Shadows Over Sol

Beyond Human

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Tab Creations

SAGA MACHINE

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Introduction

When I was running my initial playtest campaign for **Shadows Over Sol**, there was a session where one of the PCs got eviscerated by this lumbering biological monster. I remember one of the other player characters—the engineer—dragging away her corpse so that "he could rebuild her—make her well again... right?"

At the time there was no supported mechanism in the rules for handling anything like cybernetic resurrection. Indeed, my thinking at the time was that this sort of circumventing death cheapened it, and undermined the fatalistic horror elements of the game. Nevertheless, this scenario got me thinking.

The science fiction genre is rife with examples of nonhuman or variant human characters. The original *Alien* movie features an android. The number of other franchises with similar characters is too numerous to count.

Returning again to the horror genre, the parallels between cybernetic resurrection and the classic story of Frankenstein are numerous. The more I thought about it, the more it occurred to me that there are a lot of narrative possibilities in exploring the horrific consequences of bending the edge of what it is to be human.

What you are reading now is in large part a result of the thinking that began with that scenario. Hopefully game masters will find the options presented here inspiring in their own games, and players will find the new options to be good, horrific fun.

Thorin Tabor
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GMs Beware

Some of the options in this book will significantly change the themes and feel of your **Shadows Over Sol** campaign. This is intentional, as it allows for the game to tackle a wider variety and range of science fiction concepts.

How would society change if fully-sentient AI became possible, or even common? What challenges would an android player character face in society? What more radical genelines have been created? Ultimately science fiction is about social and technological change. Questions like these are at the core of the genre, and many campaigns may be improved through the judicious introduction of these elements.

Some of the options in this book even challenge the basic assumptions of the **Shadows Over Sol** setting. GMs are advised to think about the possible campaign repercussions before introducing any of the options presented in this book.

Wake Up...

And there was light.

Anna woke up with a jolt, only her body didn't move beyond her eyelids reluctantly opening. Her heart was warming back up, and it took a few moments to transition to consciousness after the long sleep. Slowly she became aware of her surroundings.

She was still in her stasis pod, still strapped in place so that she wouldn't shift when the ship changed acceleration, still breathing. All was as it should be. What then had awoken her like that? Bad dreams don't force a person out of stasis.

Slowly, she coaxed some movement back into her heavy arms, and fumbling once or twice with the attempt, undid the straps attached to her shoulders. Detecting movement, the lid to the stasis pod slid open with a hiss that seemed as loud as a scream amid the silence, though in reality it was little louder than a whisper.

The ship jerked with a sudden change in acceleration. A mechanical hum began from elsewhere in the vessel.

What was this? Were they closer to their destination than they should be when awoken? Were they going into orbit around Callisto right now? They were supposed to have a full day after waking before they arrived at their destination—it would take that long for the full effects of stasis to wear off.

With great effort, Anna forced herself into a sitting position, still grasping the sides of the stasis pod for stability. She'd feel better when she'd have the chance to see Doctor Jafari. He was always so calming, so serene. She liked his face; it had a pleasant shape to it. He may not have been the best surgeon Mars has ever seen—a fact he often lamented—but he had a superb bedside manner. And he was close by: the next stasis pod over. He was probably as groggy as her, but within half an hour he ought to be mobile enough to procure something to soothe her nerves.

The lights to the room containing her stasis pod and two others—her group's cluster—had come on. That must be related to her waking up now. Outside the rest of the ship might still be dark, everything non-essential turned off to conserve energy. She looked around.

What the hell?!? Her eyes had finally come to focus on Doctor Jafari's stasis pod. Its sliding panel was ajar, partially open. The edge where the panel opens was scarred. Deep indentations had been made in the metal, as if the panel had been forcibly pried apart by a crowbar—or something else.

Frantically, her arms now mobile enough to flail clumsily, Anna pulled herself out of her stasis pod and tumbled dreamily in the microgravity. The myriad of needles and tubes snapped away from her body, disconnecting her from the pod. She pulled herself several meters along the wall with her arms, and propped herself up enough to peer into the pod of Doctor Jafari.

He was in there—or at least what was left of him.

She could see his shoulders, his hair, his arms. But not his soothing face. It was missing, as if it had been eaten away by some devouring predator, or maybe pried off in chunks with a blunt instrument. A twisted and half-missing chunk of cartilage was all that was left of his nose. Blood had bubbled outwards, crusting onto the inside of the stasis pod, and caking the side of his head. His arms had twisted upward to grasp the edges of the stasis pod's opening, then locked in place. She hadn't noticed that before. He must have been at least partially conscious when this happened, screaming out to his compatriots, not three meters away, but being in a deep sleep they were unable to respond.

Anna wretched, but for the last five months her body had been kept alive in a stasis pod, fed through tubes and needles. Her stomach had nothing to give. She tumbled backward and for a moment floated without resistance.

There was a little voice in the back of her mind whispering that something was wrong: Not Doctor Jafari's demise. Not the strange removal of his face. Not the marks on the stasis pod. Not even the sudden, unexpected change in acceleration. It was something else. She breathed.

The room didn't smell.

That was it! That's what was wrong! The room didn't smell. Whatever had done this to Doctor Jafari had done it recently enough that the body hadn't yet had time to begin to decay. Whatever it was, it was likely still around.

Anna grabbed ahold of another wall just in time. Carefully, she crawled over to the third and final stasis pod in the small room. This one belonged to Flores, her cluster's security personnel. Flores would know what to do. Except she wouldn't—not now. Her stasis pod had been pried open, just like Doctor Jafari's. The same indentations in the metal, the same lack of a face. Only Flores' death was more recent—unlike Doctor Jafari's, her blood hadn't had time to fully coagulate.

Both her companions were dead. Anna was alone.

The hum of machinery that had started when the ship changed acceleration had been blocked out by her unconscious mind as background noise. It suddenly ceased, once again drawing attention to the silence. There was nothing.

There was one other cluster of stasis pods on the ship—three other people—unaccounted for. Had they been awoken, like her? Were they dead like Jafari and Flores? Were they the killers?

Anna tried to push against the wall with her legs, but they weren't yet ready. Her knees buckled underneath her, and she skidded against another wall with a thump. In the silence, the sound of the collision seemed to echo throughout the ship.

The echo was followed by the sound of movement coming from outside the room—a sort of steady "clomp, clomp, clomp" like that of heavy footfalls, or a knocking on the floor. Her body froze in terror except for the continual racing of her heart. Anna waited, barely daring to breathe. The sound gradually stopped.

Ever-so-slowly, Anna crept across the room. She couldn't wait here forever. Sooner or later she'd either die of thirst, or whatever had killed Jafari and Flores would come for her. She needed something to defend herself with. But this was no armory, it was a stasis cluster. The room had been designed so that there were no loose objects to shift around in transit—and thus no loose objects to use as improvised weapons. Besides, she didn't yet have the strength to try to pry anything loose. Was she going to have to rely on her teeth and stasis-weakened fists?

No! She had spent a great deal of time before this mission preparing with Jafari and Flores. The three were supposed to work as a team when they got to Callisto. She knew what the other two were—had been—capable of. Flores had a knife implanted in her left arm. It was a subtle sort of weapon, designed to spring out when Flores twitched her wrist. Maybe 20cm of blade extended from above her hand. It was just the sort of implant one of those paranoid types—a security professional—would get.

There was one problem, though: The blade was still embedded in Flores' arm. Anna would either need to carry around Flores' corpse, or saw her arm off at the elbow, wielding the forearm and blade as one.

A grisly thought! But it was this or die. Steeling herself for what she had to do, Anna began to look around for Jafari's medical kit, and in it a bone saw.

Character Options

This chapter details a variety of basic character creation options that may be employed when making a character. These options include alternatives to stat, skill and gear assignment, as well as a variety of optional tables for quickly fleshing out a character's background. Additional geneline and subculture options are found in later chapters.

Point-Buy Character Creation

The default *Shadows Over Sol* character creation system is designed to be fast and easy, while at the same time providing ample room for character differentiation. There are 10,080 unique possible combinations from just the stat array alone!

Despite this, some GMs and players may still want a greater degree of flexibility when designing characters. Presented here is an optional "point buy" character creation method, which provides alternatives to the standard stat array, skill array and gear purchases used in the *Shadows Over Sol* character creation system. These options provide more flexibility than the default system, at the cost of somewhat increased complexity.

Point-Buy Stats

When character creation comes to the "Assign Stats" step, instead of assigning base stats from a fixed array, the player instead has a pool of 99 experiences that she can assign to the eight stats. These experiences increase the value of her stats exactly like assigning experiences during character advancement. There are two restrictions, however:

- Every stat must be assigned at least one experience.
- No stat can be raised above 7 in this way.

For ease of reference, below is a table indicating the total number of experiences required to reach each stat value. Any remaining experiences must then be assigned to stats and count towards the next stat increase, as normal.

Stat Value	Total Experience Cost
1	1
2	3
3	6
4	10
5	15
6	21
7	28

Point-Buy Skills

Once a player reaches the "Assign Skills" step of character creation, instead of assigning skill values from an array, she instead has 30 experiences to distribute among her skills. This works exactly as assigning experiences during character advancement, or like the "Point Buy Stats" step above. No skill may be raised above 3 in this way, and any remaining experiences must be assigned to skills, as usual.

Skill Value	Total Experience Cost
1	1
2	3
3	6

Point-Buy Gear

When the "Make Purchases" step of character creation is reached, rather than characters simply gaining a starting Wealth score and a number of purchases they can make, they instead gain a starting Wealth score and a number of purchase points. Every purchase a player makes in this step costs a number of purchase points equal to its cost rating. Once a character runs out of purchase points she can no longer purchase gear at character creation. Any unspent purchase points are lost. Purchasing gear with a cost rating above the character's Wealth rating lowers Wealth, as normal. A character still receives the standard gear from the "Starting Gear" step.

Example: Amelia is purchasing gear for her character. She is playing in a survival horror campaign, so her starting Wealth is 4 and she has 8 purchase points.

She opts to buy a microcomputer (cost 1) and a USD-383 "Wasp" light pistol (cost 6). Since the cost of the light pistol is higher than her Wealth, this purchase will lower her from Wealth 4 to Wealth 2, as usual. These two purchases also take 7 of her 8 purchase points. If she does not spend the final point she loses it. Additionally, she gains the standard package of starting gear, including AR glasses, a hand terminal, etc.

Horror Mode	Starting Wealth	Purchase Points
Survival Horror	4	8
Investigative Horror	6	18
Action Horror	8	32

Example Weaknesses

The **Shadows Over Sol** core rulebook defines four Weakness traits which characters may optionally take. These Weaknesses both add flavor to characters by giving them recognizable flaws, and allow players to gain back Edge when these flaws hinder the character in a significant way.

What the core rulebook does not do, however, is provide an extensive list of specifics which the Weaknesses can represent. Such a list can be found below.

Complications

Complications are weaknesses that manifest some sort of problem when a joker comes up for the player in a certain type of situation. A variety of example complications are given below, including the situation in which they occur, and the nature of the problem which manifests.

■ **Allergy:** This character has an allergy to a particular common substance. If a joker comes up while the character is in a location that may contain the substance, she has been exposed and the character has an allergic reaction. This incapacitates the character until she has time to recover, away from the substance. To model a less severe allergy, take an Impairment to all actions in the presence of the substance instead.

■ **Compulsive Behavior:** Experiencing a strong urge to take some behavior, the character regularly indulges. This could be compulsive gambling, drinking, sex or other behavior. When a joker comes up in the presence of this temptation she gains the Desire (indulge compulsion, severe) consequence.

■ **Delusion:** The character has a strong belief that is at odds with reality. Often these beliefs form elaborate conspiracy theories. When a joker comes up in play the belief interferes with her interpretation of events in some way. This can cause her to act seemingly irrational, penalizing her social actions by -4 among witnesses.

■ **Depression:** Depression can be a very serious problem. When a joker comes up, thereby causing the character to fail to achieve a goal personally significant to her, she faces a bout of depression. This gives her a -2 penalty to all actions for the next day.

■ **Doomed:** The character is dying, and it is only a matter of time until she expires. This could be due to a chronic illness, radiation exposure or other medical condition. Whenever a joker comes up on an Endurance-based action, make a tally mark next to this Weakness. Once the number of tally marks exceed the character's Endurance, she finally expires from her illness.

■ **Enemy:** Many people have enemies, but this character's enemy is particularly persistent. The first time in a session in which a joker comes up, the character's enemy may make an appearance and try to foil her in some way. This could be anything from telepresence interference with the character's plans, to direct physical confrontation.

- **Epilepsy:** This character suffers from epileptic fits. The first time in a scene in which a joker comes up for the character, she suffers a seizure. She takes a Stun (moderate) consequence. Certain triggers, such as rapidly flashing lights, may set off this weakness as well.

- **Fixation:** This weakness causes the character to fixate on her victory or failure to an irritating and hindering degree. When a joker comes up, the character fixates on the action that she just critically failed. This gives her the Fixation (subject of failure, severe) consequence. For example, if a joker came up while trying to get past an electronic lock, she would fixate on that lock for the duration of the consequence.

- **Flashbacks:** Flashbacks can be caused by traumatic experiences, mental illness or drug use. Whenever a joker comes up during a stressful event, the character experiences flashbacks. This can confuse and disorient her. She gains the Dazed (severe) consequence.

- **Insomniac:** Insomnia plagues the character, causing her to not sleep well. Anytime a joker comes up in play, the character does not sleep well later that night. This causes her not to count that night towards the purposes of natural healing, plus it does not count as sleep for the purposes of sleep deprivation.

- **Mistaken Identity:** There is someone else out there with whom the character is regularly mistaken. They could look alike, have a similar or same genetic composition or even simply be keyed to the same identity numbers in most corp computer systems. Regardless, when a joker comes up when going through an identity checkpoint or interacting with a new social group, the character's identity has been mistaken. She may have to suffer through the enemies, debt or complications taken on by her double.

- **Multiple Personality:** Mental illness causes the character to flip between two or more identities. Whenever a joker comes up for her in play, she switches between two of these identities. At the very least this gives her a -4 penalty to social actions for those who witness the switch, and it may result in other consequences.

- **Obligation:** The character has a significant obligation that she owes to an outside party—perhaps a large debt, corp loyalty or organizational membership. The first time in a session in which a joker comes up in play, some favor is called to which the character is obliged to accept.

- **Secret:** People will often to go great lengths to protect their most personal and hidden secrets. This character has one such secret. If a joker comes up while events from the character's past are under review, or subjects related to the secret are being observed, their character lets something slip, or evidence otherwise surfaces that hints at the character's secret. If the secret gets revealed, this Weakness is usually replaced with Complication (Wanted), Impairment (Stigmatized) or something else appropriate.

- **Wanted:** The character is wanted by a major corp, nation-state or other sizable organization. If a joker comes up when going through a security checkpoint, port or other area where a character's identity may be flagged, bounty hunters or other agents of the organization will show up to apprehend the character.

Disabilities

Disabilities have a class of actions which a character automatically fails at, due to some sort of severe incapability. A variety of example disabilities are given below.

- **Amnesia:** There is some period of the character's life which she simply cannot remember. She automatically fails all attempts to remember this part of her life. What was she doing? Why can she not remember this?
- **Anosmia:** The character lacks a functioning sense of smell. This also usually impairs the character's sense of taste as well. She automatically fails all actions which rely on her olfactory senses.
- **Blind:** The character is blind, perhaps as the result of an accident, illness, birth defect or injury. She automatically fails all actions which depend on sight. Gaining an implant which would restore her sense of sight removes this trait.
- **Cannot Swim:** Swimming is largely a learned skill—one which the

character never picked up. This is very common among those who grew up in microgravity, as many have never before experienced a large body of water. The character automatically fails all attempts to swim or otherwise navigate in deep water.

■ **Colorblind:** The character either cannot perceive color, or cannot distinguish several different colors from one another. Attempts to do this are automatically failed.

■ **Crippled:** While the character can walk, her legs do not function anywhere near a jog, let alone a run. She automatically fails all attempts to run, jump, jog or otherwise move quickly by foot.

■ **Deaf:** The character does not have a functioning sense of hearing. She automatically fails actions relying on this sense.

■ **Illiterate:** It's a sad fact that many children do not grow up with an adequate education. This is particularly true among the poor and neglected regions of Earth, or among the squatters in the tunnels of the Lunar and Martian colonies. Either way, this character never learned to read and automatically fails all attempts to do so.

■ **Innumerate:** Similar to being illiterate, but applying to numbers and arithmetic, this character never learned even basic math skills. She may be able to intuit basic addition using her fingers, but more than that is beyond her ability.

■ **Mute:** This weakness represents a character's inability to make intelligible vocal sounds or inability to speak a language. She fails all actions that depend on verbal speech.

■ **One-Armed:** Possessing only one arm, the character is completely incapable of performing actions which depend on the use of both hands, such as holding onto a rope while firing a gun. If she only possesses her off-hand she qualifies for a related Impairment weakness as well.

■ **Paraplegic:** The character is either missing her legs or her legs simply do not function. She is likely bound to a wheelchair, and automatically fails all actions which depend on the use of her legs. Gaining the agility to walk through cybernetic legs or other means removes this trait.

Impairments

Impairments are represented by penalties that a character faces when attempting a specified type of action. Usually this penalty is at -2. A variety of example impairments are given below.

■ **Absent-Minded:** Always absent-minded and spacey, the character is in a world of her own most of the time. This applies a -2 penalty to actions that require remaining alert or recalling past details.

■ **Bad Eyesight:** The character has a poor sense of vision. She takes a -2 penalty to actions that rely primarily on sight. This might be correctable with glasses or contacts, in which case the penalty does not apply, but neither does the character gain an edge for the Weakness being a signifi-

cant hindrance. Remove this weakness if the character gets corrective surgery or a sight-based implant.

- **Bothersome Habits:** Many people have some odious personal habits, and this character is one of them. This might be bad hygiene, a consistent and awful sense of humor or an aura of pure arrogance. Whatever its nature, the character takes a -2 penalty to all social actions where she might offend others.
- **Cowardice:** This character is not very brave at all, and is likely to run or freeze up when faced with danger. This gives a -2 penalty on all aggressive actions when faced with a spooky or dangerous situation. This penalty may also be applied to actions made to resist fear.
- **Dwarfism:** Dwarfism occurs as the result of a medical condition that causes slowed growth. It results in a person having an unusually short stature. This gives a -2 penalty to actions where being short would be a hindrance, and this penalty may also be applied to social actions where dwarfism would result in social stigma.
- **Dyslexia:** The character has a reading disorder, which can hinder their reading comprehension and slow down their reading speed. This applies a -2 penalty to any actions to understand what was read, convey concepts clearly in writing or to quickly comprehend what was written.
- **Fat:** Carrying around a lot of extra weight can be disadvantageous in many situations. This character is fat, and suffers a -2 penalty on actions made to run, walk lightly or squeeze herself into small spaces.
- **Gluttonous:** This character cannot control her appetite, and given the chance to overindulge, she always will. After being presented with an opportunity to overeat, she takes a -2 penalty to all actions made in the next hour due to discomfort from being overfull, and the resulting food coma.
- **Hard of Hearing:** The character has a poor sense of hearing. She takes a -2 penalty to actions that rely primarily on listening. This might be correctable with a hearing aid, in which case the penalty does not apply, but neither does the character gain an edge for the Weakness being a significant hindrance.
- **Honesty:** Some people just aren't able to lie very well. Maybe something in their face gives them away, or maybe deep down inside they simply feel guilty. This character takes a -2 penalty on all attempts to deceive, lie or cover up the truth.
- **Intolerance:** Two centuries in the future intolerance still sometimes rears its ugly head. This character is one of the intolerant ones. Perhaps she is biased against some particular subculture, corp or religion. She takes a -2 penalty to all social actions made to interact with this group, and may receive this penalty in situations where her intolerant beliefs offend others.
- **Lecherous:** Distractions of a sexual nature are many and varied, and this character is particularly lured by them. She takes a -2 penalty on all actions to resist seduction or where

her lecherous nature may serve as a significant distraction.

- **Limp:** This character has a limp due to an injury or medical condition. She takes a -2 penalty to all actions made to walk or run quickly.
- **Phobia:** Irrational fear can be paralyzing. This character has something of which she is uncontrollably and irrationally afraid. She takes a -2 penalty to all actions made in the presence of the subject of her phobia.
- **Scrawny:** The physique of this character is stick-thin and lacking significant bulk or muscle. She takes a -2 penalty to any action which would resist moving her around, such as actions to resist being knocked down, grappled or blown over.
- **Stigmatized:** Many social stigmas exist, and this character is subject to one of them. It could be coming from a marginalized group, a history of past criminal behavior or a bad reputation. Regardless of its nature, she takes a -2 penalty to social actions due to this stigma.
- **Stutter:** The character has a serious stutter, which gets in the way of speeches and other communication. She takes a -2 penalty to actions that require significant amounts of verbal communication.
- **Suspicion:** This character is suspicious of everyone's motives—even those of her own allies, fearing that she will suffer misfortune at the hands of another. She takes a -2 penalty to any group effort action, regardless of whether she is acting as primary or secondary.

- **Ugly:** Some people are beautiful to simply gaze upon. This character is quite the opposite. This could be a natural unattractiveness or the result of some disfiguring injury. Regardless, she takes a -2 penalty to social actions where standard of beauty would apply.

Shortcomings

Shortcomings are represented by a penalty to one of a character's derived scores. Usually this penalty is at -2. A variety of example shortcomings are given below.

- **Bad Reaction Time:** The character does not have quick reflexes when it comes time to avoid attacks. This applies a -2 penalty to Defense.
- **Clueless:** Where others might scrape and draw on every ounce of internal strength to gain an edge, this character is clueless and lacks the inclination to do so. This applies a -2 penalty to the character's Edge score.
- **Combat Shock:** The character finds it difficult to bring herself to hurt others, especially when it's up close and personal. This applies a ♠-6/♥-4/♦-2/♣-1 penalty to all damage dealt by the character in melee.
- **Crippling Debt:** While the character may have a well-paying job, she may also have some pretty large debts that eat much of the income she would otherwise use to live. This reduces her Lifestyle score by -2. She must continue to make payments each month as if her Lifestyle score were its normal value, however.

- **Frail:** The character's constitution and grasp on life is more fragile than one might expect, perhaps due to a childhood illness or too much time spent in bone-degrading micro-gravity. This applies a -2 penalty to Wound threshold.
- **Low Pain Threshold:** It doesn't take much for the character to truly feel pain. This applies a -2 penalty to the character's Shock threshold.
- **Poor:** Unfortunate economic circumstances have brought the character to a point where she is vastly poorer than most in the twenty-third century. This reduces her starting Wealth by 2, after any purchases are made. It is recommended that she cannot exceed Wealth 3 unless she voluntarily removes this trait.
- **Slow:** When the time comes that she needs to act quickly, this character just cannot muster a reasonable speed. Perhaps she has coordination issues from a medical condition or being extremely elderly. Whatever the cause, she normally gains only 2 AP each round of combat instead of 3. *Note:* This is not a -2 penalty as usually suggested for the Shortcoming trait; nevertheless, this penalty is very significant.
- **Weakling:** The character finds herself unable to lift as much gear as she might otherwise be expected. Perhaps she has a condition that restricts the mobility of her arms or a delicate spinal condition. Regardless of the physiological cause, this applies a -2 penalty to her Encumbrance threshold.

Background Generator

Background details and motivations are the spark that bring characters to life. Sometimes a player has a great idea that she can run with; other times players may need a little help. This section provides a number of tables for generating a character's background—just draw a card and look up the result on each table.

All of these tables are optional, and players shouldn't feel compelled to use every result they receive; the results are there to provide inspiration rather than dictate requirements.

Physical Attributes

The below tables can be used to quickly generate a few physical features possessed by the character.

Card	Height	Weight	Age
Ace	147 cm or below	Height ÷ 1.5 kg or more	Minor
2	152 cm	Height ÷ 1.6 kg	18 – 22
3	157 cm	Height ÷ 1.7 kg	23 – 27
4	162 cm	Height ÷ 1.8 kg	28 – 32
5	167 cm	Height ÷ 1.9 kg	33 – 37
6	172 cm	Height ÷ 2.0 kg	38 – 42
7	177 cm	Height ÷ 2.1 kg	43 – 47
8	182 cm	Height ÷ 2.2 kg	48 – 52
9	187 cm	Height ÷ 2.3 kg	53 – 57
10	192 cm	Height ÷ 2.4 kg	58 – 62
Jack	197 cm	Height ÷ 2.5 kg	63 – 67
Queen	202 cm	Height ÷ 2.6 kg	68 – 72
King	209 cm	Height ÷ 2.7 kg	73 – 77
Joker	214 cm or above	Height ÷ 2.8 kg or below	78 or older

Card	Hair	Eyes	Skin
Ace – 2	Red	Blue	Dark Brown
3 – 4	Blonde	Green	Light Brown
5 – 6	Light Brown	Hazel	Pale
7 – 8	Dark Brown	Gray	Olive
9 – 10	Curly Black	Black	Tanned
J – K	Straight Black	Brown	Ruddy
Joker	Unusual genetic edit (Blue, Green, Purple, etc.)	Unusual genetic edit (Purple, Red, Yellow, etc.)	Unusual genetic edit (Blue, Green, Orange, etc.)

Childhood

Below is a table of childhood experiences. A player may optionally pick a result or draw a card to determine a result on the table.

Card	Childhood
Ace	**Low Gravity Growth:** You grew up in a low gravity environment, making you taller and thinner than you would otherwise be. Furthermore, you feel uncomfortable in "normal" gravity environments.
2	**Friend:** You had a very close friend growing up who had a major influence over your life. Perhaps you are still friends, or perhaps this turned to enmity.
3	**Tunnel Childhood:** You grew up in a colony or settlement comprised primarily of tunnels. You spent much time wandering around these tunnels growing up, and still feel most at home in such environments.
4	**Pet:** Growing up you had a particularly memorable family pet. This pet may have been an unusual species such as an uplift, or it may simply have colored you for life as a "cat person," "dog person" or similar.
5	**Moved Frequently:** Your family moved so frequently as a child that you never really grew attached to anyplace or most anyone. You still feel restless when you remain in any one place for too long.
6	**Subcultural Change:** Your family switched subcultures when you were a child leaving you familiar with both, but perhaps not fully part of either.
7	**Fall From Power:** Your family initially was wealthy or influential, but a scandal or other event forced them down the social ladder. The shadow of this scandal may still hang over your head.
8	**Net Isolation:** You grew up in a situation with limited net access, either because of family beliefs, or because the environment had restricted bandwidth. As a consequence you are more likely to rely on your own knowledge.
9	**Net Lifeline:** There were no other children near your age around growing up, and so you had to rely on the net as your social lifeline. You may still have more online friends than meatspace friends.
10	**Illness:** An illness as a child took its toll on you. Perhaps it left you scarred or deformed in some way. This would be a good justification for a weakness.
Jack	**Many Parents:** You had many parents. Perhaps they were part of a group marriage, or you were in a cultural situation where several families collectively took care of the children.
Queen	**Orphaned:** You lost your parents as a child. Perhaps you were then raised by someone else in the subculture, distant family or left on the streets.
King	**Many Siblings:** You had numerous siblings, and always had other children around. This has lead you to either prize your alone time, or to avoid being alone at all costs.
Joker	**Clone/Geneline:** You are either a clone of someone else or have a very peculiar geneline variant. This has likely overshadowed your development.

Adolescence

The following are events that may have shaped a character's adolescence. This may be useful for fleshing out a character's backstory. Pick a result or draw a card.

Card	Adolescence
Ace	**Pregnancy:** A pregnancy caused a sudden change during your adolescence, as you had to step into a role of responsibility. Perhaps it involved you, a partner, a close sibling or even parent.
2	**Subcultural Switch:** You switched subcultures during your adolescence. Perhaps this was to rebel against family or maybe your family made the switch.
3	**Runaway:** You ran away from home and this changed the direction of your life. Maybe you stowed away on a ship bound for space, or maybe you picked up unusual skills during your time away from your family.
4	**Legal Troubles:** You got into a spot of trouble with the authorities. Maybe you started running with a bad crowd, or maybe it was all a misunderstanding.
5	**Abandoned:** In your adolescence you were abandoned. Perhaps your family left you when they moved or switched subcultures. Maybe you were lost during a major conflict or natural disaster and never found your family again.
6	**Gravity Change:** A move during your adolescence led to a major gravity change. This likely caused hardship, as you either had to adapt to heavier gravity on limbs not yet equipped for it, or had to adjust to the effects of microgravity.
7	**Religion:** Not every religious individual is a Serv. Maybe you were thinking of joining the clergy, or maybe you simply went through a devout phase.
8	**Witness:** As an adolescent you witnessed a violent crime and quickly had to go into hiding, otherwise the criminal who committed the crime would hunt down you or your family.
9	**Early Indenture:** You got into a great deal of debt and were forced into a contract of indenture to pay it off. Perhaps you eventually paid off the debt, perhaps you ran away from the contract or perhaps you're still paying it off.
10	**Mentorship:** Someone during your adolescence acted as a particularly important mentor or teacher. Maybe this was to teach you valuable technical skills or maybe this was more of a personal mentorship.
Jack	**Marriage:** You got married very early on. Maybe you were pressured into this marriage by family, or maybe your family objected. Perhaps this ended in disaster, or perhaps you are still happily married after all these years.
Queen	**Moving Up:** You or your family experiences a significant leap upward in wealth or power during your adolescence. Maybe you got lucky with a good corp job, blundered into some fame or inherited a windfall from distant family.
King	**Disfigurement:** An accident during your adolescence left you disfigured and scarred. This likely has had an effect on your social status or work ability.
Joker	**Missing Years:** For some reason you have a large gap in your memory during your adolescence. You have no idea what happened to you.

Education & Training

Most people pick up many of their skills through either school or employment. Pick or draw a card on the table below to determine an event related to your training.

Card	Education & Training
Ace	**Nepotism:** You got into your first real career through good old-fashioned nepotism. It might even be some fancy corp work. *Suggested skills:* Deception, Socialize.
2	**Miner:** One of the largest industries in space is mining. Much of this is automated, but humans are still needed to repair and oversee the machines, as well as to survey new asteroids. *Suggested skills:* Mechanic, Ordnance.
3	**Salesperson:** A great deal of money can be made peddling various wares to the masses. You entered the workforce as one of the frontline sales force. *Suggested skills:* Empathy, Persuade.
4	**Grunt:** Manual labor is still needed where automation is either insufficient or not possible. Hiring manual laborers is also trendy among the Former and Expret subcultures—a sign of wealth. *Suggested skills:* Athletics, Vehicles.
5	**Military:** Small-scale military conflicts are a staple of corp dealings and cultural clashes in the twenty-third century. Specializing in this also pays comparatively well. *Suggested skills:* Guns, Stealth.
6	**Technical Training:** Technical skills are much in demand, and a job is almost always available to those with the right abilities. *Suggested skills:* Crafts, Engineer.
7	**Medical:** People are always slowly breaking down, and as the human population grows, so too does the call for medics. *Suggested skills:* Bio-Sci, Medic.
8	**Net Work:** The net makes the world go 'round, and with that comes plenty of employment opportunities, either upkeeping net nodes or producing new net content such as AR tags. *Suggested skills:* Comp-Ops, Program.
9	**Drifter:** Many individuals drift from job to job, or go unemployed. Automation has put many out of work. *Suggested skills:* Awareness, Naturalist.
10	**Security:** Depending on whom one asks, security serves and protects many stations and colonies across the Sol system, or are little better than criminals. Either way, you joined the ranks. *Suggested skills:* Investigate, Melee.
Jack	**Science:** Science has changed, and continues to change, the world. You underwent various scientific training. *Suggested skills:* Bio-Sci, Phy-Sci.
Queen	**Ivory Tower:** Academia is an institution unto itself, where knowledge is passed down through teaching or through publication. You spend the years receiving a very broad education *Suggested skills:* Lib-Arts, Socialize.
King	**Crime Pays:** The criminal element persists for a reason—the rewards are often worth the risks. You were involved in a criminal enterprise and gained skills from the experience. *Suggested skills:* Deception, Thievery.
Joker	**Executive:** A rare few rise through the corp ranks and become executives in either middle or upper management. *Suggested skills:* Bureaucrat, Conspiracy.

Connections & Contacts

No person is an island, as everyone makes some sort of connections or contacts as they go through life. Pick or draw a card on each of the tables below.

Card	Type of Connection
Ace – 3	**Ally:** This character is a close friend or ally. Whatever the specifics, the character will usually try to act in your best interest.
4 – 6	**Enemy:** The character is an enemy or someone otherwise in opposition to your goals or well-being.
7 – 9	**Rival:** The character is a rival, someone looking to beat or one-up you. They may act to oppose you, but likely have some of the same ultimate goals.
10 – Jack	**Favor:** This character is someone that either owes you a favor (black) or to whom you owe a favor (red).
Queen – King	**Acquaintance:** This is someone that knows you well, but whose relationship with you isn't as clear as friend, rival or enemy. They may be willing to perform small favors, but won't go too far out of their way.
Joker	**Twice:** The connection to this character is particularly nuanced. Draw twice more and combine the results.

Card	Connections & Contacts (Black)	Connections & Contacts (Red)
Ace	Agricultural	Financial
2	Industrial	Custodial
3	Medical	Mechanical
4	Engineering	Educational
5	Familial	Artistic
6	Hacker	Bureaucratic
7	Scientific	Construction
8	Entertainment	Environmental
9	Subcultural	Transport
10	Military	Legal
Jack	Security	Communications
Queen	Merchant	Service
King	Criminal	Corp
Joker	Executive	Celebrity

Dark Secrets

Horror literature is filled with characters that harbor dark secrets. Some of these secrets may be extraordinary, but most will be mundane, although no less dark.

Card	Dark Secret
Ace	**Killer:** At some point in the past the character was driven to take a human life. It could have been the life of a parent or an abusive spouse. Perhaps it was the life of a business partner or extortionist threatening to expose other secrets.
2	**Drug Fiend:** The character is addicted to some drug, but it goes beyond mere substance abuse. The character may have squandered her family fortune in pursuit or sweet oblivion, or may performed questionable acts to get her fix.
3	**Silent Witness:** The character was a witness to some heinous crime, but did not intervene or inform the authorities. Coming forward would mean the scorn of friends and family for not doing so before, and danger from the perpetuator.
4	**Blackmailer:** The character knows the dark secret of another character, and is blackmailing her. The character may be asking her victim for a large sum of money, but is just as likely asking her to perform questionable acts.
5	**Debauched:** The character is addicted to sensual pleasure of some sort not looked kindly upon by society. She may have even led others down this path.
6	**Voices:** The character hears voices in her head. Sometimes they tell her to perform terrible acts. And she usually resists, but those times she does not...
7	**Plunderer:** At some point in the past the character stole something of great worth. She may not even realize its true value. Nevertheless, there are those who want it back, and who are not willing to forgive.
8	**Shady Debt:** The character has worked up a large debt from some questionable activity. She may be driven to desperate acts to pay off this debt.
9	**Past Associations:** The character was formerly a member of a terrorist organization, a cult or some other group that, were it known, would result in her scorn or danger from the group she left.
10	**Sadist:** The character harbors an inner desire to bring harm to others, delighting in their suffering. She may regularly resist this urge, or she may secretly indulge when no one is there to catch her.
Jack	**Expedition Survivor:** The character is the sole survivor of an expedition to somewhere in the void. The expedition was a disaster, and the character was forced to perform the most heinous of acts to survive.
Queen	**Uncanny Double:** There is someone who looks exactly like the character and whom sometimes sullies her good name. Perhaps it is a clone, or just chance.
King	**On the Take:** The character is a spy working for another organization, or simply corrupt. She regularly received payments for small acts or information.
Joker	**Inhuman:** The character isn't fully human. She may be a trans-genetic experiment that escaped, or an AI posing as a human.

Cover Identities

Conspiracies and plots are rife in the future of *Shadows Over Sol*. They run the gamut from collusions between megacorps to individual plotters scheming to take down prominent subcultural bloggers.

Many of those working in secret make use of cover identities to hide their activities. Cover identities in this sense aren't just false names or a flimsy disguise; they include falsified records, dummy social media profiles, separate electronic addresses and forged credentials. This false electronic trail is never fully comprehensive, but to be effective it needs to be good enough to hold up against casual scrutiny.

Regardless of the nature of the cover identity, good identities take work to upkeep, and so their resources are not unlimited. Presented below is an optional system for handling and tracking cover identities in *Shadows Over Sol*.

Gaining Identities

Gaining a cover identity isn't as simple as using a false name. Appearances have to be made, records have to be forged and the identity has to be established. This typically requires either a sizable amount of money, or enough personal time and skill.

Hiring an Expert

Hiring someone to establish the identity is probably the easiest method. A skilled fixer/hacker willing to establish the identity must first be located, and then hired. Payment for this service is usually in the ballpark of Cost 8. Completing the service often takes a few days and may require the biometrics of the person for whom the identity is being established. A character should always consider how much she trusts the person being hired to perform this service, lest it later be discovered that her biometrics have now been attached to those of a wanted arms trafficker or similar.

Do-It-Yourself

Those with several weeks to make appearances and plans may establish a cover identity on their own without the outside help of an expert. This is essentially a feat of social engineering and uses the Engineering system presented in the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook. Engineering a cover identity has TN 10, Cost 5, Interval 1 week, Socialize as the concept skill and Comp-Ops as the Prototype skill. Bugs are essentially areas where the cover hasn't been fully established—the lack of the identity in passenger manifests, lines of credit, social network presence, etc.

Keeping Cover

A character may have up to a number of cover identities equal to her rank in the Conspiracy skill. Mechanically, this works a lot like languages with the LibArts skill or cultures with the Socialize skill. Characters who attempt to keep a number of active cover identities beyond this limit find their time and resources overtaxed, as they struggle with the upkeep required to maintain this number. Unwanted cover

identities may voluntarily be burned and will no longer count against this limit (see below).

Burning Cover

Cover identities are only as good as they receive regular upkeep and as long as their secret remains intact. Characters who fail to upkeep a cover identity or who have their secret revealed will quickly find their alternate identity useless.

Anytime a character's cover identity is discovered and the word gets out, the identity is considered "burned." She may no longer use that identity to any significant effect, and any attempt to do so will likely result in discrepancies turning up with the identity, prompting other to look into the identity further and turn up the whole truth.

At this point the player may remove the cover identity from her list. As she can no longer gain significant benefit from it, it no longer counts against her total number of identities. A character may also voluntarily burn a cover identity by ceasing its upkeep.

Sanity

A common trope of many horror roleplaying games is to present a system which measures a character's sanity, the idea being that when a character encounters the horrific, the encounter deals a sort of metal damage to her. In this way characters may spiral into dementia and madness through repeated exposure to horrific situations. Even if they regularly survive the actual physical threat, they may succumb to mental illness.

When writing *Shadows Over Sol* we made the design choice to avoid having this sort of system. Our reasoning was that this sort of representation of sanity comes from a Victorian horror tradition that is rather anachronistic compared to the science fiction horror feel we wanted to portray. As such, we left insanity and madness purely within the agency of the GM and players.

There is no denying, however, that sanity systems are deeply embedded in the horror roleplaying tradition. As such, there may be GMs who both want to run *Shadows Over Sol* and want to keep track of character sanity—anachronisms be damned! There may also be GMs who want to run a game paralleling Victorian horror stories, but set in space. It is for these sort of games that we present the following optional sanity system.

Representing Mental Illness

This system treats mental illness—that is, sanity loss—as a series of consequences. In this way it uses the same basic rules for consequences found in the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook (see page 114).

Every time a character loses sanity, she should either gain a new insanity consequence at light severity, or increase an existing insanity consequence a severity. As usual, no consequence can be raised above critical severity in this way.

The GM and player should work together to figure out what exactly the resulting insanity consequence represents. This is likely some form of PTSD, but it may also represent other resulting neuroses, such as flashbacks, nightmares, irrationality or depression. Ultimately the player should pick something that fits both the situation and her character's personality.

Similarly, every time an insanity consequence increases in severity, the GM and player should work together to figure out how it gets worse.

Insanity consequences likely compel certain behavior, or may even penalize certain actions at the usual penalty for the severity.

Every time sanity is lost in this way it is up to the player to decide whether this results in a new insanity consequence, or an old one worsening.

Losing Sanity

Encountering horrifying situations may threaten a character's sanity. Whenever she encounters a situation that might leave her sanity damaged, she should make a Determination flip. Which situations qualify and their difficulty is left to the GM to decide, but some example TNs are given below:

Difficulty	TN
Lethal violence	8
Encounter with monster	10
Close associate killed	12
Torture (giving or receiving)	14

Treatment

With time and therapy, mental illness can be treated. A character who seeks out treatment may remove a severity of an insanity consequence for each month of therapy.

Another character acting as a counselor can make a Per/empathy-10 flip once a month to successfully administer therapy. Alternatively, a character may pay for professional counseling—usually requiring a Cost 5 payment each month.

Succumbing to Madness

If a character's total number of severities of insanity consequences ever exceeds her Determination, she is lost to madness and ceases to be a player character. She should hand her character sheet over to the GM, who then takes over the character as a maddened NPC.

Maybe she is lost for good, or maybe she will get treatment and resume being a playable character again one day. Either way, that is something that should be worked out between the GM and player.

Gear Packages

Allowing players to pick and choose the gear their characters will start with allows for a great deal of character customization. At the same time, however, having every player pore over the equipment list in detail can be a time-consuming process. Additionally, not every piece of equipment is going to suit every campaign concept.

Presented below are a variety of gear packages that can be simply taken instead of doing the usual shopping at character creation. These packages may be useful for players or GMs looking to speed up character creation, as well as for games with a narrow character focus.

List of Packages

Every gear package comes in three versions—one each for survival horror, investigative horror and action horror. Additionally, every package comes with a Wealth modifier. This modifies the character's starting Wealth, based upon the cost of the equipment in the package.

Artist

- **Survival:** Camera, Expert System (Basic: Crafts), Stimulox, Toolkit (Basic: Crafts). *Wealth:* -1.
- **Investigative:** Camera, Expert System (Pro: Crafts), Stimulox, Toolkit (Basic: Crafts), Workstation. *Wealth:* +0.
- **Action:** AR Implant, Camera, Expert System (Pro: Crafts), Stimulox, Toolkit (Basic: Crafts), Workstation. *Wealth:* +0.

Bounty Hunter

- **Survival:** Disposable Cuffs, Somnitol, USD-07 "Firefly" Shockstick. *Wealth:* +0.
- **Investigative:** Disposable Cuffs, P&W Wide-Trim Designer Coverjack, Somnitol, USD-07 "Firefly" Shockstick. *Wealth:* +0.
- **Action:** Disposable Cuffs, E-Lock-pick, P&W Wide-Trim Designer Coverjack, Somnitol, USD-07 "Firefly" Shockstick. *Wealth:* +0.

Criminal

- **Survival:** Toolkit (Basic: Thievery), USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol, Voice Mask. *Wealth:* -3.
- **Investigative:** Disguise Kit (Basic), P&W Wide-Trim Designer Coverjack, Toolkit (Basic: Thievery), USD-720 "Widowmaker" Heavy Pistol. *Wealth:* +0.
- **Action:** Chameleon Suit, Disguise Kit (Basic), P&W Wide-Trim Designer Coverjack, Toolkit (Superior: Thievery), USD-720 "Widowmaker" Heavy Pistol. *Wealth:* -1.

Doctor

- **Survival:** Medikit, Regenasone, Surgery Kit (Basic). *Wealth:* -1.
- **Investigative:** Medikit, Regenasone, Surgery Kit (Basic), USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth:* +0.
- **Action:** Medikit, Regenasone, Surgery Kit (Superior), Toolkit (Basic: Bio-Sci), USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth:* -1.

Engineer

- **Survival:** Demolition Charge, P&W Wide-Trim Designer Coverjack, Toolkit (Basic: Engineer). *Wealth: -1.*
- **Investigative:** Demolition Charge, P&W Wide-Trim Designer Coverjack, Toolkit (Basic: Engineer), Toolkit (Basic: Mechanic). *Wealth: +0.*
- **Action:** Demolition Charge, P&W Wide-Trim Designer Coverjack, Toolkit (Superior: Engineer), Toolkit (Basic: Mechanic), USD-490L "Indra" Light Laspistol. *Wealth: -1.*

Executive

- **Survival:** Expert System (Basic: Socialize), Personal Assistant, Workstation. *Wealth: -2.*
- **Investigative:** Expert System (Pro: Socialize), Personal Assistant, USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol, Workstation. *Wealth: +0.*
- **Action:** AR Implant, Expert System (Deluxe: Socialize), Mainframe, Personal Assistant, USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth: -1.*

Gangster

- **Survival:** P&W Wide-Trim Designer Coverjack, Stimulox, USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth: -1.*
- **Investigative:** Combat Utility Knife, Stimulox, USD-11h "Bulwark" Ballistic Suit, USD-720 "Widowmaker" Heavy Pistol. *Wealth: +0.*
- **Action:** Combat Utility Knife, Injector Unit, Stimulox, USD-38n "Knight" Tactical Suit, USD-3200 "Valkyrie" Heavy Rifle. *Wealth: +0.*

Hacker

- **Survival:** Encryption System (Software 4), Expert System (Basic: Program), Workstation. *Wealth: -1.*
- **Investigative:** AR Implant, Encryption System (Software 5), Expert System (Pro: Program), Workstation. *Wealth: +0.*
- **Action:** AR Implant, Encryption System (Software 7), Expert System (Deluxe: Program), Mainframe, USD-3200 "Valkyrie" Heavy Rifle. *Wealth: -1.*

Laborer

- **Survival:** Flashlight, Medikit (Basic), Power Tool, Torpestat. *Wealth: +0.*
- **Investigative:** Flashlight, Medikit (Basic), Plasma Cutter, Power Tool, Torpestat. *Wealth: +0.*
- **Action:** Flashlight, Medikit (Basic), Plasma Cutter, Power Tool, Torpestat, Unitech "Sunspot" C3 Vac Suit. *Wealth: +0.*

Missionary

- **Survival:** Backpack, Expert System (Basic: Lib-Arts), Expert System (Basic: Socialize), Translation Software (Pick Two Languages). *Wealth: +0.*
- **Investigative:** Backpack, Expert System (Basic: Lib-Arts), Expert System (Basic: Socialize), Medikit, Translation Software (Pick Two Languages). *Wealth: +0.*
- **Action:** Backpack, Expert System (Basic: Lib-Arts), Expert System (Basic: Socialize), Medikit, P&W Wide-Trim Designer Coverjack, Translation Software (Pick Two Languages). *Wealth: +0*

Officer

- **Survival:** Encryption System (Basic), P&W Wide-Trim Deigner Coverjack, Radio Comm, USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth:* -1.
- **Investigative:** Encryption System (Basic), Ladar Scanner, P&W Wide-Trim Deigner Coverjack, Radio Comm, USD-720 "Widowmaker" Heavy Pistol. *Wealth:* +0.
- **Action:** Encryption System (Basic), Ladar Scanner, USD-38n "Knight" Tactical Suit, Radio Comm, USD-720 "Widowmaker" Heavy Pistol, Verazine. *Wealth:* +0.

Pilot

- **Survival:** Expert System (Basic: Vehicles), Unitech "Sunspot" C3 Vac Suit, USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth:* -1.
- **Investigative:** Expert System (Pro: Vehicles), Unitech "Sunspot" C3 Vac Suit, USD-720 "Widowmaker" Heavy Pistol, Workstation. *Wealth:* +0.
- **Action:** Expert System (Pro: Vehicles), Radio Comm, Unitech "Sunspot" C3 Vac Suit, USD-840L "Horus" Heavy Laspistol, Workstation. *Wealth:* +0.

Scientist

- **Survival:** Disposable Test Kit, Expert System (Basic: Pick Specialty), Stimulox, Toolkit (Pick Specialty). *Wealth:* -1.
- **Investigative:** Disposable Test Kit, Expert System (Pro: Pick Specialty), Stimulox, Toolkit (Pick Specialty), Workstation. *Wealth:* +0.
- **Action:** Data Chip, Disposable Test Kit, Expert System (Deluxe: Pick Specialty), Stimulox, Toolkit (Pick Specialty), Mainframe. *Wealth:* -1.

Scrapper

- **Survival:** Backpack, Regenasone, Unitech "Sunspot" C3 Vac Suit, USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth:* -3.
- **Investigative:** Backpack, Plasma Cutter, Regenasone, Unitech "Sunspot" C3 Vac Suit, USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth:* +0.
- **Action:** Backpack, E-Lockpick, Plasma Cutter, Regenasone, Unitech "Sunspot" C3 Vac Suit, USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth:* +0.

Security

- **Survival:** Disposable Cuffs, USD-07 "Firefly" Shockstick, USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth:* -1.
- **Investigative:** Disposable Cuffs, USD-07 "Firefly" Shockstick, USD-11h "Bulwark" Ballistic Suit, USD-720 "Widowmaker" Heavy Pistol. *Wealth:* +0.
- **Action:** Chem-Sniff, Disposable Cuffs, USD-07 "Firefly" Shockstick, USD-11h "Bulwark" Ballistic Suit, USD-720 "Widowmaker" Heavy Pistol. *Wealth:* +0.

Socialite

- **Survival:** Expert System (Basic: Empathy), Expert System (Basic: Socialize), USD-07 "Firefly" Shockstick. *Wealth:* +0.
- **Investigative:** AR Implant, Expert System (Basic: Empathy), Expert System (Basic: Socialize), USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth:* +0.
- **Action:** AR Implant, Expert System (Basic: Empathy), Expert System (Basic: Socialize), Toolkit (Superior: Socialize), USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth:* -1.

Soldier

- **Survival:** Medikit (Basic), USD-11h "Bulwark" Ballistic Suit, USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth:* -3.
- **Investigative:** Medikit (Basic), USD-11h "Bulwark" Ballistic Suit, USD-3200 "Valkyrie" Heavy Rifle, USD-9300 Frag Grenade. *Wealth:* -1.
- **Action:** Medikit (Superior), Night Vision Glasses, USD-38n "Knight" Tactical Suit, USD-3200 "Valkyrie" Heavy Rifle, USD-9300 Frag Grenade. *Wealth:* +0.

Spy

- **Survival:** E-Lockpick, Magnetic Grapnel, USD-07 "Firefly" Shockstick. *Wealth:* -3.
- **Investigative:** Biometric Cracker, E-Lockpick, Magnetic Grapnel, USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth:* -1.
- **Action:** Biometric Cracker, Chameleon Suit, E-Lockpick, Magnetic Grapnel, USD-383 "Wasp" Light Pistol. *Wealth:* +0.

Student

- **Survival:** Data Chip, Expert System (Basic: Lib-Arts), Stimulox, Workstation. *Wealth:* -1.
- **Investigative:** Data Chip, Expert System (Pro: Lib-Arts), Personal Assistant, Stimulox, Workstation. *Wealth:* +0.
- **Action:** Data Chip, Expert System (Pro: Lib-Arts), Personal Assistant, Stimulox, USD-07 "Firefly" Shockstick, Workstation. *Wealth:* +0.

Survivalist

- **Survival:** Combat Utility Knife, GPS Tracker, Survival Kit (Basic). *Wealth:* -1.
- **Investigative:** Combat Utility Knife, Gecko-Climbers, GPS Tracker, Survival Kit (Basic). *Wealth:* +0.
- **Action:** Combat Utility Knife, Gecko-Climbers, GPS Tracker, Survival Kit (Superior). *Wealth:* -1.

Genelines & Beyond

Our genes make up some of our core potential as individuals. They determine many of our phenotypic features such as hair, skin and eye colors, as well as our genetic aptitudes and risk of generic diseases. In the future of *Shadows Over Sol* the very genes that comprise us are subject to editing and manipulation before birth. This has led to a variety of commercially available genelines—both common and uncommon. Additionally, some character types may go beyond geneline, diverging into different species entirely.
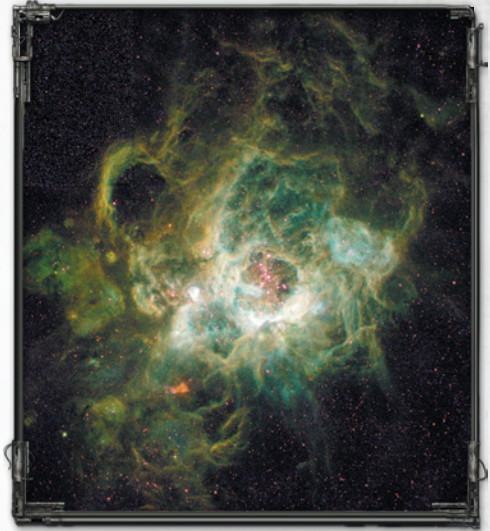
Transhumanism

One of the implicit assumptions in the *Shadows Over Sol* setting is that (so far, at least) humans have more-or-less remained human. Two hundred years is not very long on an evolutionary timeline with creatures as long-lived as human beings, and neither has humanity radically altered what it is to be part of the human species through the use of advanced technology. This, however, is beginning to change. The rise of commercial genelines is an obvious first step towards a larger-scale alternation of the human genome.

This book offers a number of additional options that explore the edge of what is possible with technology in *Shadows Over Sol*. These options veer towards the transhuman, pushing the definition of what it is to be a person. Some of these options are closer to the traditional definition of human than others. Radical genelines may have inhuman features, but the core of their genome is still Homo sapiens. Others, such as uplifted animals, introduce human-like intelligence to other species. Finally, the options for androids, cyborgs and hard AI leave traditional biology behind entirely.

GMs wishing to push their campaigns in a more transhuman direction would be well-advised to read up on the subject of transhumanism, of which there is a wealth available online.

Unusual Genelines

Hundreds of geneline variants exist, the vast majority of which fall into the categories found in the *Shadows Over Sol* core rulebook. Nevertheless, some more unusual categories of genelines can be found throughout the system's population. Many of these geneline variants simply never found their market niche, or were out-competed by the more common genelines. A few of these more unusual variants are given below.

Groundside Deluxe

The Groundside Deluxe is an upmarket version of the Groundside Standard geneline that never really found its market niche, as those with the money tend to drift toward the Athlete Deluxe, Genius Deluxe, Celebrity Deluxe or even Quicksilver Deluxe genelines. Nevertheless, the Groundside Deluxe presents a well-rounded geneline geared towards life in a gravity well.

- **Experiences:** Str +10, Dex +5, Spd +5, End +10, Int + 10, Per +10, Chr +10, Det +10
- **Edge:** -2. As one of the most advanced genelines that money can buy, those with the Groundside Deluxe geneline need to rely less on their edge to get them through situations in life, and as such do not develop it as much.
- **Optional Weakness:** The vast majority of people live in a gravity well and never journey into space in their lifetimes. Protections against common space ailments are commonly excluded from groundside genelines. The player may optionally take an Impairment weakness to account for this. The Groundside Deluxe is also a step up from most groundside genelines. Those with this geneline may feel superior to their peers, giving them a social Impairment due to their arrogance.

Martian Standard

The Martian Standard is a mid-market geneline commissioned and promoted by the Terraforming Project. It's marketed primarily towards Martian settlers or would-be Martian colonists. The geneline emphasizes manual dexterity and cognitive ability, as well as the rugged toughness and determination needed to make a life in the Martian outback. Finally, the geneline ships with a number of minor resistances to radiation, CO_2 poisoning and other hazards common on the Red Planet.

- **Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +10, Spd +5, End +10, Int +10, Per +5, Chr +5, Det +10
- **Optional Weakness:** As this geneline is so focused on Mars, individuals might suffer from Complication (Non-Mars Environment), Shortcoming (Encumbrance) in normal gravity or Impairment (Coordination) in microgravity environments.

Quicksilver Deluxe

The Quicksilver Deluxe geneline is an upmarket geneline targeted at those who want their children to have exceptional manual dexterity and agility. Targeted are those who want their children to be excellent musicians, surgeons or to compete in certain sports where quickness and agility are paramount.

- **Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +15, Spd +15, End +0, Int +5, Per +5, Chr +10, Det +10
- **Optional Weakness:** As the Quicksilver Deluxe geneline is marked to a particular demographic of parent with a strong vision of what they want from their child, those with the Quicksilver Deluxe geneline often have weaknesses that are a reaction to this. They may have an Impairment in fields other than their chosen course of study, or they may even have a Disability or Shortcoming weakness from where they relied too heavily on their geneline, and it failed them.

Spacer Deluxe

Marketed towards wealthy spacer parents, the Spacer Deluxe is an upmarket version of the Spacer Standard geneline. This geneline has never been as popular as many competing genelines, as its sales suffer both from the fact that the majority of the human population lives in a gravity well, and from the fact that many of those who can afford a deluxe geneline have more specialized options available.

- **Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +10, Spd +10, End +5, Int + 10, Per +10, Chr +10, Det +10
- **Edge:** -2. As one of the most advanced genelines that money can buy, those with the Spacer Deluxe geneline need to rely less on their edge to get them through situations in life, and as such do not develop it as much.
- **Optional Weakness:** Spacers largely live in a climate-controlled world of air-scrubbers and recyclers. Spacer genelines often fail to include modifications that protect against rampant environmental pollutants found on Earth, or the prevalence of diseases found in the large population centers groundside. The player may optionally take an Impairment weakness to account for this.
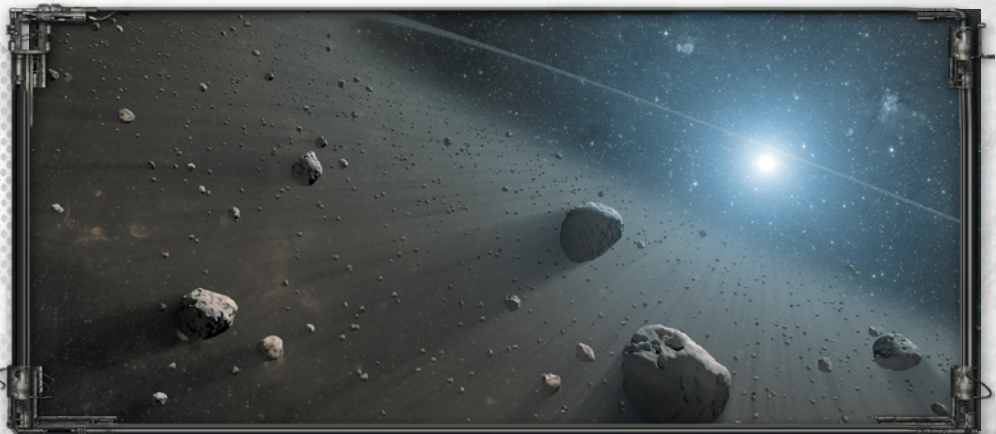
Radical Genelines

Below are a variety of genelines that make substantial modifications to the human genome—not just selecting for particular qualities or preventing genetic diseases, but oftentimes grafting in genes from non-human species or creating pathways that turn on genes latent in modern humanity.

None of these genelines are very common—indeed, the use of some has become rather taboo. Nevertheless, these are all creations which humanity has developed in its never-ending quest for new discoveries.

Icarus 2200

The Icarus 2200 geneline was funded in a wildly successful crowdfunding campaign, which launched in 2199. Playing off the dream of humanity one day being able to fly on its own accord, the campaign featured images of people soaring through multi-hued alien skies. Funding was successful and the geneline was available starting in early 2200. It proved to be a short-lived fad. Too heavy to fly in normal gravity, and with limited open spaces in low gravity environments, the Icarus 2200 geneline never found a long-term niche.

- **Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +10, Spd +10, End +10, Int +5, Per +10, Chr +5, Det +5
- **Low Gravity Glide:** Icarus 2200's have membranous skin flaps connecting their limbs to the sides of their torso. In areas of low gravity and substantial atmosphere these flaps can be unfurled and used to glide through the air, much like a flying squirrel. Icarus flaps do not function on Earth or Venus, nor in trace atmosphere anywhere. They do function within the domes on Luna, Mars and most stations. Using the flaps requires a Dex/athletics-10 action. Successful deployment prevents all falling damage and allows limited maneuverability.
- **Optional Weakness:** The Icarus geneline was a fad over a decade ago. While the children with it are just reaching maturity, the geneline already looks dated. This might justify an Impairment in social situations. Additionally, the flaps can get in the way occasionally, perhaps justifying an Impairment for actions that involve swinging the arms, or even a related Complication.

Moleman MK4

Small and radiation-resistant, the Moleman series of genelines were originally developed as an experimental geneline intended to colonize asteroids and small moons. Their radiation-resistance allows for minimal shielding, and their small size allows for smaller and easier-to-maintain habitats. Unfortunately, the geneline proved to require no fewer calories and suffered bone degradation just like non-spacer genelines. Since then the geneline has found more success inhabiting the radioactive zones on Earth left by World War IV. The current iteration of the geneline is the Mark 4.

- **Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +0, Spd +0, End+15, Int +10, Per +10, Chr +10, Det +10
- **Radiation Resistant:** Moleman have been designed to be extremely resistant to radiation exposure, although enough radiation will still kill them. They receive a +4 bonus on any actions to resist radiation or its effects.
- **Size -1:** Molemen tend to be smaller than a typical human adult. This provides a +1 bonus to Defense and a -1 penalty to Shock.
- **Optional Weakness:** A moleman's small size might justify an Impairment against being knocked down, or even a Shortcoming relating to Wound or Shock. The size might also justify an Impairment in social situations.

Neo-anderthal

Thousands of examples of Neanderthal bone fragments exist, and in the twenty-first century onward, scientists have been able to extract small pieces of remnant DNA. Through much effort, this DNA was patched together to form an almost-full genome, with Homo sapiens DNA filling in the gaps. This formed the basis for a new geneline in the early twenty-second century. Always something of a novelty, most Neo-anderthals are a small minority going back several generations.

- **Experiences:** Str +10, Dex +0, Spd +0, End +5, Int +0, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +10
- **Edge:** +3. Competing in a world where one is saddled with a reconstruction of an older wild type geneline, those with a Neo-anderthal genetic makeup

most develop their edge to its fullest in order to manage to compete.
- **Optional Weakness:** Being a recreation of a once-extinct hominid species, Neo-anderthals face a not insignificant amount of prejudice. This could easily justify an Impairment relating to social actions, or even some mental actions.

Nereid Beta

Originally intended to produce settlers ready to colonize the vast oceans of Earth rather than to compete for ever-dwindling land space, the Nereid geneline possesses an amphibian-skin, capable of absorbing much of the oxygen needed to survive. This skin allows a Nereid to "breathe" underwater.

- **Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +5, Spd +10, End +10, Int +5, Per +10, Chr +0, Det +10
- **Amphibious:** Nereids are able to absorb oxygen through their skin, much like an amphibian. This allows them to both survive in an atmosphere containing a lower amount of oxygen (up to 25% less) and to "breathe" underwater.
- **Optional Weakness:** A Nereid's skin, while the geneline's most defining feature, is also the geneline's greatest weakness. It's overly sensitive, prone to infection and kind of ugly by most common standards of beauty. This could justify a Shortcoming for Shock, an Impairment to social actions or Complication relating to contact with the Nereid's skin.

Nibelung Custom

The Nibelung Custom geneline was designed for an ambitious mid-twenty-second century attempt to settle the Antarctic. More resistant to the cold than other human genelines, Nibelungs found their specialized niche, where they continue to see use, but few members of this geneline are found throughout the rest of the system.

- **Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +5, Spd +5, End+10, Int +10, Per +5, Chr +10, Det +5
- **Cold Resistant:** Those with the Nibelung geneline have cells that resist damage from freezing. Nibelungs have a +4 bonus on actions to resist fatigue or damage from the cold.
- **Optional Weakness:** Just as this geneline is adapted to the cold, individuals may be less well adapted to the heat. This could justify an Impairment to resist heat-based fatigue or damage.

Nyx Nyx

Most people cannot see in the dark. This leads to the necessity for lighting, lost productivity and those seeking to use darkness to hide their illicit actions. One of the very first radical genelines commercially available, the Nyx nyx geneline, was designed to provide a distinct competitive advantage in the dark, with eyes engineered to see into the infrared.

- **Experiences:** Str +5, Dex +5, Spd +5, End +0, Int +10, Per +15, Chr +5, Det +5
- **Infravision:** Nyx nyx can see into the infrared parts of the electromagnetic spectrum, allowing them to ignore penalties for darkness.
- **Optional Weakness:** While adapted for the night, some Nyx nyx get so used to the dark that functioning in bright light becomes problematic. This may justify an Impairment weakness to actions in bright light.

The Ogre

The Ogre geneline has a bad reputation. In the early twenty-second century when radical genelines were a fad, they began to be criticized as an agent of social decay, turning human beings into predestined tools. The Ogre geneline was held up as an example of this—people genetically engineered to be large and intimidating, a sort of perfect bouncer or bodyguard, the poor engineered to serve the wealthy. This criticism brought the radical geneline fad to an end, but the Ogre geneline kept its stigma.

- **Experiences:** Str +15, Dex +5, Spd +5, End +5, Int +5, Per +5, Chr +10, Det +10
- **Size +1:** Those with the Ogre geneline are very large in stature. This provides a -1 penalty to Defense and a +1 bonus to Shock.
- **Optional Weakness:** As a geneline designed for its recipient to be a tool in the prime of their life, little thought was given to how well the geneline held up as the individuals' age. This has led the Ogre geneline to have a number of age-related defects. This could justify a Shortcoming related to Defense or an Impairment related to movement or perception.

Spacer Alpha

Spacer genelines feature many small changes engineered for life in space. Most of these changes were first given limited trial runs before they were incorporated into the Spacer Standard or the Spacer Deluxe genelines. The Spacer Alpha geneline is where these changes were first tested. The current generation of the Spacer Alpha geneline reaching maturity features enhancements for microgravity, such as a second eyelid that pushes tears away from the eyes so as not to cloud vision in zero-G, and prehensile toes on the feet.

- **Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +10, Spd +5, End +10, Int +10, Per +5, Chr +5, Det +0
- **Microgravity Adapted:** Those with the Spacer Alpha geneline have numerous small changes to make life in microgravity easier. This includes a second eyelid that allows them to wipe tears away from their eyes towards their nose, blood that clots more easily in microgravity and an inner ear that doesn't cause motion sickness due to zero-G or the Coriolis Effect.
- **Prehensile Toes:** The latest generation of the Spacer Alpha geneline has opposable toes, which function something like additional off-hands—good for holding into grips or holding tools, but ill-suited for delicate work. A Spacer Alpha using her feet in place of hands takes a -2 penalty to Dex-based actions.
- **Optional Weakness:** A Spacer Alpha's adapted feet may make walking long distances in normal gravity problematic, providing an Impairment to movement in full gravity or even a Disability in extreme cases.

Geneline Creation

Countless individual genelines exist, often with only minor variation from the established common genelines. These genelines range from cut-rate knockoffs of popular genelines, to expertly-tailored custom jobs.

Mechanically, creating a basic geneline is fairly straightforward. A geneline should provide a number of free experiences in the eight stats, ranging from zero to a bonus of +15. For basic genelines this should total up to 60 free experiences.

Creating genelines that modify Edge is a bit more complicated. Genelines penalizing Edge by -2 provide an additional 10 experiences, while those penalizing Edge by -3 provide an additional 20 experiences. For genelines that provide a bonus to Edge, every +1 reduces total experiences by -10, to a maximum of +4 Edge.

Radical genelines—or those representing nonhuman characters, such as uplifts or androids—are more complicated still. These genelines will provide a number of traits which function similarly to traits possessed by nonhuman NPCs. The GM can think of every such trait as "costing" or being equivalent to a certain number of experiences. Every trait provided in this way will reduce the number of experiences granted by the geneline by that amount. The cost of these traits will need to be judged by the GM on a case-by-case basis.

Uplifts

Humanity has modified not only its own genome, but the genomes of other species as well. The aims of these modifications vary, but one powerful aim is the attempt to introduce human-like intelligence to other species. This process is known as uplift, and related experiments have thus far been met with moderate success.

Human society hasn't really found a place for uplifts, and as a consequence few exist. Those that do exist are often either the result of some fringe group ideologically "sharing the bounties of human intelligence" or were created as a corp novelty. The former are typically released into a society which doesn't want them and has no real support for them. The latter are typically cared for as long as the appeal of their novelty lasts, and then dumped once no longer profitable.

Of the uplifts that do make it beyond these rough beginnings, many retreat to the safety of the net. Provided the right interfaces, an uplift can do business on the net without anyone being the wiser to their uplifted nature. Others find themselves serving as servants or indentures to groups that can make use of their unique physiology.

Most uplifts will possess the Nonhuman Servant subculture described later in this book—as in the end they are not really an accepted part of human society, and thus not a member of any subculture. A rare few, however, may operate primarily on the net, and thus find their way into the Technos or the Virtuals.

Uplift Ape

Among the uplifts with the closest-to-human physiology, uplift apes do not possess many of the complications other uplifts have—such as a lack of opposable thumbs, small size or extremely divergent dietary requirements. On the other hand, uplift apes do face the same social biases that all uplifts face. They are among the earliest and most common uplifts.

- **Experiences:** Str +15, Dex +5, Spd +5, End +10, Int +0, Per +10, Chr +5, Det +10
- **Uplift:** See "The Uplift Trait" sidebar.
- **Optional Weakness:** A variety of limitations involving an uplift's physiology or social status may be taken as weaknesses. This includes: Complication (Uplift Discrimination).

Uplift Cat

Uplift cats are among the smallest uplifts, skirting against the lower edge of what is possible with uplift technology. The skull of an uplift cat often appears "deformed" compared to a normal cat, due to the physiological changes necessary for the uplift process. Nevertheless, uplift cats are able small hunters.

- **Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +15, Spd +15, End +5, Int +0, Per +10, Chr +5, Det +5
- **Uplift:** See "The Uplift Trait" sidebar.
- **Catfall:** Halve the number of light wounds an uplift cat takes from a fall.
- **Pounce:** When making a melee attack a cat may immediately move for free before the attack executes.
- **Size -2:** Uplift cats are small and quick. This provides a +2 bonus to Defense

and a -2 penalty to Shock. Uplift cats may not possess a Strength above 3.

- **Optional Weakness:** A variety of limitations involving an uplift's physiology or social status may be taken as weaknesses. This includes: Disability (No Opposable Thumbs), Shortcoming (Small, Wound) and Complication (Uplift Discrimination).

Uplift Dog

Uplift dogs were some of the earliest uplifts outside of the primate order. Most uplift dogs are descended from larger-to-medium domestic breeds, with smaller breeds having more pronouncedly deformed skulls.

- **Experiences:** Str +0, Dex +5, Spd +10, End +5, Int +0, Per +15, Chr +15, Det +5
- **Uplift:** See "The Uplift Trait" sidebar.

The Uplift Trait

All uplifts share the Uplift trait. This imposes a number of restrictions and complications upon the uplifted character. These include:

- An uplift will often be thought of more as an animal than as a person. This is likely to lead to persistent discrimination and other biases in social situations
- Most gear will not be manufactured with the uplift's physiology in mind. This will render most human gear unusable. Custom-manufactured gear will typically need to be purchased, often costing double (+1 cost rating).
- Human drugs may not react the same way with the uplift's physiology as with a human's physiology (GM's discretion). Special drugs geared toward the uplift's physiology may need to be purchased (+1 cost rating).
- Uplifts do not have human vocal cords. This means they cannot speak human languages without electronic assistance. All uplifts start with a "vocal box," which straps to their neck and allows them to effectively speak. This does not count against their starting purchases, and it has the Worn property. Replacing a vocal box is Cost 4.

- **Keen Smell:** Dogs have a keen sense of smell and only suffer a -2 penalty rather than a -4 when facing an unseen foe. They also gain a +2 bonus on attempts to recognize scents.
- **Size -1:** Uplift dogs tend to be smaller than a human adult. This provides a +1 bonus to Defense and a -1 penalty to Shock. Uplift dogs may not possess a Strength above 5.
- **Optional Weakness:** A variety of limitations involving an uplift's physiology or social status may be taken as weaknesses. This includes: Disability (No Opposable Thumbs), Disability (Limited Color Vision) and Complication (Uplift Discrimination).

Uplift Pig

Pigs were already fairly intelligent creatures before uplift, and uplift has only enhanced this capacity. While the uplift of pigs has never been as popular as the uplift of dogs or the great apes, knowledge gained through the uplift of pigs was crucial in the development of other uplifts, including elephants, dolphins and cats.

- **Experiences:** Str +10, Dex +5, Spd +10, End +5, Int +0, Per +15, Chr +0, Det +5
- **Uplift:** See "The Uplift Trait" sidebar.

- **Keen Smell:** Pigs have a keen sense of smell and only suffer a -2 penalty rather than a -4 when facing an unseen foe. They also gain a +2 bonus on attempts to recognize scents.
- **Optional Weakness:** A variety of limitations involving an uplift's physiology or social status may be taken as weaknesses. This includes: Disability (No Opposable Thumbs) and Complication (Uplift Discrimination).
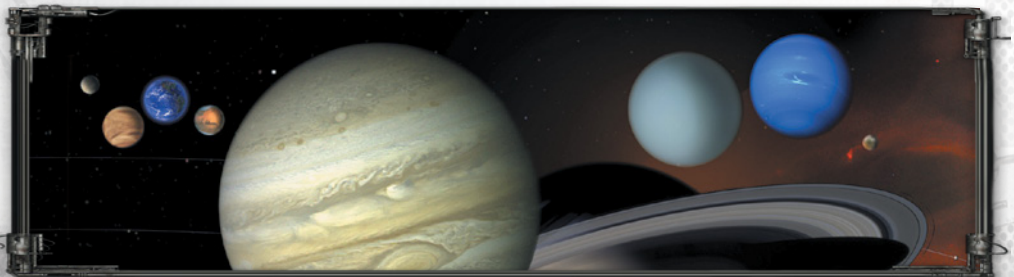
Androids, Cyborgs & AIs

Androids, cyborgs and artificial intelligences are staples of science fiction. What all of these character types have in common is that they are in some part machine, and all could make for interesting characters in the *Shadows Over Sol* setting. Some of these character types are, however, more suitable as player characters than others.

Android

Androids are robots designed to resemble humans. They are controlled by an artificial intelligence, typically housed within the android body. Most androids in *Shadows Over Sol* either exist as academic proofs of concept or as some sort of novelty, as the expense of their creation and training typically outweighs their economic utility.

- **Experiences:** Str +10, Dex +5, Spd +5, End +10, Int +15, Per +5, Chr +0, Det +10
- **Machine:** As a machine, an android is immune to metabolic hazards, as well as emotionally-based consequences. They are vulnerable to electromagnetic hazards.
- **Recharge:** While androids do not require sleep, they are powered by internal batteries and have extensive power requirements. These batteries require recharging every 24 hours. This takes 12 hours while fully functional, albeit plugged into an external power source. If the android shuts down during this time, a recharge can be accomplished in 6 hours.
- **Unhealing:** Androids do not naturally heal. Instead, with a successful Int/mechanic-10 action, they may be repaired for their Endurance in Wound severities each day. These repairs require replacement parts and have a cost rating equal to the android's highest wound severity—so light is Cost 1, moderate is Cost 2, etc.
- **Optional Weakness:** Numerous thematic weaknesses are common for androids, including Impairment (Social Skills), Disability (No Tactical Sensory Input), Disability (No Olfactory Sensory Input), Shortcoming (Delicate Construction, -2 to Wound) and Complication (AI Bugs).

Cyborg

Cyborgs are part biological and part mechanical—usually a fusion of human and machine. In many ways the distinction between a full-on cyborg and a human with mechanical implants is a blurry one. With enough implants, at some point a character begins to be more machine than human.

In the future of *Shadows Over Sol*, implants are out of fashion, except for a few basics such as the AR implant or the biomonitor. This makes an encounter with a full-on cyborg quite unusual. Nevertheless, those who fetishize implants—also known as cyberfiends—do exist, and there could be any number of secret projects researching the combination of chrome and flesh as an instrument of war or espionage.

The recommended method to create a cyborg player character is to create a character normally and then use that character's purchases to buy implants. Many of the more radical implants found in the Shiny New Toys supplement are particularly appropriate. Genelines that boost Endurance—such as Modern Superman or Athlete Deluxe—are recommended. For a cyborg that was assembled from parts and whose fleshy bits were grown in a lab, choose the Nonhuman Servant subculture described later in this book.

Hard AI

"Hard" AI is the development of truly human-like general computer intelligence, not just some domain-specific agent or expert system. It is also a claim which is difficult to prove: Who is to say whether the computer really has any true internal intelligence, or whether it is simply running a program that is very effective at mimicking human behavior?

In *Shadows Over Sol*, hard AI is of questionable existence. There are those who claim that the Embryo project, or even the Insurrection Virus, have resulted in true computer intelligence. There are just as many people who claim that these are simply computer programs very capable at mimicking human interaction.

Whatever the truth of the matter might be, artificial intelligences can make for memorable characters and particularly crafty antagonists. They are not, however, generally recommended as player characters due to the extreme differences in capabilities and limitations between AIs and other player character types. Players dead set on playing an AI are instead recommended the android option described earlier in this section.

Androids and Stasis

Humans and other biological characters are typically put into stasis during long voyages through space. This cuts down on life support requirements—particularly food—and prevents them from going crazy with cabin fever during transport. Androids, on the other hand, are rare enough that there is no "typical" procedure during transport.

In practice, many androids are shut down while the rest of the passengers are stasis simply as a matter of crew uneasiness that something is up and moving about the ship while everyone else sleeps the months away. For commercial transports this may be the case as a matter of policy—the ship's luggage space rarely includes the power inputs that androids need to charge each day.

For those who are lucky enough to have their own ship, or who have custom arrangements regarding a power supply, there is no hard requirement that an android is to be shut down during the voyage. Nevertheless, the android's activities may be limited during the months of isolation, and some androids have human-like enough AI that they too might experience a form of cabin fever—sometimes with bloody results.

Cybernetic Resurrection

The idea behind cybernetic resurrection is to take a person who has been recently deceased, and then to transfer as much of their personality, memories and capabilities as possible into an android body.

Functional cybernetic resurrection has been the goal of many scientists and researchers over the years, going back to the early days of sensory recording in the 2070's. It is only since the AI breakthroughs of the 2180's, however, that any real progress toward cybernetic resurrection has been made.

Even with those breakthroughs, the state of the technology today functions much better in theory than in practice. The state of the art is to record as much sensory data as possible from the individual being "resurrected," along with any other available data on personal history, personality and opinions. This information is then fed as "training data" into a standard AI during its development. The end result is an AI that mimics and takes on some of the personality quirks of the original individual. The better and more complete the training data, the better the AI approximation.

Cybernetic resurrection is not a mature technology. It exists mostly as a few academic proof-of-concept examples, and as a handful of field examples with disappointing results. The very best examples of cybernetic resurrection fall into an "uncanny valley"—close enough to be clearly identifiable as the original individual, but also different and robotic enough to be off-putting and creepy. The standard and worst examples of cybernetic resurrection only resemble the original individual in the broadest of ways.

Despite the shortcomings of the technology, the dream of one day achieving a mechanical immortality continues to inspire researchers across the system. Numerous research projects exist, including a few secretive black projects where scientists slave away on their research, trying to meld mechanical AI with the more fleshy bits of the brain and personality. These sometimes lead to unexpected and bloody results.

In game terms, creating a subject of cybernetic resurrection works exactly like creating an android character. The only differences will be in how the character is roleplayed. Whereas a typical android will have a wholly artificial personality, a subject of cybernetic resurrection will have bits and pieces of memory from the original individual, as well as some of the individual's opinions and personality quirks.

Genelines in Society

Genelines usually play a subtle, though important, role in an individual's personal development, from birth to adulthood, and on to death. While genelines aren't given the societal importance of subcultures or other social factors, they nevertheless leave their mark. This section describes what it's like to have a geneline in the twenty-third century.

How Genelines Work

When a woman discovers that she is pregnant she usually goes to the doctor and a genetic test of the fetus is performed as a part of the routine medical screening. This identifies potential genetic diseases, as well as other possible issues with the fetus' development.

At this point the mother can choose to have a geneline administered to the fetus, but many upcoming parents mull over the decision for a while before having the geneline done. The geneline treatment can be performed as late as the third trimester, although it's best to perform it early.

During the geneline treatment, a protein and viral payload is delivered to the fetus by means of a hypodermic needle. This payload reads the fetus' DNA, looking for particular sequences of nucleotides to cut and replace.

Another genetic screening of the fetus is performed a couple weeks after the initial treatment. Based on the results of this screening, a similar "booster" treatment may be performed. It is not uncommon for two or three such treat-

ments to be required before the geneline has "fully took."

Picking a Geneline

Obviously, individuals don't pick their own genelines. This is a decision that is made before the birth of a new baby.

For most young couples this is a purely financial decision: Can they afford the Groundside Standard geneline upgrade? If they can, that's usually the geneline administered. If they can't, they'll usually fall back to a Budget Upgrade. Every other geneline is comparatively unusual, with some more unusual than others.

Spacer Genelines

The spacer genelines are are unusual because only a small fraction of the total human population lives off Earth. Outside of Earth's gravity well, the Spacer Standard geneline is the go-to geneline for most expecting parents.

Deluxe Genelines

The deluxe, and other upscale genelines, are prohibitively expensive for anyone but the rich. This means the wealthy have a variety of expensive options that the common person does not have.

Wild Type

A person's genes are said to be wild type if they have no direct modification whatsoever. There is something of a stigma surrounding wild type genelines, as they are portrayed in popular media as being associated with irresponsible, drug-addicted parents who neglect to perform

basic healthcare for their new child, or with religious extremists. The truth of the matter is that most with wild type genes don't fall into either of these camps. Rather, these parents are just desperately poor and cannot afford even a Budget Upgrade.

Growing Up With a Geneline

A person's geneline isn't typically going to be readily apparent growing up. Looking at a class's performance in the whole, a teacher might be able to make an educated guess as to who has better upgrades, but there's enough individual variance that this will be at best a guess. Keep in mind also that since the vast

majority of children are either going to have the Groundside Standard or Budget Upgrade genelines, not a whole lot of time is spent worrying about it.

Many children won't even know their own geneline. Think of it like blood type: How many children know that? There are a few that do, particularly in cases where it's rare or somehow relevant to their day-to-day lives, but most kids are more concerned with school and friends than they are with abstract concerns, such as gene expression.

Furthermore, parents who chose an unusual geneline for their child often opt not to tell them for fear that it will single them out for unwanted attention. Who wants her kid bragging about her expensive geneline? Or who wants her kid looked down upon for her wild type genetics?

Fears of the Monoculture

Of course, genetic editing on this scale comes with its own set of societal and scientific concerns. One particular concern is loss of human genetic diversity.

The fear is this: As more and more people in the human population have their genes altered, and as more and more of the human genome gets changed, over the generations people become more genetically similar. Sure, the majority of people will end up with "good" genes that have been edited in, but what about the genetic variations that have been lost? These may serve roles in the human population that we don't yet understand. Additionally, it may just be a matter of time until some disease manages to exploit this similarity.

Subculture & Society

In the twenty-third century, subcultures form one of the pillars of society. All at once they act as social safety nets, networks of contacts, staples of cultural identity and lenses through which the world is viewed. Subcultures have their own trends, styles of dress, celebrities, patterns of speech and values.

Far more than just the eight major subcultures exist. They are surrounded by numerous associated satellite subcultures, as well as stand-alone minor subcultures. Some locations even have their own local subcultures that, for reasons of shared experience, haven't spread out throughout the rest of the system.

Minor Subcultures

The following are a variety of minor subcultures that exist throughout the system. Several of these subcultures were mentioned in the **Shadows Over Sol** core rulebook but never detailed; others are completely new.

Subculture Creation

All subcultures exist for a reason. They are identifiable, provide a sense of community and serve as a form of social networking. When coming up with a new minor subculture think about how the subculture formed, why people would identify themselves with it, what if offers and how it differs from other existing subcultures.

Mechanically, creating a new subculture is easy enough. Simply pick six skills which the subculture would value. The subculture grants +2 experiences in each of those skills. Take a moment to think before picking each skill. Why would the subculture value that ability? How would this skill become so universal among those in the subculture? Some skills are easier to justify than others. The guns and ordnance skills are particularly difficult fits, as these are usually specialist skills to which most people don't have a lot of exposure.
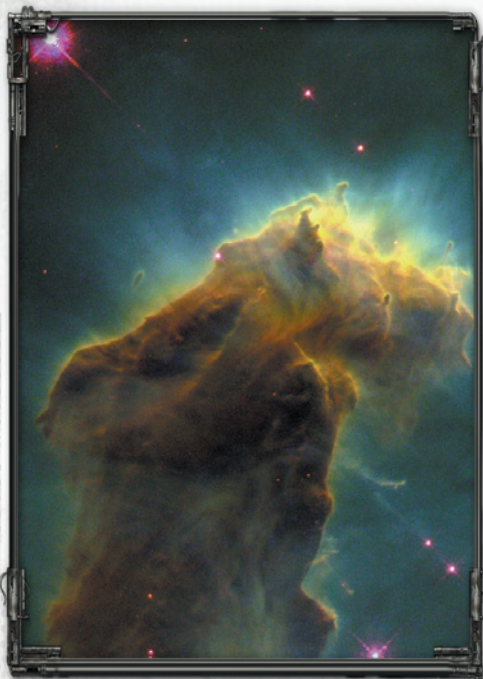
Bunkers

Remember your home. Remember your civita. Remember every happy and profound moment you've spent there. Remember the people. Remember its importance. Remember its consuetos: its traditions.

Why would you abandon this? Why would you betray this? Why would you cast this aside like yesterday's recycling, leaving it all to rot and every bunka you've ever known to die of grief and a broken home?

Don't be that monster. Don't be that traitor, that Judas! Senti? You don't abandon your home. You don't abandon the places, the people you love and value. You keep them close. You share a hab with your parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, children. The rest of the world: you leave that on the net!

Values

The Bunker subculture grew out of the Serv subculture, beginning the split some 30 years ago and completing the split only recently. As such, this fledgling subculture has inherited many of the traditional religious values of its parent.

The single-most unifying value of the Bunker subculture is the importance it places on home and location. The Bunker subculture rejects the transience of human settlement, which has become the norm in the past century. It argues that this forced mobility has undermined the fabric of society, including family and many of the traditional values held by its members.

The Bunker subculture has begun to organize small Bunker communities, consisting of several Bunker families all living in the same area. These communities support each other over the net, and indeed, many Bunkers pursue outside vocations over the net, through telecommuting and telepresence technologies.

Memes

The following memes and practices have been associated with the Bunker subculture and are shared across different Bunker groups.

- **Homeland:** Perhaps the most quintessential feature of the Bunker subculture is the rejection of transient human settlement. Bunkers place great value in the physical location in which they live, and are often reluctant to leave their homeland, even if it is just for travel.
- **Community:** Bunkers typically form small communities, usually consisting of several extended families that live in close physical proximity to each other. These communities often grow their own social structures, rules and governance.
- **Family Tradition:** The Bunker subculture is by and large very traditional. It particularly places an emphasis on family traditions, such as religion, familial fealty and arranged marriages between different Bunker communities.

History

The early Bunkers began to coalesce around The Bunker, a net node which rose to popularity among young Amrahamic Servs sometime in the early 2180's. This node featured numerous manifestos on the importance of tradition, family and "a continuity of place," meaning a singular location for a community to call home. The node also featured an expansive forum over which sympathetic Servs

began to exchange ideas and organize. Eventually, this led to families of these Servs pooling their resources to create small stationary communities of like-thinking families, sometimes, ironically, even moving long distances to do so.

A generation of young Servs grew up frequenting this node, and as the node aged, so did the influence and vocal-ness of its members as well. A movement was born, but not without attracting negative attention from others in Serv communities.

By the late 2190's, a rift was forming between the early Bunkers and other elements in the Serv subculture. Serv leaders were speaking out against the tendency of Bunkers to place community over the purity of religion. The backlash to this was that by the early 2200's there was beginning to be talk in the Bunker community of a possible split with the rest of the Serv community.

The final catalyst for the split came in 2206, when a Serv extremist group attacked two Bunker communities. This was the final straw for Bunkers, and a manifesto declaring a new subculture was posted prominently on The Bunker.

Now, officially still less than a decade old, the Bunker culture continues to pursue its community agenda, and find its place in the system.

Bunker Subculture Stats

When a player chooses the Bunker subculture as part of character creation, she gains the following experiences.

- **Experiences:** Crafts +2, Empathy +2, Lib-Arts +2, Mechanic +2, Naturalist +2, Socialize +2

Freemers

Imagine I have a loaf of bread. If I give that bread to you, or you otherwise take it, I no longer have that bread. There is only one loaf, and that is only so much to go around.

Material things work this way. Bread works this way. Mag-trains work this way. Air works this way.

But information does not work like this. Imagine that I have a piece of knowledge, and I give it to you. Now you have the knowledge, but I still have the knowledge as well. There is not "only so much to go around." Knowledge is infinite. It is the gift that keeps on giving.

Information spreads. If I give you a piece of information, you can give it to the next person down the line. In fact, once I've shared my information with you, I've lost control of it. We now both equally possess this information. The more people who have this info, the less control there is.

In this way, spreading information increases the chances that it will be spread again. It is a positive feedback loop. This is what we mean when we say that information wants to be free.

Values

Central to the Freemer set of values is the free exchange of information. The subculture has a deep-seated believe that information is meant to be shared and spread. As such, the subculture also discourages proprietary knowledge and the keeping of secrets. Many outside the subculture see Freemers as gossips.

This attitude also applies to commodities that can be reduced to information. Software, databases and other repositories of knowledge are regularly shared among the Freemers. They also expect that those they share with will share their own knowledge in turn.

Many Freemer are inclined to experiment with new economic concepts. A prestige or gift-based economy is something many Freemers aspire to achieve, even if it largely remains a work-in-progress.

Memes

The following memes and practices have been associated with the Freemer subculture.

- **Bird Symbol:** The Freemers frequently use a stylized bird as both a symbol for their subculture, and as something of a mascot, representing the free exchange of knowledge. This symbol can be found on net nodes, on locations promising free speech and on popular software.

- **Freedom of Information:** Central to the Freemer value system is the free spread of information. This value features heavily in Freemer memes as well, with entire net nodes and locations zoned specifically for this sort of exchange.

- **Stylized Realism:** The Freemer aesthetic blends the stylized "plastic" look of the Former subculture with the raw "authentic" look of the Entro subculture. The resulting mix is something of a stylized realism, with appearances that seem elegantly disheveled and a manufactured look that is intended to mimic the handcrafted.

Below are a few choice slang terms used by the Freemer subculture. These can be used for inspiration and roleplaying purposes when playing a Freemer.

- **Bian:** Something which is cutting-edge; New and exciting
- **Cred:** Money, particularly of a hard currency
- **Denar:** Something which comes with an unspoken price, usually paid in favors or servitude; frequently used with a negative connotation
- **D/L:** Download
- **Gotuzi:** Someone who got what she has through favoritism; A suck up
- **Gratis:** Something that is given freely, without the expectation of monetary compensation
- **Libre:** Someone who is free to do as she pleases, particularly lacking any sort of contracts, NDAs or other agreements that would hamper her choices

History

The Freemer subculture is an odd amalgamation, originating from a merger of disaffected groups from both the Entro and Former subcultures. Both major subcultures see Freemers as being a satellite of the other subculture, but the truth is somewhere in between.

A young movement, the Freemers got their start in the 2170's, as some groups within the Entro subculture became increasingly dissatisfied with the hardline stance and widespread negative reputation possessed by their culture. They began to organize and by the 2180's were branded the Soft Entros.

Meanwhile, the Former subculture had just finished up a long upswing dating back to the aftermath of World War IV. This period of prosperity had resulted in gains there were unevenly distributed among Formers. This uneven distribution was the cause of an increasingly apparent set of fractures within the subculture.

One vocal Former minority that was particularly vehement, insisted that the Formers were missing the boat when it came to the revolution in AR technology. Frustrated with the lack of development in this area, they broke with the Formers in the late 2180's.

Unfortunately, their early foray into AR was lackluster. Needing outside experience in the matter, a collaboration was formed with the core Soft Entro groups. This was a resounding success. By the mid-2190's the two groups had essentially merged, and a combined set of values was beginning to take shape.

Freemer Subculture Stats

When a player chooses the Freemer subculture as part of character creation, she gains the following experiences.

- **Experiences:** Bureaucrat +2, Comp-Ops +2, Conspiracy +2, Deception +2, Program +2, Socialize +2

Nonhuman Servant

Imagine, if you will, a sealed room. This room is only accessible to the outside world through two slots: an input and an output. Through the input one can slide questions, written in Chinese. Sometime later, one will get a response through the output, also written in Chinese. Imagine for a second that these queries and responses seem sensible. Together they form a conversation. They seem intelligent.

But what if I were to tell you that there is no intelligence in the room, or at least nothing that understands the conversation. Inside is a little man. He doesn't speak Chinese, but he has a large book. In this book he can look up every question input into the room, and given will be the appropriate response, which he slides through the output. There is no understanding here. There is no real intelligence. But to the outside observer of the room, there appears to be.

This is why we cannot judge the understanding of artificial intelligence by its outside behavior. It's a flawed metric. We are not slaves to the dark ages of behaviorism! No matter how intelligent a machine appears to be, we can never be certain it understands anything! And that is why we will always remain the masters.

Values

Shared values among nonhuman servants are difficult to nail down. The subculture is less of an ideological movement, and more a grouping of necessity formed by common experience and outside prejudice. The subculture exists as a practical network of identity and support for those that aren't human.

There's nothing explicitly organized, but oftentimes one nonhuman servant will recognize a similar situation in another, empathize and provide help, if able.

Nonhuman servants are often isolated, and many aren't provided with means to interact with other in a similar morphological situation. Many of these individuals will seize any chance they get to interact with others in even a remotely similar situation.

Views in the subculture range from self-hating members to those that espouse their superiority over the human species that created them. Ultimately, however, what defines the nonhuman subculture is a simple recognition of what they are not—they are not human, and they're living in a human's world.

Memes

As nonhuman servants are so disparate and varied, it is difficult to pin down specific memes that are shared across the entire grouping. Nevertheless, a few common traits apply.

- **Nonhuman:** It's obvious, but nonhuman servants are exclusively nonhuman. As such, they face a variety of social biases, and among some groups they are not considered to be people.
- **The Net:** Many nonhuman servants with the freedom to do so will conduct much of their business over the net. This allows them to operate in an environment where many simply assume that they are human, and as such they do not as frequently run up against prejudices.
- **Brain Motif:** The brain motif—ironically that of a human brain—has

Nonhumans aren't a singular subculture in the same way most of the other subcultures are, rather they are a bunch of disparate individuals that have been lumped together. As such, nonhuman servants often pick up slang from the humans subculture they serve. Some will also rely on their unique physiology for slang. For example, a pack of uplift dogs may use different pitches of barks as a sort of makeshift slang among themselves. This both builds their community and acts as a way to exclude others. In a similar example, a group of associated androids may develop an elaborate system of slang based around beeps, boops and other synthesized noises. Neither of these slang examples are likely to be full-fledged languages, but they do allow for some common concepts to be expressed. Translation software has a particularly difficult time translating these sort of inhuman noises, as this is not the target market for most software and most software packages are designed to filter for the human voice.

come to be a symbol of the movement to accept all intelligent nonhumans as people, complete with all of the rights and responsibilities that includes. How one determines what counts as intelligence remains hotly debated.

History

The earliest nonhuman servants were primitive uplifts developed in the 2110's. Part of the genetic experiments which gave rise to the Malformed Generation, these early uplifts were generally isolated individuals developed in labs and then studied for behavioral and morphological development throughout the lives. Experimentation along these lines would continue, becoming increasingly popular and successful until the early 2130's, when the backlash against the failures of genetic manipulation would rob these studies of most of their funding.

Early uplifts didn't have access to electronic vocal boxes, and thus their communication opportunities were limited. Electronic vocal boxes for uplifts were only beginning to be developed in the 2130's, around the time uplift research was losing funding. This would delay their widespread adoption until after World War IV.

Androids and emergent AIs began to join the mix of nonhuman servants after the success of Microdyne's Embryo project in 2188. Most of these are still only academic prototypes, but their similarity of experience has lumped them in with the earlier uplifts. It remains to be seen whether these AI developments will be seen as a dead end, or if they will give rise to a new boom in research.

Nonhuman Servant Subculture Stats

When a player chooses the Nonhuman Servant subculture as part of character creation, she gains the following experiences.

- **Experiences:** Athletics +2, Awareness +2, Bio-Sci +2, Comp-Ops +2, Empathy +2, Medic +2

Postals

To be human is to be flawed, to be inferior, to be a slave to baser instincts. Fourteen million years of evolution tell us to live in tribes. To live near trees. To fight for mates. To get worms, fear predators and die. Jugeum. Look around you! What we're evolved for is no longer relevant. The world has changed, and left evolution trailing behind. We're in uncharted territories now, it's all andoen!

But evolution has taught us an important lesson. The cold truth of the universe is: adapt or die. We need to leave behind what makes us human, for it shackles us to the past. It's a weight dragging us down, drowning us, suffocating us.

We need to become more than human. We need to become post-human. Only then will we be adapted to the world in which we find ourselves—the world of now, and of the future.

Values

The Postal subculture is a radical outgrowth of the Techno subculture, having varying degrees of separation over the decades. As a satellite subculture, the Postals have inherited most of the values of the Techno subculture, except dialed up to eleven. More than anything, they prize the march of progress and reject human necessitates, intuition and biological limitations. The subculture regularly latches on to the latest trends and technologies, leaving behind those that have proven obsolete, or which have run their course.

As a whole, the subculture literally attempts to practice "post-humanity." It embraces implants to a degree which is not socially acceptable in other subcultures. Members pursue radical genelines or other significant modifications to the human genome. It organizes itself in experimental and machine-like ways.

Memes

The following memes and practices have been associated with the Postal subculture.

- **Implants:** While implants are either looked down upon or not in vogue among the majority of the system's subcultures, among the Postals, implants have become a staple of the subculture— the more obvious and flashy the better. They are as much a fashion statement as they are objects of utility.
- **Radical Genelines:** Postals are more likely to embrace radical genelines for their children than other subcultures. Individuals with radical genelines may also find themselves drifting into the Postal subculture because of this acceptance.
- **Cyber-Eye Motif:** The cyber-eye image has become an iconic symbol of the Postal subculture in art and other imagery. It features an obviously inhuman cybernetic eye, complete with a glowing red iris and a bulging protrusion from the skull.

History

Many Postal beliefs go back over a century, and even predate the rise of the Techno subculture. It is only in the last few decades, however, that the Postals have been seen as a subculture in their own right, with a connection to the Technos that has waxed or waned over the years.

The earliest declarations of Postal belief go back to the rise of elective cybernetic implants in the 2080's. These beliefs remain a very fringe part of mainstream culture, and later that of the Techno subculture, after its rise in the 2100's.

Slowly, Postal beliefs began to coalesce into a movement. In the 2110's there was a boom in genetic research and human prenatal manipulation. This was coupled with resurgence of implants being in vogue, and finally the Postal movement found its footing, rising to a position of prominence in the early Techno subculture.

By the 2130's, all this would change. The earlier genetic experiments gave rise to the Malformed Generation, and soon there was a sustained backlash against all but basic health-related genetic changes. Implants also fell out of fashion, leaving the Postal movement also out of favor.

Throughout the 2130's and 2140's, the Postals began to drift apart from the majority of the Techno subculture.

However, World War IV and support for the Eastern Powers brought them back into the fold, delaying their departure from the Technos by several more decades.

The 2170's saw the rise of AR implants—championed by the Postals. With this success they continued to drift away from the rest of the Techno subculture. The emergence of the Postals as a subculture in their own right has no obvious breaking point, but rather was a gradual process. Although the Postal moniker had been in use since the 2130's, it only began to be used to refer to the Postals as a separate subculture sometime in the late 2170's, and really took off in the 2190's.

Postal Subculture Stats

When a player chooses the Postal subculture as part of character creation, she gains the following experiences.

- **Experiences:** Bio-Sci +2, Conspiracy +2, Engineer +2, Medic +2, Phy-Sci +2, Program +2

Tribals

We have forgotten our roots. We have forgotten our past. We have built our society on a foundation of lies, building up structures and social structures that are at odds with everything our instincts tell us. This cannot endure. Sooner or later our natures will always get the best of us. To think that you can overcome, or that you know better than 14 million years of evolution is hubris of the highest order!

Make peace with your animal nature. Find your tribe. Find happiness. Walk in lock-step with your instincts. Fighting them is a waste of energy. It makes you less fit, in the evolutionary sense. Look back. Learn from the past so that you do not repeat its mistakes. Know your friends from the fremders.

The human mind can only maintain about 150 relationships with other individuals. Respect this number. Don't let the social net fool you. Respect your tribe. Live with your tribe.

Values

The Tribal subculture is a satellite of the larger Neoret subculture. Like the Neorets, the Tribals look back at the past with a romanticized, if somewhat revisionist, point of view. The Tribals, however, fixate on the past tribal structures of humanity, arguing that a return to these structures would be beneficial. They believe that human nature has been ignored for too long, resulting in a situation which many find goes against their instincts. This results in many people being unhappy, even if they do not realize the ultimate source of their unhappiness.

Tribals tend to self-organize into small gangs, which they see as their tribe. These tribes tend to have an "us versus the world" attitude, seeing most other Tribals as the friend, and outside social structure as the enemy. Towards this end, many Tribals actively try to avoid registration in outside databases, citizenships or registries. This lack of outside registration forces many tribes to squat in derelict urban buildings or abandoned habs.

Memes

The following cultural trappings and practices have arisen to prominence in the Tribal subculture in the past few decades:

- **Tribes:** One of the most distinguishing features of the Tribal subculture is the subcultural tendency to arrange themselves into small bands, usually in the range of four to twenty adults. These tribes function as an important communal unit.
- **Headdresses:** In one of the many influences the Neoret subculture has had on the Tribal subculture, the leaders of many Tribal groups have taken up wearing elaborate headdresses as a symbol of their authority. Often these headdresses come to be symbols of the tribe itself.
- **Squatting:** Tribes will often attempt not to tie themselves down to a single hab or other headquarters. Many will roam from spot to spot within a city or colony, squatting in abandoned structures, maintenance areas or tunnels.

History

Romanticizing the past tribal structures of humanity is nothing new, going

back at least to Rousseau's concept of the noble savage. In many ways this romanticization has been with society all along, even if it hasn't been lived to the extent to which the Tribals take it.

Originally, the Tribals were a small school of thought within the Heed subculture. When the Neorets broke away from the Heeds over political differences in World War IV, the proto-Tribals sided with the Neorets and thus became part of that subculture. A "back to basics" school of thought was in vogue in the aftermath of the war, and the Tribal movement benefitted from this, swelling their numbers until they became a sizable number within the Neoret subculture.

In the mid-2180's, however, the Contemp Victorian subculture broke apart, and the Neorets absorbed many of the pieces. This led to a sudden shift within the Neorets,

as Contemp Victorian ideas influenced the subculture, driving it further away from the values of those in the Tribal camp.

The Tribal subculture would break away shortly after this shift, becoming their own minor subculture and severing ties with the Neorets. Over the next couple decades the Tribals would further go their own way, further organizing themselves into tribes and popularizing among themselves a rejection of registration and census with outside groups and authorities.

Tribal Subculture Stats

When a player chooses the Tribal subculture as part of character creation, she gains the following experiences.

- **Experiences:** Awareness +2, Investigate +2, Melee +2, Naturalist +2, Socialize +2, Thievery +2

Virtuals

You've heard of utilitarianism, right? The greatest good for the greatest number of people, and all that, a net increase in happiness. Well, let me ask you a question: Would you rather be a handsome corp executive who's a master fencer and can fly, or a wage slave in small, dank hab?

The answer's obvious, right? Every year the quality of experience for simspaces and virtual worlds gets better. Pretty soon they're going to be indistinguishable from realsies. Does it matter if you're a corp executive in a virtual world, if it means you live a happier and more fulfilling life?

I'm not just saying, "Yay! Escapism!" I'm saying this is a moral imperative. I'm saying in simspaces, we can provide great lives for a greater number of people. What's more, those people will have a lower energy consumption, consume less resources and pop out fewer babies than people spending more of their time in meatspace. We have a population going on 13 billion. We can't provide meaningful lives for that many people in the real world. Virtual reality will save us all!

Values

The Virtuals are a long-loved minor subculture, which believe that the pinnacle of human happiness and expression can only be achieved in simspaces or other virtual environments. For many Virtuals this is not just an exaltation of escapism; it's a calling and a moral imperative. Many also argue that meatspace is becoming increasingly obsolete, and is inherently limited. For many Virtuals, their lack of reliance on meatspace is a point of pride.

Once an individual has embraced the importance of simspaces, Virtuals are extremely permissive in regards to personal tastes, expression and views. They value happiness and different virtual experiences, in many ways resembling the Heed subculture in their personal aims.

Memes

The following memes and practices have come to be associated with the Virtual subculture.

- **Feeding Tubes:** Many Virtuals try to minimize the time they spend in meatspace, reducing practices like feeding and hygiene to their bare minimum. Many have elaborate net connection pods, with feeding tubes and other attachments to handle their biological needs while spending time in a simspace.
- **Avatar Library:** Pretty much every Virtual has a huge wardrobe of avatars that can be worn in different simspaces or for different occasions. Many like to show off particularly rare or fashionable avatars, or exhibit the extent of their collection.
- **Downsizing:** Many Virtuals take pride in how small or spartan their hab is. Some will even broadcast this to put on display their conspicuous lack of meatspace consumption.

History

Unlike most minor subcultures, the Virtuals are neither an outgrowth nor a satellite of any major subculture. Instead, they are a long-lived independent subculture, breaking away from mainstream culture on their own sometime in the

2080's. This makes them among the oldest still-existent subcultures, even if they are often overlooked due to their minor status.

The valuation of life on the net has been around almost as long as the net itself. The rise of AR headsets in the 2050's, however, leads to numerous breakthroughs in both augmented and virtual realities. The resulting boom led to the advent of damaging sensory recoding tech in the 2070's, and although brain-damaging experience chips were a scourge on society, they also provided a wealth of data, which when applied to virtual reality, led to the modern simspace.

Virtuals were at the forefront of these breakthroughs, proselytizing the benefits of a life spent on the net in various virtual realities. The subculture still keeps many of these early simspaces running, as a sort of museum piece, showing off how far the technology has come.

Although the subculture waned in the early 2100's, it got a boost in the aftermath of World War IV, as many sought an escape from the horrors of war and its aftermath. A second boost was had in the 2180's, when the rise of non-damaging experience playback again led to breakthroughs in the realm of simspaces. Although these two events led the Virtuals to accept many newcomers into their fold, ultimately the subculture remained a minor one.

Virtual Subculture Stats

When a player chooses the Virtual subculture as part of character creation, she gains the following experiences.

- **Experiences:** Comp-Ops +2, Conspiracy +2, Engineer +2, Lib-Arts +2, Mechanic +2, Program +2

Portraying Subcultures

As a GM, subculture can be an easy thing to forget if some plot point doesn't revolve around it. Below are some tips and tricks for how to represent, portray and make the best use of subcultures in a *Shadows Over Sol* game.

Locations

When writing an adventure, it is good to think about the locations where the player characters are likely to find themselves during the events of the scenario. For example, a particular adventure might feature a "dive bar," a "creepy mining outpost" and a "corp office."

When coming up with these locations, give each of them a subcultural association. Even if it's not important to the plot, pick something. This not only helps regularly work subcultures into a game, it also gives depth and flavor to the place.

When making up a new NPC on the fly who is to be encountered in that location, it also gives something to quickly work with. An Entro dive bar is going to have a very different feel and cast of regulars than a bar where those in the Former subculture go to slum it for a while.

Additionally, subcultures can be used to make a location more inviting or more threatening. A PC trying to fake her way into a corp office is going to have an easier time of it if she is familiar with its dominant subculture. She's going to be at the top of her social game there. On the other hand, if she's not familiar with the office subculture, there are unknown social queues she may trip over, and the scene is made more challenging. In fact, this is one of the best times for a GM to whip out the book and work some of the different subcultural slang into her speech. This helps emphasize the lack of familiarity with the culture.

AR Tags

Another thing to remember is that different subcultures largely have their own AR tag clouds. These can be used to pass along key information to different players or to give a nuanced view of a particular place, event or person. Simply declare that a PC of the approprie subculture notices the posted information.

Minor NPCs

When coming up with minor NPCs, we recommend getting in the habit of assigning them a subculture, even if that choice is arbitrary. This provides a useful hook for the GM to give that NPC some personality when she comes up in play. It also can give players a hook for interacting with that character. ("Hey, we're both Ghostmen here. You can trust me...")

Key NPCs

It is even more important to think about subculture when coming up with key NPCs. Subculture provides a ready baseline for the character's views, values and how she might relate to the player characters. This also cuts both ways. Player characters might favorably or unfavorably view the NPC based on how their own subculture relates to that of the other character.

Profession & Lifestyles

Choosing a starting Lifestyle value can be difficult without some context of what's normal for different professions. Below, a number of different careers are listed, along with their median associated Lifestyle score.

- **Accountant:** Lifestyle 6
- **Actor, Theatrical:** Lifestyle 4
- **Assistant, Executive:** Lifestyle 5
- **Artist:** Lifestyle 3
- **Bounty Hunter:** Lifestyle 5
- **Broker, Financial:** Lifestyle 8
- **Carpenter:** Lifestyle 6
- **Celebrity, Sports:** Lifestyle 8
- **Celebrity, Vids:** Lifestyle 9
- **Clergy, Ordained:** Lifestyle 4
- **Cook, Restaurant:** Lifestyle 4
- **Corp Executive:** Lifestyle 10
- **Corp Middle Manage.:** Lifestyle 8
- **Counselor, Genetic:** Lifestyle 5
- **Counselor, Personal:** Lifestyle 3
- **Customer Service:** Lifestyle 4
- **Doctor, Medical:** Lifestyle 7
- **Engineer, Software:** Lifestyle 7
- **Engineer, Spaceship:** Lifestyle 6
- **Janitor:** Lifestyle 3
- **Laborer, Construction:** Lifestyle 4
- **Laborer, Shipping:** Lifestyle 3
- **Mechanic, Groundcar:** Lifestyle 6
- **Mechanic, Life Support:** Lifestyle 6
- **Military, Enlisted:** Lifestyle 3
- **Military, Officer:** Lifestyle 5
- **Miner, Asteroid:** Lifestyle 4
- **Nurse:** Lifestyle 5
- **Pilot, Civilian Spaceship:** Lifestyle 6
- **Professor:** Lifestyle 6
- **Scientist, Astronomical:** Lifestyle 5
- **Scientist, Biological:** Lifestyle 6
- **Security Guard, Private:** Lifestyle 5
- **Teacher, Primary Ed.:** Lifestyle 5

Shadows Over Sol

How would society change if fully-sentient AI became possible, or even common? What challenges would an android player character face in society? What more radical genelines have been created? Ultimately science fiction is about social and technological change. *Shadows Over Sol: Beyond Human* is here to help facilitate these stories!

Shadows Over Sol: Beyond Human is a key supplement for *Shadows Over Sol*. Its features include:

- Rules for playing an android or an uplifted animal!
- Expanded character creation options, including 12 new genelines, 6 new subcultures and an optional point-buy system for generating a character's stats and skills!
- A complete character background generator!
- New systems for handling cover identities and a character's ever-dwindling sanity!

Tab Creations

SAGA MACHINE