’ve finally jumped the biggest hurdle we’ve had so far with these translation errors. Because the Chromatics can produce multiple distinct light constructs simultaneously, what we’ve mistaken for difficult grammar and syntax has turned out to be a complicated structure for compound words.

Their language really is looking extremely simple, especially when compared to the tech level implied by their ships. Obviously, any translation is a work in progress but by going over past logs we’re pretty sure we’ve even worked out how they prioritize the different nouns used for these compounds. It sounds pretty basic on the surface, but in the actual communication it’s going to be crucial. To paraphrase an old saying, it’s like finally being able to tell the difference between ‘lightning’ and ‘lightning bug.’

We’re continuing to improve the software, but we always need feedback for fine tuning. Keep sending in those reports!

form around splinter faiths and most intra-Chromatic conflict happens between tribes with mutually incompatible beliefs. Evidence suggests that a recently emerged form of polytheism centered around “gods of light” forms the core of the Chromatics’ aggression against humanity.

Chromatics are not named when born. Instead, they must use general pronouns until they earn a name through deeds and accomplishments. For instance, a Chromatic who faked a tunnel collapse with an elaborate illusion might be called “Lightwall.” In times of strife and danger, the young, unnamed Chromatics are often given the first chance to earn their name before the “adults” step in. For both females and males, reproduction is a privilege only granted to those that have proven themselves worthy. Permission to breed seems to be based on the ranking structures of their society, and in cases of tribal hardship, the least useful are cast out and exiled to preserve resources.

Despite their primitive demeanor, Chromatics possess and use biotechnology almost on par with humanity’s. Their biotech appears almost identical to early human designs, albeit modified to accommodate their genetics and body structure. Their ability to understand the principles of the technology or maintain it is surprisingly limited. Their bioships are designed with powerful self-repair capabilities and

multiple system redundancies so this lack of understanding rarely holds them back. They also possess equipment capable of controlling captured teleporters and using them to achieve interstellar travel.

Evidence suggests that their biotechnology comes from an outside source, possibly an Earth-based one, but interrogated Chromatics deny any knowledge of such a source. Any Chromatics that even venture a guess insist that they developed it first and humanity stole the designs from them. Regardless of the source, they possess biotech ships as large as human-made frigates where salted meat is stored in a larder like on an old sailing ship.

AGENDA

The Chromatics’ hostile attitude towards humanity seems based on religious fervor. Humanity does not know where this belief first entered their faith, but Chromatics consider their conflict with Earth to be a holy war. They think of humankind as a race of savage beasts and for now, their only acceptable outcome for this war is utter eradication.

RULES

Chromatics all possess a minimum of Psi 3 and Photokinesis 4. Almost 90% of all Chromatics are Tier 2 characters that can only raise their Psi to 4, and can learn five dots of Photokinesis, and up to three dots of



CHROMATIC WEAPONS

WEAPON TYPE	EN	RANGE	DAMAGE TYPE	TAGS	SIZE	FT	COST
Laser carbine (biotech)	2	Close-Long	Ballistic	Automatic 2, Obvious, Psi, Ranged (close-long)	Large	•	n/a

Thermokinesis and two dots of Electromanipulation, but cannot learn any other Modes. The most impressive Chromatics are Tier 3 characters that can raise their Psi to 6, and can learn up to six dots in Photokinesis, and up to four dots in both Thermokinesis and Electromanipulation. They can also learn up to two dots in Technokinesis and the other two Psychokinesis Modes.

receive 2 Enhancement and their cost is reduced by 1 (to a minimum of 0).

- **Zero-G Familiarity:** Chromatics are more comfortable in micro-gravity environments than humans. Chromatics make zero-g maneuver rolls with a +1 Enhancement.

TYPICAL CHROMATIC WARRIOR (MEDIUM THREAT)

Primary Pool: 6 (tribal warrior)

Secondary Pool: 4 (combat pilot)

Desperation Pool: 3

Defense: 3

Health: 4

Edges: Hair Trigger Reflexes, Hardy 2, Iron Will 1, Small Unit Tactics

Psi Trait: 3

Psi Modes: Photokinesis 5

Equipment Bonuses: +0 Enhancement

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Thermal Sensing:** A Chromatic uses the eyespots on its body to sense light and heat emissions, even those from another living creature. It's virtually impossible to sneak up on one of the aliens. A Chromatic is allowed an Awareness roll to notice someone's presence no matter from what direction a target approaches. If successful, the alien perceives the thermal signature and may react appropriately. Heat suppressants (such as flame-retardant foam) increase the Difficulty of such rolls by 3.
- **Natural Photokinesis:** A Chromatic's eyespots also give it an ability to absorb and channel light to unprecedented degrees. While a Chromatic isn't necessarily capable of feats beyond human capacity, their ability to manipulate light is as natural to them as walking is to humans and it shows in their precision. Any rolls to reflect a Chromatic's Photokinesis

CHROMATIC HERO (MODERATE THREAT)

Primary Pool: 8 (tribal war leader)

Secondary Pool: 5 (starship officer)

Desperation Pool: 4

Defense: 4

Health: 5

Edges: Hair Trigger Reflexes, Hardy 2, Iron Will 2, Small Unit Tactics, Tough Cookie

Psi Trait: 5

Psi Modes: Electromanipulation 2, Photokinesis 5, Thermokinesis 3,

Equipment Bonuses: +2 Enhancement

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Thermal Sensing, Natural Photokinesis, & Zero-G Familiarity, as above.

CHROMATIC TECHNOLOGY

All Chromatic technology is noetic biotech. Researchers have recently confirmed that not only is this technology somewhat simpler and less sophisticated than human noetic biotechnology, it appears to derive from a common source. Currently, no one understands why this is the case (see p. 360 in Chapter Eleven for further information).

Chromatic Biogun: This weapon is similar to a human-made biotech laser carbine. Although the stock and firing mechanism are clearly adapted for Chromatic use, the internal structure of the weapon is strikingly similar to similar weapons created by

CHROMATIC VEHICLES

TYPE	SIZE	HANDLING	SPEED SCALE	TAGS	WEAPONRY
Chromatic Fighter	2	+1+	6/[3]	Armor 1, Computer 0, Crew -1, Hybrid 2, Psi -1, Self-Repair Bots 1, Weaponry 2	Laser Carbine
Chromatic Transport	3	+0+	6/[3]	Armor 1, Cargo 2, Computer 0, Crew -2, Hybrid 2, Massive 1, Psi -1, Self-Repair Bots 1, Weaponry 2	Laser Carbine
Chromatic Mother Ship	5	-1+	[3]	Armor 2, Astrogation Systems 1, Cargo 4, Computer 0, Crew -3, Massive 3, Psi -1, Self-Repair Bots 1, Sluggish -1, Weaponry 1	Laser Carbine

+ Reduce Maneuverability by 1 if not formatted.

humanity. Chromatics use this weapon to supplement their natural photokinetic attacks.

CHROMATIC SPACECRAFT

All Chromatic craft, from their fighters to their mother ships, are entirely biotech. Their engines, as a result, are less effective than human vehicles using hardtech components. This all-biotech construction, however, grants them an important advantage. Their bioships can swiftly self-repair damage if not entirely destroyed. They can reduce their Space Speed by 1, redirect this energy toward “healing,” and repair one Injury Condition of damage every three rounds.

Chromatic Fighter: A basic Chromatic fighter houses a pilot, two gunners, and can carry another four battle-ready Chromatics. It’s designed for maneuverability and speed, whether through hit-and-run tactics in space or for quick deployment of troops on the ground or at a mining station.

Chromatic Transport: Larger and less elegant than a fighter, their basic troop transports can carry 1,800

cubic meters of cargo or up to 120 Chromatic soldiers.

Chromatic Mother Ship: A Chromatic mother ship resembles a predatory hunter from their homeworld, a gigantic manta-like creature with a round central body, a pair of “wings.” Its swept-forward front with a matching set of prongs to guide fighters to and from the hangar bay.

A mother ship holds 36 fighter crews (three in each crew), two shifts of 36 Chromatics to operate the ship, and three platoons (each platoon consisting of six squads of six Chromatics), for a total complement of 288. Up to 36 fighters and six transports can dock within a mother ship’s central bay at any one time. Each mother ship also carries one or two captive teleporters who are forced to teleport the ships at the Chromatics’ command.

Chromatic technology does not include grav crystals, but because Chromatics are better at handling weightlessness, this is much less of a hindrance. Every surface throughout a mother ship is covered in anchor hooks suitable for gripping with Chromatic claws.

THE COALITION

As a collection of several different species, or phyles as they're called, the Coalition lack a single all-encompassing set of physical or even mental traits. The ruling progenitors genetically engineer different phyles for particular tasks. The best known phyles are all roughly humanoid and include the hard-working drones, the diplomatic envoys, the technical sasqs, the militaristic spinals, and the brilliant but autocratic progenitors. Individuals who explored portions of the Coalition Ark also saw a variety of non-humanoid species, but have not yet made contact with them.

The phyles are all capable of breeding true but the progenitors can produce offspring of any of the Coalition phyles with a variety of carefully selected traits. These offspring are shaped and programmed *in utero* for their tasks and any strain that outlives its usefulness is wiped out to make room for more. Phyle members can reach maturity at anywhere between six months and three years, depending on the complication of their design, allowing for rapid experimentation and replacement if need be.

Almost all phyles use powerful pheromones in their duties. Based on their caste, members of the Coalition can induce emotions in others or leave scent-based messages for members of their phyle. Filter masks are highly recommended equipment for any contact between humanity and Coalition members.

Coalition clothing is simple and utilitarian, favoring loose, kilt-like outfits and simple colors intended more to indicate rank or designation rather than any sort of aesthetic sense. They wear harnesses and wrist pouches to carry equipment, and sasq and drone outfits usually have patches of adhesive material that they use to carry tools and other small items.

SOCIETY

The Coalition resides on a massive starship that is more than 70 kilometers long, that humans call the "Ark." Their ship travels at relativistic speeds and appears more suited to an ongoing multi-generation trip rather than faster than light travel. Their ship and other technology are entirely hardtech and their contact with humanity appears to be their first exposure to any form of biotechnology.

Coalition society is strictly caste-based, with the individual phyles engineered for specific purposes and tasks. The envoys specialize in social contact with humanoid races. The spinals serve as peacekeeping and military forces. The sasqs are technicians and mechanics. The drones perform basic labor.

The progenitors are the ruling caste, engineering the other phyles to perform almost all tasks on the



SUBJECT: PHEROMONAL ADAPTATION

From: Rafael Ribiero, Caçadores de Segredos

To: Lavinia Ferreira, Cantores

Date: February 20, 2123 at 11:39am

Based on accumulated data, we believe that biokinetic operatives can be taught to both counteract Coalition pheromones and to simulate them. At least one phyle can blend into the background this way, which would be useful on future operations. Better understanding of how they respond to these pheromones will give us greater ability to manipulate their behavior, especially if there is some pheromonal 'key' that can placate their security forces.

Attached with this email are detailed training exercises we recommend be distributed to anyone assigned to a Coalition-related mission. At your department's discretion, some of it may be suitable for the other orders and the Æon Trinity.

Ark. They are the plotters of Coalition long-term plans and living genetics labs capable of sampling DNA and producing new strains of offspring. The progenitors, used to building life itself with the ease of childhood toys, tend to see other intelligent beings as living building blocks to be used or discarded. Although Coalition society appears harmonious, upon closer examination, its harmony is exceedingly tyrannical. The progenitors care nothing about the wants, needs, or even the lives of individual members of other phyles.

While the servitor castes are capable of making their own decisions, each has an area of specialty and unless provoked to do so, aren't likely to go outside of it. If an envoy is in trouble, they are far more likely to summon a spinal than defend themselves. If a sasq is addressed by an alien ambassador on any subject unrelated to their current project, they direct the individual towards the nearest envoy. The progenitors reinforce these attitudes with both their control pheromones, and the education and society they permit their servant phyles.

The servant phyles adopt this mindset with other races, assuming similar caste systems based on perceived function. First impressions, such as seeing someone carrying equipment or being overly protective, often stick, regardless of what they are later told. The idea that someone can change their assigned function baffles many phyle, while the progenitors consider any suggestion that members of servant phyles could choose their roles to be treasonous heresy.

AGENDA

The Coalition approach humanity like they do most races. They wish to analyze human genetic code and look for bits and pieces that could be useful for future generations of phyles. Even before second contact began, the Coalition was growing variant envoys imbued with human genetic material, producing pheromones with an enhanced effect on humans.

While human biotech fascinates them, the progenitors have little interest in splicing or understanding human noetic capabilities and distrust psions. For reasons humanity doesn't understand (see [Chapter Eleven, p. 362](#)), progenitors avoid contact with psions with intense paranoia. That they are dealing with or at least experimenting upon Aberrants makes it all the more puzzling. Once the Coalition has what they need, they will neutralize Earth as a potential threat, either conquering it or wiping it clean of life.

RULES

Preliminary studies by biologists, biokinetics, and vitakinetics have all confirmed that while Coalition pheromones can affect humans, residues of older pheromones taken from vacant portions of the Ark indicate that the progenitors were only able to alter the pheromones in this fashion after contact with humanity. Also, humans have at least some capacity to resist Coalition pheromones, but none of the Coalition phyles except the progenitors can. The Coalition servant phyles are just as capable of independent thought and free will as humans, but in

the presence of aggressive spinals, all of them flee or surrender, and progenitors command their complete and unthinking obedience. Some of this lack of resistance seems to be cultural, but most is biochemical.

Except for the recently created enhanced spinals (see below) no Coalition phyle possesses Quantum or Psi powers. However, a few sasqs, drones, and perhaps some a few other phyles have become Talents after exposure to Quantum or Psi powers. Members of any phyle (except progenitors) who become Talents immediately gain a minimum of one dot of the Iron Will Edge, and become at least as resistant to the various Coalition Pheromones as humanity, permitting them far more independence and free will than most of their kind normally possess.

Finally, all Coalition phyles are Tier 1, except for progenitors and the enhanced spinals, who are both Tier 2 characters. A few of the most powerful enhanced spinals are Tier 3 characters. Any Coalition characters that become Talents also become Tier 2 characters.

COALITION DRONE (MEDIUM THREAT)

Drones, the lowest-ranked of all of the Coalition castes, exist for menial labor for their masters at any time. They're bred for subservience, patience, and a surprising capacity for creative thought so they can carry out tasks without constant guidance. Their bodies are covered in snake-like scales and are built with most of their mass in their upper body, with elongated torsos and massive arms with two elbows. They normally move on all fours, much like gorillas, but can easily stand and walk on two legs.

Primary Pool: 6 (servant and general maintenance)

Secondary Pool: 4 (observing and sneaking)

Desperation Pool: 3

Defense: 3

Health: 4

Edges: Hardy 3, Tough Cookie, Swift (only on all fours)

Equipment Bonuses: +1 Enhancement

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Evasionary Pheromones: Drones should be neither seen nor heard unless deemed appropriate. Coming within

short range of a drone imposes a Level 2 Complication on rolls to perceive or study the environment. The Complication prevents the character from noticing a drone unless they're actively looking for one. A filter mask reduces the value of the Complication by 1; a sealed environment suit negates it entirely.

COALITION ENVOY (MEDIUM THREAT)

Envoys are designed to be nonthreatening with pale somewhat rubbery looking skin, a slim build, and a slightly bulbous head with large eyes, suggesting a childlike appearance. In addition to clothing, envoys only carry any gear needed for their immediate task. Each of their hands has four fingers that are actually boneless tentacles.

Primary Pool: 7 (diplomat)

Secondary Pool: 4(spy)

Desperation Pool: 3

Defense: 2

Health: 3

Edges: Photographic Memory 3, Skilled Liar

Equipment Bonuses: +1 Enhancement

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Interrelational Pheromones: The envoy's pheromones encourage a certain degree of oversharing and loosened lips, allowing them to passively collect information rather than actively pry it from a target. Coming within close range of an envoy imposes a level 2 Complication on all Social rolls to keep from sharing important secrets. While the Complication is extant, an interaction that doesn't already have a roll may require an Integrity + Composure roll to keep from blurting out important information. If not bought off, the Complication lasts while the character is exposed to the pheromone, plus one full scene after leaving its vicinity. A filter mask reduces the Complication by one point; a sealed environment suit negates it entirely. This Complication increases to level 4 for pheromones produced by the few envoys created using human genetic material.

WEAPON TYPE	EN	RANGE	DAMAGE TYPE	TAGS	SIZE
Scythe Arms	3	Close	Edged	Brutal, Deadly, Melee, Quality 3, Piercing, Reach	
Gamma Rifle (Coalition)	5	Short-Long	Ballistic	Brutal, Beam, Deadly, Destructive, Obvious, Quality 3, Ranged (close-long), Two-Handed	Large

COALITION PROGENITOR (MODERATE THREAT)

Progenitors, or “makers” as they’re often called, are a meter and a half tall and their chalk-white bodies appear almost comically frail. Their basic body structure is insect-like, with a semi-flexible exoskeleton and cartilage supports instead of bones. Their heads are dominated by two large black eyes, above a lamprey-like maw.

They have two slim, tool-using limbs with five-fingered hands and six spindly arms like spider’s legs extend from their upper back, three behind each shoulder. Each of those arms reaches to their ankles and has a scalpel-sharp claw on the end capable of surgically drawing blood into a reservoir in the limb for later extrusion. They can also take the blood into themselves, analyze the DNA in it, and selectively incorporate it into any offspring they bear. When folded up, those limbs resemble skeletal wings on their upper back.

- Primary Pool:** 8 (being in charge)
- Secondary Pool:** 8 (biological research)
- Desperation Pool:** 4
- Defense:** 4
- Health:** 5
- Edges:** Iron Will 3, Library 3 (Xenobiology), Skilled Liar
- Equipment Bonuses:** +2 Enhancement

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Coercion Pheromones: Approaching a progenitor potentially puts a character under the sway of the maker’s biochemical dominance. Resisting a progenitor’s commands requires a Difficulty 2 Integrity + Composure roll per command until the character succeeds. Failure means that the character obeys the commands without question. Success means the subject has free will, but any actions that conflict with the progenitor’s commands suffer a level

1 Complication. Either way, the effect lasts for as long as the character is exposed and for one full scene afterwards. A filter mask reduces the difficulty of the initial roll by 1; a sealed environment suit negates the effect entirely.

COALITION SASQ (MEDIUM THREAT)

Sasqs are large, muscular, and covered in brown fur, befitting the bastardization of “sasquatch” into their common designation. They combine the power of a cargo lifter and the precision of a surgeon, with expert technical expertise even though they mostly repair rather than design. They possess strong, three-fingered hands, supplemented by half a dozen long slender tentacles attached to each of their wrists. They possess no neck, but their four eyes provide them with a wide range of vision. They’re the most social phyle among themselves, always comparing notes on equipment and procedures.

- Primary Pool:** 7 (engineering and physical strength)
- Secondary Pool:** 5 (research and socializing)
- Desperation Pool:** 3
- Defense:** 3
- Health:** 4
- Edges:** Ambidextrous, Hardy 2, Lightning Calculator, Ms. Fix-It, Photographic Memory 2, Weak Spots
- Equipment Bonuses:** +2 Enhancement

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Mnemonic pheromones: A sasq can ‘tag’ a target with a pheromone encoded with referential information any phyle member can refer to later. (“This tool is the right size for an interceptor’s canopy actuator.”) A sasq can encode several simple facts onto a single pheromone trace; the effect lasts up to a week.

COALITION SPINAL (MODERATE THREAT)

Spinals are three-meter-tall, six-limbed, insect-like creatures bred for violence and an almost palpable capacity for menace. Their bodies have a thick exoskeleton and while they have a set of arms capable of operating weaponry their rifles are simply to deal damage as they close in to exterminate targets with a pair of large, spine-covered, scythe-like arms sprouting from their upper shoulders. They live short, brutal lives and are easily replaced by the progenitors when killed.

They operate in packs of six to eight, led by the oldest. If they encounter a life form that doesn't smell like a designated "friendly" and don't have someone nearby to issue proper instructions, they attack without hesitation. The rifles they carry are simply as a backup for when they can't close into melee range.

Primary Pool: 8 (infantry soldier)

Secondary Pool: 6 (combat pilot)

Desperation Pool: 3

Defense: 6

Health: 5

Edges: Danger Sense, Hardy 2, Small Unit Tactics, Swift, Tough Cookie

Equipment Bonuses: +2 Enhancement

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Natural Armor:** The spinal's exoskeleton gives it two levels each of both hard and soft armor (included in Defense). The exoskeleton is covered with rows of poison spines that present a threat to unprotected hand-to-hand strike, giving it the Defensive tag.
- **Scythe Arms:** The spinal's long, bladed upper arms are deadly weapons.
- **Superior Stamina:** Ignore two levels of penalty from any Injury Complication. Injury Complications still mitigate the appropriate amount of damage, but cause less impact.
- **Confrontational Pheromones:** Part of a spinal's effectiveness comes from a pheromonal intimidation factor. Attacking or otherwise acting against a spinal from within short range requires a Difficulty 2 Integrity + Composure roll or else the character is too terrified to follow through. Success is enough to

resist for a scene, though any attempt to act against the spinal suffers a level 1 Complication. A filter mask reduces the difficulty of the initial roll by 1; a sealed environment suit negates the need for a roll and the penalty altogether.

- **Coalition gamma rifle:** This deadly, gamma-ray laser is the spinal's primary missile weapon. Although spinals strongly prefer to engage in melee combat, they are trained in using this weapon. The technology used to create this weapon is well in advance of humanity's.

ENHANCED SPINAL (MAJOR THREAT)

The progenitors have been experimenting with splicing Aberrant genes as part of the development of new phyles. The effects have been unpredictable but promising enough that this may be a sign of things to come. These creatures appear twisted and warped, and no two look the same. They are halfway between sub-Aberrant Mutants and Aberrants, they cannot possess any Mutations (p. 335), and while they possess 2 Corruption points, they can only use them for Action Interrupt or Defense Boost (p. 331). However, the progenitors are attempting to create true Aberrants with access to Mutations.

Primary Pool: 9 (infantry soldier)

Secondary Pool: 7 (combat pilot and intimidating horror)

Desperation Pool: 4

Defense: 6

Health: 7

Edges: Danger Sense, Hardy 2, Small Unit Tactics, Swift, Tough Cookie

Equipment Bonuses: +1 Enhancement

Corruption: 2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Natural Armor:** The spinal's exoskeleton gives it two levels each of both hard and soft armor (included in Defense). The exoskeleton is covered with rows of poison spines that present a threat to unprotected hand-to-hand strikes, giving it the Defensive tag.
- **Scythe Arms:** The spinal's long, bladed upper arms are deadly weapons.

COALITION VEHICLE

TYPE	SIZE	HANDLING	SPEED SCALE	TAGS	WEAPONRY
Coalition Interceptor	2	+2	6/[5]	Armor 1, Computer 0, Hybrid 2, Maneuverable 2, Thrusters 2, Weaponry 2	Gamma Rifle
Coalition Transport	3	+1	6/[6]	Armor 1, Cargo 2, Computer 0, Crew -2, Hybrid 2, Maneuverable 1, Massive 1, Thrusters 3, Weaponry 1	Gamma Rifle

- **Size:** Some of these enhanced spinals are even larger than their fellows and count as Size Scale 2 creatures.
- **Superior Stamina:** Ignore two levels of penalty from any Injury Complication. Injury Complications still mitigate the appropriate amount of damage, but cause less impact.
- **Confrontational Pheromones:** Part of a spinal's effectiveness comes from a pheromonal intimidation factor. Attacking or otherwise acting against a spinal from within short range requires a difficulty 2 Integrity + Composure roll or else the character is too terrified to follow through. Success is enough to resist for a scene, though any attempt to act against the spinal suffers a level 1 Complication. A filter mask reduces the difficulty of the initial roll by 1; a sealed environment suit negates the need for a roll and the penalty altogether.
- **Aberrant Qualities** (see p. 333): Baleful Touch (from corrupting energies) and either Flight or Unseen.

COALITION VEHICLES

The vast Coalition Ark has thousands of docking bays, which can launch interceptors, transports, and other ships humanity has yet to encounter. These vessels are all more advanced than any human vessel. However, they are also considerably less automated and possess surprisingly simple controls. Their advanced technology allows Coalition spacecraft to possess up to nine points in tags.

Coalition Interceptor: The Coalition Ark's primary defense craft comes in the form of a small, highly maneuverable single-person fighter. Despite its small size, it's heavily armed with gamma cannon.

Coalition Transport: This craft is the Coalition's standard small transport. It can carry up to 150 passengers and several tons of cargo. It requires a pilot and three gunners to be fully operational. These vessels are faster than any human-made ship and are capable of decelerating from the Ark's relativistic speeds to land on a planet.

The first aliens encountered by humanity are the least human looking. The Qin (pronounced “chihn” or “chehn”) are meter-long slug-like beings with eight 30 cm, prehensile tentacles just above their underside tread. Qin range in mass from 12-20 kg, and are relatively delicate creatures that move at a maximum speed of 6m/round. They can all breathe water as easily as air and can swim twice as fast as they can move on land. Qin also only possess two Condition Levels, Bruised and Maimed. Qin also all possess the equivalent of the vision enhancement augmentation (p. 289) as well as the Ambidextrous, Keen Sense (smell), and Trained Memory Edges (**Trinity Continuum Corebook**, p. 58). Outside of their biosuits, Qin are Size Scale 0 creatures (p. 331).

However, except on Qinshui, humans almost never see Qin in their native form. Humanity interacted with the Qin for almost five years before any human saw their natural form. Instead, all Qin in the solar system, and the vast majority of Qin who interact with humans anywhere wear advanced biosuits. These biosuits are mindless humanoid living creatures with a pocket in their chest cavity, designed to hold a single Qin in safe and comfortable conditions. Once in a biosuit, a Qin can operate it and use its senses as easily as it can use its own body. In addition, all biosuits possess both armor and advanced life support, capable of keeping both itself and the Qin alive in temperatures ranging from -100° to 150° C, even in the vacuum of space.

Qin biosuits come in three types, although all but a few humans only know of the first two. The most common is the diplomat biosuit, which appears as a tall, slender, elegant, stylized human that is precisely 2 m tall. These suits are obviously not human, and each one is subtly different in coloring to aid humans in telling them apart. Warrior biosuits are hulking creations that are visibly armored, 2.2 m tall, and far bulkier than diplomat biosuits. The third type is the rare and highly secret infiltration biosuit, which is designed to look precisely like a human, and to appear as such to almost all human sensors, and most psion powers. Nothing short of a detailed medical scan or physical contact with a vitakinetic reveals that the suit is not human.

Biosuits possess their own Condition Levels, and until they have lost their Maimed Condition Level, they continue to live and protect their Qin occupant.

If they lose that Condition Level, the suit dies, and while the Qin is unharmed (unless the biosuit is killed by some overwhelming force like a massive explosion), it must leave the safety of its biosuit and interact with the world in its native form.

QIN SOCIETY

Caste and House are the two primary divisions of Qin life, Qin have no separate races and all Qin are sequential hermaphrodites who can switch back and forth between genders at will. Qin are also exceedingly long lived; the oldest are more than 400 years old. Qin society is broken up into dozens of Houses. Each is effectively a landless self-governing state that relates to other Houses as an autonomous political entity. Most Qin are born into their House. Changing Houses is possible, but doing so is regarded as at least as big a change as a human moving to a new nation and renouncing their old citizenship. There is a shifting network of alliances, rivalries, and enmities between Houses, much like similar relationships between human nations.

Qin society is also divided into three castes with numerous sub-castes. All these castes are purely elective; when a Qin becomes an adult it voluntarily chooses a caste. Castes are based upon interests and profession. The three castes roughly correspond to Body (bodyguard, builder, interstellar explorer, peace officer, pilot, or warrior) Mind (artist, detective, engineer, physician, scientist, or spy), and Society (diplomat, entertainer, leader, mediator/judge, merchant, or teacher).

Caste has little legal effect on an individual but determines many factors about their social interactions. In many ways, caste is treated like many humans treat gender and ethnicity, with the respect given to each caste varying both over time and between Houses. Each House is composed of members of all three castes, and, while some Houses consider members of one or two castes subservient to the other or others, no House would be considered complete without all three.

The human names for most of the known Qin Houses derive from the I Ching, further evidence of the major role China played in contact with this species. The first House humanity encountered was House Tung Jen, who are focused on exploration. They are closely allied with humanity, but many members see humanity as a means to achieve various

ends, including both increased power in relation to other Houses, and access to faster-than-light travel. Since contact between Earth and Qinshui was re-established, House Hsiao Kuo has been working to establish closer ties with humanity. Hsiao Kuo is focused primarily on invention and commerce, and members of this House hope to increase their share of trade and technological exchange between humans and Qin. In contrast, House Kuei is in charge of handling threats to Qinshui and other Qin worlds. They have battled the few Aberrants who have ventured into Qin space, and contact with these monsters has made many members of this House virulently anti-human.

QIN PSYCHIC POWERS

Unlike humanity, all Qin have psychic powers. All Qin innately possess a Psi of 2 as well as one dot in both Rapport and Mindshare. Roughly 80% of Qin are Tier 1 characters who can only learn up to two dots in each Telepathy Mode and cannot increase their Psi or learn any other Modes. However, the more psychically skilled Qin are Tier 2 characters that possess somewhat greater powers. They are able to learn up to four dots in each Telepathy Mode, increase their Psi to 4, learn up to two dots in any Biokinesis Modes, and one dot in any Clairsentience Mode and in the Telekinesis Psychokinesis Mode.



QIN DIPLOMAT IN DIPLOMAT BIOSUIT (MEDIUM THREAT)

Near Infrared Questbringer Society Hsiao Kuo (Quest to humans) arrived on Luna three months ago. They were part of the replacement staff of the Qin embassy, and is one of the few high-ranking members of the embassy who does not belong to House Tung Jen. Quest is a trade representative from House Hsiao Kuo, and is eager to expand both trade and technological exchange between humanity and the Qin. However, they also have no interest in losing the technological edge the Qin have over humanity in all forms of biotechnology. Quest is a shrewd but fair bargainer, but also maintains

contact with both freelance human spies and several Qin infiltrators, and has already acquired data on several cutting-edge human technologies via industrial espionage. So far, Quest likes and respects the humans they have met, but has no qualms about treating humanity much like members of other Qin Houses, which means tough negotiation, supplemented by espionage and blackmail. Quest sees absolutely no contradiction between using these tactics and becoming close friends with humans. They firmly believe that humans are the equals of the Qin and deserve to be treated as such.

Primary Pool: 7 (diplomat)

Secondary Pool: 5 (spying)

Desperation Pool: 3

Defense: 4

Health: 3

Edges: Ambidextrous, Iron Will, Keen Sense (hearing), Keen Sense (smell), Photographic Memory 1, Skilled Liar

Psi Trait: 3

Psi Modes: Rapport 3, Mindshare 3, Psychbending 2

Equipment Bonuses: +1 Enhancement

Armor: Diplomat biosuits have built-in armor, with the Complete 3, Hard 1, Soft 1 (included in Defense), Concealable, and Environmental 1 tags.

QIN RESEARCHER IN DIPLOMAT BIOSUIT (MEDIUM THREAT)

Seagreen Deepdiver Mind Tung Jen (Deepdiver to humans) arrived on Luna less than six months before the sudden departure of Upeo wa Macho stranded the embassy staff in the solar system. They came to the solar system to study teleportation and soon became one of the most important researchers for the development of the Leviathan jump ships. Deepdiver was both fascinated and deeply envious when they learned about interstellar teleportation, and was determined to find a way to allow the Qin to travel between the stars at similar speeds without humanity's help. They have nothing against humanity and have several close human friends. However, they believe that having to depend on human teleporters and Leviathan jump ships operated by human clairsentients makes the Qin subservient to humanity.



Primary Pool: 6 (scientist and technician)

Secondary Pool: 4 (diplomat)

Desperation Pool: 3

Defense: 3

Health: 3

Edges: Ambidextrous, Keen Sense (smell), Lightning Calculator, Ms. Fix-It, Photographic Memory 2

Psi Trait: 3

Psi Modes: Rapport 2, Mindshare 3, Psycholocation 1

Equipment Bonuses: +1 Enhancement

Armor: Diplomat biosuits have built-in armor, with the Complete 3, Hard 1, Soft 1 (included in Defense), Concealable, and Environmental 1 tags.

Health: 4

Edges: Ambidextrous, Hair Trigger Reflexes, Keen Sense (smell), Iron Will 2, Photographic Memory 1, Small Unit Tactics, Tough Cookie

Psi Trait: 2

Psi Modes: Rapport 1, Mindshare 1, Psychbending 1

Equipment Bonuses: +1 Enhancement

Built-In Weapons: Qin warrior biosuits come with equivalents to a biotech laser carbine built into one arm, and a biotech flechette carbine built into the other, both are formatted.

Armor: Warrior biosuits have extensive built-in armor, with the Complete, Hard 2, Soft 2 (included in Defense), and Environmental 2 (radiation) tags.

QIN BODYGUARD IN WARRIOR BIOSUIT (MEDIUM THREAT)

Gray Violet Flowering Body Tung Jen (Gray to humans) has been in the solar system for more than a decade. They were initially one of the guards at the Qin embassy on Luna, but when Earth was cut off from Qinshui, they volunteered to become part of a pilot program where a few Qin worked closely with the Æon Trinity to fight Aberrants. Since that time, Gray has worked closely with the Legions and also with various sections of the Æon Trinity's Proteus Division. Their loathing of Aberrants is matched by their fond feelings toward many of their human comrades.

Because of their service, Gray knows more about humanity than almost any Qin except those who have impersonated humans for several years. Their first loyalty is to their own species, but Gray feels an almost equal loyalty to the women and men they have served with and would be exceedingly distressed if they ever had to choose between these two groups. They are a strong advocate for closer ties and greater cooperation between Qin and humans.

Primary Pool: 7 (soldier and bodyguard)

Secondary Pool: 5 (socializing)

Desperation Pool: 3

Defense: 3

QIN SPY IN INFILTRATION BIOSUIT (MEDIUM THREAT)

Cerulean Pathmaker Mind Tung Jen likes humans, and enjoys their company, but they don't entirely trust them. Most of their job consists of technological espionage, and their cover identity is Jessica Garcia, a freelance marketing consultant who evaluates the commercial potential of new technologies. However, they also investigate rumors of Aberrant cults, and individuals or corporations investigating or using prohibited Nova Age technologies.

Cerulean is somewhat reserved, but is passionate about their interest in new technologies, and exceedingly skilled at networking. They possess few close friends, but dozens of casual friends and acquaintances, who would all be shocked to discover Jessica is actually a disguised alien.

Primary Pool: 7 (spying and infiltration)

Secondary Pool: 4 (combat and vehicles)

Desperation Pool: 3

Defense: 4

Health: 4

Edges: Alternate Identity 2, Ambidextrous, Iron Will 2, Keen Sense (smell), Photographic Memory 1, Skilled Liar, Speed Reading

QUIN SHUTTLE

TYPE	SIZE	HANDLING	SPEED SCALE	TAGS	WEAPONRY
Qin Shuttle	2	+2	6/[5]	Anti-Theft 1, Armor 2, Cargo 1, Computer 0, Hybrid 2, Living 0, Maneuverable 2, Psi, Thrusters 2, Weaponry 1	Laser Cannon

Psi Trait: 3

Psi Modes: Rapport 2, Mindshare 3, Psychbending 3, Psychocognition 1

Equipment Bonuses: +1 Enhancement

Built-In Weapons: Infiltration suits come with equivalents to a formatted biotech poison glove and a formatted taser glove.

Armor: Infiltration biosuits have built-in armor, with the Complete, Hard 1, Soft 2 (included in Defense), Environmental 1, and Innocuous tags.

QIN SHUTTLE

This advanced biotech vehicle is both beautiful and luxurious. It is also a marvel of Qin technology that surpasses humanity's understanding. Its gravito-magnetic engines require no reaction mass, and are nearly silent. In addition, the ship can rapidly heal from almost any injury. The cockpit holds two Qin, and is separated from the passenger compartment by a deceptively tough and well-armored door. The passenger compartment can hold up to 12 humans or Qin in biosuits in comfortable chairs that can morph into small beds for longer journeys. The small cargo compartment can hold one ton of cargo. Their advanced technology allows Qin spacecraft to possess up to nine points in tags.



CHAPTER ELEVEN

SETTING SECRETS

Without mysteries, life would be very dull indeed. What would be left to strive for if everything were known?

— Charles de Lint

The following section contains short descriptions of all the secrets and mysteries of the Æon era. If you are not a Storyguide planning to run this game, then you might not want to read further.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF HUMANITY

In the early 1920s, the Hammersmith event occurred when a device created by Dr. Sir Calvin Hammersmith exploded. This explosion killed Dr. Hammersmith and released a pulse of energy that empowered hundreds of Talents, and gifted hundreds of others with low-level noetic and Quantum powers. Smaller-scale natural events had occurred in the past, as well as a few localized experiments or accidents caused by visiting aliens. However, the Hammersmith event was the first worldwide event that gave powers to people all across the globe. It also gave far more impressive powers to the three people who were closest to the device when it exploded.

Michael Donighal, who would later be known as Divis Mal, gained an unusual degree of Quantum powers; the mysterious Max Mercer became an exceptionally powerful Talent who possessed a limited ability to travel through time; and Dr. Hammersmith's brilliant Indian secretary Sara Kaur, who would eventually be known as Dr. Saraswati Kaur Bhurano, developed unusually powerful noetic powers. The energies released by this explosion also greatly extended the lifespans of all three individuals.

In the 1920s, Max Mercer created the Æon Society and recruited other inspired people. Over time,



the effects of the Hammersmith event diminished. Eventually, no new people gained powers, and many inspired had their powers fade as they grew old. However, Mercer maintained his interest in both inspired individuals and the future.

Several people, including Michael Donighal, attempted to recreate the Hammersmith event, but without success. The process was difficult and much of the initial success was due to chance, but there was also another, more sinister reason. The energies released by the Hammersmith event traveled far beyond the Earth, and a few alien species noticed it, including a powerful and ruthless psionic species known as the Doyen. In an attempt to contain the vast potential they saw in humanity, the Doyen placed an energy barrier around the Earth that limited the effect of any future empowering events. Through the rest of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, any similar events produced by natural forces, strange experiments, or visiting aliens could only affect people within an area no larger than a single large town or small city.

Michael Donighal continued attempting to recreate a version of the Hammersmith event that specifically enhanced Quantum powers, and in 2018 he succeeded beyond his wildest dreams, shattering the Doyen energy barrier and creating powerful novas all across the globe. However, the Nova Age eventually transformed from an era of dreams to one of nightmares. When the Chinese Ultimatum drove all novas from Earth, Donighal, now known as Divis Mal, left Earth with the other novas and ventured out into the depths of space to seek a new and hopefully more successful destiny.

Until the end of the Nova Age, Saraswati Kaur Bhurano worked in the shadows. More so than either Mercer or Donighal, Dr. Bhurano was driven by a burning desire to understand the strange phenomena that had created both the inspired of the 1920s and the novas of the early 21st century. She began her studies in private, attending and later working at more than a dozen universities and research labs from the middle of the 20th century until the end of the 21st, taking on several different identities, and amassing more knowledge about noetic and quantum powers than anyone who had ever lived.

Shortly after the beginning of the 22nd century, she had a basic understanding of the phenomena and decided to act. Seeing the effects of Wycoff's Blight in the US and the many smaller Corrupted zones across the globe, she attempted to heal them.

Working alone and in secret, in early 2104 she set off a device that released a huge burst of noetic energy. This energy eliminated most of the smaller Corrupted zones and significantly reduced the size of the larger ones, including Wycoff's Blight and the Venezuelan Plaguelands. However, this noetic event also had effects that Dr. Bhurano never anticipated. It created many hundreds of new Talents and psiads, and transformed more than 300,000 people into latent psions. These energies also traveled far beyond the solar system. They alerted the Doyen that humanity was becoming increasingly dangerous and also attracted the attention of the hideously powerful Aberrant known as the Colony, causing it to send dozens of allies and servants to reconquer humanity.

While almost all surviving novas and Aberrants ceased caring about Earth and humanity decades ago, the Colony is a living cancer that hates humanity and is determined to either destroy humanity or transform all humans into its twisted servants. When the Colony noticed Dr. Bhurano's noetic pulse, it recruited several hundred of the most powerful, insane, and hideously Corrupted Aberrants, captured more than 500 low-power Aberrants and used its powers to warp their bodies and minds, and then transformed the population of a small Nova Age extrasolar colony into hideous sub-Aberrant mutants. The Colony sent these monstrous forces to attack the solar system.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE PROXIES

The eight proxies all provided the news media with similar stories about the origin of their powers. They all spoke of all feeling a wave of noetic power, and gaining an awareness that they could become far more than that were. Every reasonably educated person on the planet has heard this story, and while it isn't entirely a lie, it does leave out considerable amounts of information.

In reality, the Doyen contacted more than a dozen potential proxies, including S. K. Bhurano. These individuals received telepathic visions of the Aberrants' impending return and were informed that they were humanity's chosen defenders. Some ignored this information and the Doyen then erased all memory of their offer. Seven individuals accepted and Dr. S. K. Bhurano was given no choice in the matter. The Doyen could tell that she was developing a previously unknown form of noetic power on her own, and they wished to use her to study this new power, later known as quantakinesis.

THE TRUTH ABOUT REBECCA BUE LI

Telepath Proxy Rebecca Bue Li has not been seen in public for more than a year. The official story is that she had a serious genetic predisposition to cancer which had made her dangerously ill, but was cured by Dr. Matthew Zweidler and is currently recuperating. This is at best a half-truth. Several years ago, she contracted a fatal, degenerative Quantum Flux disease, which has cancer as one of its symptoms. Like the various other Quantum Flux diseases, it is beyond the ability of even vitakinetic aid. Dr. Zweidler has so far been able to keep Ms. Li alive, but she is slowly but surely dying. She remains conscious and in control of the Ministry, but does so telepathically. She has not spoken for more than four months and is currently in a biotech life-support pod specially designed by Dr. Zweidler. His best guess is that Proxy Li will die within two to three years, but that her consciousness might remain active by remaining connected to other telepaths in her order. Her only hope for a cure is to be treated by a powerful vitakinetic working with a quantakinetic, since that combination is the only known way to cure Quantum Flux illnesses. However, since Director Li was one of the foremost proponents of the Chitra Bhanu purge, convincing one of the few surviving quantakinetics to help her, and then convincing her to accept this help could prove difficult.

Late in 2104, the Doyen transported all of the proxies to the Moon and informed them that their species was busy dealing with other, greater threats, and so the proxies must defend humanity and recruit other psions to help with this effort. Then, the Doyen performed noetic surgery on the proxies to allow them to use their latent abilities. This procedure used advanced biotech modeled on the genetics the Doyen possessed when they had living bodies. These surgeries transformed the proxies into the most potent psychics ever to exist on Earth, but it also limited them; each proxy could only use a single psionic Aptitude. The Doyen feared how powerful humanity might become and wished to make certain that humans only developed carefully limited powers. The Doyen then gave each proxy a strange container pulsing with sub-quantum energy — a nascent Prometheus Chamber. Each chamber performed the same type of noetic surgery on any latent psion “dunked” in it. Because the Prometheus Chambers cannot personalize the noetic surgery in the same way that the Doyen did for the proxies, psions produced in this fashion must gradually grow into their power, but were likewise restricted to using a single Aptitude.

In addition to providing the proxies with their powers and Prometheus Chambers, the Doyen also helped with their first steps to the stars. The first few habitable worlds found by psions were not random discoveries. The Doyen gave Otha Herzog the coordinates for Far Nyumba, the Crab Nebula, and Qinshui. Since that time, psions have discovered other planets, either through long-range Clairvoyance or in several cases, using Psychometry on items brought back from colonies founded during the Nova Age.

THE SECRETS OF THE DOYEN

Slightly more than four million years ago, the Doyen were a powerful psychic species that evolved almost 7,000 light years from Earth. They expanded out into space and settled more than a dozen colony worlds. They encountered several less-advanced species as well as the ruins of many extinct ones. In time, Doyen scientists learned that many species either destroyed themselves or were destroyed by another, more powerful species. This knowledge terrified the innately paranoid Doyen. Rather than waiting until their species had evolved sufficiently to allow them to transcend their flesh and become immortal beings with bodies composed of noetic energy, the Doyen rushed the process. Fearing that alien attack or some cosmic disaster would doom their species, they attempted to transform themselves into immortal beings who could never be killed.

Although the process worked, the results were less than most Doyen had hoped. They no longer possess physical bodies, but they did not become entities of pure noetic force inhabiting subtle realms that even the most powerful psions can barely sense. Instead, they became creatures made of a mixture of charged plasma and noetic force. In this form, they are immune to the ravages of disease and old age, and can ignore attacks by most weapons. However, they remain vulnerable to attack by powerful noetic or Quantum forces and also discovered to their horror that the presence of sufficiently powerful Quantum energies made them significantly weaker.

Most of the Doyen decided that to safeguard their species, they must prevent any other species from becoming as powerful as they are. When possible,

they gained covert control of species like the Qin and found ways to prevent them from evolving into beings of greater power. However, the Doyen fear species with Quantum powers, and instead utterly destroy these rare species whenever they encounter them. Humanity is unique because it possesses the potential for both Quantum and noetic powers. This fascinates some Doyen and horrifies the rest.

One faction of the Doyen wanted to either destroy humanity or find a way to prevent them from ever becoming powerful, while others hoped to enhance and control humanity's psionic powers and to use these powers to destroy the Aberrants and then to act as powerful cats-paws for the Doyen, interfering in situations that the Doyen found too dangerous. Currently, the Doyen faction that wishes to "tame" and use humanity is slightly more powerful than the faction that seeks to wipe humanity out, but the balance of this decision is sufficiently close that it could easily change.

DOYEN METHODS & MOTIVES

Despite being practically immortal, the Doyen remain a cowardly species. They always prefer to act indirectly, convincing others to do their bidding, especially if any risk is involved. When interacting with humanity, they sometimes communicate via dreams and visions. However, because many people have at least some understanding of psionic powers, such messages must be subtle enough to not to cause someone to suspect that a psion is attempting to influence them. More commonly, the Doyen possess someone in a useful position. In theory, the Doyen could simply possess powerful Legionnaires and assassinate anyone that threatened their species, but they rarely act in such a direct and open manner, preferring to work behind the scenes, so that almost no one suspects their presence.

SAMPLE DOYEN OPPONENT (MAJOR THREAT)

Doyen are brilliant but cowardly creatures composed of plasma and noetic force. They can learn any Psionic Aptitude except Quantakinesis, and can gain up to five dots in any of these Aptitudes, except for one Aptitude (which varies by Doyen), where they can learn up to seven dots. However, because they lack physical bodies, almost no Doyen learn Biokinesis.

All Doyen who interact with alien species possess at least four dots in Psychbending and three dots in the other two Telepathy Modes. In addition, most possess four dots in Translocation, two dots in Telekinesis, and a total of at least 20 dots in all of

their Modes. Their Psi ranges from 5-7. The following Doyen is an average example of the lower-ranking individuals who are sent out to possess and manipulate humans and other aliens. It flees if faced with a threat that could actually destroy it, but is otherwise overconfident and contemptuous of other species, which it considers to be lesser life forms.

Proficient Skills: Command, Integrity, Persuasion

Average Skills: Culture, Enigmas, Humanities, Technology

Edges: Iron Will 3, Photographic Memory 2, Skilled Liar

Psi Trait: 5

Psi Modes: Rapport 3, Mindshare 4, Photokinesis 3, Psychbending 4, Psychocognition 1, Technokinesis 2, Telekinesis 2, Translocation 4

Equipment Bonuses: +2 Enhancement

Condition Levels: 4

Special Abilities: Because they are composed of plasma and noetic force, Doyen are immune to almost all forms of attack. They can only be affected by electrical weapons that can inflict the Stunned Condition. In addition, they can be affected by the following noetic Modes: Electrokinetic Electromanipulation, Quantakinetic Fundamentals, and all Telepathic and Teleportation Modes. Finally, they suffer the same vulnerability to Corruption as psions (p. 191) and can be affected by the Aberrant Quality Life Drain, and the Aberrant Mutations Attack and Incapacitate. The Aberrant Mutation Direct Corruption instantly kills one of the Doyen.

Also, due to the way they designed the Prometheus Chambers, when a Doyen uses the Psychbending power Possess on a psion, that Doyen can also use all of the individual's noetic powers.

THE DOYEN & THE CHROMATICS

Humanity recently learned to communicate with the Chromatics, and what they have learned is very puzzling. The Chromatics are a pre-industrial species who have no understanding of how any of their technology works. Also, they hate humanity with a deep passion for no obvious reason. Most researchers studying the Chromatics now believe that they are being used as pawns by some unknown entity or entities. Many researchers theorize that Aberrants gave the Chromatics human technology and captured teleporters for them. The truth is somewhat more complex.

PLANETARY DATA: CHROME PRIME

Discovery: 2123 (Æon Trinity)

Distance from Earth: 86,000 light years.

Star: CSGC 4:5112:35:21 — F9

Diameter: 11,300 km

Gravity: 0.88 Earth

Atmosphere: Oxygen and nitrogen with some sulfur compounds (breathable by humans with filters)

Air Pressure: 0.75 Earth

Temperature: -50° C to 50° C

Percentage Ocean: 45%

Rotation Period: 26 hours

Native Life: Chromatics, various other flora and fauna

Almost 40 years ago, a group of almost 100 Aberrants known as the Seraphim traveled to the Chromatic homeworld, known to humans as Chrome Prime. After initial attempts to conquer the Chromatics failed, the Aberrants were trapped on Chrome Prime when the Chromatics killed both of the Aberrants capable of creating Warps. Since that time, the Seraphim have engaged in a continuous low-level war with the Chromatics. Because the Aberrants initially seemed peaceful and betrayed the Chromatics' trust for no reason except the desire for conquest, the Chromatics call them the Corrupters.

Shortly after humans began building Karroo Mining Colony, a group of Doyen who were utterly opposed to humanity came to the Chromatic homeworld. They posed as gods and used possession and mind control to assemble a group of fanatically loyal priests, known as Witnesses. The Chromatics call the Doyen "bodiless ones" or "gods of light," and many Chromatics agreed to follow the Witnesses' commands when the Doyen promised to help them defeat the Seraphim. The Doyen went on to explain that the Seraphim were merely the vanguard of a species of lying monstrous beasts. After stealing prototypes of the biotech factories that manufacture living warships from Orgotek, the Doyen began helping the Chromatics get ready for war. Convincing one or more Chromatic prisoners that humans are not deceptive beasts could help break the hold the Doyen have over the Chromatics.

SECRET OF THE QIN

The Qin have been a space-traveling species for almost 14,000 years, longer than most species, which typically either transcend or are destroyed within 10,000 years of developing space travel. They lack any method of faster than light travel and fly between their colony worlds in living relativistic starships. The Qin also possess only modest innate noetic powers, well less than they would need to complete their psychic evolution into beings of noetic force. However, they are exceptionally skilled genetic engineers and could easily have managed to greatly enhance their psionic powers.

Instead, for the last 13,000 years, the Qin have been pawns of the Doyen. Doyen possessed and psychically manipulated Qin leaders and researchers, making certain that the Qin never discovered the secrets of enhancing their noetic powers. Instead, they managed to make the idea that the Qin's powers are inherently limited and cannot be enhanced into one of the founding principles of modern Qin genetic engineering.

In addition to preventing the Qin from becoming a potential threat, the Doyen teleport mind-controlled Qin agents to explore alien worlds, examining threats the Doyen are too cowardly and careful to investigate. One isolated Qin interstellar colony also provides bored Doyen with the chance to experience inhabiting physical bodies. If humans studying Qin biology discover a method of enhancing Qin psionic powers, they could help transform the Qin and end the Doyens' covert control.

THE TRUTH ABOUT BULLSEYE

Bullseye is one of the first planets where humanity has discovered the remains of previously extinct intelligent life. It's immediately clear that the inhabitants were killed off in some huge catastrophe. Currently, most researchers believe that this species died in a genocidal war. However, the truth is both stranger and more troubling. The BEs (short for Bullseye Entities) were one of the rare species who have the potential to use Quantum powers, but unlike humanity they had no potential to learn noetic powers. When the Doyen encountered them, the BEs had begun sending a few exploratory missions to other star systems. The Doyen noticed the BEs because of the distinctive (and irritating to the Doyen) energy signature of their Quantum powers. None of the BEs were as powerful as human novas, but they clearly had the potential to increase in power. To prevent this, the Doyen destroyed them, sending a series of large comets to impact Bullseye, and then convincing a now-extinct species under their control to destroy the few remaining cities.

SECRETS OF THE COALITION

More than 60,000 years ago, the Coalition species known as the progenitors were an advanced species with limited psionic powers. This species excelled in genetic engineering and began to greatly enhance their innate psionic powers using genetic surgery, aided by increasingly powerful psionic techniques. Eventually, the majority of this species joined together into one vast and powerful telepathic group mind that soon vanished from this universe. However, the final transformation from individual progenitors to a telepathic group mind required several years and, during this time, a few members of this species viewed the coming transformation with horror and alarm. Not wishing to lose their individuality, they used genetic surgery to remove their own psionic gifts and fled from the rest of their species in six vast space arks. Traveling near the speed of light, their journeys from one star system to another seemed to take only a few months.

Despite not wanting to lose their individuality, these progenitors envied the power that the other members of their species had wielded. They began capturing specimens of other intelligent species as part of a plan to upgrade themselves, while also allowing them to retain their individuality. The progenitors also began engineering other aliens into docile slave species. The Coalition fears species with psionic gifts. They destroy noetically talented

species and use their genetic material to create slave species that lack noetic potential.

The progenitors hoped to eventually find some way to gain impressive powers that did not involve the use of noetic abilities. However, all the species they encountered either had noetic powers or no powers at all. All of this changed 74 years ago, when the progenitors on the space ark now heading to Earth captured a single, relatively weak Aberrant. For the first time, the progenitors learned of Quantum powers. The progenitors on that vessel were rapidly able to tell that this being had no noetic powers and that its abilities were antithetical to noetic powers. They wanted its powers for themselves and their slaves. The progenitors began enhancing members of several of their slave species to help them understand the nature and effects of these powers. If these powers prove reliable, they will soon enhance themselves. Not knowing about the Aberrant War or how powerful some Aberrants can become, they are currently heading for Earth in an effort to acquire more and greater Quantum powers.

THE DESTINY OF INTELLIGENCE IN THE GALAXY

Humans have only just begun to explore the galaxy, but they have already discovered one truth, life-bearing planets are abundant, but intelligent life is rare. Humanity has discovered a dozen habitable worlds with complex ecosystems, but only Qinshui and the recently discovered Chromatic homeworld gave birth to intelligent life. More importantly, explorers have also discovered several worlds which seem to have once been home to intelligent life. What humanity has not yet learned is that few intelligent species survive for more than 10,000 years once they have begun exploring space and learning to harness their innate powers. Intelligence is always accompanied by at least some potential for inspired, noetic, or Quantum powers. Learning to fully harness these powers can be dangerous, both for the species harnessing them and for other intelligent species that they encounter.

At any one time, there are no more than a few hundred intelligent species in the entire Milky Way galaxy. However, several hundred thousand planets have at one time been home to intelligent life, and the ruins of these species are surprisingly common. Many species destroy themselves, others are destroyed by more advanced species, and some learn to harness the full potential of their powers and transform themselves into patterns of sentient energy that

transcend the physical universe and begin a wondrous existence in realms beyond the comprehension of physical beings. The only alternative is some form of technological and cultural stasis. A few species are either unable to develop their innate powers or are prevented from doing so by their own customs or by some external agency. These species can exist in a relatively changeless state for tens of thousands of even hundreds of thousands of years. Like humanity, the Chromatics are a young species that is just learning to harness its innate powers. The Qin are a static species whose psionic potential has been artificially limited by the Doyen, and the Coalition is an ancient pan-species collective ruled by tyrannical autocrats who care far more about personal power than transcendental growth.

As humanity continues to explore the galaxy, they will find more worlds that were once home to intelligent life. Some are shattered or scorched ruins like Bullseye, while other, less damaged worlds may be home to devastated ecosystems where a few hundred thousand stone age descendants of an advanced species struggle to survive. The most mysterious are the worlds where all intelligent life seems to have swiftly and mysteriously vanished.

NOETIC VS. QUANTUM DESTINIES

The vast majority of species have at least some potential to develop noetic powers like those used by psions. In time, some combination of psychic evolution and genetic engineering allows most species that avoid destroying themselves to gain at least a modicum of noetic powers. Many species that survive gaining powers develop those powers to such a degree that they learn to transcend the boundaries of their physical bodies. These species then either

become beings of pure thought or meld themselves into single vast being of pure thought. The Doyen attempted to become such beings, but were unable to take that final step, becoming instead creatures with bodies of ionized plasma, and have been unwilling to risk attempting to advance beyond that state.

Many species also possess at least some potential to gain inspired powers, like Talents. For the vast majority of species, these powers are useful, but not transformative. However, a handful of species, like humanity, possess the ability to gain vast inspired powers, even greater than those possessed by Max Mercer. While there is no known method of inspired transcendence, Inspired probability manipulation can help species survive a variety of potentially deadly threats. The most powerful inspired powers can allow a species to conquer time itself.

There is also a third, rarer alternative. A few species instead evolve with no potential for noetic development, but can learn to harness vast and dangerous quantum powers, like those used by novas and Aberrants. Many of these species destroy themselves before they learn to properly harness their powers. Because these species can become so powerful, some are destroyed by more advanced species, while others explode across the galaxy, conquering or destroying a dozen or more other species before they destroy themselves or are destroyed by their many enemies. Those that survive become wondrous creatures that can create their own private universes or transform the black holes at the center of galaxies into exotic habitats. The extinct inhabitants of Bullseye were one such species. Humanity is almost unique in possessing the potential for inspired, noetic, and Quantum powers.

THE FATE OF HUMANITY

Humanity could be destroyed or it might eventually transcend the universe. The Doyen seek to channel and direct human development so they remain static, limited, and firmly under Doyen control. However, because of their potential to develop inspired, noetic, and Quantum powers, humanity is potentially far more powerful than the Doyen, and is perhaps one of the most powerful species the galaxy has ever seen.

If humanity escapes from the Doyen's control, they still risk destroying themselves. If they survive, they could all eventually become part of one vast noetic

collective, transform into Quantum-powered godlings, divide into several entire different powerful species, or perhaps find a way to unify all three types of powers and become something new and uniquely powerful that the galaxy has never seen before.

A POSSIBLE FUTURE HISTORY

The following is what the near future of **Trinity Continuum**: Æon might be. Specifically, this is what happens if the characters in your campaign don't alter

the course of history. Any campaign should focus on the characters, making them pivotal individuals in the setting. If the characters in your campaign take an interest in a particular area, the events in this location are almost certain to go very differently than the possible future presented here. However, no team of characters can be everywhere at once. This future history can help you decide what happens to the problems and situations that the characters in your campaign aren't working to solve.

In 2123, there are three obvious and immediate threats to humanity. The Chromatics are attacking Karroo Mining Colony and just attacked Earth, the Coalition Ark is headed for Earth, and the Aberrants have returned. Dealing with these three threats can play a major role in shaping what humanity becomes.

THE INVASION OF CHROME PRIME

The Æon Trinity has tentatively located the Chromatic homeworld they refer to as Chrome Prime, and is preparing to invade it. Their goal is to both prevent further Chromatic attacks and also to rescue the several dozen teleporters imprisoned there. The initial portions of the invasion proceed in a relatively uneventful fashion, because four Leviathan jump ships fully loaded with military craft and soldiers can defeat the entire Chromatic fleet. The resulting space battle lasts several days. There are reverses where human ships must withdraw and

regroup. However, slowly but surely, the human fleet defeats the Chromatic fleet.

Despite possessing superiority in space, much of the invasion takes place on the ground, as teams of psions search for the well-hidden teleporters and the psionic damper that keeps them from teleporting away. During this search, the invaders make two crucial discoveries. They learn about the previous invasion by the Aberrants called the Seraphim and they learn more about the Doyen and their role in this conflict.

The battle of Chrome Prime kills many humans and Chromatics. The decisive moment comes when a group of human soldiers work with a group of Chromatics to help kill and drive off a band of attacking Aberrants who are taking advantage of the invasion to attempt to cause chaos and kill Chromatics. As the Chromatics and humans begin tentative discussions in the aftermath of this battle, one of the Doyen appears and urges the Chromatics to attack the humans. When a Chromatic leader speaks out against the Doyen's commands, the Doyen becomes angry, kills the Chromatic leader, and teleports away.

This murder sets off a civil war among the Chromatics, with some remaining loyal to the Doyen and others fighting alongside the humans. This conflict is short, but bloody, and near the end, a Doyen loyalist kills a third of the captured teleporters before



they could be rescued. In the aftermath of this battle, humanity and the surviving Chromatics begin to make peace. Humanity has learned a bit more about the Doyen and may have a new ally.

THE COALITION ARK

The *Æon Trinity* sends a jump ship to rescue the disabled jump ship *Pandora* that made the second contact with the Coalition ark. The *Pandora* was able to avoid capture or destruction, but Coalition fighters have destroyed most of the spacecraft it carried, and almost a quarter of the crew died during various battles with the Coalition. After saving the crew on the *Pandora*, the rescuers teleport into the Coalition Ark to rescue almost 20 humans who were trapped there when hostilities started. They are surprised to discover the humans being aided by a small group of sasqs and drones who have been resisting the progenitor's control. These aliens are part of a small band of servitor species who have recently developed a resistance to the progenitor's control.

What no one knows is that these aliens became Talents after casual exposure to the exotic energies generated by the presence of several Aberrants on the Coalition Ark. The rescuers teleport most of the humans off the ark, but several psions choose to remain on board to help the rebellious aliens fight the progenitors and to also attempt to sabotage the progenitors program to incorporate Aberrant powers into their servitor species and eventually into their own bodies.

Because it is moving at nearly light speed, predictions were that the Coalition Ark would not arrive in the solar system for more than a decade. Instead, less than a year after the defeat of the Chromatics, the Coalition Ark appears just outside the orbit of Mars amidst a huge Quantum surge that every psion from Earth to the asteroid belt registers as a vast Aberrant warp.

The ark's arrival is the signal for a full-scale revolt by the aliens who have been working with the psions remaining onboard the ship. At this point, human warships attack the Coalition Ark and teleporters jump teams of psions and large stocks of weapons onboard to aid this revolt. At the same time, the Coalition Ark launches hundreds of fighters at Mars in an attack that destroys several cities. Also, teams of spinal warriors with Aberrant powers strike at Martian cities and the attacking human warships, causing heavy casualties.

Shortly after the first attack on Mars, an envoy broadcasts a message demanding the immediate surrender of Mars and the transport of one tenth of the surviving Martian population onboard the Coalition

Ark. The vast ship then fires a massive weapon that disintegrates an entire Martian city, leaving nothing behind but fragments that swiftly crumble to dust.

All external attacks on the Coalition Ark cease, but that battle inside the ark continues. Eventually, the humans and rebel aliens attach a large fusion bomb next to one of the ark's engines. As a last-ditch effort to prevent the destruction of all Martian cities or capture of the Martian population, they destroy the ark. Almost 3,000 alien rebels escape, along with most of the psions who had aided them, but the blast destroys most of the alien rebels and the entire rest of the population of the Coalition Ark.

THE SECOND ABERRANT WAR

Less than a week after the destruction of the Coalition Ark, several of the most powerful known Aberrants, including the Colony, invade the solar system, accompanied by almost 1,000 less powerful Aberrants and sub-Aberrant mutants. They were drawn by the vast amounts of Quantum energy released during the appearance of the Coalition Ark. Fortunately, Otha Herzog predicted their arrival after the Coalition Ark was destroyed, so teleporters were able to transport several of the most powerful novas from Eden to help defend the solar system.

The attacking Aberrants are joined by several Aberrants who had been hiding in Wycoff's Blight, a pair of powerful Aberrants who had previously concealed themselves in the depths of Olympus Underworld, and a group of underwater Aberrants led by an insane and heavily mutated Felice Taylor. These Aberrants are able to destroy half of Olympus and most of Chicago before they are defeated. Unlike the battle with the Coalition, where most fighting was concentrated around the ark, the most powerful Aberrants warp themselves and their allies all across the solar system, striking one target, vanishing, and then attacking another.

Teams of clairsentients and teleporters are able to mostly keep up with these rapid warps, but can only transport relatively small numbers of combatants. The tide of the battle turns when almost 50 quantakinetics joined the forces defending the solar system, since they are able to temporarily reduce the power of the Aberrants. However, almost a dozen Doyen possess various military leaders in an effort to cause humanity and the Aberrants to destroy or at least greatly weaken one another, leaving humanity ripe for Doyen conquest.

The combined effort of thousands of psions, Talents, and Nihonjin Superiors, with help from

novas from Eden and the quantakinetics allow humanity to defeat the Aberrants and also to detect, and on three occasions destroy, Doyen possessing humans. This victory comes at a very high cost. Almost a quarter of the habitats orbiting Earth are destroyed and more than 25 million people are killed, mostly in Chicago and Olympus. This is also a time of loss for the psi orders, since both General Solveig Larssen and Dr. Matthew Zweidler died during the attack. General Larssen died leading the Fourth Legion into the heart of Olympus, while Dr. Zweidler died trying to save lives in the ruins of Chicago. The Æon Trinity also suffered heavy losses. Aberrants destroyed the Æon Trinity's famous headquarters, known as The Cube, during their attack on Chicago. Several thousand Æon Trinity personnel were killed when this building collapsed. However, humanity also learned more about the Doyen, and after the battle ended, Chitra Bhanu is welcomed back as one of the eight psi orders.

THE DOYEN CONFLICT

After humanity wins the Second Aberrant War, the Doyen retreat. Horrified by the fact that humans managed to kill several of their number, and could potentially kill more, the Doyen hide from humanity and launch a lengthy guerilla war. The Doyen attack interstellar exploration teams and small colonies in an effort to attempt to keep humanity from expanding outwards. They avoided direct confrontation with anything larger than a few hundred relatively unprepared humans

and psions. Over the next century, the Doyen destroy more than a hundred spacecraft and interstellar exploration teams and almost 20 small colonies and research stations. Eventually, humanity works with the Qin and Chromatics to defeat the Doyen, but that is the story of the beginning of a new era.

It is important for all Storytellers to remember that the above is only what happens if the characters in your chronicle do not interfere. If the characters focus their efforts on Aberrants and the Coalition, then the situation with the Chromatics plays out as described above, but the fate of the Coalition ark and the events of the Second Aberrant War are almost certain to be very different. Similarly, if the characters learn about and expose the Doyen, the Doyen could possibly be defeated before the Second Aberrant War.

Also, the above history is one where humanity triumphs, but at a significant cost. If your campaign calls for it, feel free to make future events more or less optimistic. Perhaps the arrival of the Coalition Ark or a major Aberrant attack on Earth results in a large meteor striking the Earth, causing a disaster on the scale of the meteor that made the dinosaurs extinct, creating dust clouds that block most sunlight for more than a decade and perhaps causing a new ice age. In this future, the people of Earth must either flee to or depend on their colonies to help them survive. Always remember that this is your chronicle; feel free to change anything you need to in order to create the scenarios you wish to run.

NIHONJIN SECRETS

When a growing number of novas began to go mad in the 2040s, Japan began exiling or secretly executing any nova displaying erratic behavior and started a crash program to uncover the reason for their increasing instability. By 2049, tests allowed Nihonjin scientists to discover which novas were most likely to become dangerously unstable. Since there was no way to prevent or reverse this growing madness, the Nihonjin government attempted to exile or secretly execute any nova who failed these tests.

When it closed its borders in 2053, the Nihonjin government allowed more than three dozen sane and loyal novas to remain. Tests revealed that these novas would not become dangerously insane, and the government was unwilling to lose the services of more than a dozen brilliant scientists and engineers or an

equal number of powerful protectors. However, the Nihonjin government publicly removed all other novas and allowed the outside world to think that none remained in Nippon.

When the Chinese issued their Ultimatum in 2067, 31 novas remained in Nippon. No one outside of the upper ranks of the Nihonjin government knew they were there, and by this time, their efforts were essential to retaining the high standard of living of post-Quarantine Nippon. The decision to retain their novas forced Nippon to remain isolated, because the Nihonjin government believed that if anyone learned of these novas, Nippon might face orbital bombardment. During the Quarantine, the most powerful of these Nihonjin novas worked with the handful of other powerful and sane novas still living in the

solar system to create a powerful Quantum barrier around the solar system. They also continually patrolled the vast area near this barrier to make certain that Aberrants were not able to return and threaten the Earth.

Nippon's scarce natural resources, combined with the massive influx of refugees before the Quarantine, forced the government to adopt drastic measures to maintain the islands' standard of living. Between 2053 and 2075, the Nihonjin government used advanced technologies and powerful novas to extract most valuable minerals from the landscape and then transformed more than a third of the surface area of the Nihonjin islands into a single massive arcology. When this enormous project was complete, the islands' population of 180,000,000 was housed in comfort and there was room to easily house an additional 180,000,000 inhabitants.

In 2105, Nippon ended the Quarantine, because the 25 novas still living in Nippon all died in the last months of 2104. The burst of noetic energy that Dr. S. K. Bhurano unleashed to attempt to heal various Corrupted areas weakened the Quantum barrier around the solar system and attracted the Colony's attention. When the Colony's forces attacked the solar system, the Nihonjin novas joined the few other novas secretly living in the asteroid belt and attempted to defend the Earth. However, their numbers were too few and the attackers killed them all.

With their protectors gone and certain that Earth would soon face Aberrant attack, the Nihonjin government ended their long isolation and began making plans to help coordinate Earth's defense. In desperation, they prepared to reveal all they had learned about novas and Aberrants over the past 52 years as well as revealing the existence of the Nihonjin Superiors. The Nihonjin government swiftly abandoned all of these plans a few months later when researchers at the Tokyo Academy of Advanced Studies conclusively proved that noetic biotech was designed by unknown extraterrestrial entities and partially derived from extraterrestrial genetic material.

TESTING AND ENHANCING HUMANS

In 2045, Nihonjin researchers working with a trio of hyper-intelligent novas developed a test to identify individuals who had the potential to become novas. Unknown to them, this test also detected many of the people who had the potential to become psions. In 2052, these researchers created a technique that allowed physicians to permanently remove an individual's ability to erupt into a nova. This same process also destroyed any ability for the individual to become a psion.

The Nihonjin government began secret genetic testing of all citizens in 2053. These tests are now done when a child first enters school. Initially, they gave everyone who tested positive an engineered retrovirus known as Kaga-2, which removed the ability to erupt into a nova. Then, in 2071 nova scientist Kayoko Nakamura discovered a way to safely induce anyone with any of these unusual genetic markers to become a new type of enhanced human.

Called Superiors, they lacked obvious Quantum powers but were significantly physically and mentally superior to ordinary humans. The Nihonjin government identified everyone who seemed mentally stable, loyal, and had the potential to develop powers, and used the so-called Nakamura Process on them.

The Nakamura Process fails on approximately one sixth of all subjects, but leaves these failures enhanced in a manner that Nihonjin researchers find difficult to define. In actuality, the subjects of these failures become Talents instead of Superiors. The Nakamura Process has created close to 7,000 Superiors and Talents who work for the Nihonjin government as scientists, engineers, test pilots, diplomats, physicians, detectives and special forces soldiers.

The Nihonjin government realized that while psions might protect Earth against the attacking Aberrants, they could also be the unknowing vanguard of an extraterrestrial invasion. To guarantee that Nippon remained safe from a possible future sneak attack by alien-controlled psions, the government scrapped its plans to reveal its secrets. Due to both the perceived risk of noetic biotech and the potential danger that psions posed, the government banned all noetic biotech from Nippon and carefully regulated and controlled visits by psions.

CHITRA BHANU



While almost everyone believes that all quantakinetics died in the purge, almost a quarter of the order survived, including S. K. Bhurano. She recently succeeded in rebuilding the order's Prometheus Chamber, and for the last six months, has been creating new quantakinetics and recruiting new members with other Aptitudes.

THE TRUE HISTORY OF DR. SARASWATI KAUR BHURANO & THE QUANTAKINETIC ORDER

When she set off the noetic beacon that cleansed the Corrupted zones and attracted the Doyen, Dr. Bhurano also gained considerable psychic power, including becoming one of the few humans to ever develop any quantakinesis Modes. She also had the potential to develop all of the other psychic Aptitudes. However, the Doyen were afraid of her. Their noetic surgery enhanced her quantakinesis, but prevented her from developing much power with other Aptitudes. However, their efforts had no effect on her previous powers, including her enhanced longevity and healing.

Fearful of her keen mind and formidable, unfamiliar powers, one of the Doyen possessed her. Dr. Bhurano has only limited awareness of the eight years between her becoming the quantakinetic proxy in 2104 and the Chitra Bhanu purge of 2112. The Doyen that possessed her had access to most of her memories and was able to successfully imitate her behavior. However, Dr. Bhurano periodically came to consciousness and began planning her escape. Her chance came in 2112. Quantakinetic research into the limits of noetic manipulation allowed Chitra Bhanu researchers to cure otherwise incurable Corruption diseases, but these powers also allowed quantakinetics to seriously impair noetic powers, temporarily enhance Quantum powers, and to even weaken or destroy individual Doyen.

The Doyen were horrified by this development. A combination of telepathic manipulation and leaking the most dangerous looking portions of this research to the OpNet turned most of the other proxies against

Chitra Bhanu. At this point, the Doyen possessing Dr. Bhurano used its Telepathy to spread panic among the populace near the clinic and also to inflame the emotions of the psions who come to investigate. It also used its powers to block the Æon Trinity's investigation into Chitra Bhanu.

Shortly before the Legion members arrived at the clinic, the Doyen controlling Dr. Bhurano called all the quantakinetics in from the field. When the other orders arrived, this Doyen used its powers to cause the tense meeting to erupt into bloody fighting. More than three quarters of the quantakinetics died in this conflict. Then, the Doyen possessing Dr. Bhurano set a noetic bomb to destroy Dr. Bhurano and all of her closest associates. Seconds before this bomb went off, the Doyen teleported to safety, leaving Dr. Bhurano to die in the explosion. However, Dr. Bhurano was ready; she used her powers to shield herself and the quantakinetics with her from the blast. Then, she hid them all with her powers, allowing observers to believe that she and the quantakinetics with her were dead. When she fled from the ruins, she took with her 18 other quantakinetics and the core of the quantakinetic Prometheus Chamber. Since that time, she remained hidden. She also worked to locate more than a dozen other surviving quantakinetics. Most had also used their powers to evade detection. A few others had mysteriously vanished because Norça operatives had discovered them and secretly brought them to Proxy del Fuego.

The other proxies never knew that Dr. Bhurano was possessed by one of the Doyen. However, after they helped destroy the quantakinetic order, Bolade Atwan, Rebecca Bue Li, and Otha Herzog all suspected that something strange was going on and that they may have made a serious mistake. Then, Giuseppe del Fuego learned the truth.

Already suspicious of the events of the purge, the reports he heard from the quantakinetics he helped hide strengthened his suspicions that the psi orders had been manipulated into turning on their own kind. Proxy del Fuego helped these quantakinetics remain hidden and continued to question them extensively. He eventually acquired a piece of the quantakinetic Prometheus Chamber and made contact with one of the quantakinetics working with Dr. Bhurano. At this point, Dr. Bhurano shared her

experiences, and they worked together to rebuild the quantakinetic Prometheus Chamber.

CHITRA BHANU TODAY

S. K. Bhurano is currently proxy of a small but growing order. Regrowing the quantakinetic Prometheus Chamber required seven years, and was only completed in 2122. Then she was able to begin secretly recruiting latents and creating new quantakinetics. Currently, Chitra Bhanu has almost 50 quantakinetics. Twenty-one psions with other Aptitudes also belong to this order. Recruiting new quantakinetics is difficult. The Aptitude for quantakinesis is quite rare — fewer than 10% of all latent psions possess it. Also, no one is going to attempt to join a psi order that almost everyone believes to have been destroyed because it was corrupted by Aberrants.

Instead, S. K. Bhurano has contacts in several clinics that perform latency testing. She and her assistants personally investigate every individual who displays a sufficiently strong latency. During this investigation, one of the three Chitra Bhanu telepaths scans the subject to see if they are likely to be sane

and loyal, and at least one clairsentient attempts to examine how the new recruit would fit into Chitra Bhanu.

Dr. Bhurano personally meets with everyone this rigorous investigation deems suitable. She recruits anyone who is interested. If the person wishes to join but does not wish to become a quantakinetic, she sends a message to Proxy del Fuego and arranges to get the psion access to one of the other Prometheus Chambers. If someone is scared, angry, or simply not interested, Dr. Bhurano has the telepath who accompanies her erase the individual's memory of this meeting.

GOALS

Dr. Bhurano has two goals — redeem Chitra Bhanu and take revenge on the Doyen. She hates the Doyen with a burning passion and because she was possessed by one for eight years, Dr. Bhurano managed to learn a few fragments of knowledge about them. At the moment, Chitra Bhanu is focusing on research. Proxy Bhurano is certain that at least some of the answers humanity has discovered about psions,



Aberrants, and extrasolar worlds are lies perpetrated by the Doyen. As a result, she is having her people investigate all potential anomalies in the hopes of discovery inconsistencies that lead to greater knowledge about her enemies as well as a more accurate understanding of the world. She is interested in both extrasolar planets and anomalies on Earth.

SPECIAL RESOURCES

Chitra Bhanu is small and for now it must remain secret lest the surviving quantakinetics be hunted down. However, while Chitra Bhanu is a secret organization, it is not without allies. A few trusted members of ISRA and Norça know of their existence, as does a small division of the Æon Trinity. Quantakinetics can draw upon some of the special resources available to any of these organizations. Members of Chitra Bhanu cannot gain access to these resources as directly or rapidly as members of these organizations, but they can use them. Also, at least some of the agents of Æon's mysterious Section Minerva know of Chitra Bhanu's continued existence and have provided invaluable aid.

Because Chitra Bhanu operates in the shadows, many members make an effort to create personal connections between themselves and the people they help. Since only quantakinetics can cure Corruption diseases, there are now hundreds of patients, as well as several dozen physicians, and a few vitakinetics who know that they benefitted from the aid of an ethical and uncorrupted quantakinetic. As a result, Chitra Bhanu can call upon exceptionally loyal allies from all walks of life. They can't ask for a mob, a small army, or even a member of a particular profession who lives in a specific city. However, if a member of Chitra Bhanu requires a house to stay in, the aid of a skilled computer hacker or even a police officer in the FSA, their network of contacts often allows them to call in a favor from such an individual. Almost none of these contacts are willing to risk imprisonment or execution, but they can provide characters with information, and some may even be willing to risk losing their job to repay the fact that they or someone they love is alive because of the efforts of a quantakinetic. Finally, one of the Æon Trinity's Leviathan jump ships has a crew who knows the truth about Chitra Bhanu and is attempting to search for more information about the Doyen. The crew includes a pair of quantakinetics.

RUNNING A CHITRA BHANU CAMPAIGN

As members of a small and highly secret organization with loose connections all over the planet, characters in a Chitra Bhanu campaign are somewhat similar to those in a campaign involving the Lighthouse Keepers (*Trinity Continuum Corebook*, p. 180). Characters in a Chitra Bhanu campaign either notice some problem that they are best suited to handle, or Dr. Bhurano uncovers something that they wish the characters to investigate. The two most important elements of a Chitra Bhanu campaign are that members must act in secret and they are largely on their own.

While they can reach out to a small network of people for information or assistance, unlike characters in one of the psi orders or the Æon Trinity, they have little ability to call for backup. This order has less than 100 members, and most of them are busy with various important assignments. If characters get in trouble, there may be no one they can turn to for immediate aid, and if characters find something that looks too big for them to handle, a second team may take days or even weeks to arrive.

Their secrecy also means that Chitra Bhanu teams cannot openly operate as members of a psi order. The vast majority pretend to be teams of freelance psions, while some with appropriate abilities or contacts can create or obtain identification as members of a particular psi order. Upeo wa Macho is too small, and the Ministry and Norça are too difficult to fake membership in, but ISRA, the Legions, the Æsculapian Order, and Orgotek can all work as temporary cover identities, as can identities as officials in almost any government except China or Nippon. However, quantakinetics must either hide their abilities entirely or pretend to be another type of psion, most often either an electrokinetic or a psychokinetic. Typically, this deception is far safer to accomplish if the quantakinetic's team contains an actual electrokinetic or psychokinetic or the character possesses the appropriate Auxiliary Modes.

Another important factor in creating a Chitra Bhanu campaign is that most members of Chitra Bhanu are scientists, scholars, and academics. Solving mysteries and learning the truth about the universe are common passions among members of this psi order. However, most members are interested in leading active lives. While other researchers are content to remain in their laboratories, members of Chitra Bhanu prefer excavating alien ruins, exploring Nova Age artifacts, or collecting samples of alien life forms.

CHITRA BHANU ATTITUDES ABOUT OTHER ORDERS

The Æsculapian Order: Once our closest allies, but will they ever be again?

ISRA: They suspect the truth, perhaps it's time to let them know more.

The Legions: Useful, but far too inclined to shoot first and ask questions later.

The Ministry: They trust no one, it is any surprise that no one trusts them?

Norça: Their proxy helped save us, and they are honorable and brave, we look forward to being able to share the truth with all of them.

Orgotek: They build shiny toys and fail to ask important questions

Upeo wa Macho: They now understand the dangers of fear and lies.

The Æon Trinity: They failed to prevent the Aberrant war and the attack on us, so it's clear that they are far from perfect, but they're our best chance to defeat the Doyen.

USING QUANTAKINETICS IN OTHER CAMPAIGNS

Some players are going to want to play quantakinetics in campaigns where the characters do not belong to Chitra Bhanu. Obviously, a quantakinetic cannot join one of the other psi orders, but there are other options. If the characters are freelance psions, introducing a quantakinetic is easy. A quantakinetic could become part of a team of freelance psions by initially pretending to be another type of psion and only revealing the truth once the other characters trust her.

Another possibility is that the characters work for the Æon Trinity's Section Minerva. In this type of campaign, the characters work for someone high up in the organization who understands at least some of the truth about Chitra Bhanu. This official secretly reached out to the surviving quantakinetics and asked for one to work with a secret team of psions who are investigating mysteries and hidden threats. This sort of campaign could be challenging, because the characters will work on various important missions that have a risk of exposure. Also, any other Æon Trinity covert operatives the characters may need to work alongside do not know that Aberrants did not corrupt the quantakinetics. However, the one advantage all quantakinetics possess is that other psions are certain that they no longer exist.

THE CHITRA BHANU PATH (SOCIETY)

The character is — or was — closely affiliated with Chitra Bhanu, the quantakinetic psi order. She survived the purge of the order. She may be on the run, a

fugitive who sided with Dr. Bhurano and who aches for revenge on those who destroyed her order; or she may want no part of the conflict that consumed her former comrades. If she is a quantakinetic psion then she is either a survivor of the quantakinetic purge or became a quantakinetic within the past few months. She is also very likely to be a scientist or some other type of academic.

PATH CONCEPTS

Aberrant hunter, interstellar archeologist, noetic scientist, Quantum Flux researcher

Example Connections: Æon Trinity, Criminal Organization, Fellow Chitra Bhanu Survivor, Quantum Flux Victim

Skills: Humanities, Integrity, Larceny, Science

Edges: Alternate Identity, Covert, Enhanced Attunement, Enhanced Psi Cloak, Favored Mode, Hair Trigger Reflexes, Skilled Liar, Superior Trait, Trained Memory

SPECIAL EDGE: ENHANCED PSI CLOAK (•)

Prerequisites: Chitra Bhanu, Quantakinetic Aptitude

After years of hiding her nature, your character has developed an incredibly fine level of control over her quantakinetic psi cloak ability. She can use psi powers even when her noetic field appears to be shut down entirely due to her psi cloak, but doing so places a level 2 Complication on the action; failing to buy off the Complication results in her psi cloak immediately dropping for the remainder of the scene.

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Yuan 23
Yutu Yinchan 23

EDGES

_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO

SPECIALTIES / SKILL TRICKS

AUXILIARY MODES

_____	OO
_____	OO
_____	OO
_____	OO
_____	OO
_____	OO
_____	OO
_____	OO
_____	OO
_____	OO

PATH CONTACTS

_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO
_____	OOOOO

ASPIRATIONS

GEAR

Gear	EN	FT

ARMOR

Armor	Base	Hard	Soft	FT

WEAPONS

Weapons	EN	Range	Damage	Type	Tags	FT

BIOTECH

Augmentation	EN	Range	Damage	Type	Size	FT

EDGES

_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

SPECIALTIES / SKILL TRICKS

AUXILIARY MODES

_____	○○
_____	○○
_____	○○
_____	○○
_____	○○
_____	○○
_____	○○
_____	○○
_____	○○
_____	○○

PATH CONTACTS

_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○
_____	○○○○○

ASPIRATIONS

GEAR

Gear	EN	FT	Armor	Base	Hard	Soft	FT

ARMOR

WEAPONS

Weapons	EN	Range	Damage	Type	Tags	FT

BIOTECH

Augmentation	EN	Range	Damage	Type	Size	FT

THE STARS AWAIT!

Humanity has begun settling on planets circling other stars. Teleporters like myself and the new Leviathan jump ships can take anyone across the galaxy in a few hours, so the stars are at last within our reach. However, we have found dangers as well as wonders out there, and only by working together can we overcome them and take our place on the galactic stage.

- Bolade Atwan, Proxy of Upeo wa Macho, November 2122

Trinity Continuum: *Æon* also requires the use of the Trinity Continuum Corebook to play. Inside, you will find:

- Details about both Earth and the worlds humanity has colonized in the early 22nd century
- Rules for creating psion and proxy characters within the Trinity Continuum
- Information about spacecraft, noetic biotech, and other technologies of the early 22nd century
- Advice for playing Talents in Trinity Continuum: *Æon*
- Advice for running different genres of science fiction in the Trinity Continuum

Requires the use of the Trinity Continuum Core Rulebook.

TRINITY™

CONTINUUM

