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To you.

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Kudos, gang!

— Bates



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TRINITY™ PLAYERS GUIDE

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NASCENDANCY

Rosalyn McCree dropped her duffel bag on the couch and smiled nervously at the woman relaxing in the suite's common room. The redhead grinned back at her.

"Welcome to Orgotek, blondie. Take a seat, have a drink; tell me all your deep, dark secrets."

"Thanks," Rosalyn said, settling onto the couch. She picked a carafe from the selection on the center table and poured herself a glass of apple juice. "I'm Rosalyn, by the way."

"Pleasure indeed. I'm Melody Fischer, the self-designated loudmouth of this batch. Originally from Perth, but I've been doing research work off your country's west coast long enough to consider myself an honorary fascist." Her easy smile belied any barb to her words.

Rosalyn sipped her juice. "What do you research?"

"Fish."

"Fish?"

"It's a lot easier for people to understand than 'proprioreception of vertebrate poikilotherms,' don't you think?" Melody explained. "Most marine biologists throw as much vocabulary as they can at you to sound important, but when it comes down to it, I live on a converted oil rig with 30 people as dull as myself studying the flight reflex of fish. I'd nearly convinced myself I was content with it."

"And how'd you get here?"

Melody brushed a strand of hair from her eyes. "A while ago, a trade journal published a paper I wrote on possible applications of undersea biotech. So a week later Orgosoft Farms sends a rep who, after waving his hands in the air and rubbing goat entrails over my body, tells me I'm a psyq ready to pop. Offers me a job on the spot — 'pending confirmation of an official test,' of course. Double my salary and rub elbows with the cutest of proxies? Couldn't say no to that." Melody grinned again. "Yourself?"

"Nothing special. I tested positive and decided to go through with it."

"Come now," Melody scolded. "I tell you my life story and you hand me a grade-schooler's summary of what she did for holiday? You're not getting off that easy, love. Give us some dirt." Melody leaned forward and rubbed her hands.

Rosalyn laughed. "Dirt, huh?" Warming to Melody's friendly bluster, Rosalyn offered, "I'm a Scorpio, I like long walks on the beach, and my turn-offs are smoking, bad breath, and Aberrants. I graduated from Georgia Tech's electrical

engineering program with a focus in communications. My thesis was about the further development of Super-Optimal Spread-Spectrum Direct-Sequence Code-Division Multiple-Access detection schemes." Her mouth quirked in a smile. "I say that so people won't ask me what I do; I don't want anyone feigning interest in MUML or signal degradation when it's just as boring as it sounds."

"DS-CDMA is ancient history," said a new voice. Turning in her seat, Rosalyn saw a lanky black man emerge from one of the suite's bedrooms. "Improving cellular communication is a waste of time because the government keeps such a tight handle on it. It's exorbitantly expensive. Only the CSA would be interested in something like that." He smiled shyly as he leaned against the doorframe. "Um... I'm Kevin, by the way." His posture and face harbored an awkwardness that made Rosalyn wonder if he was younger than he looked.

"You're right about that last part," she responded. "My father worked for the CSA before he passed away. I continued some of his unfinished work for my thesis project."

Melody laughed, then saw Rosalyn's face. "Oh, don't look at me like that. I wasn't laughing about...." After a quick pat on Rosalyn's knee, the Aussie confided, "Dear, I think it's very noble that you would continue your father's theorizing. I just can't imagine who assembled this little group of ours. Some Orgotek recruiter is going to catch hell for letting an FSM stormtrooper and the daughter of a CSA agent take a dip in their Prometheus chamber."

There was a loud snort of laughter from the kitchen alcove. "That's *ex*-stormtrooper, thank you," a rough voice barked. "And if you keep that up, I'll have your pluralistic ass shot." Rosalyn was sure that if she stood, the beefy man walking out of the kitchen would dwarf her by at least 40 centimeters. The only hair on his head was a thick gray moustache that obscured most of his mouth, but it wasn't enough to hide an easy smile. "Heya," he said, waving an apple in Rosalyn's direction. "Alfred Mason."

Agreeing mentally that this did seem like an odd group, Rosalyn asked, "What's this about you being a stormtrooper?"

Alfred grimaced around a mouthful of apple and shot a rueful smile at Melody, who pretended not to notice. "Our rather loquacious suitemate is referring to my stint in the military 30 years ago. She failed to mention I've been employed by Lumen for over a decade."

Rosalyn whistled. "So you've been with Orgotek for years. What took you so long to go through the process?"

He shrugged. "When I started, I told myself I didn't need to shoot lightning out of my ass to do my job well. Now I'm 53 and have been passed over for promotion by people half my age more times than I care to recall."

Disturbed to hear of such discrimination in the supposedly straight-shooting metacorp, Rosalyn opened her mouth to say as much. Melody interrupted, stretching loudly. "Listen up," she said, "I'm close to starving, and a fruit basket isn't going to do it for me. Let's get some real food before I collapse. Must keep our energy up if we're to sit through three weeks of pseudo-religious theory, yeh? Plus, I want to meet the other two suites while we're there."

"I'll catch up in a minute," said Rosalyn, hefting her bag. She headed to her room to unpack.

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The Orgotek Prometheus chamber wasn't nearly as imposing as Rosalyn had imagined it. She had seen pictures, of course, but in person it seemed fragile and much smaller than the gnarled, translucent behemoth presented to the media. It was lonely, she decided, quite obviously out of place amongst the multitude of ergonomic computer banks that seemed to sprout from the walls and grow around and into it. It reminded her of an old man surrounded by infants. The cabling and multitude of hoses attached to the tank made Rosalyn question who the patient

really was, here: the chamber's occupant, or the chamber itself?

She paused, taking stock of the technicians slouching in their seats at the workstations located throughout the circular chamber. *If this is where miracles happen,* she wondered, *why aren't they the least bit excited? How has the acceleration of humanity turned into a nine-to-seven job?*

"This way, Rosalyn," activation technician — Wilson Tobias, she remembered — indicated as he gently led her forward. "Are you cold?"

"I'm fine."

"Good. The gel might be cool, but it'll warm fairly quickly. Slip your feet into the stirrups and they'll tighten around your ankles. After the mask is on everything is pretty much automatic."

They stopped at the steps leading up to the chamber. Tobias offered a tentative smile. "Whenever you're ready." He turned to punch some commands into a panel. There was a soft hum, then a hiss as the tank's upper half cracked open and thick cables lifted it smoothly to the high ceiling. Large pincers gripping the diaphanous tube at the base contracted and the chamber's front split down the center, the glass-like substance bending as easily as flesh.

"You can leave your robe on the railing," Tobias said, keeping his back to her. She silently thanked him for the small courtesy as she undressed. "Walk up the steps when you're ready."

Rosalyn did as instructed, wincing as she slid into the clammy, viscous goop. She slipped her feet into the fleshy loops at the bottom of the tank. They contracted, clutching her firmly but comfortably in place. The front of the tube silently folded shut. There was a deep rumbling as more of the mucousy gel pumped into the chamber. It rose swiftly and stopped below her breasts. Tobias



helped Rosalyn slip her arms into the cuffs that dangled from the top of the tank, then brought the crab-shaped mask to her face. She closed her mouth softly around the hollow tube emerging from its underside. The legs of the mask closed, gripping her cheeks snugly. Two smaller tubes extended into her nostrils, forming a tight seal.

Rosalyn shuddered as warm biofluid filled her mouth and nose. She nearly gagged on the overpowering taste of burnt seaweed but forced herself to breathe it in. As the stuff slid into her lungs, the sensation of strangulation lessened and faded. After a few experimental breaths she looked to Tobias.

"Just relax and let the chamber do its thing. I'll be with you in spirit."

Rosalyn nodded and closed her eyes. She felt the upper portion of the tank lower into place before the fluid swelled above her breasts, her shoulders, and then her head. The quiet roar of silence washed over her as the goop worked its way into her ears. She felt a slight tingling within her and then a hazy warmth expanded throughout her mind. Rosalyn quickly faded.

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You are flying. Your arms are thrown wide, but there is no ground — only soft gray darkness. You flap your arms in delight and your stomach lurches as you gain altitude. You laugh as the wind whips at your face... for the first time in your life, you feel unattached to yourself, to gravity, to reality.

A tug at your belly suspends your elation. You look down to see a glowing white umbilicus sprouting from the middle of your abdomen, trailing down and to the left, growing needle-thin as it stretches far, far away, terminating in the hand of... Alex Cassel?

Confusion sets in as you see that the kilometers-high person far below you is indeed the Prexy, his arm extended toward you, spinning slowly and staring solemnly into the grayness. There is another tug from the cord and you realize that you only fly because the Prexy wishes it so.

"You can fly alone."

You're startled to see that Melody is suddenly flying at your right, her wide-spread arms close enough to touch. Unlike you, Melody has no cord. Her smile is almost tranquil. "If you want to fly alone, you have to come out of your shell. Come out of your shell, Rosalyn."

She falls silent and looks away.

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You're 12, leading Robbie Mercer through your parents' orchard. The wind rustles through the trees and obscures the soft padding of your sandals on the grass. As you reach the fence, you reluctantly let go of his hand and begin to climb. You know you two should be safe on the other side, for the tall weeds growing along the fence are thick enough to obscure you.

Robbie lands beside you, dropping to a crouch. The setting sun shines into your eyes and for an instant he is a shadow limned with fire. You feel as though the butterflies are trying to scratch their way out of your stomach as you dart forward and fumble for his lips. After a quick moment of rubbery wetness, you pull away to find that your bodies are much closer. Robbie's breath is a hot staccato whispering across your face.

You press together once more. You can't help but think that all this is indescribable and wonderful, all wrapped up in one wet, fleshy moment of gentle asphyxiation. You feel as though you're swimming, but that the water is inside you. The fusion of your mouths lights a cold fire inside as it engulfs your reality.

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There is a brief scream of metal on metal and then you are away, encompassed by a dark, silent cold. Below you the blue-white marble of Earth fills your perspective. For long moments you rumble onward, the slowly growing panorama your only indication of progress.

You quiver as you feel the first indications of atmosphere buffeting you about.

You grow red-warm, yellow-hot, and white-blistering as you push through at three kilometers per second, intent on your destination. There is a dull moan that grows into a bellow as the air itself tries to deny you passage.

The light fades and you plunge into blinding white clouds. Everything is a rapid flurry of white and gray, but now you are through, staring at a small speck of brown and green to the east of a large mass of land. You know this is where you must go. You shudder as a burst of acceleration roars through your body and servomotors subtly shift your course. The speck grows until finally it comprises your field of vision. You can make out buildings, roads, and cars. You imagine that you can see people.

Everything stops. You feel a soft heat growing within that you desperately wants to share with all below. The warm itching becomes painful in its need for release; swelling, insisting, blossoming. You open your mouth wide to herald the gift you are to bestow. You feel as though you're burning, the flames rising inside you. The cold fire of fusion lights within as you engulf Bahrain.

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You are lightning!

For half an instant, you are 10 kilometers tall and 97.9 million volts!

Then you are gone.

>>> <<<

The chattering is coming from your teeth. You are naked and crouching in darkness. You can't feel your feet and even with hands clutched tightly beneath crossed arms, your fingers are ready to snap off. You don't think you could stop shivering if you tried.

A thin sliver of light appears in the darkness, then widens. It is so bright that you cover your eyes to keep from going blind. There is a great rush of air and a loud moaning as you are pulled toward the light. You feel something warm wrap around you and then it lifts you away. You want to see what it is, but even now the brightness is working its way around your arms, forcing its way past your closed lids. You realize you're screaming as the rending brightness slams through your head. A starburst of white blossoms behind your eyes. Everything is slippery cool and brilliant for a moment as the brightness tugs at you, pulling you upright, throwing your arms back, and slamming your eyes open. The light speaks.

"It's time to go, Rosalyn. Follow me out. This way...."

The light is deafening.

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"—or you're getting ice-water in the face."

She opened her eyes and saw Alfred Mason standing over her.

"That did the trick." He grinned behind his moustache. "You ready to take on the world?"

"What happened? The last thing I remember I was... dreaming?"

Mason nodded, sitting heavily on the edge of her bed. "You were asleep when it finished, so they cleaned you up and brought you to this ward. You didn't miss anything. I spent half an hour trying to wash that green crap off me. It was like snot, but more persistent."

Rosalyn smiled, then winced. Her cheeks were sore. "How are the others?"

"Kevin and I came through fine. I've been boring him with tales of life in the military all morning. Melody is a little shaken up, but she should be okay."

"That's good." Rosalyn paused. "Alfred... do you feel any different?"

He shook his head. "Not that I've noticed yet, but Kevin's hair keeps frizzing up. If he shaves it like mine, I don't think it'll bother him." Alfred shook her knee gently and stood. "Now, stop wasting the day. After you change, we'll head back to the suite for dinner. Tomorrow we're off to the training campus. After 15 years of education, your first task in the real world is... to go back to school."

Rosalyn groaned and swatted him with her pillow.

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"What's your story?" scowled Melody. Rosalyn tried not to laugh, but the halo of red hair extending from Melody's scalp forced a giggle. Melody followed Rosalyn's gaze and brought her hands to her head.

"Oh." She sighed and glared at Mendenhall. "I sign up for a research position and you're showing me how to zap the piss out of training dummies. Is the biotech going to try to make a meal of me?"

Mendenhall smiled and pointed at the scorched half-mannequin on the other side of the small training room. "No, but we want you to do this so you're aware of what you're capable of. Better to know your limits now than to accidentally destroy a project you work on for two months straight, yeh? Also, we want you to know how to defend yourself."

"From what, Aberrants?"

Mendenhall grimaced. "Barring full-scale invasion, you're more likely to die of a heart attack than you are to encounter an Aberrant. You're odds'd be quite different if you were in Operations, but you'll most likely spend your life in the relative safety of laboratories. With greater refinement, you'll be able to manipulate the biotech matrices on a level not possible without intuition and noetic fields to guide you. You'll jolt bioapps out of their dormant states with a touch, curb negative cyclical phase states with a wave of your hand, and power your minicomp without its battery."

He paused, glancing briefly at Rosalyn. "As electrokinetics, we control the flow of energy, focusing it to produce effects in what the rest of humanity calls the 'physical universe.'" Mendenhall waggled a finger in warning. "Problem is, you've been handed coilguns without instruction manuals. It's my job to teach you where and how to point them. Now, Rosalyn, let's see you reset my watch to 12 o'clock noon."

Rosalyn ignored Melody's smug grin and focused on Mendenhall's Orgonex chronometer. She closed her eyes and held her breath, trying to feel the watch's energies with her mind. After a long pause she exhaled sharply and opened her eyes.

"I can't do it," She admitted, avoiding Mendenhall's inquisitive gaze.

He shook his head and smiled encouragingly. "Of course you can. You're just not sure how yet. It's like wiggling your ears — once you know how to do it you can't forget."

"It's so frustrating, though," Rosalyn protested, irritated with her failure. "I'll never get it to work."

"You know that's not true," Mendenhall admonished gently. "Start small, but think big. When you graduate next month, you'll be able to drive a car while relaxing in the back seat. All you need is practice."

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Rosalyn flinched as the man in the sweatshirt slammed the butt of his pistol into the stewardess' face.

"I told you to move, cunt! Now get over there and quit moaning."

"Would you like some refreshing orange juice?" the drink cart offered.

The pistol answered, humming twice. Acrid smoke and the stench of burnt plastic filled the air. A baby began to cry. Rosalyn gripped her armrests tightly and kept her eyes lowered. Minutes ago she was just another passenger on the seven pm flight from O'Hare. Now she was a hostage.

Alfred had invited the three of them to visit his home in the Chicago arcology after graduating from Orgotek's New York training campus. Melody declined, shipping out early to her assignment in San Francisco, but not before they all celebrated in what Rosalyn guessed had been half of New York's bars. Once in Chicago, she and Kevin helped Alfred pack his things to ship to Olympus. All three of them were to report there for assignment and had booked a flight (Chicago-Baltimore-Luna) the following weekend. They hadn't counted on the man seated at the front of coach standing up and waving a gun around.

"Wackerly's drill?" she whispered to Alfred, seated in the aisle seat. He nodded, carefully undoing his seat-belt buckle. Kevin, seated in the 858's middle bank of seats, nodded as well.

Alfred exhaled softly and closed his eyes, faint flickers of electricity dancing around his lids. "Lights out," he whispered.

Rosalyn felt a subtle hum prickling her scalp before the dim light of the cabin dropped to near blackness. She could still make out enough to align the energy between herself and the drink cart. A moment later, Rosalyn left the confused cries of passengers behind as part of her consciousness fused with the cart's simple SI circuitry. Rosalyn winced as she became aware that one of her speakers was damaged and that her freezer unit was leaking badly. She couldn't serve cold drinks to the passengers without a significant overhaul.

However, there was nothing wrong with Rosalyn's wheels.

She disengaged her brakes and shot forward, speeding along the left aisle, turning at the last moment to slam the terrorist into the partition between coach and business class. After activating her brakes, she relaxed her focus and blinked as she was once again merely Rosalyn.

The lights returned and she saw Kevin point his forefinger at the terrorist and cock his thumb. A blue-white bolt arced from his finger and the man shrieked, dropping the laser pistol and writhing against the partition. Another bolt flickered into his chest and the terrorist slumped onto the cart, quivering.

Alfred hurried forward and picked up the gun, tucking it into his belt.

"Stay clam folks, everything's under con—"

"*Behind you!*" Kevin shrieked. Alfred spun as a man with a machine pistol burst through the curtains.

Rosalyn saw Alfred's hand snap up, palm open, and a bar of light brighter than the sun blasted the other terrorist's eyes. The man swung the gun up and around wildly until Alfred grabbed his arm and forced the weapon down between them.

cough cough cough

Alfred jerked, then snarled and yanked the gun out of the man's hand. "You shot me, asshole!" The former soldier spat as he shoved the pistol into the terrorist's surprised face. Rosalyn looked away.

cough

Screams erupted once again. Rosalyn numbly made her way to where Alfred slouched heavily against the bulkhead. She pointedly avoided looking at the body next to him. Alfred was clutching his side, his hands and shirt soaked with blood.

"Are you—"

"Might be more," he gasped, waving her forward. "Cockpit. Check cockpit. Can you—?"

"I'll lock it from here. Kevin, sweep forward. I'll join you in a minute."

Kevin was sweating heavily, but he nodded. Alfred grabbed her arm. "If... pilot dies, you... can land this," he croaked. "Computer knows... Just tell it where."

"Shhh.... stay quiet." Rosalyn aligned her energy with the plane's and sought the cockpit door controls in her mind.

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"Any change in Alfred's condition?" Rosalyn heard Kevin ask, the strong scent of coffee informing her that he'd found the vender.

"No," she replied, opening her eyes. "The nurse said he's still in critical."

"He's tough, Rosalyn. He'll pull through."

"I'm sure."

Kevin set both cups of coffee on the floor and placed his arm around her. Rosalyn said nothing. Neither did Kevin, for which she was grateful.

"I caught a news report in the cafeteria."

"What did it say?"



Kevin frowned. "The wife and son of a senator from Great Lakes were in first class," he said flatly, picking up one of the cups. "Apparently some Canadian separatists wanted to send a message. They were going to take the wife and kid hostage, force the plane down, wait for the cameras to show up, and then kill them on the air."

"What?! How did they get their weapons past security?"

"They had inside help at Chicago. At least, that's what the news said." He sipped his coffee, then scowled and hurled it into the trash. The stink of ozone radiated form Kevin as he snarled, "Rosalyn, they didn't even mention us! We saved all 200 people on that flight and we're not even a fucking *afterthought*! Just some crap about the 'heroic efforts of the flight crew' and footage of airport security taking away the guy you locked in the cockpit. Alfred could be dead by morning and yet nobody thanked us. Nobody thanked him. Nobody will ever know!"

"That's bullshit!" Rosalyn was startled by the anger in her own voice, but forced herself to continue. "If we weren't there, every one of those people would have died. You saw those guys; they were panicked, disorganized. If Alfred hadn't done what he had, one of them would have fired through a bulkhead, depressurizing the cabin and we'd be scattered all over Ohio." After a breath, she continued more quietly. "We did save 200 people, Kevin. We know it, and they know it. We were there and we could help, so we did. *That's* what matters."

"I guess."

"You 'guess?'" The sharp tone returned to her voice. "Kevin, being a psion isn't about fame, or credit, or even respect. We do what we can with what we're given and hope to God we've made a difference. Besides, if we were in this for ourselves we'd have joined the Norça."

Kevin smiled slowly. "You're right. I'm just worried about Alfred. I lost perspective." He sighed. "So what do we do next?"

Rosalyn smiled and put her arm around him. "'Start small, think big.' Next we save the universe."

Kevin snorted. Rosalyn sipped her coffee. They sat together in silence.

In every era of its history, humanity faced innumerable challenges to its survival. So far, we've overcome each one. Of course, that doesn't mean that things get any easier with time. In fact, it's generally the reverse — the stakes are raised again and again, and the bet is all or nothing.

The 22nd century is no different. Aside from threats from without — Aberrants, aliens — humanity faces many dangers from within its own ranks as well. Although the United Nations has grown into a commanding role among Earth's countries, mankind is still far from having a unified government. Indeed, much of what the UN's about involves maintaining (or enforcing) peace among various nations.

Society itself is in a tumult. The age-old causes of unrest still exist — hunger, poverty, discrimination — and the fast pace of life doesn't make coping with it any easier. Then there are the psions. Joe Hologram already had enough on his mind without the emergence of humans with strange powers (not to mention the parallels this drew with the previous century's ultimately tragic rise of Aberrants). Even after almost two decades, psions still search for a firm role in society, other than as "humanity's protectors" — or "a new menace," as some believe.

And, as the wheel of change continues in its ceaseless revolutions, the centuries-old Æon Trinity tries with increasing difficulty to adjust and adapt in its role as mankind's protector.

A Look Inside

Certainly, there are many factors that conspire to make the 22nd century universe the most chaotic — and wondrous — ever to face mankind. The Trinity Players Guide takes a detailed look at a number of these elements. Certainly, even in a book this size, we can't outline everything we'd like to. That falls to you fundamentally anyway; it's your game, after all.

Still, this book does shed a fair bit of light into some important corners of the Trinity Universe. It's a tool for players (and Storytellers), designed to broaden the scope of your **Trinity** game, no matter where in the universe you go.

Breakdown

Chapter One: The Æon Trinity is an overview of the powerful society that influences much of the modern universe. You'll learn what it's really all about — its organization, its involvement, its goals. Additionally, there are details on the roles individuals can play within Æon — including benefits of status and special privileges each division enjoys.

Chapter Two: The Psi Orders describes each psion group in more detail, from the bureaucratic Æsculapians to the mysterious Upeo wa Macho. Not only will you see more about each order's inner workings, you'll discover what's involved in becoming a member (psion or neutral), as well as how to advance and ways to leave — or be expelled.

Chapter Three: Modern Society is about exactly that — human culture in the 2120s. Find out what Joe Hologram thinks of psions and aliens. Learn the influence the United Nations holds over the modern age. Gain insight into what, exactly, the Aberrants are up to now.

Chapter Four: Developing Character expands the character creation process even further. Here you'll find new Abilities and modifications to existing ones and detailed explanations of Backgrounds. Perhaps of greatest interest to the savvy player, this is where you'll discover a comprehensive listing of Merits and Flaws you may use to flesh out your Trinity character even further.

Chapter Five: Psi is, again, fairly self-explanatory. Much as the previous chapter delves into the options possible in Abilities and Backgrounds, this section outlines more clearly just what Psi — and psi — is. In this chapter, discover revealing data on noetic energy and its function in the Trinity Universe.

Chapter Six: Option: Free-Form Techniques is a bit of a departure from the rest of the book. This hefty chapter provides you with a completely new method of psi power use. Substituted for the Aptitude system in **Trinity**, this allows for psi to have a more dynamic, free wheeling role in your game.

But Enough About Me....

I'm sure your appetite has been whetted enough at this point, so more words here would be wasted. Go ahead, dive in; see what else lies out there in the vast Trinity Universe....

The guiding credo of "Hope, Sacrifice, Unity" pervades every aspect of the Æon Trinity's organization. Its every level, from the Æon Council's central leadership to the smallest and most far-flung chapter-house, is dedicated to restoring hope to humanity through good works and the vision of a brighter future. Each Trinity employee and operative is subtly urged to sacrifice his own individual goals and agendas for the greater good of humanity. And above all, Æon's ability to function depends on unity, both in terms of internal cooperation between the three divisions — Neptune, Triton and Proteus — and its ability to forge successful working relationships externally, whether with the psi orders or with humanity's ruling governmental bodies.

General Structure

Central Headquarters

Æon's main headquarters remains in Chicago, the city where the organization began back in 1923. Originally, the Æon Society for Gentlemen was housed in a charming four-story brownstone on the city's North Side, a few blocks off Lake Michigan and a quick rapid transit ride from Wrigley Field. Over the years, like the organization itself, Æon's headquarters have expanded outward, downward, and skyward.

The Trinity's central complex, devoted to Neptune, now covers a significant portion of the arcological sector known as the Chicago Cube. This facility has a commanding view of Lake Michigan and enjoys a private landing pad on the sector roof. The interior is decorated in what amounts to a history lesson. The first few floors follow 1920s styles. Each higher level shifts the style ahead another decade — Art Deco and American Craftsman, Art Nouveau, Wright's early style, Le Corbussier's flat designs, Post-Modern, New Millennium. The top floors, dedicated to Neptune senior management, are influenced by natural and cultural styles found everywhere that Æon operates — *faux* vistas of ocean-bottom volcanic labyrinths, African organic patterns, elaborate geometry emulating crystal habitats among Saturn's rings. Large arcology sectors dominate Chicago's lakefront and environs, but the Chicago Cube is a distinctive cultural center by virtue of Æon's presence. The original brownstone, renovated countless times, is presently used as the local Chicago chapter-house.

When the old Æon Society founded a separate research division, it bought properties adjacent to the University of Chicago. Although the entire area was severely damaged during the Aberrant War, the surviving facilities became the nucleus of the modern Triton Division headquarters.

Those outside Æon who are aware of Proteus' true role have little information on where the division is headquartered. Speculation runs rampant, but the truth is that Proteus' main complex is underneath Lake Michigan. This site includes space for far more people than actually live or work at Proteus. Æon Trinity planners realized long ago that Trinity members may need a bolt hole, and Proteus' headquarters responds to that concern. The chambers beneath Lake Michigan can hold every Æon senior official and tens of thousands of subordinates and have life support and food supplies to operate independently for three years.

Neptune and Triton Divisions are linked to Chicago's public-transit system. Traffic to and from Proteus uses secret underground tunnels, part of a private subway system between its three division sites. People going from one division to another never have to wait more than 10 minutes — usually only five minutes during normal business hours — to arrive at their destinations.

Regional Offices

Trinity maintains nine regional offices. These sites are charged with keeping an eye on the surrounding area — often a sizable geographic region — and give operatives access to a full range of equipment, manpower and intelligence.

Æon's Chicago HQ doubles as the regional office for North America; the other regional offices are presently located in Melbourne, New Delhi, Barcelona, Nairobi, Beijing, Vladivostok, São Paulo and Olympus. Each regional office monitors all Æon activities within its jurisdiction, which generally covers a continent-wide territory. Officially, a Neptune assistant director heads the office, although in practice the Triton and Proteus assistant directors on

staff are treated as equals. Main responsibilities involve directing assignments to regional staff and to the branch offices as well as forwarding data to central HQ. Between 150 to 400 Neptune and Triton personnel support the AD, with a couple Proteus squads on hand for security. Each regional office also has three to five field teams on rotation, staffed by elite personnel who take on the more sensitive assignments.

The largest of the regional offices is located in Olympus' Ukiyoshi Sector. This site coordinates the activities of all branch offices and chapter-houses beyond Earth. In addition, it maintains training facilities for Æon spaceship pilots, two Triton operation groups (Data Analysis: Space and the Alien Species Database), and specially trained Proteus strike teams.

Æon also has a handful of distribution centers that serve as storage facilities for archived data like the collected files of Project Rewrite, that hold Trinity's primary stockpiles of weapons, vehicles and other special equipment, and that can act as staging areas for large operations. These sites also provide redundancy of basic services (communications, satellite uplinks, computers) in the event of a disaster like an Aberrant attack. Typically disguised as nondescript manufacturing, storage or research facilities, these sites actually extend several levels below ground. Staffed by Proteus security and a skeleton crew of techs, they are located in those countries where Æon operates with little restriction — Perth in Australia, Kinshasa in Central Africa, Omsk in Russia, Montevideo in Uruguay, and Yutu Yinchon on Luna. The central HQ also maintains a sizable distribution center in the Chicago arcology.

Branch Offices

The branch office is a small complex or building, staffed with between 20 and 50 individuals. It usually has an attached or nearby dorm complex (typically small but comfortable studio or one-bedroom apartments) for branch members and up to a dozen field operatives.

Each branch office is designed to carry out the basic functions of the Neptune, Triton and Proteus divisions within its home region as supervised by the regional office and with the assistance of local chapter-houses. There are roughly 80 branch offices scattered around near space, spread out for geographic efficiency and according to population. So, North America has eight branches — Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore-Washington, Kansas City, Montreal, San Francisco, Vancouver, Veracruz — while Australia's region has three — Perth, Townsville, Wellington.

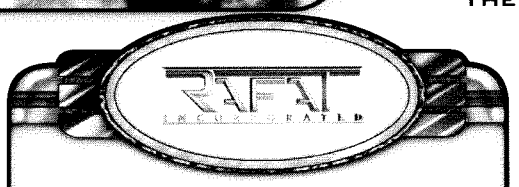
Each office has a sizable geographic territory under its jurisdiction, and limited resources to expend. Thus, branch administrators must sift through chapter-house reports and use their discretion to determine where those resources are best allocated. Though these decisions are ultimately reviewed on the regional level, in practice, the branch has significant autonomy. It is a credit to Æon's training programs that these leaders perform so well in getting the best "bang for the buck."

Keeping Up Appearances

Personnel from Neptune's Asset Management group invested much time and energy over the years in choosing the specific sites of its regional and branch offices. Great care was devoted to ensuring that both the Æon personnel assigned to each office and the facility itself would contribute to the Trinity's public image. On the whole, Æon offices lack architectural excesses that cry out "conspicuous consumption." The central Neptune headquarters pushes the envelope here, being dramatically visible yet designed to invite, not assault, the eye.

Placement includes avoiding a city's most affluent neighborhoods, while ensuring that the facilities are considered safe environments for operatives, associates and visitors. As a result, Æon offices are typically located within a city or arcology's older neighborhood, often one that recently underwent urban renewal or gentrification. Frequently, these districts are also considered "bohemian" havens where artists, intellectuals and other creative types congregate.

Care is also taken to ensure that each office satisfies the needs of Æon personnel. Ready access to local transportation networks is a necessity as are dedicated fiber-optic lines for secure communications and data transfer. Security provisions within each facility are subtle but pervasive. Many complexes contain residential apartments separate from the dorms. These dwellings are typically a step more luxuriant than the dorms and are reserved for use by visiting dignitaries, field teams or as perks to high-ranking staffers.



The Secret Menace

— Qaj Ali Rajal, © 2120 Rafat, Inc.

The average citizen thinks of the Æon Trinity primarily in terms of its public face — the smiling server at the food pantry, the doctor dispensing meds at the free clinic. They think of its operatives as unselfish humanitarians, like Masons without the funny aprons and hats, and indeed, there is little doubt that Æon is admirable in its support of projects at the local level. What the masses do not question is if the Trinity supports these efforts out of some sense of guilt, an attempt to ease the suffering that the policies of its seldom-seen leadership have recklessly caused.

It is well known that Æon supported the psi orders from the beginning, touting the "Gifted" as saviors against the Aberrant menace. Yet one of the eight orders, the Chitra Bhanu, apparently consorted with the enemy and was subsequently eradicated... by the psions themselves. Recently a cadre of Æsculapian and Orgotek researchers were caught engaging in the unconscionable act of injecting taint into human test subjects, reportedly to create more powerful bioapps. Now there are rumors that the Upeo wa Macho vanished into space rather than become enslaved by the other psi orders!

What other monstrous acts have yet to be revealed about these "heroes"? And since Æon's stated purpose is to coordinate the psi orders' activities, how much of these dark deeds did the Trinity know about and sanction in the name of progress? Could the *Esperanza* crash have been prevented if Æon had acted more quickly on intelligence suggesting that some kind of attack was imminent?

The time has come to ask these questions, even if we fear the answers.

Personnel assigned to Neptune Division use chapter-house reports to identify a community's most pressing concerns — whether medical assistance to the sick, education programs to retrain displaced workers or food and shelter for the homeless. They then request mobilization of Trinity resources and other local parties to address the problems promptly (and to make sure that the successful results are publicized properly).

Triton retains the largest number of operatives at the branch level. These individuals work closely with chapter-houses, their fingers on the constantly changing pulse of city life. They keep tabs on everything from electronic media to local government to word on the street, all in an effort to identify trouble spots before they happen (it was exactly this type of method that started the ball rolling in the **Darkness Revealed** series). They also support long-term Æon initiatives like Project Rewrite, which involves searching out long-buried caches of books or fragmented computer files and adding them to the Trinity's central archive. And Triton operatives share their information resources with visiting Æon investigators and other local parties as needed.

Finally, each branch office typically has a half-dozen Proteus guards on board. Although these individuals are responsible for maintaining security, they also apply their training for the good of the community as a whole. Local Proteus operatives provide back-up to police and military forces, serve as bodyguards for visiting foreign or interstellar dignitaries and investigate reports of individuals displaying symptoms of Aberrant Syndrome. On occasion, they even handle such minor tasks as rescuing Granny's cat from a nearby tree.

With so few people available to perform such varied tasks, the need for cooperation between personnel from different Trinity divisions is vital. It is not uncommon to find a Proteus guard drawing blood at a local plasma drive, or for a Neptune or Triton operative to obtain weapons training to assist in field operations.

Chapter Houses

Arguably, Æon's principles are most clearly articulated in the activities of the organization's most basic structural unit — the local chapter-house. Located in virtually every major Earth enclave in settled space, each chapter-house is an unassuming structure, consisting of little more than a small suite of offices or a converted residential co-op. It operates with a limited permanent staff of between a half-dozen to a dozen full and part timers (mostly Neptune or Triton operatives, with only one or two Proteus guards for security). In a very real sense, this office represents Æon's true

public face. Chapter-house personnel interact directly with Joe and Jane Hologram, forging lasting relationships within each community that provide the foundation of the Trinity's support.

The chapter-house carries out the branch office's directives on a local level (as noted above). Such input is necessary to providing Æon with a complete picture of events throughout human society, and how best to implement the organization's plans of unity.

Public and Private Faces

Earth Governments

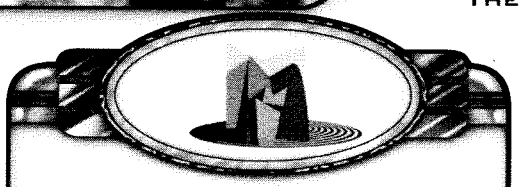
Since its founding, Æon has had to deal with various Earth governments. Before the Aberrant War, most of these entities considered Æon nothing more than an idealistic group that was willing to perform good works for the sake of humanity. The war itself, and the widespread destruction that accompanied it, forever changed this view. While its members have never publicly admitted it, Æon lost very little in the conflict. Except for some installations in North America and Europe, no major assets that Æon helped build were destroyed.

The subsequent Crash was a time of great opportunity for the Æon Trinity (and is when the organization changed its appellation from "Æon Society"). Healthy compared to many governments, Æon lent its resources in an effort to rebuild society. Although fundamentally altruistic, the endeavor also enabled the Trinity to strengthen its influence in various parts of the world.

The recovering nations well knew that getting into bed with Æon could become a problem down the road but they had little choice at the time. Also, the world leaders assumed that once their countries were healthy again, a private organization couldn't pose much of a threat. Of course, events have shown otherwise. Æon became privy to many nations' secrets, just one of numerous ways the Trinity placed its hooks in world government.

The uneasy alliance continues to the present. Publicly, Æon respects and honors the sovereignty of each individual government and makes sure that all of the organization's chapter-houses and other operations follow local laws and regulations. However, privately both Triton and Proteus often have the internal authority to bend local laws as needed to complete an investigation. If the operatives are caught breaking the law, Neptune steps in to negotiate with the local government and can usually





Cracks in Æon's Armor?

— Cori Heisler with Solveig Larssen, *The Painful Truth* © 2121 MMI

PT: Much has been made in recent months of the apparent rift between the Legions and the Æon Trinity. Have you just grown too big to need Æon's help any longer, or do the problems have deeper roots?

SL: Cori, you're exaggerating. We may squabble from time to time, but it's more like an argument between siblings. Sharp words may be spoken but in the end, you're still a part of the same family. Both of our organizations are dedicated to helping people, and I'm often surprised at the lengths that the Trinity will go to be of service. But it used to be that Æon's activities centered on their chapter-houses in the cities. Yet now we're hearing reports of its personnel in the deserts of northern Africa or the desolate tundra of Alaska. I'm not opposed to Æon being in those places but I have to wonder "why?" After all, if it's devoted to helping people, shouldn't it be looking where the people are?

get it to accept restitution or a deal with favorable terms, in exchange for "forgetting" the affair. The governments of the FSA and Nippon, both of whom resisted Æon aid during the Crash, seldom fall victim to such ploys. Although the Federated States government is still usually willing to be bought, Nippon proves to be a perpetual thorn in the Trinity's side.

Of late, China has become a similar concern. Æon and China got along famously in the later war years — in fact, the two worked closely together on China's Great Leap Upward and final Ultimatum. Now, though, current Æon management is ashamed of the ruthlessness followed in that policy. Some feel the social conditions within China during that time were far too severe, and the solution to the Aberrant problem was overly extreme.

For its part, China feels that *it*, not the Æon Trinity, should be considered the guiding light of humanity. The country believes that the Trinity works to reduce Mother China's influence as a political superpower. It is even more galling to Chinese officials that Æon is often touted as humanity's defender, while it's China that plies space with vast capital ships and millions of loyal troops. Other Chinese officials are also not happy about recent public statements made by local Æon members in Korea about working conditions in Pyongyang's computer factories. The country's increasing reticence to go along with Æon policy disturbs the Trinity to say the least. The two remain at a stalemate presently, since while Æon relies on Chinese industry for much of its transportation, China relies on the Trinity's jump ships for interstellar travel.

Despite such conflicts, governments and Æon both recognize that they must work together to deal with Aberrants and alien threats. So while there are disagreements, no country has yet taken any action to truly damage Æon and the Trinity does its best not to push its luck. Once the Aberrants are dealt with, however, many on both sides wonder how much longer governments will continue giving Æon their support.

Corporations

Dealing with corporations is an entirely different matter for Æon. Thanks to its economic clout and connections to influential members of society, the Trinity is much sought after by major corporations. Yet, the metacorps often prove to be surprisingly resistant to Æon influence. Most companies look only at the bottom line and are seldom willing to change policy to suit the Trinity's agenda. Plus, since corporations are generally smaller and more flexible than nations, they're better able to resist pressures that the Æon Trinity may bring to bear.

Interestingly, the Trinity subscribes to a similar philosophy. Æon considers most corporations exploitative entities only interested in their own survival but still recognizes the good they can create through the new products and technologies they develop. The Trinity's main conflicts are with those corporations that value profit and growth more than they do social responsibility and improving the condition of humanity.

Æon gets involved with corporations that hold back beneficial products they design or that take advantage of the market in some way (many past conflicts have involved pharmaceutical and biotech manufacturers). The Trinity's response is to "acquire" information on the product or service in question. The data usually stays in Triton files for

safekeeping or to be used as leverage, but Æon has been known to slip the secrets to a company more in line with the Trinity's views.

The Trinity also spies on companies making products that it feels are detrimental to humanity. Firms that make advanced weaponry, dependency drugs and code indigo bioware are frequent targets of investigation. These companies react violently to being investigated, not surprisingly, calling for extreme subtlety on Æon's part. Considering such corporations are often willing to take extreme steps to protect operations, these assignments often have very high stakes.

Corporations that think that Æon's ripped them off in some way make sure the Trinity is aware of their suspicions. Some companies strike back by harassing known operatives, while others try to influence community views on Æon or simply hire outside muscle to mess with the local chapter-house. On a few notable occasions, some corporations have even tried to kidnap high level Æon personnel as a means of getting leverage of their own.

Æon has also been set up as a scapegoat for industrial espionage conducted between rival corporations and, not surprisingly, has pulled the same tactic itself. Some efforts were plain hacks while others turned out to be major corporations trying to steal highly sensitive data from a competitor. Still, the Trinity knows well the value of misdirection. So although being the target of such efforts is frustrating at least, Æon management resigns itself to accepting it as part of the game.

Both the Trinity and corporations try to keep their conflicts out of the public view. Æon doesn't want to be known as engaging in corporate espionage, and the corporations don't want their less desirable behavior revealed. It's bad for business.

Psi Orders

Æon investigations disclosed the orders' existence years before they went public. As a result, the Trinity was on hand during the psi orders' formative stages, and became instrumental in helping them be welcomed by humanity. The Trinity is one of the few places that psions feel they are treated as equals (and Æon hopes its policies provide an example of how human governments and organizations should treat the Gifted). Not surprisingly, this has made psi orders the easiest power elites for Æon to deal with. It maintains generally good relations with the orders — most positively with the Æsculapians, ISRA and the Legions, most frustrat-



Subject: Your Recent Comments about Æon

From: Neville Archer, Director, Neptune Division, Æon Trinity

To: Proxy Solveig Larssen

Encryption: DSE

Transmission type: textfile

Date: 10:15:26 3.7.2121

Ms. Larssen,

I hope you don't believe that Æon has lost focus. You know very well that much of our activities take us to remote parts of the globe, not to mention space. Always, these missions have humanity's best interests as their primary focus.

Some of my more paranoid associates suggest that you may have a desire for the public to more closely scrutinize Æon operations. I consider such a notion foolish. Still, lest there be a misunderstanding, recall how important it is that our efforts remain secret. The public may reach inaccurate conclusions should they receive incomplete information about our aims. As such, it is vital that we not reveal details until the time is right. This may sound condescending but as some matters we pursue are sensitive indeed, we must exercise the utmost caution. After all, would you rather the Legions' existence have been exposed back when you were a motley collection of a dozen psions?

Æon has never hesitated to undertake the difficult tasks that are necessary to keep humanity secure. As with your own order, however, we feel that not every matter we deal with needs to become public. We have never shown any ulterior motives or desire to control humanity and never will.

With this in mind, we would rather that Æon's image remain linked to its public service efforts, with our covert pursuits remaining just that for the time being. I know you have reservations about this viewpoint, as we've talked about on several occasions, but the council still feels that this approach is best. I hope that you will agree.

Ad Astra,

Neville Archer

· NEPTUNE ARCHIVE ·

Subject: Re: Your Recent Comments about Æon
From: General Solveig Larson, Legions
To: Neville Archer, Director, Neptune Division, Æon Trinity
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: textfile
Date: 01:25:14 3.8.2121

Neville,

You take things far too seriously sometimes. There isn't one person in a thousand who has the foggiest idea what incidents I was referring to the other evening, and even less who would interpret my comments as an attack on the Trinity.

I might suggest that you and the other council members should look at where Æon is headed, not at its past. Personally, my biggest problem with Æon is that it's starting to act like some of the organizations it doesn't agree with. Tell the people one thing but not everything. Use the convenient "they are not ready" excuse. That's just what fascist regimes like the FSA do to keep people in line or to try and justify why its children go to bed hungry at night. It's also the same problem I have with my fellow "proxies" not talking about our "benefactors." I've never liked secrets, nor those who use them as currency.

Realize that you're dealing with equals in terms of power and resources. Equals who don't like their private affairs being spied upon any more than you do. And when you *do* get caught snooping in places you don't belong, you try to pass it off as an "Aberrant investigation." You might've been able to hide your covert ops better in the past but that's not the case today. The countries and corporations you're spying on have improved since the war, and aren't as easily manipulated as they used to be — and Lord knows we orders aren't willing to play the role of lackey.

You say you don't want the public to know about your covert efforts. Well, they're bound to find out sooner or later and it's probably *not* going to be from people who like you very much. Even now, you know that the FSA and Nippon use your organization's support of psions to rally people against you. Æon's also on the hit lists of several large metacorps, again due to your habit of poking around in their business. This isn't 60 years ago, Neville. Æon's no longer the sole top dog. It's time for you to really unite people — by treating them with honesty and equality, rather than assuming you know what's best.

ingly with the Ministry, Norça and Upeo; Orgotek has recently become more problematic as well.

Additionally, Æon has always been an aggressive recruiter of independent psions. Of late, even the Trinity's normal psion pool has not been sufficient, requiring it to step up the number of requests that it makes to the orders for temporary or long term personnel loans. This is especially noteworthy for such efforts as re-establishing contact with the interstellar colonies and the continuing investigations on Aberrant activity on Earth and in space.

The orders understand that Æon has a legitimate demand and publicly support the efforts. Privately, however, some orders — most notably the Ministry and the Upeo — have long been reticent to fall under the shadow of such an influential organization. More recently, other orders have become concerned at the number of psions who've joined Æon part- or full-time. The orders' only source of influence on society is their stable of Gifted, after all. If Æon lures most of them away, the orders will soon find themselves at the mercy of outside forces.

Aside from a potential loss of power, the orders worry that the constant need for psions may result in Gifted taking the field without adequate training. After the efforts made to portray psions as talented but still normal humans, the last thing the orders want to see is a psion lose control of her powers because she hasn't fully adapted to her gifts. The Norça have been most vocal in presenting this argument to the Trinity; while Æon has supported the concern, it points out that it has received no indication that the psions in use present a danger to themselves or others.

These interactions aside, Æon still covertly monitors the orders' operations. This can sometimes involve field investigations similar to those undertaken against corporations. The Ministry and the Norça are traditional targets of such missions. Recently, the Æsculapians have fallen under harsh scrutiny (as detailed in the **Darkness Revealed** series).

Æon is unable to keep all these efforts entirely secret — Orgotek recently learned it was under investigation as well, souring relations between the two groups — but the Trinity stands firm when an order complains. Æon assures the proxies that it only looks into an order's activities to ensure that there isn't a repeat of the tragic Chitra Bhanu affair. Orders not indulging in dangerous or immoral acts have nothing to fear. None of the orders seem to find this very comforting, however.

Æon Operatives

Those individuals who join the Æon Trinity full-time are generally known as "operatives." These agents carry out myriad duties with the same purpose — to further Æon's goal of unity for all mankind. Æon "associates" lend the organization significant assistance but are not accorded the same measure of trust and opportunity that full operatives are. See p. 34 for more information on associates.

Most published material describes Æon as a single entity made up of three parts. While each division's pursuits are occasionally mentioned, the focus generally remains on overall goals rather than individual pursuits. Similarly, the **Trinity** character creation system provides an Ability template that can be applied to all characters who select an allegiance to the Æon Trinity (see **Trinity**, p. 166). This baseline cluster covers the gamut of skills that the average Æon operative might be expected to employ.

Practically speaking, a character joining the Æon Trinity isn't simply assigned to the Trinity as a whole. Instead, he's placed within one of its three divisions: Neptune, Triton, or Proteus. From that moment onward, the operative focuses on developing abilities that are most useful to that branch's specific activities.

No matter what division the operative is in, he's taken good care of. Besides training and equipment, a full-timer receives housing in a branch office dorm (more luxurious than it sounds), full medical care, paid leave after an assignment and one month's annual vacation anywhere in near space. This generous benefits package was designed as a means of preventing burnout among operatives. After all, the amount of work that an operative takes on can sometimes appear overwhelming. Æon leaders don't want operatives working under a large amount of physical or mental strain for extended periods of time.

The section below expands upon each of the three divisions, as well as identifying character Natures most common to operatives from each division. Allegiance philosophies and available Ability groups are described starting on p. 103. Also, Backgrounds of relevance to the Æon Trinity are handled on p. 31.

Neptune Division

Neptune Division is generally described as Æon's head. It takes the Æon Council's directives and turns them into concrete policies, allocates and guides the other two divisions' resources to accomplish overall goals and negotiates on Trinity's behalf with psi orders, metanational corporations, and world governments. Neptune also coordinates Æon's involvement in the jump ship program, me-

·PROTEUS ARCHIVE·

Subject: Extraction
From: Andreus Kilos, Proteus Division
To: Hardin Pennyfeather, Liaison, Neptune Division
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: holofile
Date: 18:46:35 8.12.2121

Sir,

We've contacted Qu Ma Feng, but she's changed her mind. Instead of just passing information, she now wants to leave Korea. Since our last contact, the Chinese overseers have instituted several changes at the research facility where she is stationed. Personnel have been transferred to different work groups, and additional security has been brought in. While we can't confirm it, we also believe that Ministry psions have been added to the security staff.

We could be walking into a trap but Qu is one of the best computer minds in settled space. She wants out, and I think we need her. Aside from her expertise, Qu has information confirming Chinese abuse of Korean workers, including the disappearances of several who recently protested the harsh treatment. She can testify that the Chinese have employed a variety of means, including threatening families' safety, sensory deprivation, starvation, and drugs to make the Korean workers submit.

I recommend that we prepare a veteran Theta ops team as the extraction force, backed by a full Omega strike team, both with psion personnel, and with VARG support in case things go wrong. We don't have full specs on what the Chinese can throw at us but I believe their rapid response forces in the area could go as high as a battalion of troops, with tanks and possible air support.

If this assignment goes bad, it's going to be noisy, and I'd expect the Chinese to commit everything they've got to try to stop it.



Archer on Æon

— Jarvis Maiken with Neville Archer, *On the Hot Seat*

© 2118 Stahu Entertainment

Maiken: Mr. Archer, the Æon Trinity describes itself as a force for good, dedicated to the protection of Earth, and efforts like Project Rewrite are testaments to the many wonderful things you've accomplished. Still, you aspire to some pretty lofty goals, considering that Earth is threatened by space-faring alien races like the Chromatics and the Coalition. Not to mention the Aberrants' return. In the face of all these obstacles, aren't you whistling past the graveyard when your PR machine keeps pumping out inspirational messages of hope?

Archer: Not at all, Jarvis. You must understand that Æon gains its strength from its members, the thousands of operatives who work for us directly and the tens of thousands of outside individuals who join with us as associates. The many individuals I've met through the years, whether civic leaders or average citizens, have the same look in their eyes: "I want to help." They just don't know quite how to do it on their own. That's where Æon comes in — we give them a place to focus their energies, and in so doing give them the means to take destiny back into their own hands.

Maiken: Come now, Mr. Archer, that seems awfully naïve. Joe Hologram can help repair a magrail grid or contribute to a food drive. But only a squadron of well-trained and heavily armed psions stands a chance of bringing down a rampaging Aberrant — and psions represent only a tiny fraction of humanity's population. Isn't the fate of the universe truly in *their* hands?

Archer: Again, Jarvis, I must correct you. Think back to the Aberrant War, long before there were psions. The sacrifices of millions of Chinese made the Great Leap Upward possible, giving China the space flight capability to issue the Ultimatum that forced Aberrants from Earth. It's the same today. In order to put Gifted in the field as our first line of defense, it takes the efforts of many neutrals in and outside Æon to provide them with equipment, technical and logistical support. It requires government recognition and support of the psi orders — something not always forthcoming, unfortunately. And it requires the commitment of each and every member of the human race, whose sacrifices today will lead to a better life for their children tomorrow.

diating the use of all Leviathans whether by Orgotek, China or even the UN. It also serves as the Trinity's public relations arm, ensuring that the organization's accomplishments are promoted to the public and maintain its message of hope and unity.

Neville Archer, Neptune Division's longtime director, was a tireless supporter of Æon since his earliest days as a member of the Glasgow chapter-house. He long recognized that the Trinity must have access to all available resources to guide humanity through the rocky shoals of the present day and yields the philosophical high ground as needed to gain consensus. A consummate diplomat, Archer has developed an uncanny ability to sense what others are really thinking. Considering the hardy 75-year-old never registered the slightest bit of noetic potential, his knack of reading volumes from a person's subtlest gesture or slightest vocal inflection is all the more impressive. As gifted as he is in analyzing others, Archer himself is often referred to as "The Great Stone Face," his ever-polite yet inscrutable visage giving nothing away to either allies or opponents.

Natures: Neptune Division is a perfect posting for Architects or Visionaries, who may see themselves in Maxwell Anderson Mercer's origi-

nal vision of a society of brilliant and motivated individuals poised to lead humanity into a brighter future. Bureaucrats, Caregivers, Judges and Leaders can also flourish among its ranks.

Neptune Departments

Neptune's organizational chart assigns all division personnel to one of four main groups — Trinity Administration, Liaison Office, Diplomatic Corps, or Asset Management. Each group deals with tasks that share a basic commonality of purpose, but often carry them out in widely differing ways. The operations conducted by each group are briefly summarized below.

• **Trinity Administration:** This department makes most of Æon's day-to-day decisions, and passes them on to the agency's personnel. Decision-making is conducted on many different levels. The strategic planning task force attached to the Æon Council shapes the Trinity's long-range objectives, while at the other end of the spectrum individual chapter-house supervisors keep abreast of current events. Trinity Admin also houses Personnel, that faceless group that monitors Æon member files, authorizing promotions and changes in access level and voting on requests for equipment or specialized training. Lauren Chilcott is the titular head of Admin, but in practice little goes on outside Neville Archer's watchful eye.

• **Liaison Office:** This is a broad umbrella covering all sorts of activities that require coordination within Æon. It houses the agency's PR arm, as well as project liaisons who monitor the operations of Trinity field teams. A significant number of liaisons are in fact made up of former field operatives who were incapacitated in the line of duty or requested removal from the field and now ride a desk. Some liaisons prove quite troublesome when they decide to meddle into a team's affairs, while others have just the right combination of experience and vision to put a floundering mission back on track with a few well-placed suggestions. Hector Ramirez, featured in the **Darkness Revealed** and **Alien Encounter** adventure series, is an example of a liaison. Carter Yun, a former commissioner in China's Politburo, handles the Liaison Office's affairs.

• **Diplomatic Corps:** This Neptune department contains the agency's numerous public representatives. Where the Liaison Office handles inter-division representation, the Diplomatic Corps acts on Æon's behalf with various Earth and



·PROTEUS ARCHIVE·

Subject: Qu Ma Feng
From: Hardin Pennyfeather, Liaison, Neptune Division
To: Andreus Kilos, Proteus Division
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: holofile [file enclosed]
Date: 14:51:24 9.12.2121

I have discussed your ludicrous manpower request with the director. His response, paraphrased, was to ask whether you were facing windward when you typed in your message. If so, your leg must still be wet.

There will be no Omega team, no squadron of psions, and absolutely positively, no VARGs assigned to this operation. No matter how brilliant your computer scientist Qu might be, Æon has no intention of starting a full-scale war with the Chinese government or the Ministry. We have routed your information to a Delta ops team with some familiarity with that portion of the Korean countryside. This team has a well-documented public identity as an independent mercenary group; a dossier is attached to this message. Their leader, Simeon Steab, should contact you from Djakarta before the morning is out. Æon will also supply the mission with satellite reconnaissance, equipment in the form of the latest Nihonjin hardtech (with no data trail to us) and transport out from the designated pick-up zone.

You will take your best shot at this with the resources that we've provided. If the operation goes bad, cut your losses and move on. Period. Be advised that if you persist in thinking otherwise your next assignment may be chapter-house security.

space governments, the psi orders, and the Qin. Smaller subgroups within the corps develop the skills for specialized tasks, such as first contact, hostage negotiation, etc. Michael Demetrius, an extraordinary individual who may be the most vibrant septuagenarian on the planet next to Neville Archer, directs the corps. Demetrius has been a Trinity diplomat for well over 40 years, and his photographic memory can still recall many of the agency's past trials and triumphs. He still runs three kilometers along Lake Michigan each morning, outpacing many of his aides.

• **Asset Management:** This group handles the vital (though often dull) tasks of resource procurement and allocation. When Æon needs 12 VARGs ready to take the field against an Aberrant assault, Asset Management gets them there, whether from the organization's own resources or by coordinating with an outside agency (resulting in frequent interaction with the Liaison Office and the Diplomatic Corps). Fulya Ertegun recently took over administrative duties for this department, after only a few years as an associate with the Ankara branch office.

Triton Division

Triton Division is known as Æon's eyes and ears. It maintains listening posts in every chapter-house, scans the electronic media and conducts illicit surveillance as needed on events both on Earth and in space. Triton also maintains an extensive staff of analysts who investigate and interpret gathered data using techniques that range from computer simulation to psionic manipulation.

Maria Pappagallos is the recently appointed head of Triton Division. An electrokinetic specializing in Technokinesis, she is the first psion to rise to the level of director in Æon. Pappagallos went through the Prometheus chamber in 2108, and after finishing her initial contract term with Orgotek began working with Æon Trinity project teams as an associate. Finding the Trinity lifestyle more to her liking, she negotiated her release from Orgotek, and joined Triton's Incursions and Surveillance Branch. In the following years, Pappagallos' spotless work record as a field operative earned her several field commendations.

Despite her unquestioned abilities, Maria's appointment to the directorship was a complete surprise to many, especially some higher-ranked Æon staffers who hoped for the promotion themselves. Though no one formally disagreed with the Æon Council's choice, it's hard to say how the various department heads will accommodate Pappagallos in practice.

Natures: Triton is a natural haven for Analysts or Explorers, who look to uncover answers that others cannot see. Critics, Judges, and Visionaries should also be able to find their place among one of the division's seven sub-branches.

Triton Departments

Triton Division is divided into seven operations groups. Five of these correspond to the division's essential functions — Incursions and Surveillance, Simulations and Forecasting, Logis-

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Subject: New Director
From: Randall Dellinger, Triton S&F
To: Wolf Jensen, Triton ASDB
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: holofile
Date: 18:53:15 6.6.2121

So we finally meet the new boss tomorrow. Let's see: a psion, master programmer, privy to Orgotek secrets before getting snatched up by us — and that's nothing compared to her *real* qualifications, if you know what I mean. No wonder none of us stood a chance.

>>> end transmission <<<

>>> transmission <<<

Subject: Re: New Director
From: Wolf Jensen, Triton ASDB
To: Randall Dellinger, Triton S&F
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: holofile
Date: 19:05.28 6.6.2121

Take your hoof out of your mouth, Randy. I recommend you take Maria Pappagallos *very* seriously. If my sources are correct — and they always are — Pappagallos convinced Orgotek to release her from her contract to join Trinity by hacking into Ellayne Cassel's personal computer, which apparently contained some email files detailing some of the Cassel family's most private thoughts. Nobody knows whether she learned Alex's "secret plan for galactic domination circa 2114," or that Ellayne was slipping away for romantic weekends with Ashley Frost. In any event, looks like the prexy decided that letting Pappagallos go was the safest course of action.

With all the skeletons you have in *your* closet, Randy, don't get her mad at the first staff meeting.

tical Support, and two independent Data Analysis branches (Earth and Space). The last groups maintain two of the most critical outputs of Triton's efforts — the Aberrant Tracking System and the Alien Species Database. Each department's administrator comprises Triton's Executive Staff, which coordinates with the director to discuss strategy and set priorities.

Each department contains multiple research foci, such as Xenoscience in Data Analysis and Tactical Logistics in Simulations and Forecasting. Covering so many niches would take more room than is available, so this material focuses on the seven main groups, detailing the general types of operations each performs, their administrators, and their positions concerning the new director.

• **Incursions and Surveillance (InSurv):** This department collects the data that Æon cannot obtain from the news media or other public information sources. Although InSurv operatives maintain networks of informants in all walks of life, they obtain the most sensitive information independently, using techniques as diverse as breaking and entering, wiretapping and computer hacking. Its operatives include daring second-story-men and behind-the-scenes observers and many who combine the two disciplines in one package.

Barney Ziegler, a 45-year old with thinning hair and a modest paunch, has been InSurv administrator for over a decade. He knows where a lot of old skeletons are buried but has never been inclined to use this knowledge for his own personal wealth or advancement. As Maria Pappagallos' former supervisor, Barney is one of the new director's staunchest supporters.

• **Data Analysis (DA: Earth, DA: Space):** The two data analysis groups perform parallel functions. One monitors situations around the globe while the other keeps tabs on Earth's solar and extrasolar colonies. Their analysts sift through the mountain of incoming information that Æon receives every day, both from public and in-house sources. They identify which events require ongoing tracking, follow-up field investigation or even direct intervention by Æon and its allies. Though analytical skills are obviously a must for everyone in DA, great desk analysts do not always make great field investigators, and vice versa.

Jose Miguel Valdez, 39, manages DA: Earth operations out of Æon's Chicago HQ. He is a handsome gentleman with fastidious personal habits and a sultry bass voice who always wears the latest fashions in work attire. He works long hours and expects those under his command to do the same (he has little trouble inspiring such loyalty, particularly from certain female associates). Valdez made little secret of his own desire for the directorship, and took being passed over as a personal affront. Still, he's taken a wait and see attitude about Pappagallos, treating her with deference and respect. Cynics might say that Jose is merely trying to work his personal charms on the director but only time will tell.

Otto Von Ohlen, acting administrator of DA: Space, is newer at his job than Pappagallos is. Von Ohlen was hurriedly appointed to his post when the previous administrator, Colonel Anthony Faber, was found murdered in a cheap hotel in Luna's Yutu Yinchon District. Understandably, Von Ohlen's initial efforts have largely centered on collecting information to explain the mysterious circumstances surrounding the colonel's death. Aside from being a thorough researcher, little is known about Von Ohlen... including how long the administrator's job will remain his.

• **Simulations and Forecasting (S&F):** This department's personnel employ Æon's state-of-the-art technical resources (computers, virtual reality environments, zero- and low-g simulators) to postulate the worst crises that could befall mankind — and the best ways to counter those threats should they occur. S&F attracts the Trinity's boldest — and often most eccentric — thinkers, men and women accustomed to believing that the normal rules of society don't apply to them. Although these attitudes make them perfectly suited to handle the rapidly changing challenges they must solve, it can also make it hard to keep them focused on the problem at hand.

Randall Dellinger, 32, heads the Simulations group, though he does not so much manage it as open the doors of the asylum and turn the inmates loose. Randy is a good ole boy from the FSA's Tex-Mex District and his Trumerican leanings are well known within Æon. He and his boon companion, Wolf Jensen (project manager of the Alien Species Database) have disrupted the Triton's upper level management on more than one occasion with various "frat boy" pranks. These often elaborate stunts cause no lasting harm but can make others on the Exec Staff look foolish (especially the ultra-serious Valdez). Early indications are that Maria Pappagallos has far less tolerance for this behavior than her predecessor did.

• **Logistical Support (LS):** This group provides backing to the Æon project teams in the field. This support ranges from regular briefings and updates to specialized assistance in the form of satellite recon images, computer access codes or even the best place to find good Chinese takeout in Sydney. As the number of project teams has grown exponentially in recent years, this group's tasks have expanded as well. LS Coordinator Celia Murtaugh constantly complains that her department is short staffed and under-budgeted, and seems to have found a sympathetic ear in the new director, thanks to Pappagallos' own years of field experience.

• **Aberrant Tracking System (ATS):** This endeavor was initiated 19 years ago. All field office or regional reports that make reference to Aberrants or Aberrant activity are forwarded to the ATS, and coordinated into a central database. Nala Mbenge, a 38-year-old Kenyan and mother

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Triton Executive Staff Meeting — Excerpt: holofile, 6.9.2121

Valdez: Madame Director, DA identifies new hot spots in Mombasa, outside Cairo, and Rio de Janeiro. There's some kind of corporate espionage war going on between Mashindano and a new competitor, MMC, that's not benefiting either company — we may need to step in and make them both play nice. There's a strange virus running through the Cairo outlands that's generating sizable fatalities and could spread into the city if we're not careful. We've mobilized local operatives and associates but we'll need some outside rexs to run any quarantine facility they set up. Finally, something big's brewing in Brazil. Key Norça personnel are on the way to Rio — as are the Presidents of Argentina and Colombia (for a trade parley, coincidentally). No matter how hard it is to get past shifter security, we better find some way to learn why they're all gathering.

Pappagallos: Get that last info into Neptune's hands pronto, so they can decide if we want to risk inserting a recon team and have simulations run extrapolations of our most recent intelligence scans to make some guesses about what the big news might be.

Dellinger: Already on it, ma'am. Our best guess is some kind of new bioware breakthrough that they want to format to their agents ASAP. Argentina's involvement suggests a military application, maybe even one neutrals can use. I assume you want this Priority One 'til further notice?

Pappagallos: Yes, and if you'd be so kind, please remove your baseball cap when you're in a staff meeting.

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

ATS Status Report
— Update: Nala Mbenge. 4.7.2121
>>> EYES ONLY <<<

Fairly quiet in ATS the last few days, Allah be praised. Seventeen sightings of The Colony, none confirmed. Twelve sightings of Divis Mal, including one fellow who entered the Atlanta chapterhouse and claimed that Mal had revealed himself to be Elvis just before he nuked a convenience mart. Though the informant's a total loon, the explosion was real and operatives detected some signs of taint among the rubble. It's not Mal, of course, but we're keeping a close watch on that one anyway. Finally, the Fifth Legion appears to have been engaged in some fighting at the fringe of the LAST Zone. Nothing got past them but the way they've got the Blight Zone perimeter locked down, we'll probably have to wait for their next press release to learn what happened.

Keep us posted on the whereabouts of Elvis, Nala. Better the King than Divis Mal any day.
— P.

of two, manages the ATS. Though Mbenge is pleased to see a woman promoted to the director's chair of her division, she is not happy about the selection of Maria Pappagallos. After the treason of the Chitra Bhanu and the recent rumors of corruption in Basel, Nala is highly suspicious of the connections between Aberrants and psions. She is more than a bit uncomfortable having one of the "Gifted" in command of all the resources of Triton, including the ATS.

• **Alien Species Database (ASD):** This group is dedicated to the compilation and analysis of all known information on the intelligent alien races that have been encountered by Earth's spacefarers, including the Qin, Chromatics, and the Coalition. Database personnel maintain regular two-way contact with members of Neptune's Diplomatic Corps assigned to liaison duty with the Qin Embassy.

Wolf Jensen, a tall and lanky 27-year-old, is the youngest member of the Exec Staff. Although he often follows Dellinger's lead in their sophomoric pranks, Jensen is better at putting aside childish antics when serious matters are afoot. A case in point is the ASD's current *cause celebre* — a "Chromatic Autopsy" holo that's currently being circulated on late-night feeds. For a hoot, some of the ASD boys purchased a copy... only nobody's laughing now. Even though the tape alleges it was shot somewhere in New South Wales and shouldn't possibly be real, ASD can't clearly establish it as a fake no matter what tests they put it through. It seems a private citizen got his hands on some of the most classified footage in history... or perhaps even on a Chromatic itself!

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Subject: Joke's On You!
From: Randall Dellinger, Triton S&F
To: Wolf Jensen, Triton ASDB
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: holofile
Date: 09:43.57 6.7.2121

Way to take your own advice, Wolfie! What in the world made you decide to pawn off that lame alien autopsy bullshit as a status report? You sounded like one of those crackpot conspiracy theorists writing for *This is True*. Well, anyway, thanks for taking yourself out of the running for Maria's affections. I can imagine her long legs entwined around my neck even now.

Yee-ha!

>>> end transmission <<<
>>> transmission <<<

Subject: Shut Up
From: Wolf Jensen, Triton ASDB
To: Randall Dellinger, Triton S&F
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: holofile
Date: 09:49:12 6.7.2120

Dammit, I was totally serious up there! If you don't believe me, come to the lab later and I'll show you the tape. The weirdest thing is that the background of the autopsy room doesn't look anything like the lab where we examined the Chromatic from Operation Abyss — or any section of Karroo, for that matter. When we magnify it and extrapolate its dimensions, it looks like some kind of weathered old grain silo that one might find... well, in Australia.

As far as Pappagallos goes, she didn't exactly seem to embrace you too warmly, either. And why would she be attracted to a redneck techno-twink with subversive leanings?

"Yee-ha!" yourself, dirt farmer.

Proteus Division

The men and women of Proteus Division are Æon's hands, which are seemingly busy 24 hours every day around the globe and beyond. Unlike the other Æon divisions, Proteus has no public face or image. Officially, it's the internal security arm of Æon. Proteus operatives defend the organization's facilities and storehouses of specialized equipment, providing security details to guard physical plants and electronic and computer counter-measures to safeguard systems.

In practice, Proteus is a large military and espionage organization. Its members assist local law enforcement officials in the urban arcologies, while out on the frontiers of space they serve as the first line of defense against smugglers and pirates. Most importantly, Proteus recon and strike teams take on the assignments that are too dangerous for Triton and too sensitive for Neptune to handle. The division performs many of its tasks out of Joe Hologram's sight, and receives few public accolades as a result and that's just the way Proteus likes it. Indeed, part of Proteus' training consists of showing different methods of keeping covert activities out of the public eye.

William Renton, the Director of Proteus, retains the charismatic style that made him a good media representative in his pre-Proteus days (since moving over from Triton, he's seldom appeared in public and is usually identified in a vaguely truthful but misleading way). Though in his 50s, Renton looks at least 10 years younger... at least when the stress of his job doesn't overwhelm him. The director has spent the last 30 years promoting the shadowy deeds that protect the Trinity's public face. For him, the end doesn't justify the means so much as it *is* the means: His whole life is dedicated to the preservation of the Trinity's position in society. What the Æon Council does with that status is its business. Thanks to this ceaseless dedication, Renton has lost sight of much of his personal interests.

Natures: The bold lifestyles of a Proteus operative attract Bravos, Leaders, and Thrillseekers. Yet Proteus also stands as one of Earth's last lines of defense, and attracts Caregivers, Explorers, Martyrs, and Survivors as well.

Proteus Departments

Proteus is responsible for the initial training of all new Æon operatives. To handle this, the division has several small boot camps located near its various regional headquarters. Basic training lasts four weeks, during which each trainee undergoes various physical and mental tests, and is taught basic self-defense skills, computer skills, dealing with various government agencies, and other diplomatic situations. Keeping with Æon custom, all operatives who complete basic training are given their Æon pins at an awards ceremony.

After basic, operatives slated for Neptune or Triton are sent to their respective divisions for further training. Proteus trainees go to advanced training, where each receives a specific area of training based on test scores, aptitudes, and demonstrated abilities. This six week long course also involves advanced close combat and weapons training.

After advanced training, Proteus operatives are attached to Mars, the division's largest department (see below for more details), where they're pulled as needed for field assignment. Operatives undertake many types of missions, including space travel in system and to the interstellar colonies. When not on assignment, Proteus personnel spend much of their time training. Every time a new hardtech or biotech weapon or system is developed, operatives spend time training on it (sometimes as guinea pigs).

Because Proteus usually draws assignments with a great chance of violence, operatives get a chance to learn how to operate a wide range of weapons systems, as well as training in piloting some military craft or even VARGs. The type of training depends on the results from an operative's previous training courses and his performance on past assignments. Upon undergoing specialized training, the operative has a chance to move from Mars to one of Proteus' other three departments.

- **Mars:** Named for the god of war, this is Proteus' largest department, and is where most recruits go for their first year. Those who stay in Mars after their first year are the ones who love combat and lots of it. The Mars division provides Proteus with everything from security guards to shock troops to weapons specialists used for heavy assignments. Those who willingly stay here are commonly known as "lifers" or "ammo junkies."

Vinus "Redeye" McKenzie, a former merc and Æon operative, assumed command of Mars after losing a leg in the field (he deigned regenerative surgery, instead proudly wearing an artificial prosthesis). McKenzie sees his job as "breaking down and rebuilding" Proteus operatives, so they're as tough as possible before moving into another de-

partment. He considers those who remain in Mars to be kindred spirits — simple, stalwart souls dedicated to carrying out Æon's grunt work.

• **Apollo:** This department takes its name not only from the Greek god of the Sun, but also from the former North American space program. Like that program's astronauts, operatives assigned to Apollo spend a lot of time in space. Department operatives fly everything from two seater turbo skimmers to advanced hybrid craft. Since, officially, Æon doesn't own any actual military vessels, pilots must be careful talking about what they're flying; the department works with Asset Management to get its hands on ships needed for a given mission. Apollo has seen an increase in membership since Æon got control of the Leviathan project. Many operatives in this department are now assigned as gunners, techs and support crew on vessels going to extrasolar colonies.

Beth Haudin, a striking a redhead in her late 40s, runs Apollo. She's trained pilots for Proteus for over 10 years, and was just recently promoted to her current post.

• **Titan:** When the shit hits the fan, Titan grunts hit the shit back. This department holds Æon's small but significant number of armored infantry personnel. Titan includes ground pounders trained in using just about every form of armor available including tanks, ships and VARGs. Like Apollo, Titan relies on Asset Management to supplement Æon's rather small stable of armor from outside sources when needed (not that these sources always know what they're volunteering or to whom). While all the Proteus branches have attitudes, those from Titan tend to have *real attitudes.*

Much of the Titans' attitude is because of the department's leader, "Black" Jack Wolstren, a veteran VARG pilot (and one of three VARG jockeys known to have killed an Aberrant in single combat). He runs Titan with a firm, but fair, hand.

• **Athena:** This department handles Proteus' most sensitive jobs — espionage and counter-espionage work. Many of these tasks are hidden even from the rest of the Trinity — espionage at the most secure levels of government, assassination and the like. The Æon Council itself hand picks members of this unit. They receive no public and little private glory for what they do, but have literally held humanity's fate in their hands on more than one occasion. On a higher profile, Athena coordinates with Triton's InSurv branch to defend various Æon installations, computer networks and other property from electronic and physical intrusion.

Saul Ku Lun handles allocation of Athena resources. Æon security has taken up more time of late, and coordinating efforts with InSurv has proven inefficient. Saul Ku Lun and Barney Ziegler have both requested that the Æon Council place full authority within one department or the other — of course, each supervisor is lobbying to have the responsibility fall within his branch.

·PROTEUS ARCHIVE·

Subject: Security Concern
To: Neville Archer, Director, Neptune Division
From: Maria Valdez, Assistant Director, Proteus Division
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: textfile [file enclosed]
Date: 9:04:18 1.24.2121

Triton has completed analysis of a file provided us by an individual known as "Archangel" (see enclosed file). The data appears to be a combination of months of investigation — data searches, off the cuff interviews, surveillance, public reports — into the Æon Trinity. Taken as a whole, the file provides a comprehensive look at Æon from its inception to the present, including a shocking amount of information on our covert pursuits.

Triton believes (and I concur) that whomever did this knows their trade; this was the work of professionals. Points in the file refer an organization known as the Hellfire Club. Triton hasn't yet found any modern referents but there are historical references about a European group that existed back in the late 1800's. Considering the information that this group has gathered already, it should be considered a primary threat to Æon.

We've attempted to contact Archangel to see what more we could learn about the Hellfire Club but she died recently in an accident. An Epsilon intel team has been authorized to investigate.

Current security should be inspected at all Æon installations, including chapterhouses. Overall security procedures should be reviewed, and anyone reporting suspicious activities or individuals should be debriefed.

·PROTEUS ARCHIVE·

Field Report: "Disciples of Tvastr"

Transmission: Epsilon field team, Captain Winton de Luca commanding, Himalaya Mountains, Central Nepal, 9.4.2120

>>> Warning: Omega clearance required for access. <<<

Parks: Can you read, Comm? We're in deep shit here! Half our team's been scragged and we're about to die from exposure! Can you read?

Lewis: Let it go Parks. Transmission's one way; comm won't respond for several minutes.

Parks: Well, the channel's open, anyway. What the he—?!

[Bluish ball of light forms near the group. Operatives take up ready positions. Ball transforms into an image of a young human woman. No visible transmission source.]

Unidentified speaker: Greetings, humans. I am the avatar for the Disciples of Tvastr. I have no interest in harming you. All we ask is that you leave this area immediately and not return. As a show of good faith, your companions are being healed enough to be moved. We are not interested in conflict, but will fight if we are forced to. What is your decision?

Parks: You're in command here, Lewis. What do you say?

Lewis: Is it real or a hologram?

Menzies: Hold on. Completing a scan, but I'm getting no energy readings, Lewis can confirm, but I'm going to say psi-based transmission.

Lewis: Uh... Confirmed. I'm detecting a *very* high amount of psi. Source... hard to pick up, but it's not ambient; definitely focused. Strongest where that image is. [pause] Okay, we're pulling out, pending status of our wounded. Avatar, you are human, what's going on? Why the show of force and the secrecy?

Unidentified speaker: Return again in peace, Lewis, and I will be glad to show you.

Parks: Looks like Baker, Forbes, and de Luca appear to be okay.

Lewis: Sonofabitch. Okay then, let's get moving.

[Image of woman fades as recon team retreats.]

>>> end transmission <<<

Note: Subsequent ATS scans confirm that psi energy in the area disappeared after the team was extracted.

The Æon Council

Æon's three directors — Archer, Pappagallos, Renton — serve as the face of Æon Trinity leadership to the general public and the media. They accept the kudos when things go right and take the blame when they do not. Indeed, since the directors provide a convenient physical manifestation of a "trinity," many folks — including lower level Æon operatives and associates — never give the matter another thought. But the truth is that there is a level of management beyond the directors: the Æon Council, an entity shrouded in mystery that nevertheless plays the central role in setting Æon policy.

The council's historical origins are simple enough to document. When Maxwell Anderson Mercer established the Æon Society for Gentlemen in 1923, his intention was to bring together a handful of brilliant and motivated visionaries willing to lend their talents to lead humanity into the future. Æon's council chamber was the forum where these men and women assembled to ponder the great issues of the day and postulate solutions. Among their ranks were scientists and inventors, corporate executives, and current and former heads of state. They published their findings in scholarly journals, addressed sessions of Congress, the Politburo, and the United Nations — in short, they were visible advocates of Æon's ideas.

By the late 20th century, however, politics had become such a circus that overt involvement seemed counter-productive. As Æon's influence on society was expanding, its use of that influence moved more and more behind the scenes. Many of Earth's best and brightest flocked to a council that now met hidden from the public eye, where they could enact policy without distraction. The Æon Council has remained that way ever since.

Today most Æon operatives below the assistant director/Omega clearance level know little about the council beyond the fact that it exists. They know that it meets at least quarterly in some secret and highly secure location outside the Chicago HQ, and that the three directors are members. They know that the higher-ups have a tendency to get a bit edgy as meeting dates approach and demand that on-

going investigations be wrapped up and research projects show tangible results, and they know that when performance appears to be lagging, the council is not shy about making heads roll — as in the recent shake-up of Triton Division that led to Maria Pappagallos' recent appointment as director.

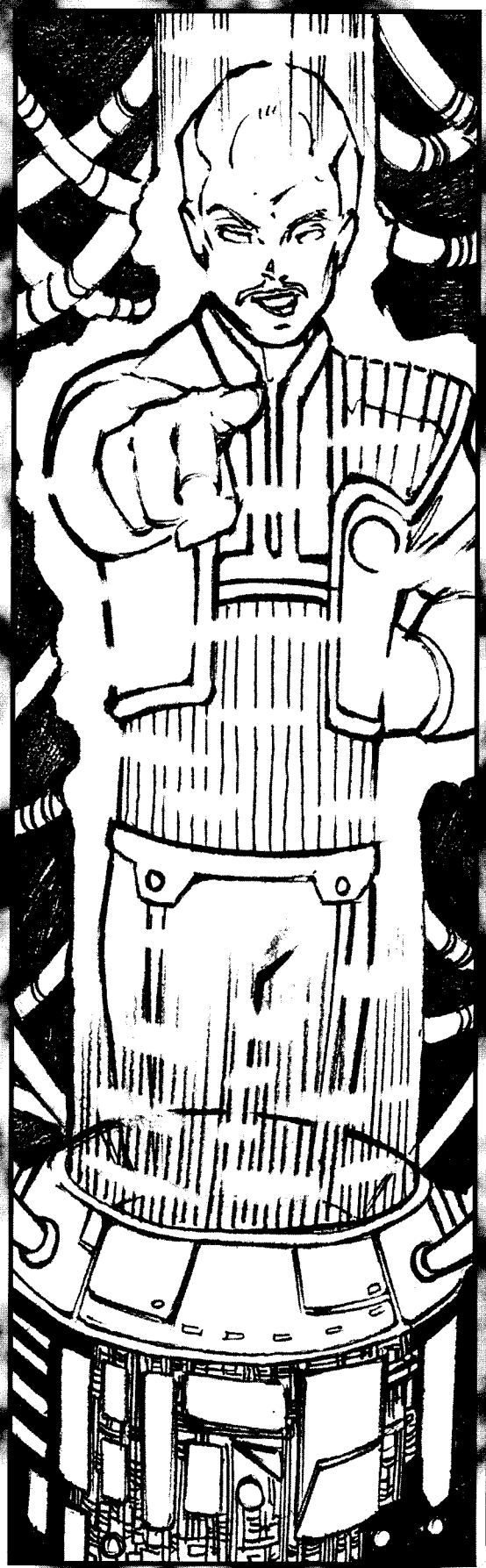
Of course, what the rank and file members of Æon Trinity do not know, they imagine. Some contend that one or more of the proxies, from Rebecca Bue Li to Otha Herzog, are council members — even the long presumed dead Chitra Bhanu head S.K. Bhurano is said to still have a seat. Other speculations focus on government leaders like Australian Prime Minister Luis Trenton, the FSM's General Margaret Beckenstein, or UAN Vice Chancellor Kama Ntungidi. Still others advance the names of metacorporation magnates like Tekne Group's Kevin Labak or philanthropist and retired former L-B CEO Elizabeth Bowen. Even media personalities — like *Retrospective*'s Warren Shaw, whose views often hew closely to Æon's own — are rumored to be council members.

There are even those who repeat the apocryphal tale that council meetings are still chaired by Maxwell Anderson Mercer himself. Indeed, a cadre of rumors have sprung up around Æon's founder — that he's cryogenically preserved and communicates with the aid of a telepath, that he's "unstuck" in time and able to appear through force of will, that he's a secretly immortal Aberrant ruling from the shadows, etc.

It's worth noting that at least some of the rumors about the council have their source in truth. However, determining which ones would be a full time occupation... and one that Æon is not particularly interested in having anyone pursue.

Psions in Æon

Psions often have a polarizing effect on society. In Australia, for instance, psions are generally looked to for assistance, even leadership. The Hindus of India have a healthy respect for psions, thanks to the formative influence of the defunct Chitra Bhanu and its ties to Vedic beliefs. In contrast, the FSA treats psions with thinly-veiled suspicion, while Nippon has numerous laws designed to restrict psion rights in Nihonjin society. In some areas of the Middle East, known psions are even shot on sight.



The Æon Trinity is one of the few places in human civilization that openly accepted and was friendly to psions from the very beginning. Æon continually does its best to show the rest of humanity that psions are no better or worse than normal humans; the Gifted should be treated no differently than a talented musician, artist or mathematician is. The idea is to convey that, like other individuals with special gifts, psions are fundamentally human. Their powers don't give them any more of a natural advantage than other humans have.

Some recent events have exposed psions as being all *too* human, in fact — the Huang-Marr scandal (described in the **Darkness Revealed** trilogy and **Shattered Europe**) showed that some psions can be just as petty and power-mad as any human being. Still, psions' positive contributions to society — namely, the continued defense against Aberrants and other threats — continue to outweigh such unfortunate events.

Æon still works ceaselessly to encourage the acceptance of Gifted. Not surprisingly, this makes the Trinity an organization that many psions want to be part of. One of the biggest attractions is that psions truly feel that they are part of a community, and that their powers are not taken for granted. Additionally, psions get a chance to understand why their powers often make such a strong impression on those who don't have them. And, in return, being able to interact with psions has broken many of the stereotypes neutrals often have of the Gifted.

The Trinity encourages all its members to be the best they can be, no matter what their background. Everyone has the same opportunity to move up in the organization and advance into a position of greater responsibility. This philosophy was designed specifically to address the supposed "advantage" a psion has, and prove that those without gifts could succeed as well.

Though the Gifted form less than 1% of the total human population, they make up around 20% of Æon's present membership. Since they still make up a significant majority, though, neutrals comprise virtually all of the Æon Trinity's office staff, from the main HQ on down to chapter-houses. Psions talents generally lend themselves to juicier assignments — tracking down Aberrant sympathizers rather than coordinating food drives. Even so, a psion who wants to work on community projects is welcome to do so just as a skilled neutral soldier can join an Aberrant patrol team.

Backgrounds with Æon

Points spent on the Status Background during character creation indicate your character's initial rank in the Æon Trinity hierarchy, and largely determine her access to Æon's resources, whether classified information or specialized equipment. Each of the Trinity's three divisions employs slightly different names for its higher ranks, but persons of equivalent ranks generally possess the same Access clearance. The chart below details the rank and access level associated with each Status level.

A character cannot purchase more than four levels of status in the Æon Trinity during initial creation, as positions at the Assistant Director level and beyond can only be earned during the course of a series. Conversely, a character who chooses Allegiance to Æon should probably purchase at least one level of Status so that she can be tapped for reasonably challenging assignments from the outset. Only Æon Trinity operatives may purchase status in Trinity. Associates (see p. 31) are officially considered trainees regardless of how long or how well they have assisted the organization.

A character's connection to Æon can also be used to explain or amplify other Background Traits, as follows:

Status Level	Ranks Neptune	Triton	Proteus	Access Level	Rank Color
x	Trainee	Trainee	Trainee	Alpha	white
•	Field Operative	Field Operative	Field Operative	Beta	orange
••	Special Agent	Special Agent	Special Agent	Gamma	red/maroon
•••	Specialist	Senior Analyst	Lieutenant	Epsilon	purple
••••	Liaison	Coordinator	Captain	Theta	blue/navy
•••••	Assistant Director	Assistant Director	Commander	Omega	green/jade
••••••	Director	Director	Director	?	black on white

Allies, Followers, Mentors

Any of these Backgrounds could be attributed to Æon operatives or associate members. If a Storyteller character is considered a member of Æon then the number of dots spent on the Background translates directly into that individual's rank and access level. Therefore, a character with a Background of 5 Mentor has a connection at the Assistant Director level. In cases where the Background score denotes multiple individuals (as is possible with Allies and Followers), simply split the dots as appropriate. So a player who purchased 3 points of Allies for his character and decided they were two "Allies of correspondingly high power" could have one who's a Special Agent and another who's a Field Operative within Æon. Whatever the point allocation, the Storyteller should work with the player to create a plausible background story as to how such bonds were formed.

Remember that friends in high places have a lot more on their plate than servicing the character's needs and may not always be available. Moreover, though Allies and Mentors could use their access to supply a character with information and equipment far beyond her resources, they would violate Æon security (and risk their own status) to do so. Therefore, they are much more likely to provide oblique hints at the bigger picture, or leads that the character can follow to obtain the resources on her own.

Cipher

Æon cares most about what its operatives can do to fulfill its lofty objectives and has little problem hiring those whose backgrounds are obscured by Cipher. Be assured, however, that the Trinity will use the massive data resources at its disposal to fill those gaps over time. For game purposes, a character's Cipher functions at two dots below its normal level when dealing with superiors within the Æon Trinity. Historically ciphered characters also take longer to gain higher level rank and access within Æon, as the Trinity takes more time evaluating her loyalties to the organization.

Citizenship

Possession of valid Æon Trinity credentials means the character has also received a valid passport for her country of birth. Æon credentials have the added benefit of generally enabling her to move through foreign countries with a minimum of hassle. This isn't an absolute, of course; corruption exists everywhere and some places aren't too friendly with the Trinity (most notably the Shatter in Europe, the Middle East, Nippon and Khantze Lu Ge). Even so, Æon's influence only goes so far. Once inside the country, without the benefits of local Citizenship your character may find herself restricted in what she can access beyond the boundaries of local Æon facilities.

Contacts

Æon's many interactions with governments and psi orders give characters an almost infinite array of Contact options. Trinity associates who have separate status in other organizations are a particularly rich source of logical Contacts. Such individuals can include other psions, local law enforcement professionals, scientists, or academics. For Æon operatives who have points in Savvy, these connections can even be with underworld figures or other unsavory types.

Devices

The Æon Trinity has more than its share of specialized weaponry, vehicles, and bioware available in its storehouses for use by its project teams. Characters with Devices should have no difficulty in justifying any one to three dot Device as being supplied by Æon. Storytellers may also give operatives the option of possessing a Device one level higher than its base rating. In this case, the Device is a prototype expressly supplied by Æon for testing and can revert back to the Trinity at any time (in exchange for a new Device of the character's normal rating).

Influence

Although a character's rank and access clearance reflect her degree of influence within Æon Trinity, they provide no more than passing respect in normal society. However, a character's general

Membership Benefits

All Æon members — operatives and associates, psions and normals — receive a membership pin in the shape of the Hope/Sacrifice/Unity chevron. This pin contains a basic ID transponder that is recognized at all official Æon Trinity facilities. A person who tries to move beyond the reception area of even the smallest chapter-house without one is quickly met by security.

Each pin also provides an indication of the member's general status within Æon, as designated by the chevron color (see the status chart).

affiliation with Æon can typically backstop and augment whatever outside Influence she does possess. In any area where the Trinity is held in good repute, treat the character as having one dot of additional Influence whenever she is acting in the capacity of an official Æon representative. Of course, the reverse can also occur — if the character is a known Æon stooge working in a Trinity-unfriendly area.

Resources

As part of its pursuit to bring the best and brightest under its roof, Æon pays its employees salaries that match those paid by most private corporations and the psi orders. Therefore, an operative with no dots in Resources should either be a brand new recruit, or the player and Storyteller should work out a rationale to explain why a character with a good salary would be flat broke. Possible explanations might include a gambling or drug habit, a string of bad investments, or a family back home to support.

Access Level

Originally developed by Proteus Division but now employed by each of Trinity's departments, each agency operative and associate receives a rating referred to as her "access level" or "AL." Though the AL's original purpose was solely as a security clearance, in practice AL's are utilized throughout Æon for much more than that.

Æon depends on every field operative and associate to give her all for the organization. In return, the Trinity does its best to ensure that its personnel receive the best equipment and training available. This doesn't mean that every character who walks in the door gets the latest in tech or bioapps handed to her on a silver platter. Before Æon makes significant investments in someone, it must have reason to believe that the individual's worth it. The person who proves her worth to Æon over time receives the most exciting assignments and has the newest and most powerful technological devices at her disposal.

This is where the AL comes into play. A character's AL rating provides a fast and effective means of telling what level of confidence the Trinity has in her abilities. Department heads use this information in determining what assignments an operative works on, what equipment she is issued and what training she receives.

Determining Initial Access Level

At initial character creation, the AL rating assigned to an Æon operative is equivalent to the character's starting rank (e.g., a character taking 2 Status receives the rank of Special Agent and a Gamma AL). Associates typically begin their careers with an Alpha AL, but those with relevant experience from other organizations may be granted Beta clearance at the Storyteller's discretion.

Using Access Level

Access level is a roleplaying tool to give Storytellers flexibility to award or reprimand Æon characters based upon how they perform in the field. Increasing or decreasing a character's AL doesn't cost any experience points. Instead, it gives Storytellers a way of showing a character how Æon feels about her efforts, outside of experience awards.

In order to increase your character's AL, she can't simply perform the assignments she is given successfully over an extended period, she must also show extraordinary initiative on a particular assignment or generally contribute to the enhancement of Æon's goals. Though AL typically increases when a character earns a promotion in rank, the two ratings are not always at the same level. Access levels of one or even two levels higher than a character's rank do occur within the Trinity.

Of course, the reverse is also true. If an operative messes up on one assignment, then Æon won't be happy with the result, but typically won't cut the hapless character's AL. Mess up a couple of assignments in a row, however, and she can expect her access level reduced even before she is officially demoted. A character may also suffer a temporary or permanent loss if she commits a major violation of Æon policy, or is cited for insubordination by her superiors.

In general, ALs usually can exceed a character's rank by one level up or down. It's uncommon for a character to have an access level two or more levels above his rank. A character with an AL lower than her rank has usually just been promoted, or might be a perpetual screw-up.

Access Level Descriptions

The following describes the six levels of access clearance generally available to operatives as well as the duties, perks and authority associated with each. Note that Æon associates typically retain Alpha or Beta level clearances for their entire tenures with Trinity, though associates with extensive field experience or a particularly unique field of expertise may attain Gamma level clearances.

- **Alpha:** Basic access given to all members and associates of the Æon Trinity. You have access to Æon's public databases and any item of commonly available equipment. You typically work

out of the branch office or local chapter-house and handle the society's routine assignments.

• **Beta:** You have completed your basic training, and are considered an asset with some potential for growth. You may be a Proteus guard in a chapter-house or regional office, a messenger who delivers low priority information between various Æon locations, a listening post operator or entry level analyst in one of Triton's data centers or a management or diplomatic trainee in Neptune. Your access to information is somewhat increased in your direct area of focus while your access to Æon resources remains limited to basic equipment and training (i.e., no military-grade weapons or bioapps). You can apply for placement in the personnel pool for field ops but your chances of drawing an assignment are limited to situations in which more experienced choices are not available.

• **Gamma:** You have access to the gamut of basic postings and assignments. You can serve as a local chapter-house coordinator, guard a shipment of weapons headed for Luna, perform surveillance tasks or learn encryption codes for sending data. As a ranking member of a specific department within your division, you have the opportunity for specialized training in that field. You're typically posted to a regional office and may have contact with groups from other regional offices or Æon central HQ. You are still commonly working with basic equipment and skills but now have a sense of the variety of tasks that Æon is involved in, and can apply to join some of these groups. About 10% of all field operations are assigned to Gamma level teams, and you can also get to work on other more dangerous assignments where you might sneak in as the low man on the organizational totem pole.

• **Epsilon:** This is typically the last point at which Æon allows you to switch between divisions. You can select a posting at either the branch, regional, or central HQ levels and become exposed to even more of the "big picture." Your first Epsilon assignments won't seem that much different in complexity than those of Gamma level, but you'll be learning to contribute more within your particular area of expertise. Your clearance qualifies you for inclusion in roughly 60% of the field assignments issued by Æon.

• **Theta:** Now you're in line to work on the *really* interesting stuff, or "heavy assignments," as they're called. Depending on your area of specialization, you also have access to train on and work with the latest equipment, computers and weapons including bioapp and weapon prototypes. You'll most likely be posted at either the regional or central level and probably have other operatives under your control. You have the experience to administer a regional office, serve as a liaison to the Qin embassy or serve as a commander on Epsilon field teams.

• **Omega:** Depending on what department you work for, you've become an experienced VARG pilot, field operations commander, advanced computer security expert, master spy or senior diplomat. You now specialize in carrying out Æon's most sensitive assignments, often acting as an assistant director's right-hand-man. Indeed, you're likely on a first-name basis with the directors themselves. You may wind up managing a large department, or working alone or with a small group in the deepest reaches of space.

While Omega is the highest AL any operative can obtain, there are still at least two or three more access levels above it. If you've reached AL Omega, you might even hear about them, as they are associated with those who decide the overall policies and goals of Æon.

Æon Associates

Operatives are the main force that powers the Æon Trinity, but the organization couldn't survive without outside help. The chapter-houses in particular make it their business to forge relationships with regional civic, business and academic leaders (doctors, professors, scientists, lawyers, councilmen) and encourage them to accept the honorary designation of Æon Trinity associates. While such trained professionals provide important skills, Æon seldom turns away the man on the street who just wants to lend a hand.

The relationship between the Trinity and its associates is a symbiotic one. Most branch offices and chapter-houses typically hold some sort of monthly meeting in a local restaurant or assembly hall. Employees and associates are invited to attend and debate the important issues of the day, not unlike fraternal service organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club or the Knights of Columbus. In this way, Æon provides its associates with a heightened sense of community and an awareness of the shared burdens all must face in the days ahead.

·TRITON CONFIDENTIAL·

Personnel Update
Analysis: Stan Menzies, 2.11.2121
>>> Warning: Omega clearance required for access. <<<

Menzies has been a full operative for over five years. Before joining Æon he was a captain in the New France Army and received a one-step increase to his access level upon recruitment with Æon. Menzies has participated in over 20 field assignments and completed most of his missions without incident. He does have one failed assignment in his record but the mission failure was blamed on a major equipment malfunction unrelated to his duties.

Recently, Menzies was assigned to an Epsilon field team sent to investigate reports of a Chitra Bhanu cult in the Himalaya Mountains of Nepal. The cult, reportedly called "the Disciples of Tvastr," claims not to be a threat to humanity. On the mission, Menzies was instrumental in helping his team avoid an ambush set by the cultists. Using his skills in electronics, Menzies also confirmed that the holographic image of the cult leader, who appeared to be a human female, was not electronic in origin.

Team commander de Luca recommends that Menzies be upgraded in rank to lieutenant and his access level raised to Theta. De Luca feels that Menzies' attitude and skills are an asset to the organization that will be better realized with greater security access.

Currently, Proteus Director Renton is considering the upgrade.

Of course, Æon receives much more in return. Though its associates do not unanimously agree with every activity Trinity operatives pursue, in general they provide a sympathetic audience that can quickly and quietly obtain the approvals or resources needed for a project. Collectively, associates augment Æon's capabilities with a pool of specialized skills that the Trinity can draw upon to complete certain assignments. Finally, the very fact that so many well known local leaders are willing to align themselves as "friends" of Æon gives the Trinity the benefit of the doubt among most citizens — "Well, Councilman MacReady supports them, so they must be okay."

Perception

Associate recruitment and security issues are more complex than for operatives. After all, these people are volunteers, not employees. Æon's hold over them is less strong than with operatives. As a result, while the general public believes that the Trinity truly wants to help people, many question why. When chapter-houses look for volunteers, community perceptions about the agency can change. This is usually due to the more zealous chapter-house recruiters, who put off potential associates with their "put Æon first" attitude. This has even helped spawn stories about how the Æon Trinity wants to take over a person's life, brainwash her and take all of her personal assets. Local Æon lead-

· NEPTUNE ARCHIVE ·

Subject: Next Scheduled Meeting
From: Zak Bonner, Local Coordinator
To: All Æon Personnel and Associates
Encryption: SPE
Transmission type: textfile
Date: 12:07:36 4.9.2121

The next meeting of the Brisbane Friends of Æon Trinity will be held on Monday, 19 September at the Breckinridge Athletic Club. We have reserved the club's recreational facilities for our private use from 4 to 6 PM. Come out early and play some tennis, go for a swim or just relax and have a synthbev in the Terrace Lounge.

At six we'll convene in the Dundee Room for a buffet featuring grouper, a vegetable medley and the Breckinridge's renowned seafood casserole. After a short business meeting, we'll turn the floor over to guest speaker Juliana Cox-Spence, a local anthropologist who will discuss the long-term negative impacts that FSA and European immigration into the Australian Bush has had on the native aborigine population. There will be a question and answer period, followed by an open discussion about how we can help ameliorate these problems.

The evening promises to be entertaining and informative for one and all. Please RSVP to Monica Clarke, the Breckinridge function room manager and one of our longtime associates. And remember, friends — your help makes great things possible!

ers often deal with such rumors cropping up, to the point that it can seriously interfere with daily operations. Triton has started an investigation into whether this is part of a coordinated disinformation campaign designed to spread anti Æon propaganda.

Æon's open acceptance of psions is also a source of stories. Aside from idle speculation, certain governments and groups opposed to psions or to Æon's policies aren't above disseminating rumors. The Nihonjin government and the Brotherhood of Human Purity in particular have spread tales of recruits being used for bizarre experiments or of having their minds controlled.

Reality

In practice, Æon's leaders view associates as a tremendous, carefully-nurtured asset. Associates' greatest strength are as a flexible workforce that can be assigned as needed, as compared to operatives who usually only work for one division. Since most operatives started out as associates, this also gives management the chance to test out full-time candidates in different capacities.

Though, at this level of involvement, associates see only a part of the bigger picture. New associates sometimes feel shut out because they aren't told everything that's going on or because they can't get access because of security concerns. Some new recruits even quit working with Æon because of this seeming standoffishness. People who stay often realize that there's no malevolent agenda in place; the Trinity is just being careful in its handling of new talent. Æon actually empowers its members by giving proven personnel access to superior training, equipment and resources.

Still, it's worth remembering that an associate is a replaceable cog that the Trinity uses as it needs to. A character whose performance is marginal or acceptable remains an associate and may continue to view Æon as a local service organization for her entire life. An associate can have some flexibility in her dealings with Æon but that's only because the organization has use for her. A character who performs well is eventually asked to join full time, and commit to the fight to protect humanity.

The only time this really changes is with psions. Though the Æon Trinity was key to the psi orders' acceptance into society, it doesn't control the psion groups. The Gifted are a valuable resource but Æon can't force them to join. As a result, it must handle dealings with psions carefully. Whereas Æon would write off a normal associate after a few substandard efforts, it tends to be much more lenient with a psion who shows any sort of promise. This creates an opportunity for a psion to join Æon on pretty much his own terms. Æon is happy to give what the Gifted asks for (within reason)... but is very demanding when he finally joins.

Associate Benefits

An associate isn't as well compensated as an operative is but she does get the same access to training and resources once she shows her worth (typically after successfully handling a couple assignments). Unlike an operative, an associate must pay for part of her medical expenses and any equipment she gets must be returned after an assignment ends. Æon does reimburse an associate who uses her own equipment in the field, even up to replacing or upgrading it when need be.

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Subject: Re: What Have You Been Up To?
From: Tessa
To: Gerald
Encryption: SPE
Transmission type: textfile
Date: 10:15:38 2.4.2121

Sorry I haven't got back to you, Gerald, but my job has been taking me out of town quite a bit. My roommate Tina and I are working for Æon as part time associates. They hired Tina for one assignment after I told them she had experience with Asian computer systems and speaks Nihonjin and various Chinese dialects. Can't tell you where we've been, or what we were doing, but I can say it's been really cool.

It's all turned out to be much better than I expected. I'm sure you've heard Æon's "we want to help you" shtick. Well, it's true, far as I've seen. They really do seem to care about people.

The benefits could be better but the pay is still pretty good for the work I do. Tina doesn't like having to pay for part of her medical benefits but they told her that would change if she does more regular work.

Oh, you can tell the rest of the guys that those rumors about Æon brainwashing people are complete bullshit. We did have to answer some questions and stuff but they weren't anywhere as bad as what your friend Riles had to go through when he applied for that government job with the FSA.

I'll be in town for the next few days, if you want to get together. Let me know!

Tess

The pay is good; typically ¥15 per hour for short-term work, or flat fees of between ¥2,000 to ¥10,000 for longer assignments. However, an associate who wants medical benefits or training must pay for the privilege (usually ¥500 annually with a ¥50 deductible for medical care, and ¥250 for each three-week training course). An associate can live in one of the branch dorms for ¥200 a month. These rates are at least competitive with local fees and better than most.

An associate can have whatever Allegiance she likes. As long as she provides Æon with whatever work or information is requested, the Trinity cares little for where her final loyalties lie. A big reason for Æon's lackadaisical attitude is because it keeps all part timers at an Alpha access level (some trusted or obviously capable associates may receive a Beta or Gamma AL, at the Storyteller's discretion).

An associate has no official rank, but a long time member is shown increasing trust. She gets greater access to Æon facilities and more information about assignments. A proven associate is called upon more often, and given more responsibility as she progresses. Not surprisingly, a very successful associate is asked to join the Æon full time.

A veteran associate with a long and successful history with Æon may be supplied with advanced weapons and gear beyond her normal AL (except for noteworthy equipment like hybrid craft, VARGs and the like). Such benefits of equipment and training do not extend to information. As a result, even a veteran associate often doesn't have complete knowledge of the details surrounding the assignments she undertakes.

Operative-Associate Interactions

Full-time operatives have gone far beyond their days as associates. They devote nearly all of their time working for Æon — between training and working, it's not uncommon for operatives to pull 50- to 60-hour weeks, not including being on assignment! Æon encourages associates to devote as much of their time as they feel comfortable giving. As a result, associates can lend anywhere from five to 20 hours of their time each week. For them, the Trinity isn't a life, it's an extracurricular activity.

Freelancers

In recent years, the increase in the number of field assignments has forced Neptune to look for additional methods of attracting needed personnel. The result has been the creation of a new status termed the freelancer.

Considered lower than an associate, a freelancer is someone who's hired to do a single assignment or work for Æon on an as-needed basis. Triton performs an extensive background check on every freelancer candidate before any contact is made. Those who pass are placed in a central database for retrieval when an appropriate assignment comes up.

The freelancer is paid in money or equipment — between ¥10,000 and ¥75,000 or equivalent, depending on the assignment. Higher fees are possible for particularly dangerous missions. However, the freelancer has no access level whatsoever and may even be restricted to certain areas when at an Æon facility. A freelancer who has demonstrated skill with specialized weapons or equipment may requisition that gear for the duration of the assignment. Æon provides medical care to a freelancer who's injured while on assignment, but 50% of the cost is deducted from her duty pay. This percentage can go as high as 75% if the Trinity determines that the freelancer's injuries were avoidable.

Teams in Æon

To conserve resources and standardize the operating procedures for assignments, Æon uses a team structure for assigning field missions. After an operative has completed training and been given both a title and an access level, she's placed in a pool of available personnel. This pool contains operatives from all three divisions, though Triton and Proteus members make up the majority of field personnel.

Once Neptune authorizes an assignment, a team is formed from both the veteran and new personnel in the pool. Usually after a new team is created a short period is provided for the team members to practice working together. If a skill set needed for the assignment isn't available from the pool, Neptune checks with the appropriate Triton database for a likely associate or freelancer. If a psion is specifically needed but not available from the pool, Neptune first contacts the requisite psi order for an appropriate candidate. If the order can't or won't fulfill the request, the Trinity turns to any associate psions. Freelancers are almost always the last place that Æon turns to fill out a team, psion or no.

In the past, Æon tried to have the majority of the operatives on a team at or above the access level specified in the mission parameters. Because the increasing number of assignments have put such a strain

on the available operative pool, Æon now only expects the team's leader to have the requested AL. The team leader has also received more flexibility in selecting the team's personnel herself — in return, being held accountable for the mission's success or failure (in game terms, this increases the possibility that a character with a low access level could still be included in a higher level assignment, thanks to a high-ranking Ally or Mentor).

The operatives are debriefed after completing the assignment, and after a short time off (from a few days to a week) are placed back in the pool. If certain individuals show that they work well together, Æon often establishes them as a set team. Such teams may operate in a specific geographical area or specialize in certain types of assignments.

Team Configurations

A character can be assigned to any type of team, with placement generally depending on the skills she has. In general, Æon prefers people with several different areas of expertise so that each team has more than one person with the necessary abilities.

Neptune usually specifies the team access level it requires for the mission when it makes the assignment. So a preliminary investigation of a possible Aberrant cult in India would call for a Gamma ops team. Extracting information on a Bakuhatsu prototype VARG would involve a Theta intel team. Note that while it's rare for characters with Beta and Gamma access levels to be assigned higher-level missions, it's still possible. Indeed, this is often the only way low level field operatives move up in access level. Each team setup is described below:

• **Intel Team:** This configuration focuses on covert infiltration and espionage. Team members are usually experts in spying, disinformation and information-gathering. The priority is on extracting (or planting) the needed data and getting out without the target being the wiser. This can involve a high-profile endeavor like posing as diplomatic attachés or a stealth operation that slips in and out under cover of darkness. An intel team consists of between five and a dozen operatives, with half usually devoted to backup for the primary agents. The job in the beginning of the *Mission: Impossible* movie is a good example of an intel assignment (until things went wrong, anyway...).

• **Ops Team:** The most common team type, an operations or "ops" team is a default configuration put together when time is short and specific skills are needed. Ops teams are usually made up of Proteus operatives, with a few Neptune and Triton personnel thrown in for good measure.

• **Recon Team:** Recon teams are usually Triton operatives, with a few Proteus and Neptune personnel thrown in for good measure. Recon teams are usually sent out to gather information on a specific area or target, and are rarely expected to engage in combat.

Missions by Division

• **Neptune:** While Neptune assigns virtually all missions, it isn't known for actually authorizing missions for itself. Some assignments fit Neptune the best, though. When contact was being re-established with the interstellar colonies, Epsilon level Neptune diplomacy experts were assigned as part of the Omega ops teams to make sure that re-contact went as smoothly as possible.

For Example: *Currently, Neptune is concerned with unconfirmed Triton reports that a group of experienced salvagers is going through the ruins of Paris in an attempt to loot the remains of the Louvre Museum. Reportedly, there's a good possibility that the* Esperanza *crash may have left some of the underground museum vaults only lightly damaged or even fully intact. Working with the government of France-in-Exile out of Québec, Neptune wants to send in a Theta ops team to investigate. If it proves to be true, the value of the items in the vaults could help the remnants of France get back on its feet.*

• **Triton:** While Proteus makes up the majority of recon and strike team personnel, Triton actually sends out more teams (most of them intel and ops). Since their tasks typically involve reconnaissance and information gathering, these teams tend to operate much more quietly. With Director Pappagallos taking over a backlog of assignments, the department has been busier than usual.

For Example: *The biggest priority is the upcoming trade meeting in Rio. Pappagallos wants proof of the rumored new bioapp and would like an Omega intel team to check things out. Another, more personal priority, is the murder of Colonel Faber. Faber was personally looking into the Yeltsingrad Corridor, long a Triton concern due to its strategic vulnerability to attack from both Aberrants and conventional forces. It seems likely that someone planning to use the Corridor for just that purpose is responsible for Faber's murder. At Von Olen's request, Pappagallos has asked Neptune to authorize a Theta ops team to conduct an investigation.*

• **Proteus:** When it comes to taking on the heavy assignments, Proteus is usually at the forefront. The paramilitary group is bound to be involved in any endeavor where conflict is in the offing. Even if the mission itself doesn't involve direct combat, a Proteus operative is often sent along just in case.

For Example: *Renton has a concern involving a report he got back from an Epsilon recon team that Æon sent into the mountains of Nepal to investigate rumors of a possible Chitra Bhanu cult called the Disciples of Tvastr. The team actually made contact but was unable to learn much after half the team members were incapacitated in an ambush. Since the team came back, scans have detected nothing in the area. Renton wants to send an Omega strike team back in to investigate in more detail.*

cific mission information is scarce. The emphasis is on versatility of talent, since an assignment could veer from intelligence gathering to search-and-destroy to personnel extraction. These are often called "jack teams," not only because the members must usually be jacks-of-all-trades, but because they often don't know jack about the mission parameters. An ops team can employ anywhere from three to 20 persons, although five is most common. The movie *Ronin* did a good job of setting up a typical ops mission.

• **Recon Team:** This team setup is not designed for heavy combat. Instead, a recon team pursues such tasks as monitoring an installation or scouting out hostile territory. This configuration also takes on search-and-rescue duties when needed, extracting hostages or accident victims from every condition imaginable. Not surprisingly, the average recon team contains a mix of Proteus and Triton operatives, generally with emphasis on urban and rural survival and communications technology skills. Equipment is assigned with a similar focus. Most recon teams contain between three and eight operatives. *Clear and Present Danger* contains a fine example of a recon operation.

• **Strike Team:** Just as the name implies, this team configuration is used mainly where heavy combat is anticipated. Strike teams almost always use Proteus personnel, most of whom are combat veterans (operatives without combat experience usually cut their teeth on a few recon missions first). Other specialists may be assigned to a strike team as well, if the mission has any secondary objectives. So an assignment where the team must venture into hostile territory and try to identify new technology involves a Triton tech expert. Strike teams get access to a wide variety of weaponry and vehicles as needed for the assignment. The average strike team has 12 to 24 members, though some fast strike opportunities might use only six operatives. Aside from being colonial marines, the soldiers from *Aliens* are a perfect example of a strike team.

Incidentally, there's no hidden meaning to the fact that each film example's mission goes to hell, throwing the team into unforeseen danger. Really.

Æon and Law

For all of Æon's influence in the 22nd century universe, its operatives remain private citizens subject to the laws and regulations of their



country of residence — not to mention the laws of any country, space station or colony they visit on assignment. Some Æon associates have a separate public status (police, government officials) as a result of their other Allegiances. Though operatives don't enjoy the same benefits, there are several circumstances operatives may encounter that can temporarily change their status under the law.

• **Deputization:** There are many occasions, particularly at the local level, in which an Æon operative works hand in hand with law enforcement officials. This can range from investigating Aberrant cultist activities to checking out a factory suspected of manufacturing code indigo bioapps. In these circumstances, the operative is essentially deputized as a temporary law enforcement officer. Under these auspices, the operative can obtain legal authorization for communications and computer taps, gain the right to enter private property to investigate "suspicious acts," etc. In countries with more repressive forms of government (FSA, Ukraine), being deputized may even give the operative *carte blanche* to use any means necessary to obtain a needed information.

• **Aberrant Emergency Zones:** Under the Emergency Powers Act of 2048, the UN General Assembly has the ability to declare any area that is either under attack by or under the control of Aberrants as an Aberrant Emergency Zone. Persons engaging in the defense or liberation of an AEZ are indemnified from all claims for personal injury or property damage resulting from their acts. After recent invasions of our Solar System by Chromatics (as detailed in **Passage Through Shadow** and **Ascent into Light**), there is presently a move afoot to extend the Emergency Powers Act to cover attacks by alien species.

• **Outside Governmental Jurisdiction:** There are a handful of areas in settled space where no government exerts effective control. Examples include the disputed sections of Old Mexico where guerrillas fight against the FSA, the chaotic region of Eastern Europe known as the Shatter, the turbulent lands of the Middle East and the vastness of the Asteroid Belt. In such places, there is no rule of law to follow. However, anyone with enough strength at his back can proclaim himself the law and get away with it... until someone stronger comes along. So although an operative needn't worry much about formalized law in such areas, she's advised to tread very lightly nonetheless.

Dealing with the Law

Special legal status aside, Æon wants every operative to break the law only when absolutely necessary and to think before acting. So a character facing a choice of two options that offer equivalent chances of success should pick the less legally egregious one. Breaking down a suspect's door and pistol-whipping him for information might take 15 minutes to complete. Monitoring the suspect, searching his residence when he's out and shadowing his contacts could take days or weeks to bear fruit. Unless time is a critical issue, Æon pretty much demands the latter. An operative still breaks the law from time to time, but seldom in a way that is obvious and blatantly injurious to others.

When an Æon Trinity operative is caught committing a crime as part of an Æon assignment, Neptune representatives quickly jump into action to secure the prisoner's prompt release and to head off any negative publicity. In most countries with which Æon has a generally favorable relationship, most non-capital crimes are resolved through an "exchange of favors" or a "financial settlement" that falls somewhere between a fine and an out-and-out bribe. In countries where the Trinity is not so well regarded, local officials may prolong negotiations for weeks or months and/or demand sweeteners far beyond the standard settlement. Even then, there's no guarantee the country will play ball. As a result, an operative in hostile territory is encouraged strenuously to avoid capture.

A character accused of capital crimes like murder or treason must normally stand trial, though Æon supplies legal representation... and spares no expense to buy "justice" in jurisdictions where it's for sale. An operative whose arrest was the result of her own misguided initiative into acts outside the bounds of her mission must answer to more than criminal charges. Though Æon defends the individual just as strenuously, she can expect an immediate loss of status and clearance upon her return as punishment for putting the Trinity in such a predicament. Confiscation of gear and wage garnishing may also be applied depending on circumstances. Of course, the operative has other things to worry about if she is convicted.

General Legal Guidelines

Regulations that have direct impact on the activities of Æon operatives include laws governing the licensing and use of weapons, bioapps, mili-

tary vehicles and psionic powers — as well as laws of property and those governing personal liberties and privacy.

• **Weapons:** Thanks to the efforts of the United Nations, most personal light weapons (lasers, slug-throwers, flechettes, screamers, tasers) licensing is universally standardized. Provided that a person has a carry permit and valid weapon registration issued by his country of origin, the same documents are accepted in all United Nations member jurisdictions. Æon makes sure that all its operatives keep their carry permits up to date and Storytellers should assume that all weapons requisitioned from Æon storage are properly registered. Characters are responsible for obtaining the proper paperwork for any weapons they personally acquire.

Still, being licensed to carry a weapon does not give its owner license to fire at will. In any civilized area, the use of a firearm is generally justified only in self-defense and the difficulty of proving such a claim depends on the circumstances in which deadly force was used.

• **Bioapps:** Due to the relative newness of current biotechnology and strenuous protests from Nippon, biotech weapons licensing has not been standardized. Bringing such items into a foreign country can therefore sometimes be impossible — as with Nippon's highly secure customs process — or expensive and awkward — like the FSA's often arbitrary and obscure "tariffs" or China's random telepathic screening. Bioapps that don't have a military focus (computers, clothing) are generally subject to regulations applied to their hardtech cousins.

• **Military Vehicles:** Transshipment of such battle gear (tanks, fighter craft, VARGs) across international borders without express written authorization is a capital offense in virtually any jurisdiction. Any materiel seized in this fashion is typically confiscated as "contraband," and the owner subject to hefty fines and possibly even imprisonment. Of course, if the owner is in the vehicle at the time, it can be tricky to enforce the regulations.

• **Psi Powers:** Like masters of the martial arts, a handful of governments (including the FSA, UAN, India, Nippon and Switzerland) require psions to register themselves as possessing natural lethal weapons. Psions operating in these areas may be liable to charges of murder if they kill anyone through the use of their powers, no matter what the circumstances. **Trinity Field Report: Psi Laws** contains detailed information on the legal ramifications of psi power use.

• **Laws of Property:** In the course of their project assignments, Æon operatives may be called upon to trespass, break and enter into facilities, and even commit acts of theft or sabotage on the properties they violate. Most of these activities are — surprise — against the criminal code no matter what the country involved. In addition, many countries allow the victim of such attacks the right to file civil suit against the perpetrators and their employer.

• **Laws of Privacy:** Without the benefit of properly signed court orders or government oversight, Æon operatives routinely violate the personal privacy of any citizen whose communications or computer activity they monitor. Operatives caught performing such acts can be subject to criminal and civil charges (though the relationship of cause and effect can be more difficult to prove on the civil side).

The intercom clicked off, leaving an uncomfortable silence behind. Jacinto Alesana looked over at Jerzy Bocquet, the other PK on guard.

"I told you that teep would go running to de Raygada for help," Bocquet said placidly.

"So?" said Alesana. "Who cares what Liao thinks?"

"De Raygada does, apparently." Bocquet stretched, then carefully adjusted a few settings on the complex control panel. After glancing at the monitors that lined the security station walls, he set the computer agent on auto sweep and nodded to himself. "That'll do for a short break," he added. "Come on — you heard her. We don't get time to think before she chews us out."

The two Legionnaires left the security station. On the way out, Jerzy glanced toward the airlocks that led out into the Antarctic winter. His partner, lost in his own sullenness, said nothing.

Five minutes of dingy corridors later, the pair arrived in the Bermuda conference room. Some long ago designer had thought that sunshiny murals would make the winter chill more bearable. Based on the flat images tacked to the walls and graphitti scrawled about, the attempt appeared less than successful.

Olivia de Raygada was waiting, as expected; with her were the rest of the psions on site. Baxter was looking at the floor, while Schriber contemplated the surly Alesana. The Liao twins were murmuring back and forth to each other, at least, until de Raygada cleared her throat.

"It's very simple," she said as her curt tone caught the attention of the entire room.

"It's very simple," she said again. "There are seven psions on this station, along with three dozen neutrals. That makes 43 people, in case anyone can't count. Æon brought us all together — psions and scientists — to figure out why taint's increased in this region by 50% over the last three months."

The Norça paused. Nobody took the opportunity to fill the silence.

"This means that each and every one of you will share everything *with one other. We're on a joint project; this is not the place for petty order politics." De Raygada frowned, and focused on straightening her sleeves as she continued. "I was under the impression we were adults and could be reasonable about this, but it seems I was wrong. Accordingly, as project director, I am now explicitly ordering you to share all the data you gather while at this station, regardless of potential value to your respective orders. I expect you all to follow my order or leave immediately." Her hard eyes snapped up, flashing around the room. "Any questions?"*

Another moment of silence.

"Dismissed," de Raygada snapped. Then, with a sharp turn on her heel, she left the room, her back held straight.

Alesana couldn't help it; he looked over to Jamie Liao to catch his reaction. Liao was shaking his head, as if trying to clear water from his ears.

Schriber chuckled, low in her throat. "Damn. And to think someone told me once that the only Norça religion was secrecy."

Beginnings

The very beginning of the orders is still a mystery to humanity at large. The details, locked in the Æon Council's Babel Dossier, remain hidden even from most levels of the Æon Trinity.

It is known that, in 2103, eight individuals — Bolade Atwan, S.K. Bhurano, Rebecca Bue Li, Alex Cassel, Giuseppe del Fuego, Solveig Larssen, Matthieu Zweidler — traveled to a mysterious location on the Moon. Although each apparently went independently, they all arrived at the same time. After experiencing some event (which was anything from a religious epiphany to complete genetic reconstruction, depending on which rumor you subscribe to), they manifested psionic abilities.

The newly made proxies returned to Earth afterward and spent the next few years laying the groundwork for what would become the psi orders. Each proxy gathered both strong latents and talented neutrals to help build their cults of personality. The charisma of a proxy is evident in that none of the people selected betrayed their confidence.

It was during this formative stage that the Æon Trinity tumbled to the proxies. Despite the secrecy in which the proxies worked,

stories of strange miracles and odd events leaked out. Triton Division is perhaps the most organized intelligence agency in human space and quickly put those stories together to locate their various sources. Contact was tentative at first but a relationship soon formed between Æon and the young psi orders. Each side had the same fundamental goal — protecting and nurturing humanity's future — and saw much to gain from the other.

Most of the proxies were in need of money and/or organizational assistance. Though a medical genius, Zweidler didn't have the clout to take over operations of Montressor Clinic. While able to read others' minds, Bue lacked the diplomatic savvy to make a fair deal with the Chinese government. Certainly an electronics and financial wizard, Cassel's zeal threatened to make him run afoul of FSA law. For its part, Æon had carefully helped humanity for almost two centuries. These "psi users" could completely undermine Æon's influence.

Not surprisingly, the accommodation these groups reached wasn't entirely comfortable. Few of the proxies were pleased to discover how widespread Æon's influence was and the Trinity's leaders were never certain that the proxies would remain relatively cooperative. On the whole, however, it marked the beginning of a solid working relationship.

The Orders Exposed

Things developed well enough until the Battle of Sydney Spaceport, in 2106. Reportedly, part of the arrangement for the proxies' powers required that the psi orders remain secret for up to 20 years. Based on that time frame, Æon developed a two-decade plan to slowly prepare society for the psions' appearance. A few companies (like OBC) and governments (like Brazil and China) were made privy to the orders' existence, in exchange for special behind-the-scenes arrangements.

Such long-term secrecy had never sat well with General Larssen, though, who felt that good intentions presented in a straightforward manner would win over the skeptical. Her attitude, combined with the urgent need to turn back a sizable Aberrant attack, made the Psychokinesis Proxy's decision easy: she would send her troops to attack, secrecy be damned.

Some of her fellow proxies, most notably Bhurano, Bue and Cassel, were none too pleased with Larssen's rash act. In their eyes, the short-term benefit of saving a few lives didn't balance well against the long-term harm caused by revealing the orders before the proper groundwork was laid. Larssen flatly denied that claim. The debate has never really ended; Cassel points at the bigotry of the FSA, while Larssen points at the acceptance her order has found in Australia. Regardless of who was right, the deed was done and the orders had no choice but to accelerate their efforts to blend with society.

General Larssen and her Legions had the easiest time of this; Australia was a grateful nation and its temperament was well suited to the psychokinetics' blunt manner. Bue's negotiations with the Chinese government resulted in a partnership between Bue's native Philippines and China — the telepaths serving as mediators and faciliators. Del Fuego took a similar approach in South America, with the advantage that he had already been involved in the South American drug cartels. Like Bue and del Fuego, Proxy Atwan joined her fortunes to that of her entire continent, promoting United African Nations space exploration. Additionally, her record as a member of the Nigerian police force increased Atwan's acceptance with UAN citizens. For his part, Cassel had a pre-built corporate organization. Unfortunately, while Orgotek's financial clout ensured its safety, the FSA's paranoia and prejudice guaranteed that Cassel would never be at peace with his country.

Zweidler and Bhurano didn't see their groups as political entities. They adopted a more scholarly stance, forming research-oriented academic institutions around their orders. Zweidler's vitakinetics proved welcome to Europe due to the direct benefits they provided. Bhurano already enjoyed great prestige in her home country of India, and found little resistance to her new pursuits.

Finally, Old Man Herzog took the literal high road. His order made little attempt to create a new social dynamic within humanity. Instead, Herzog encouraged clairsentients to interact on an individual level. His confusing mysticism did not reassure the average neutral but his vision and lack of visible interest in meddling did.

Intigration

Despite the proxies' best efforts, however, many individuals still assumed the worst. The damage caused by the Aberrant War left both physical and emotional scars and while noetic scientists claimed that psionic abilities were completely different than Aberrant taint, scientific proof rarely convinces on an emotional level. During these early years, many formerly hidden psions lost their jobs, their friends

and their reputations; in some areas, physical attacks on psions were not at all uncommon.

In 2109, when the Chitra Bhanu were reported to be conspiring with Aberrants, humanity became even more wary. However, the quick response from the other orders and the decisiveness with which they eliminated the entire Chitra Bhanu Order calmed most doubters' fears. It seemed the majority of psions were dedicated to humanity's defense and would not tolerate those who fell to corruption.

Through 2114, the orders continued the slow process of integration with notable success. The tide of worries rose again when the entire Upeo wa Macho Order vanished on the same day *Esperanza* fell to Earth, devastating France. The Upeo had gained a reputation as the most heroic of the orders and their loss was lamented as a tragic event somehow tied to *Esperanza*.

The truth, that the remaining proxies tried to place the Upeo under martial law, was kept under wraps. After all, it started because Proxy Atwan came to the proxies with claims that she'd found a benign group of Aberrants. Her refusal to listen to concerns that these self-styled "novas" were at the least trying some manner of trick resulted in Orgotek, the Legions and the Æsculapians sending forces to Africa to restrain the Upeo. The teleporters fled to the stars rather than face capture. Most tragically of all, these events reached their peak just as Aberrants attacked *Esperanza*. By mutual agreement, the proxies left the situation a mystery and all the orders stepped in to fill the vacuum the Upeo left.

In 2120, the fragile accord between psions and neuts suffered the largest blow yet. Respectable newscasters called it the "Huang-Marr conspiracy;" the gossip sheets called it proof that psions were no better than Aberrants. The scandal revealed that Orgotek and Æsculapian psions had engaged in illicit research by implanting Aberrant-tainted bioware into involuntary psion subjects. The Huang-Marr Project was no fringe experiment by a couple of unbalanced psions, either; the data trail led directly to ranking individuals within the Montressor Clinic. (See the **Darkness Revealed** trilogy for full details.)

Such activities are precisely the sort of thing the orders had promised to prevent. Despite the conspirators being rounded up and the psi orders submitting to a United Nations investigation, few people were willing to simply forgive and forget. Orgotek and the Æsculapians in particular were badly damaged, with mistrust spilling over onto the other orders. It may take more than the orders' involvement in the invasion on the Chromatic homeworld, for psions to regain mankind's trust (see the **Alien Encounter** series for specifics).

Even seemingly positive events like the Upeos' recent return (as described in **Stellar Frontier**) may be seen in a negative light. After all, the circumstances of their departure are suspect to say the least. Still, the Æon Trinity's ceaseless efforts at creating positive propaganda regarding the return of the Upeo, combined with the well-documented Chrome-Prime offensive, appear to have turned the tide. With luck, the good feeling engendered by these events will positively influence future psion/neutral relations.

The Orders: An Overview

In many ways, the orders are extensions of their proxies. They are truly cults of personality, often with odd social structures that don't seem as though they should work and that wouldn't, either — if it weren't for the proxies at the middle of it all. So when looking at the orders, one must first look at the proxies.

The Proxies

The proxies are the center of the orders. Passage through a Prometheus chamber is a life-altering event and a proxy is both the cause and the guide. Without the proxies, there would be no psions; this alone makes the proxies almost parental figures to every Gifted in existence.

Furthermore, the sheer noetic power of a proxy creates a distinct sort of charisma. Proxies use their powers unconsciously, often in ways not even the most skilled psion can hope to duplicate. Cassel uses Technokinesis to flicker through multiple computer networks as easily as breathing while Larssen works out almost constantly through subtle telekinetic manipulation. Easy control of such great power is attractive on a very fundamental level, drawing interest from Gifted and neutral alike.

Perhaps more notably, the noetic field that surrounds a proxy is fascinating in its own right. Each acts like a star within the subquantum universe, exerting a kind of "noetic pull" that draws psion particles toward him. This lure isn't restricted to psi sensitives; even the most baseline neutral feels the attraction. It's almost impossible to look



away from a proxy: the mere presence of one automatically makes him the most important thing in the room. This effect is magnified tremendously when proxies gather; most people avoid meeting with more than one at a time.

Alex Cassel and Rebecca Bue Li are perhaps the most similar in temperament. They share a deep-rooted interest in protecting humanity as a whole, along with the belief that their personal intervention is necessary before humanity can achieve its potential. Cassel is more pragmatic, though; he'd say that Bue's religious belief gets in the way of real effectiveness — though Bue would reply that Cassel's lack of faith prevents him from achieving true empathy with those under his command. Still, Orgotek and the Ministry reflect their leaders' desire to work from within society whenever possible.

Bolade Atwan and General Solveig Larssen form another rough pairing of personalities. Perhaps coincidentally, they often took the opposition role to Cassel and Bue. Atwan and Larssen are direct and straightforward, with a high regard for duty —Atwan shaped by her years as a police officer, Larssen by her early military training. They think in terms of protecting individuals, but Atwan is prone toward individual effort while Larssen would rather lead a group to strike at the root of a problem. As a result, the Upeo wa Macho is an order of individualists while the Legions have a military focus.

S. K. Bhurano and Matthieu Zweidler were also kindred spirits. They were scientists at heart; together, they established the groundwork for the discipline of noetic science. However, Bhurano was a humanist, concerned with the relationship between science and the human condition. Zweidler was and is more reserved, less inclined to concern himself with human frailties. Since Bhurano's death, Zweidler has, if anything, become even more isolated from human contact, leaving the Æsculapians without clear direction.

Giuseppe del Fuego stands alone, as he prefers. He believes that South American culture — living in harmony with one another in nature — represents the best attitude to lead humanity into the future. Del Fuego sees himself as the pinnacle of that culture; he is the gentleman of the third millennium. So del Fuego must demonstrate, by example, the nobility and independence to which

humans can aspire. These attitudes are entwined with virtually every level of Norça culture.

Otha Herzog is equally a loner but is in no way an icon — at least, not if he has anything to do with the matter. His isolation is born of a need for clarity. By leaving the Earth behind, Herzog gains the perspective to see the universe and its future clearly. His vision is a curse as well as a gift; he is the only man who truly knows the consequences of his actions. At least through ISRA, Herzog can share that burden.

Inter-Order Relationships

With such strong personalities, it's not surprising that friction exists between proxies. Much of these conflicts are public knowledge (or at least grist for the rumor mill). Joe Hologram can tell you that Zweidler isn't fond of Herzog and Bue is wary of del Fuego. The proxies' attitudes toward one another are often assumed to echo down through the orders. This isn't always the case, though. Psions are influenced by their proxies but are not *defined* by them.

Certainly, a new psion can't help but be affected by the attitudes of those around him. That's human nature. But training does not determine belief, so while a psion does tend to pick up on his order's stereotypical attitudes, it's by no means universally the case. When Gifted from different orders work together, there's often a delicate dance to figure out how each feels about the other. The end result depends on how much of the order stereotypes each has already taken as gospel (see **Trinity**, pp. 41-63), and how willing each is to set aside such prejudices in favor of a personal accounting.

Ministry telepaths are most at ease around other psions, at least initially. Thanks to their potent mental powers, telepaths have it easy when deciding whether or not to trust someone — tels know that they can get to the heart of the matter if it's absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, the edginess other psions often feel at first around telepaths erodes that trust in short order. Few people are secure enough with themselves to be comfortable next to someone who could read their innermost thoughts. Even if the telepath isn't snooping *now*, who says he won't do it later? It usually takes time to trust a telepath but that trust is usually reciprocated without hesitation.

ISRAn clairsentients have an easier time of it. Their vision of the noetic totality provides a sense of security similar to that possessed by telepaths and while clears can make others nervous — one could be watching *right now* — few see ISRA as a shadowy or malevolent entity. Otha Herzog encourages his clairvoyants to be as open as possible, both for philosophical reasons and to make it easier to work with others. This policy has been successful for the most part.

Orgotek employees have recently run into difficulty in working well with other orders. Cassel long had a reputation for being guileless and open. However, whispers of the Prexy having a covert agenda have recently leaked into the rumor pool. These tales are generally exaggerated but that's never stopped rumors from spreading. Most damaging was the Huang-Marr scandal; some find it hard to believe that on a ship run as tightly as Orgotek, personnel could act without the greater order's knowledge. Electrokinetics have the spectre of Huang-Marr's conspirators hanging over their heads, putting a strain on inter-order assignments.

The Huang-Marr scandal was even more damaging to the Æsculapians. Although the rexs long enjoyed good will for their healing efforts, it's hard to ignore that the conspiracy was primarily made up of vitakinetics. Zweidler publicly condemned those involved with Huang-Marr and called for an exhaustive investigation of corruption through the order, but the Æsculapians still suffer a loss of trust. It's difficult for others to give the docs the benefit of the doubt after such betrayal. On a positive note, the order's Haitian contingent was visibly removed from the scandal. Haitian-based rexs don't have near as much trouble finding cooperation.

The Legions comprise the most straightforward order around, making members well-received virtually where ever they go. On the other hand, most psions are all too willing to assume that any individual Legionnaire is as straightforward as her order and concerned only with the best way to battle to the enemy. This frustrates Legionnaires since being a soldier doesn't mean being stupid or unperceptive. The Legions want to help and cooperate in more ways than simply blasting away but the other orders can make it damned hard to contribute.

The Norça get little trust from others and don't care in the least. Of all the orders, the Norça are the most likely to believe they can handle a given situation on their own. Unsurprisingly, other Gifted often allow them to try. The Norça pride themselves on their clever espionage and smooth internal workings and have no qualms about operating with little aid from other orders.

Becoming a Psion

Chapter Five: Psi provides more detail on determining baseline latency and triggering psi. This section is devoted to organizational efforts devoted to recruiting latents and training them to become psions.

The psi orders discover the majority of latents — after all, they're the ones who created the devices to detect latency in the first place. A psion in the field can use Attunement to sense a person's psionic potential but this is by no means an accurate assessment. A latency test is required to discover the subject's noetic capacity and potential, as well as his physical and mental health. Each order has a network of latency assessment stations spread through its local facilities. These typically consist of a psi-sensing bioware device, physiological scanning equipment and psychoanalysis software. Any individual, whether prompted by a psion or of his own volition, can go to one of these facilities to request latency testing.

Æon has received psi energy sensing bioapps from the orders and has many psions on staff. When an operative comes across a latent in the course of her duties, she typically refers him to the nearest order. If the latent shows strong potential for a particular Aptitude, he is directed to the appropriate order. Æon keeps tabs on such individuals and extends offers to join the Trinity after the latents become trained psions.

Some nations have begun widespread latency test programs — most notably Australia, Brazil and the FSA's Central Security Agency. They use licensed psi scanners or pirated equipment, depending on whether they act for the good of humanity or to gather the latents for their own purposes. As this gear can seldom test to the same degree of accuracy as the orders' bioware, it's likely that these programs are missing a number of latents.

Reciprocal Triggering

Often, an order finds a latent who shows a tendency for an Aptitude under a different order's purview. For example, the Æsculapians might turn up a medical student who, despite his avocation, tests through the roof for Telepathy. While such a latent could still be triggered in any Aptitude, his greatest growth as a psion would occur in the Aptitude for which he registered tendency. The orders have developed certain conventions to handle such situations.

No order is ever obliged to activate any latent on behalf of another order. The Ministry couldn't force Orgotek to trigger one of its latents *gratis*, sending the new electrokinetic back to the Ministry after the process was completed. If a psi order agrees to trigger a latent for another order, the order that supplied the latent is obligated to perform a similar service for the triggering order. So the Ministry could send a latent to Orgotek for triggering, but must activate one of Orgotek's latents to Telepathy in the future.

In its role as liaison for the orders, the Æon Trinity accepted the duty of coordinating such obligations. All requests go through Æon's Neptune Division, and a simple tally is kept of which orders currently owe reciprocal triggering. Even so, since this system runs primarily on good faith, there's no practical way to stop an order from recruiting a latent during the triggering process. If del Fuego convinces a new biokinetic to stay with the Norça instead of returning to Basel, for instance, Zweidler could complain to Æon. Beyond that, though, there's not much else to be done. Therefore, reciprocal triggering usually only occurs between orders that trust one another.

ISRA and the Legions trigger anyone, no matter what, with the philosophy that more psions are better even if they work for a different order. Neither order has pushed the issue of how many "favors" it's owed. The Legions, however, keep careful track separate from Æon's tally; the Psychokinesis Order calls for reciprocation when it builds up a number of applicants for a given order.

Orgotek and the Æsculapians are willing to trigger latents from the Legions and ISRA as well as between one another. Even so, they usually wait until they have latents of their own before making the trade.

The Ministry joined the reciprocation program only recently. A few special trades were possible in the past, but the Ministry handled each on a case-by-case basis. Even now that it's fully on board, the other orders are leery of sending latents to the Ministry since about 10% of the applicants choose to remain with the Ministry. Still, the value of telepaths is high enough that the risk is worth the gain.

The Norça never endorsed the trade policy. Del Fuego agreed to trigger biokinetic latents sent to him, but those psions were never returned. For its part, the Biokinesis Order has never asked for latents it found to be activated by another order. As a result, an order that finds a latent strong in Biokinesis must resign itself to possibly losing the applicant or simply trigger him in another Aptitude.

Drawing a Blank

While the orders wouldn't exist if it wasn't for psions, neutrals make up a significant part of each organization. In some cases, the majority of an order's members are neutrals. Orgotek doesn't have enough Gifted to keep a major metanational going — besides, you don't need a psion to work in the mail room. The Norças' shifters direct the group's many plans but blanks take care of most of the grunt work — a biokinetic doesn't need to drive a truck full of marijuana to market or set up a computer to run a DNA test sequence.

Although most order neutrals work in service jobs, there's certainly room for exceptional individuals to join psions in the field. No proxy is foolish enough to discriminate based on the possession of noetic powers — there's no genetic link between psionics and intelligence or common sense, after all.

Æsculapians

Recruiting

The Æsculapians recruit carefully. Their great advantage is that they see the public more frequently than any other order. Every Æsculapian clinic has the equipment for latency testing and Æsculapians perform noetic testing on almost every patient they treat as a matter of course. A possible latent is then told of her status and undergoes full latency testing (including the physical and psychological battery of exams) if she so desires.

Once confirmed as a latent, the individual is usually invited to join the order. Zweidler prefers educated sorts but any relatively bright and stable latent is accepted. When the order finds a psychologically unstable latent with high noetic potential, it offers free psychological treatment in hopes of recruiting him after he's cured. This further broadens the recruitment base, although some researchers suspect that such noetically-derived treatment may be partially or wholly negated by going through the Prometheus Effect.

The Æsculapians recently began offering the same psychological services to other orders, in return for various favors. The less paranoid orders like the Legions and ISRA have gladly taken advantage of this. Orgotek and the Ministry have sent a few "test subjects" but are waiting to see how they turn out. There are no hidden motives to this service — though the head of Special Projects, August Delemont, wishes Zweidler would take more advantage of the potential for infiltration this offers.

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

The Æsculapian Point of View — Excerpt: Doctor Trevor Holmes, 5.4.2121

Look, I must cut this rather short. I have a truckload of patients from a street gang incident in Cannes. Duty comes first.

So, the short version: We Æsculapians are healers, first and foremost. It's what we're taught and what we believe. We pick up the wreckage that violence inevitably leaves in its wake. Almost a holy calling, really.

And sometimes we botch it, yes. Huang-Marr was a botch — any sane person would have to agree. But I think it's very important to think about the causes behind it, don't you? After all, the vitakinetics involved did have a greater goal in mind. Unfortunately, in their search for scientific advancement, they lost sight of the human element.

Indeed, the reverse is often the greatest danger for us. The pain and suffering we sense is so constant, it can be tempting to take shortcuts. But, tempting as it is, we must remember the oath we took. The poor souls of Huang-Marr forgot that we're here for humanity's sake. You can believe that the rest of us never lose sight of that... and now I really must go.

Training

Æsculapian training is as varied as the medical instruction upon which it is based. All rexs go through the same initial training period, during which they adjust to their new abilities and learn to control their sometimes overwhelming awareness. From that point on, training techniques and processes diverge to fit the individual psion.

As much as Zweidler would like to recruit only scientists and physicians, latency doesn't restrict itself in that manner. He can insist that all his rexs receive a minimum of medical training, though. Not only does this suit Zweidler's sense of the appropriate, it helps the new rex understand the abilities that she's gained.

To Zweidler's regret, the Port-au-Prince clinic proved long ago that its holistic healing techniques were just as effective in training new rexs as Zweidler's preferred methods were. Therefore, while medical training is part of every doc's life, it might be based on acupuncture in one case and on

traditional Western diagnostic techniques in another. While Zweidler does insist on a certain minimum level of Western medical training, he suspects that vitakinetics who wind up in Port-au-Prince tend to let this portion of their training atrophy while they focus on holistic medicine.

After a rex's initial stay in the Montressor Clinic, where Zweidler's staff teaches basic noetic techniques and fundamental Æsculapian ethics, she is assigned to one of the many multi-person clinics in the Æsculapian network. These range from the tiny five person clinics of the frontier to the super-clinics like Basel itself.

Along with continuing medical training, internships may include instruction in just about anything the Æsculapians need (bureaucracy, security, psychology, etc.). While Zweidler regards science as the pinnacle of human achievement, the rest of the order understands that one needs a support staff to make research possible. After a year or two of internship, an Æsculapian graduates to full-fledged status. She may continue with the clinic or move on to new challenges.

Daily Life

The stereotypical Æsculapian spends much of her time in medical clinics. Spending day after day with patients frustrates some docs intensely but most find ways to deal with the psychological stress. Vitakinetics who take other paths reason that their work will prove more valuable in the long run than the fight against illness and injury.

Research and field work comprise the most common non-clinic endeavors that Æsculapians undertake. Proxy Zweidler actively encourages research as an investment in the future. Æsculapian researchers work on their own projects and assist with outside endeavors, often lending their services to private, corporate or government projects that show a worthy goal (or that will benefit the order). Research isn't for everyone, though. The Æsculapians are just as heavily involved in the field, most notably with Legions strike teams or Æon Trinity exploration teams.

A few docs work as personal physicians to the powerful. Though not prestigious work, it can be important; these vitakinetics are involved with public relations as much as they are in providing



physical care. The rexs can work wonders in increasing tolerance of the order in specific and of psions in general. It's hard for a politician to condemn psions as evil if he has a Æsculapian caring for him.

There is also a place for vitakinetics back in Æsculapian security. A significant portion of Æsculapian security is made up of neutrals, of course, but the psion-staffed Black Company is a most useful component. Vitakinesis is very useful on security duty, after all; you never know when you'll need to talk someone down or analyze someone's emotional state before letting him into an Æsculapian facility.

Leaving the Order

Proxy Zweidler doesn't prohibit psions from leaving the order — indeed, in some cases he's happy to see them go. After all, Basel adherents who go into private practice or sign on with other groups will likely continue following Zweidler's preferred paradigm. Conversely, Zweidler is happy to ignore those who pursue Port-au-Prince's holistic philosophy — if these rexs leave the order entirely, all the better.

Still, a valuable Æsculapian who announces a desire to leave usually receives inducements to stay — special perks, a raise, a visit from one of the department heads. Indeed, if Zweidler catches word that a particular favorite might leave the order, that rex may find herself the target of the proxy's personal pleas to stay. Zweidler is not charismatic by traditional standards but the unconscious force of his noetic abilities is hard to resist.

Plus, given the decentralized nature of the Æsculapian Order, there may be other barriers to departure. For instance, the Black Company, the order's elite psion security force, goes to great lengths to keep a member from moving on. In the bureaucratic monster that the order's become, it all depends on who you know and what you do.

Most docs leaving the Æsculapians wind up with one of the other orders or with Æon. The Legions are a particularly common destination. Those rexs who go into private, profit-making practice often suffer from discrimination on the part of their former colleagues. Most Æsculapians feel that such money-hungry individuals cheapen noetic science and damage the public image of psions everywhere.

ISRA

Recruiting

ISRAn recruiting is as offbeat and freeform as the rest of the order. There are no formal ISRA recruiting offices or recruiters; each clairvoyant keeps his own watch for potential latents. In some cases, this watch is physical, but more often it utilizes Clairsentience. Potential candidates are "gyres in the noetic continuum," registering psionically to those clears who know how to look. When an ISRAn finds a candidate, she either passes word along to a more experienced clear or handles the situation herself.

Either way, nobody approaches the candidate directly. Rather, the ISRAn handling the case leaves subtle clues for the candidate to find. If the candidate is a good match for ISRA, he'll follow those clues, drifting deeper and deeper into the mystery over a period of weeks or months. In some cases, the candidate avoids the mystery, running away physically and mentally. This is not disqualification; Otha Herzog himself ran from his awakening for over a year. It's often a sign of great potential.

The nature of the clues, and of the mystery itself, depends on the mentor involved. Moral and ethical tests — suggesting that a loved one is having an affair or inviting the candidate to embezzle funds — are often part of the recruitment process, though the mentor herself seldom reveals her involvement directly. Aside from testing the candidate's moral fiber, the mentor must also believe that he is psychologically and emotionally stable before bringing him into the fold.

After the potential clear gets to the heart of the puzzle — by determining that it's a test — and meets his mentor, a period known as dormition begins. Akin to solitary meditation, this is the final screening for stability and fitness for experiencing the Prometheus Effect. The mentor who brought the candidate this far guides him through dormition. Once the mentor and any other interested parties are completely satisfied, the candidate enters the Prometheus chamber.

Training

Each new clear goes through an individualized training process, overseen by one of the Mashriqi, ISRA's inner circle. This may be teaching by example or the new psion may be thrown into the deep end to make his own mistakes while his instructor stands by to comment. It's always heavily flavored with meditative grounding techniques and a strong emphasis on the virtues of simplicity.

Muzzein Sight

***— The Rants of Diva Andelusia* © 2121 Eclipse Media**

What you have to imagine, see, is a room as big as the inside of your skull. It's not small, my sister — it's bigger than anything. It's not limited by time. It's everything you've ever thought of, everything you ever *will* think of. Got it? Got it. That's how big the universe is... big as you can imagine.

I can't see everything in there; I don't think anyone can. Even the Old Man. But we clears, we can see the "cords" that tie it all together and if you follow a single one then sometimes you find something interesting. Especially the big shiny cables that glow — which is about where the analogy breaks down, but everything breaks down eventually. Go with it.

We're the navigators. We like to find things that make people smile and bring people closer together. The Old Man told me once, or at least told a bunch of us, that the best thing in the cosmos is the joy you feel when you see something for the first time. I think he's right — he almost always is — and that's why I'm in the business of bringing everyone that joy. Got it? Good.

These virtues are reinforced by the menial work used to teach the value of concentration and patience. Proxy Herzog believes that simple physical labor provides grounding and a sense of confidence.

Noetic instruction complements the physical. The most important element of Clairsentience training is the *zikkir*, a nonsense word best thought of as a type of mantra. In theory, a *zikkir* represents the clairsentient's position within the noetic universe... although skeptics claim that it's merely a psychological tool with no real significance. Regardless of the truth, the *zikkir* is of grave importance to most ISRAns, helping them focus in the midst of chaos.

On occasion, new clears take the virtues of simplicity to extreme ends, swearing vows of poverty and isolation. While this isn't wrong in and of itself, Proxy Herzog encourages his Mashriqi to keep a close eye on them, as these sorts are generally flailing for personal direction or spiritual meaning. The misguided receive help and counseling as necessary; most find their balance, but some drift into Messianic Baha'i and worship of Herzog — a trend that greatly distresses the proxy.

Daily Life

ISRA has no centralized structure. There are a number of groups within the School, however, which give form to the order as a whole. These groups have loose internal structures formed mostly by common interests. Herzog recognizes each group by appointing a Mashriq to guide it.

Joycean ISRA is the group closest to Herzog's core beliefs. In one of the oblique jokes clears are fond of, it's named after James Joyce, author of the great *Finnegan's Wake*, perhaps the most complex and obscure book ever written. Joycean seers spend their time contemplating and analyzing their visions in the hopes of finding truth therein. The group that calls itself Messianic Baha'i is equally mystical, but on the opposite end of the scale when it comes to Herzog's affections. Messianic Baha'i members look upon Herzog as a messiah, despite the proxy's continued efforts to correct the misapprehension.

The Hajj and the Qadiyya occupy more practical roles within the ISRAn whole. The Hajj are much sought-after pilots and explorers; after all, no pilot is better than the clairsentient who can see without mechanical sensors. The best of the Hajj pilots crew the gigantic Leviathan jump ships. Meanwhile, the Qadiyya exercise their noetic insights by becoming the best investigators in known space. Although taking a similar investigative role, the shadowy Al Alif has a much more grim purpose. This faction is dedicated to maintaining the School's integrity, including hunting down rogue psions and others who would corrupt the noetic totality.

Adherents of Muzzein bang, along with the Sharifiyya, are the face of ISRA as far as society is concerned. Muzzein bang isn't truly a part of the School, but as many Muzzein bang artists and philosophers claim inspiration from the teachings of Herzog and other ISRAns, the movement is inescapably associated with the order. The Sharifiyya is the closest thing to a public relations bureau within ISRA and works to polish the School's image. Much of this effort is expended to help support the group's pursuit of noetic research.

Interestingly, the seven groups (counting Muzzein bang) form a well–balanced whole. Each provides an essential function and, while there's certainly overlap in purpose, it only rarely causes friction. This is particularly amazing when one remembers that each group is a purely voluntary



association. On occasion, reporters have asked Herzog about this. His response is always, "I do not determine the shape of the noetic totality; I merely watch it with awe and wonder."

Other than the occasional request by a Mashriq — which is always phrased as a request — individual clairsentients do as they will. The order provides shelter and hospitality as needed, trusting each ISRAn to determine his proper course of action on his own. Clears are typically drawn to areas and periods of noetic significance, which include notable upheavals and times of chaos as well as seemingly insignificant events. This helps give ISRAns their reputation for odd oracular pronouncements and mysterious demands. Indeed, many clears consider it their duty to give advice, no matter how cryptic, if it's necessary to make events progress auspiciously.

Leaving the Order

Proxy Herzog doesn't mind when clears want to leave his order. In his eyes, every clairsentient alive is part of the School's totality. It doesn't really matter if a psion works for another order; he's still part of ISRA. If ISRA needs to tell clairsentients what to do, it's failed to train those Gifted properly. Herzog expects ISRAns to find their own direction and, if that leads them elsewhere, that's as valid a choice as any.

Still, the School's leadership doesn't allow any clairsentient anywhere to misuse his powers. Psionics are a gift and must not be used unfairly or immorally. Al Alif dedicates itself to hunting down rogues, with a virtually perfect success rate to date.

Whereas ISRA as an entity is content to allow its members to go elsewhere, individuals within the School are sometimes less sanguine about such matters. Antonia Noordsij–Doso, leader of the Hajj, hates to see her pilots go elsewhere. Abbas Kastami, the man behind Al Alif, is also reluctant to let his people go, concerned as he is about the lives they might lead without the structure he provides.

The Legions

Recruiting

Legions recruiting follows the military pattern. Since the Legions have a place for just about every psion they can find, General Larssen's recruiters cast a very broad net, appealing to the disaffected and disadvantaged. As the slogan goes, "Second chances are our stock in trade." The Le-

gions have established recruiting stations in every base they maintain throughout settled space.

The Legions accept almost any latent who wants to sign up. If an applicant is strongly latent in an Aptitude other than Psychokinesis, the Legions recruitment division arranges cross-training if possible. Failing that, the applicant is triggered in Psychokinesis — better a middling-powerful PK than none at all. The Legions do not accept psychologically unstable recruits, although their psychological testing is not necessarily as thorough as that of other orders.

Training

Legions' recruits enter boot camp at widely variable levels of ability. They leave, almost to an individual, as crack soldiers. Legions boot camp is no different than any other military training camp, with latents going through a 12 week program before even stepping into the Prometheus tank. Legions drill sergeants are direct, loud and sometimes brutal — and the soldiers they produce are as good as any in settled space.

Psychokinetics train alongside psions of other Aptitudes as well as blanks. In war, reasons General Larssen, the Legions don't have the luxury of being picky about one's allies. Therefore, it's essential to know how to work with other Gifted and even normal soldiers.

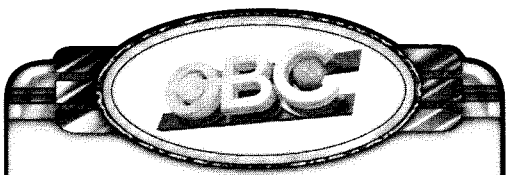
After the trainee finishes basic, she gets triggered and enters a six-week noetic training program. The new psychokinetic then moves onto Occupational Schooling, another six-week course (neutral Legionnaires spend their time in a 12-week extended OS program). Next, the recruit submits an assignment request to a qualification board comprised of veteran officers. Neutrals and non-Psychokinesis psions must go to the Third Legion, but PKs face few posting restrictions. After assignment to a squad, the recruit undergoes a brief assimilation and indoctrination course before her first round of active duty. If the Legionnaire fails any of these course steps, she goes through three-week remedial training.

Daily Life

Typically, barring severe personality conflict or promotion, a Legionnaire stays with her assigned squad through her entire four year duty tour. Despite Legionnaires' popular image as battle-hungry "war dogs," they typically spend very little time in actual combat. Such conflict is a wearing, tiring experience and, given the lack of front lines in the Second Aberrant War, there's no call for extensive trench warfare. Battles in the 2120's are often quick strikes or reactions against the same; it's a rare fight that lasts more than a week at the most.

A standard Legions duty cycle consists of six months on ready duty: this might mean patrolling with the Fifth Legion in the LAST Zone around the Wycoff Blight or flying with Phoenix Squadron through the Asteroid Belt. After a ready duty cycle, the Legionnaire receives two weeks of R&R, then back to ready status. Of course, R&R is terminated as need be if a crisis arises.

Individual Legions vary this basic cycle to some extent. The Fourth Legion stands at the ready most of the time. Each of the so-called "territorial" Legions — the First, the Fifth and the Sixth — keep substantial strike forces in base camp, not on active duty but able to ramp up to readi-



The Line of Fire and Ice

— Transcript: Oscar winner for Best Documentary, 2119

[Camera pans over a large interior space, filled with people from all cultures and walks of life.]

VOICEOVER: The Legions Hall of Honor in Sydney is never empty. Unlike most memorials, it is always alive with visitors: Legionnaires, relatives of the dead and those just plain curious. At any time of day, you'll find someone eating, children playing games, even a group engaging in *ad hoc* theatrics.

I couldn't understand it at first; I grew up on solemn tales of Gallipoli and the horrors of war. Such cavalier activities at the Hall seemed irreverent and disrespectful toward the dead. So why the... well... frivolity?

[Camera zooms in on the column at the center of the room, and the inscription upon it.]

INSCRIPTION: So that we might remember that Legionnaires need never stand alone, we come to share our lives with those who died for us. So that we might never forget those we fight for, we invite mankind to help us remember.

ness within 48 hours if necessary. As with most details of Legions life, alternatives may exist as needed by players and Storytellers.

Every two years, a Legionnaire returns to training camp for a one-month refresher. This may involve training in tactics, weaponry and/or Psychokinesis techniques. There are also special cross-training sessions with Orgotek, in which psychokinetics and electrokinetics have a chance to settle the question of who's the most dangerous on a battleground.

Legionnaires who've distinguished themselves may join Officer Training School. General Larssen requires all officers to spend six months training at the OTS, in order to ensure a certain minimum standard and a commonality of experience.

Leaving the Order

The standard Legions tour of duty is four years. A Legionnaire has no obligation to remain for more than one tour but the order's turnover rate is fairly low compared to that of other military services. Over three-quarters of all Legionnaires re-enlist for at least one more tour. General Larssen's charisma accounts for a lot of this, as does the fierce sense of purpose instilled by the Legions' all-important war against Aberrants. Further, Fortune's Knights — the mercenary Second Legion — attracts many Legionnaires who want to get into more specialized work but who aren't willing to strike out on their own.

Thus, a psychokinetic who's busy guarding an Iraqi hospital might be a private consultant, but she might just as easily be a Fortune's Knight on contract (this is a good option for someone who wants to play a freelance psion who still has strong connections with her order; a squad of Knights — which could include non-PK Legionnaires — makes for a varied story relatively easy for a Storyteller to control).

The Legions don't discriminate against departing Legionnaires. Indeed, many former Legionnaires spend a few years at loose ends before returning to the fold and signing up for another tour of duty.

The Ministry

Recruitment

The latest Æon Trinity report notes that Ministry members hold the youngest median age of any order (followed closely by the Legions). This is a dramatic change from the survey of 2113, in which the Ministry membership skewed older. The cause is no great mystery; Proxy Bue, backed by the weight of the Chinese government, has gradually increased the order's efforts to recruit adolescent latents.

This focus is due to several factors. First, it's easier to ensure loyalty in recruits when training begins at a young age. Those in their late teens and early 20s generally hold stronger opinions, both political and ethical, and are often more resistant to authority. Recruiting young is no panacea, but it does help matters. Not only that, but the new methods

Neo-Confucianism

The catchphrase of the day among China's rulers is "neotraditional Confucianism" — the fusion of traditional Confucianism with the still-revered wisdom of the Great Steersman, Chairman Mao. One of the key elements of "neo-Confucianism" is a revival of the ancient system of examinations. Under that system, all applicants for government positions took a grueling series of examinations designed to test both knowledge and virtue. The tests required literally years of study, and those who passed attained positions within the government (the better an applicant's results, the higher a post he could attain). Perhaps more importantly, they were considered examples of wisdom within the culture.

In those times, bureaucrats were the solid underpinnings of China's empire. Foreign influences came and went, emperors rose and fell but the bureaucrats ensured the survival of the Chinese way of life. Today's China is battered by outside influences: Aberrants, other governments, alien races, the Æon Trinity, the orders. The Chinese Premiere Zhang Hu-lan wants to make sure that such influences — not to mention power struggles within the upper echelons of Chinese government — don't put the entire country at risk. As such, she promotes neo-Confucianism as the means to sustain China's societal integrity.

Since the Ministry's needs weigh strongly in government deliberations, it was the ideal place to reintroduce this system. Ostensibly a test case, the Ministry now uses telepathic examinations as the first and most important examination in schools. Of course, this also means the psi order can control the flow of intellects through the neo-Confucianist system. This has created an uneasy compromise between Bue and Zhang, with each side thinking it's getting the better of the deal.

fit into the Chinese government's "neo-Confucianism" agenda. Finally, Ministry researchers believe that starting noetic training young greatly strengthens a trainee's noetic abilities.

The Ministry's program doesn't restrict itself to Asian latents. Still, the east hemisphere holds a significant portion of the human population, and other cultures aren't too eager to allow Ministry agents to prowl around for applicants. As such, it's inevitable that Asians comprise the majority of telepaths.

Training

Western noetic science holds that 14 is the youngest age to test for latency, with actual triggering held until the age of 18. While adolescents often show remarkable psi potential, the human body and psyche undergo tremendous changes during these years. The general consensus is that subjecting youths to the Prometheus Effect could inflict unforeseen side effects. Triggering too young may well inflict severe physiological and psionic maladies on the subject down the road.

Recent rumors from the Forbidden City claim that the Ministry has triggered children as young as five years old. The Ministry has indeed gathered many adolescents who register strong latency, but it does not trigger them immediately. Instead, a youth integrated into the Ministry is sent to one of the Psi Institutes where years of daily schooling include noetic and neo-Confucianist training. The child then experiences the Prometheus Effect as soon as is considered safely feasible (the youngest so far was 14, and shows no negative side effects to date). The first graduates of this program are now in their late teens. Although they don't show significant gains in noetic functioning over those triggered at an older age, they do seem more adept at picking up new techniques and more at ease with their abilities.

Mature latents, having earned a basic education, study only noetics and some neo-Confucianist dogma. Preparatory training continues for three months, when the latent is finally considered ready for triggering.

Both young and old Gifted fresh out of the tank undergo training in Telepathy for another two years before going on active duty. Neutral teachers are equipped with biotech mind shields for the first six months to reduce the shock of entering another human's thoughts without proper cushioning. Once the students master basic control techniques, the mind shields are removed. New psions also receive intensive training in ethics and morals (and the difference between the two), information gathering, diplomacy and both Chinese and Filipino history. When the Ministry says that it trains its telepaths to act morally and with forethought, it's no public relations lie, but a truth born of necessity.

The Psi Institutes maintain a rather low student-to-teacher ratio of 10-to-1. While other orders also dedicate psions to training classes, the time involved is relatively brief. The Ministry also retains a sizable number of highly trained neutral teachers. All this makes for an expensive project, though its value is unquestioned.

Daily Life

The life of a Ministry agent is highly structured. Everyone has a place in the Ministry, and the Ministry's plan covers everyone. The major offices within the order are devoted to exploring psionics to best effect.

The Office of Semiotics has the hardest role in the Ministry: to enhance the image of psions in general and telepaths in particular. Given the Ministry's reputation for secrecy, this is no easy task. The office's translations, diplomacy and arbitration are not overly onerous but winning the trust of those it assists is much more difficult. OS spends a great deal of time researching those organizations and individuals it works with in an attempt to form the strongest bond possible.

The Psi Institutes are an easier environment, and they are no less important to the task of gain-

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Finding Understanding
— Journal: Pierre Boulle, Office of Semiotics

I chose my signifier today. It was strange that, with this act, I was finally giving up the remainder of my old life. Still, I had so little to live for in France — well, what is left of it — and I think I can do more here.

I am learning to be a bridge. Before I came to China, I didn't realize how separated we all were. Even before I was triggered, it amazed me how well everyone in the Ministry communicated. Differences of opinion rarely spilled into open anger. Chasms of misunderstanding were paved over with ease.

The Ministry can bring everyone perfect communication. It's not often a man gets a chance to work toward perfection.

ing humanity's trust. Institute scientists spend time in pure noetic research, training, and field research as required. The Institutes also involve psions of all Aptitudes — not just because it's useful to have such a range available in noetic research facilities, but because it's yet another way to put people at ease with the Ministry.

Sadly, the mere existence of the Office of Psionic Security goes a long way toward negating any positive perception the other two major offices garner. Proxy Bue views OPS as possibly the most vital branch of all; without a strong defense, her Philippines and her adopted China might be lost and then what good would all the public relations be? The office is also a necessary part of her accommodations with the Chinese government. The Ministry's position within China is not secure; one price it pays for its status is the loan of OPS agents to other ministries. Meanwhile, other agents keep tabs on those ministries, and Bue makes sure everyone knows it. All part of the dark game of politics.

The Ministry is possibly the most religious of the orders. Christianity is not its official religion any more than Baha'i is ISRA's; still, Proxy Bue's adherence to the faith can be felt throughout every level of the order. Each Ministry office has an assigned chaplain and closes down for daily services. Only about 40% of Ministry psions are devout Christians, but those who aren't still tend to follow the forms. Interestingly enough, the rate of conversion among career Ministry veterans is quite high.

Leaving the Order

Very few telepaths resign from the Ministry. Bue has built a deep sense of community that goes beyond mouthed platitudes. Christianity is a religion of brotherhood at its heart, and the proxy is consciously devoted to living her life according to that doctrine. While Bue is seldom seen even within the order, her devotion and that of her inner circle shines strong. Much like the Norça, the Ministry is a family.

Some ex–Ministry psions gravitate to other factions within the Chinese government. Bue knows that other ministries plant ringers within her training system who often leave for another ministry at the earliest opportunity. Though part of Chinese politics, this annoys Bue. In some ways, she'd rather see a telepath go to Orgotek or the heretic Otha Herzog than stay in China working for a rival.

Norça

Recruiting

It's hard to become a Norça. Proxy del Fuego is very selective; he approves every recruit personally, considering it one of the most important aspects of his job. As he's said in more than one address, "If the seed is weak the tree will be rotten." Thus, many latents with Biokinesis tendency go unrecruited by the Norça. However, those who del Fuego finds inadequate wind up elsewhere. The *Pai de Norça* admits that his castoffs might still be made useful but doesn't tend to waste his time beyond a nudge toward another order.

Racial background is not an issue with the Norça — for those who can change their shape, surface appearance bears little relevance. The order retains a large portion of neutrals, from soldiers to scientists to spies, and many of those are drawn from the talent throughout Central and South America. But latents may be found where ever the order roams, and that includes all of Earth and settled space. Interestingly, many shifters choose to adjust their appearance to a Latin cast as a sign of brotherhood and dedication to the *Pai de Norça*.

The key characteristics for a prospective biokinetic are loyalty and devotion to universal excellence. It's not enough to be a genius in one area; the Norça wants a person who offers multiple talents, and who tries as hard as possible even when natural talent is lacking. Proxy del Fuego has no use for someone who doesn't care about everything she does.

Once a candidate is identified, a senior Norça approaches her personally. He explains the nature of the Norça, without giving up any of the order's secrets. At this point — even before becoming part of the order — the candidate must decide whether to never betray the Norça on pain of death. If so, the candidate is taken to a neutral location and told in more detail of the order's goals and methods. After that, the candidate has one last chance to back out but is well advised to keep quiet the secrets she has learned.

If the candidate remains interested, she is brought before Proxy del Fuego himself. This one-on-one interview is different for each candidate, and lasts anywhere from a few minutes to many hours. If *Pai de Norça* considers the applicant unsuitable, the latent is rather unceremoniously deposited in a nearby air- or spaceport and given a ticket home. Otherwise, she is assigned to a mentor (often the same



· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Subject: Youth
From: Tio Marcelo Torres
To: Guadalupe
Encryption: SPE
Transmission Type: textfile
Date: 2:31:51 1.2.2121

The new crop is the very soul of the family, my dear. I must admit, I was thinking that perhaps the last few initiates I met showed signs of weakness, but I believe now that I was allowing my own prejudices to cloud my thinking.

We found twins this time, women with fine poise and good bearing. And what is more important, they grasp the heart of the family. When I explained that we look into ourselves so that we might perfect ourselves, they understood. When I said that perfection gave us more rights and opportunities, young Paula said boldly that it also provided more duties, among them the duty to lead. You'd have been proud.

I look forward to seeing you after my return from Titan, my dear. Until then, I will be thinking of you.

shifter who met with her initially) for a few days to prepare for the Prometheus Effect. This amounts to little more than a primer of what the latent can expect; any detailed discussion of psi is held until after the candidate becomes a psion.

Proxy del Fuego is personally on hand to observe the actual triggering. Though every proxy took part in the early transformations, del Fuego is the only one who maintains the practice.

Training

The Norça devote much more attention to indoctrinating the new biokinetic into the Norça way of life than to teaching her how to use her powers. The Norça are highly patriarchal, and "family" is their watchword. They respect an individual's former ties, but it's assumed that the order is the member's new, more important family. For some months after emerging from the tank a new Norça joins her mentor's "family," where she's isolated from the rest of society and saturated with Norça beliefs. Since in that first meeting del Fuego tries to gauge how easily a candidate will fit into such an environment, this acclimation is very effective.

It's worth noting that, although "family" is of key importance to the Biokinesis Order, it is sel-

dom meant in the genetic sense. The most obvious equivalent is an organized crime family which includes, but is not restricted to, direct genealogical relationships. This is an overly simplistic view, though. True, there are actual nuclear and extended families within the order but being related to a Norça isn't a requirement to join. Plus, the order isn't simply interested in illicit activities — indeed, the Norça pursue criminal ties mainly to fund their environmental and genetic research.

Dedication and talent are key, with "families" forming around common goals or philosophies within the order. The Norça's "family within a family" structure echoes the order's philosophy as a whole — multiple layers of duty and loyalty that all find their source in the proxy, but that are fundamentally dedicated to Earth and its people.

After a Norça has been with the order for six to eight months, she is free to leave her mentor's "family" for another more suited to her tastes. It goes both ways; she needs to convince her chosen family that she's right for them, as well. This process, known as the "*liberdade*," typically takes months. The Norça is already at least passingly familiar with the various families, but she takes this time to get to know each one's members and activities. The *liberdade* also serves as a final period of blowing off steam before taking on "adult" responsibilities. The order forgives much that a Norça does during this time.

Instruction in Biokinesis itself typically takes place on the job. Some time is spent during the social indoctrination helping the new biokinetic adjust to her powers, but it is secondary to teaching the societal ropes. Once she settles on her family, the new shifter receives tasks to perform. These may be solitary missions or part of a group effort, but all challenge the psion's talents, conventional and noetic. If *Pai de Norça* made the right choice, the shifter should accomplish her goals with little difficulty and, if the psion finds herself in trouble, she'll either learn from the experience or die.

Daily Life

As noted above, the Norça organize along loose family lines. During the order's formative years, the *Pai de Norça* gently guided his followers in different directions. The end result is a combination of related individuals and those who share common philosophies and interests. To help reinforce the idea of family and loyalty, though, each group adopted the surname of the Norça who first shaped its course. For example, the Rubalcala family controls most of the drug trade in Colombia, while the Calado family handles relations with Brazil. The Torres family runs biotech research throughout South America, while the Vargas family oversees the order's security concerns.

Although recognized as a member of a given family, a Norça only takes its surname when she achieves special status. This usually requires years of loyal service to the order, though newer members may be rewarded with the *nomear* after accomplishing an especially challenging task or dramatically advancing the order's cause.

Though the Norça speak of "siblings" and "family," the order remains quite patriarchal and therefore a bit sexist. In the Norça paradigm, women are not lesser than men in any way, but they are different. The Norça combat troops are generally men, while the infiltrators are more often female. Exceptions certainly exist, but gender classification is the rule. Though relatively straightforward among the order's neutral members, it has become both complicated and reinforced by the psionic ability to shift genders. A male biokinetic who is skilled at "female jobs" usually just shifts to a female form and keeps it. On the other hand, some Norça have given up gender identification entirely and change sex on a near-daily basis.

There are a few other large-scale divisions worthy of note aside from gender and family distinctions. A Norça most intimately involved with illegal activities is called a *primo*, Portuguese for "cousin." This is a family member who does necessary, but often distasteful, things. This is no insult, but rather a statement of fact. *Primos* are well-trained in the stereotypical Norça activities — espionage, infiltration and disguise. They brag that any *primo* could walk through a security perimeter manned by clairsentients and disarm a Legionnaire. The operation using the most *primos* is the Mexican rebellion, but there are *primos* throughout the Solar System and beyond.

The *tios*, or "uncles," are the order's upper echelon. It's not a formal title; one becomes a *tio* when the *Pai de Norça* calls one "*Tio*," and if he should ever stop, so would everyone else. *Tios* are the most trustworthy and reliable of the Norça. Proxy del Fuego empowers them to call on the resources of any Norça at any time for any purpose.

This creates a certain tension among the order's ranks. Every *tio* wants to be noticed; each one wants to prove that she's the best. They compete fiercely to recruit the best young Norça, and



there's nothing stopping a *tio* from ordering someone else's protégé around. The only check on a *tio*'s actions is failure, which del Fuego tolerates only grudgingly and never more than twice. This results in spectacular displays of initiative.

The remainders of the Norça family have no special names, although they call one another siblings — "brother" (*irmão*) or "sister" (*irmã*), depending on gender. The *primos* call the bulk of the Norça "cousins;" similarly, *tios* refer to those of lesser status as "nephews" and "nieces."

Leaving the Order

Every time someone wants to leave the Norça, Proxy del Fuego takes it as an indication that he's done something wrong. In his eyes, it reflects poorly on the family when a member wants to leave. Still, del Fuego must trust his people to make correct decisions, or the order's entire autonomous structure would collapse. Thus, the proxy is willing to allow a family member to leave... but not without a chat first.

A Norça who wants to leave the order must therefore present her case to the proxy himself. Del Fuego uses his tremendous natural charisma as well as his formidable noetic talents to convince the supplicant that life outside the family is a cold and empty thing. It's a rare individual who can resist the proxy's most impressive persona (in combination with wave after wave of heady pheromones). *Pai de Norça* also makes it painfully clear that once the supplicant leaves the Norça, she may never come back. If you reject the family, the family rejects you.

Most supplicants change their minds during the interview, and may return to their duties with no fear of reprisal. The proxy is proud of those who show strength of character in thinking for themselves and challenging the status quo; many *tios* and *primos* come from such stock, in fact. Those who whine about things like the order's secrecy, insular attitudes or tough standards are a different matter. They disgrace the Norça, and show that they do not comprehend the issues at stake. Del Fuego puts these disappointments in the care of a *tio* to be educated more clearly in the Norça's goals and attitudes. This probation can last from a few weeks to more than a year, with the individual either coming to terms with her life or trying to flee.

The uncommon soul who sticks to her guns becomes an exile. The proxy ritually strips her of

her possessions, symbolically taking back all that he has provided. The supplicant's home and its contents are similarly confiscated, as are her finances. The former Norça receives only simple pants and shirt and, walking barefoot from her meeting, leaves the order forever.

An exile may build a new life unmolested by the Norça. However, she may never call upon her former order for aid, and all Norça who encounter the exile treat her like a non-entity. The family atmosphere is a powerful thing, and most exiles join other orders or Æon to recapture that sense of belonging. A few exiled shifters have even started a kind of support network of their own.

Those who leave the order without permission, as well as current or former Norça who act disloyal to the family (revealing its secrets, working against it), are *traidors*. For these, there is no mercy. The rumors of Norça performing public executions on those who betray them are exactly that — myth; murder in public would do the order more harm than good. Still, the Norça have no qualms about spreading such tales, as the fear of painful death helps dissuade those who consider crossing the order. Every Norça knows that, though public executions are propaganda, the shifters won't hesitate to slay a *traidor* in private.

Orgotek

Recruiting

Orgotek recruiting focuses on colleges; Cassel is a product of the American educational system and is very proud of the scholastic pedigree of his employees. Orgotek booths are features at every college job fair throughout free space, from major universities to small technical schools. Though they seldom have complete latency testing gear on-site, these booths can establish general latency and set up more comprehensive tests and an informative meeting at a nearby Orgotek facility.

Of course, with latency so rare, Orgotek can't afford to ignore anyone, so the metacorp doesn't restrict itself to college students. Orgotek advertises its recruiting program as well as its products on every major media network, sponsoring everything from drama spectacles to sporting events. Helpful contact information brings candidates in touch with Orgotek more easily than a bunch of individual psions tromping through neighborhoods. While most applicants turn out to be neutral, the order has seen a dramatic increase in the number of latents found since initiating the advertising program.

Perhaps the strongest draw in Orgotek's campaign is that it happily positions itself as the order that won't try to run your life or tell you how to think. This slogan appeals greatly to those turned off by ISRA's mysticism, the Legions' gung-ho militant attitude, or the Ministry's smiling uniformity.

Training

Orgotek models its training methods after Western universities. The three Orgotek campuses (San Francisco, New York, Olympus) differ in the

A New Future Awaits!

— Alex Cassel, Recruiting Hologram #34B © 2120 Orgotek

So, you've discovered that you have great potential locked inside you — the chance to become a psion, an electrokinetic! Quite a surprise, yeh? You're probably not quite sure what to think.

Well, we can't help you there. See, Orgotek's not here to tell you what to think. And we're not going to give you a song-and-dance about great pay and the chance to see wonders throughout space. Orgotek's benefits and employment opportunities are a matter of public record. What's important here is that you know what electrokinetics *do*.

In the end, Orgotek wants to enhance the human condition. We're all about making life better. Cliched, yeh? But it's also very true. Our tasks range from the mundane like designing a better computer or improving ways to do menial jobs, to the sublime like keeping humanity safe from those forces that would take away our freedom.

Really, it's very simple. We think life can be perfect for everyone, and we're doing what we can to make it that way. Think you're up to the task? We're ready when you are!

details, but all share the same goal of creating well-rounded graduates. The training program encompasses general education as well as instruction in Electrokinesis. Recruits lacking advanced learning take courses to cover the basics in humanity, math and science; those with partial or complete college education can pursue advanced studies.

Aside from providing instruction, Cassel and his staff designed this collegiate system to encourage a bonding atmosphere among new employees. So far, the scheme has worked well. Even those who leave Orgotek tend to feel a strong sense of pride toward their former employer, and more often than not they'd still do the "Big O" a favor in a pinch.

This atmosphere is influenced strongly by the campus deans, though. The San Francisco campus is a model of scholastic efficiency, with Dr. Marcus Srinivasan imposing perhaps too much order upon the students. The Olympus campus is under investigation after repeated episodes of paranoia involving its dean, Dr. Daryl Shockey. The demands of this investigation have kept Orgotek too busy to look into the New York campus, where Dr. Jane Tanner runs an exceedingly liberal program whose graduates often emerge without much company loyalty. It's entirely possible that Cassel may revamp the entire training system in the near future.

Daily Life

Life in Orgotek bears more similarity to that of a metacorp than a psi order. Orgotek doesn't demand 24/7 alertness from its employees; most come to work at eight and leave at six. Unless, of course, they're under deadline....

Orgotek maintains five main divisions. World Enterprises, Inc. is the company's administrative arm, handling human resources and other such issues for the other four departments. WEI is not always an exciting place to work, but psions can find interesting niches within it — after all, it's the place where the order's corporate scheming and intrigue occurs. If you enjoy corporate conflicts and battles, WEI is the place for you.

Orgosoft Farms is the bioware division. As one of the company's most valued resources, it's subject to frequent industrial espionage and thus requires a constantly vigilant security force. It's also in charge of learning biotech secrets of other orders and the Qin. As if that wasn't enough, Orgosoft helps build the Leviathan-class jump ships. This creates a strong space orientation within the division, and its employees often find themselves sent far beyond Earth orbit.

Tekne Group handles hardtech for Orgotek — which, considering the rest of the company continually focuses on biotech, creates some friction. This divergent focus is especially galling to Tekne employees since that department created the biotech-hardtech interface (used in everything from integrating biotech ships' hardtech weapons and engines to fitting biocomputers with hardtech SIO ports). Tension aside, Tekne continually produces advancements in electronics and computer technology. The inquisitive geniuses of Tekne also provide Orgotek with the fruits of their more illicit research. Continuing the age-old tradition of antisocial computer programmers, Tekne employees spend a notable portion of their time exploring databases and computers all over the OpNet.

Lumen, Inc. is the most pure-science oriented of all the divisions. Lumen was originally chartered with all light-oriented research and development. This would be a small department in most companies; considering an entire Mode within Electrokinesis deals with light, though, it's taken on far more importance within Orgotek. Since the discovery of the photokinetic Chromatics, Lumen has drifted away from pure research and taken on the unfamiliar role of hands-on xenologists.

Finally, as a mirror to the friendly public persona of WEI, the Operations division handles overall company security, provides forces to help fight Aberrants, bodyguards important individual members of Orgotek and even hires out as professional security to third parties under the proper conditions. Considering the various opportunities possible within Ops, most action-oriented psions tend to gravitate here.

Orgotek maintains a "shadow department" related to Operations but not under its direct control. Known to a few ranking personnel and called simply "Option-8," this department's operatives do the dirty work that Cassel can't publicly admit needs doing. Option-8 is a well-kept secret even within the company — most electrokinetics don't even know it exists.

Leaving the Order

Orgotek is one of the easier orders to leave. Cassel's long term goals require that humanity rid itself of anti-psion bigotry; that won't happen if all the Gifted are hidden away in mysterious orders. Joe Hologram might mistrust psions as a class, but it's harder to hate someone you eat lunch with every day. Therefore, it's good to spread psions among the population. Orgotek itself does this to a certain



extent with its public efforts, but freelance psions tend to promote the cause even further.

Plus, Cassel doesn't believe in holding employees against their will. Though the Prexy's unique ethical stance might permit him to keep an employee unwillingly if it meant that he could reach a more important goal, Cassel is well aware that morale affects performance. He needs people who *want* to work for him. Such people produce, often far beyond the call of duty. Those who lack the commitment or interest are free to go.

Orgotek isn't above trying to affect the decision, however. The company works hard to be as inviting and comfortable a work environment as possible, with pay and benefits comparable to other top metacorps. Plus Cassel made sure that Orgotek's different divisions cater to different personality types, and it's easy to transfer between departments. An employee who truly wants out may go with no hard feelings — in fact, Orgotek often helps facilitate a psion's move from one order to another. This aid isn't applied universally, though; while he'd deny it, Cassel is less inclined to let his people go to the Norça. His disdain for del Fuego's methods leaks through to the Prexy's personnel decisions. The same applies, to a lesser degree, to the Ministry.

Upeo wa Macho

Recruiting

There have never been many teleporters, since the latency required greatly reduces the number of likely candidates. The teleporters have searched carefully for latents throughout the Upeo exile, and it remains a long, arduous process.

Those rare candidates with the appropriate latency must first meet Atwan's scrutiny. Her interviews last for hours and are incredibly grueling. The proxy feels that, considering the stakes involved, there is no room for error in choosing psions. Having been a police officer prior to being a proxy, Atwan knows what questions to ask to get at an applicant's true goals and motivations. Assuming the candidate passes, he must go through a battery of tests and a month or more of education. The tests and instruction echo that followed by the other psi orders.

Following this, the candidate spends six months as an apprentice, following jumpers on a wide range of tasks. This is for the benefit of the prospective psion as well as the order, giving him an idea of what his life will be like if he gets triggered. After the applicant sees the roles

teleporters play, he must choose which part of the Upeo he'd like to join. He then undertakes six more months of grueling training with that group.

Finally, over a year after the initial interview, the candidate has another interview with Atwan. This talk is just as detailed as the first one. At the end of it, both candidate and proxy make their final decisions. If Atwan rescinds her offer, there's not much the applicant can do except apply at another order. Similarly, some latents have decided against joining the Upeo after seeing the order from within. Otherwise, a candidate who runs the entire gauntlet has one final test before him: the long walk. He's taken to a remote location — anywhere from a distant colony to a crowded South American arcology — and must return by a certain deadline. This last test is a means of challenging the applicant's natural wits and ingenuity, as well as seeing how much he's picked up in his year of training. If he makes it back by the deadline, the latent at last enters the Prometheus chamber.

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Subject: What the hell?
From: Derek Turkel
To: Mary Padova
Encryption: SPE
Transmission Type: textfile
Date: 15:02:41 11.11.2121

So what next? We've returned to Earth with all the expected fanfare, and now we're getting nailed with the questions: "Why the disappearing act?" "Couldn't you have saved the *Esperanza*?" blah blah. Ironic that we can't give a clear answer, since we've been asking ourselves the same questions during the exile.

Maybe I'm being too harsh, but we had a *purpose* when I joined the Upeo 10 years ago! We were a benevolent society dedicated to helping people in trouble and exploring places nobody had ever been before. I liked that time. Perhaps it was an ego thing, being mankind's star-jumping golden boy. Even so, I — we all — had direction, a common cause.

And now... we don't have the same purpose. Even worse, nobody's sure what to think of us anymore. About the only thing we can agree on is that we must do what's right. So who knows what that is? I can only follow my gut; I'm going to have a long chat with the Star-Crossed.

Daily Life

The order is divided into four main roles. The first, known as the Long Riders, handles communications. The riders are dedicated to keeping people in touch, carrying information and cargo from world to world. The Long Riders even remained active, albeit covertly, during the exile.

The second group, known as the Monitors, was previously dedicated exclusively to search and rescue. The time in exile expanded this group's role to that of observation and investigation. While they still watch for emergencies and save lives when they can, Monitors also explore odd occurrences and pursue lawbreakers.

The Kupita are the Upeos' explorers. They are the most talented teleporters, ones who can open the star-spanning transportals and ferry entire fleets from one solar system to another. From the earliest days to the present, Kupita teleporters have dedicated themselves to continuing humanity's exploration of space.

The last group, the Nguzo, does not include teleporters but still serves a vitally important role. The many neutrals in Nguzo have the skills to colonize space, repair spacecraft, and otherwise support teleporter endeavors. This group also contains psions from other orders who've elected to join the Upeo mission — clears dedicated to exploration, vitakinetics interested in fast-response rescues, and the like.

Since the return to Earth, some Upeo have split into a fifth role — dissenters. The self-proclaimed Star-Crossed have lost faith in Atwan's leadership, and have offered their services to any organization with suitably humanitarian goals. Atwan has not tried to dissuade anyone from leaving the Upeo but it's clear that this contrary group pains her greatly. Since the Upeo headquarters remains on the hidden colony of Ruan's World, the Star-Crossed have taken up residence in the old African base, Nyota Kukumbatia.

With the exile ended, the Upeo wa Macho finds itself in the midst of a crisis. Its organizational structure was always very loose, more like a guild than anything else. This helped the order remain intact during its exile and recent return to Earth. However, the core of that structure was always the infallible Bolade Atwan. With the news that she may be as much to blame as the other proxies in forcing the Upeo exile (and so being unable — or unwilling — to avert the *Esperanza* crash), Atwan's aura of invincibility has crumbled.

Several matters must be resolved before the Upeo can really return to anything approaching a normal life (if such a thing even exists for a psion). Most importantly, the matter of the Upeo disappearance must be addressed. Certainly the public is glad to have the teleporters back and the Upeo are thrilled to rejoin Earth society. Still, no one can ignore the grim truth that the rest of the orders plotted to effectively enslave the teleporters. For some, this is a stain of shame; for others, it was a matter of necessity. Furthermore, most of the Upeo only learned of the *Esperanza* tragedy upon returning seven years later. Though the orbital station crashed to Earth with shocking suddenness, the teleporters can't help but wonder if they could have made a difference. The tragedy and resulting self-doubt has left most Upeo struggling with feelings ranging from confusion to horror... and many are focusing these emotions into blame of Atwan.

With all this going on, teleporters returning to Earth are having a hard time of it. They face questions about their disappearance, the *Esperanza* and many other tragedies where Upeo help was sorely needed — questions from the public, from other psions, and even from loved ones.

Leaving the Order

Proxy Atwan selected her people for loyalty, and very few teleporters ever left the order to go solo or join another organization. Despite the concerns facing the Upeo wa Macho from within and without, most members currently choose to remain with the order. The Star–Crossed represent the first real alternative to Atwan's authority. Nobody outside the order is quite sure what to make of the situation; several organizations hope that since the initial psychological barrier to leaving the order is broken, teleporters will begin drifting even further afield.

Chitra Bhanu

Those willing to speak of the Chitra Bhanu remember a contemplative order devoted to studying psionic potential, but tragically seduced by the evil of Aberrants in the process. The tiny order was wholly contained within Proxy Bhurano's Chitra Bhanu Institute. As with other orders, much of the Institute's staff was made up of neutrals — though in the Chitra Bhanu's case, blank membership outnumbered quantakinetics by 20 to 1. The order's members, neutral and Gifted, worked together with



a single-mindedness of purpose matched only by the Norça, exploring the full potential of psi and its relationship to taint. Bhurano, through selectivity, achieved what Zweidler could not: an order consisting solely of scientists and philosophers.

Based on stories that the Æon Trinity gathered in the aftermath of the 2109 Chitra Bhanu massacre, the order's fall was the result of Bhurano's atypical refusal to cooperate with an investigation of the Institute. The other orders discovered that the Institute was researching the nature of taint... with the active assistance of several Aberrants. Bhurano met requests for information with polite refusals. In the end, the orders were forced to back their requests with force.

As the matter escalated, Bhurano called back all chibs in the field and cut lines of communication with the other orders. The situation was tense, but when representatives of the orders arrived at the Institute — backed by a number of strike teams — the Chitra Bhanu welcomed them inside. As Æon was left out of events (being told this was a matter to be resolved "between the orders"), it's still unclear what happened next. It is certain that some sort of conflict ensued which resulted in Proxy Bhurano's death. This triggered panic and over-reaction on both sides of the conflict, and the utter destruction of the Quantakinesis Order. The building was gutted and even the Prometheus chamber was dismantled and its parts destroyed.

Æon would dearly like to know how the situation could have gotten so out of hand so quickly. Despite a quiet ongoing investigation, the Trinity has gathered little hard information on the matter.

Survivors

One of Bhurano's strict recruitment parameters was loyalty. In the six years that the Chitra Bhanu existed, no more than a dozen quantakinetics resigned from the Institute, and few joined other orders. Most chibs preferred lives of solitude; the majority of Bhurano's recruits were already inclined toward the meditative life. Perhaps another dozen escaped during the massacre.

Whether gone before the tragedy or having fled during the conflict, the quantakinetics went underground after 2109. Their order was labeled corrupt, themselves in league with Aberrants; survival demanded secrecy. Though Chitra Bhanu sightings were reported over the intervening decade, the few remaining chibs became adept at evading capture. Those few who were tracked down remain quietly in custody of the psi orders or Æon.

While a handful of quantakinetics still exist, their rarity and experience make them much better-suited as Storyteller rather than player characters. After over 10 years in hiding, any chib would be a truly exceptional human being, and couldn't be built with a novice character's point allotment. Still, a Storyteller may decide to allow a player to have a Chitra Bhanu character in her series. If so, the Storyteller has final say on the extent of the chib's abilities and powers.

Freelance Psions

Warm milk doesn't always work. Jack Chu found that out on November 9th, 2121, lost in a night without rest. The ritual of heating the milk, pouring in honey, and washing the pan was calming, but not enough to bring sleep. Drinking the stuff wasn't enough, either. Wakefulness rode him, unwilling to let go.

Twenty minutes after the failed milk experiment, Chu heard a rapping on the window. A branch, maybe, or imagination playing tricks. Jack was a rex, not a clear, so checking would've required getting up. Too much bother. Just another annoyance meant to keep him from sinking deeper into his bed.

A tap, then another, then a third. Pause. Rap, rap, rap. *Far too much of a coincidence to be a branch, but the purpose behind the boyhood signal was no more welcome. Chu rose, reluctant, to the sound.*

"Jaaack!" Tim drew the word out, grinning wide through the window.

Jack rubbed his eyes, then nodded to his brother as he opened the window. Jack gestured Tim into his flat silently and a bit wearily.

"So," said Tim, seemingly full of the energy his older brother lacked, "how've you been?" Darting into the kitchen, he perched on the edge of the counter. Jack carefully moved his new espresso machine out of harm's way.

"Not bad," Jack replied. "Work's well enough, more or less. Life's good. And you?"

Tim shrugged, then glanced around. "Hey, I don't see any sign of that cute Spanish femme *you were shacked up with last time. She still around?"*

"No. No, she left a few months ago. Long story."

"Oh, indeed; you don't have to tell me. I lost a good partner after the — uh, the problems. Tough all over for us, yeh?"

"Tougher if you're breaking the law." Jack's tone was sharper.

"Whoa!" Tim swung his legs around, slid off the counter with thoughtless ease. "Look," Tim continued as he walked into the small living room, glancing around curiously, "I'm not going to claim Father would be proud of me, and I'm not going to pretend I'm Fong Sai Yuk fighting the evil gwai–lo. *But hell, it's a living, and it's only what blanks expects of me. Don't tell me your boss doesn't suspect you're evil at heart."*

Jack, hurrying after, frowned. "My boss is a fine man."

*Tim shrugged. "*His *boss, then. His manager's manager. Somewhere along the line, Elder Brother, someone has it in for you."*

It was Jack's turn to shrug. "Perhaps. But I get a regular paycheck, and security... and I don't have to worry about the police coming after me."

"Hey, I do most of my work in the FSA, so cops would be coming after me even if I was pure of heart. And as for the steady paycheck, well, my apartment's nicer than this place. Not that it's bad; these old European buildings hold up surprisingly well. But," he smirked, fingering a wall hanging, "I don't like Kostbaar's stuff much."

Jack settled down onto a couch, laughing despite himself. "Your opinions on style are well-documented." His smile faded. "And at least people only sneer at me for what I am — not what I do."

"And that's better?" Tim shot back. "Besides, people don't sneer at me. They never see *me. I'm a good thief."*

Jack shook his head, grinning again. "Incorrigible, as always... still drinking scotch?"

Tim grinned back. "Always."

The 22nd century universe is not entirely friendly to the psionically gifted, so it's not surprising that few psions willingly give up the comfort that the orders provide. While each order has its own way of encouraging its members to stay, none of them like to lose Gifted, and all of them take measures to avoid it. The Æon Trinity is as far as most psions stray. Though a distinctly different atmosphere than the orders, Æon is very good at making psions feel wanted and understood.

Still, there are always individuals who find that the universe outside Æon and the orders has rewards that outweigh its faults. These benefits are often monetary, occasionally political, sometimes religious, and in some cases simply psychological. Life in the Norça may not suit those of a more reserved temperament, and life in Orgotek may disagree with those who feel that the profit motive is a corrupting influence. Each of the orders has a definite ideology, one that's not always a comfortable fit with personal views.

"Freelance" describes the psions who don't work for the orders or the Æon Trinity. A "rogue," on the other hand, is a pejorative term devoted to a Gifted who uses her powers to break the law, causing grief or injury in the process — and who fundamentally gives all Gifted a bad name. (See p. 70 for more details.)

Playing a Freelancer

The most difficult element in playing a freelance psion is figuring out how your character joined forces with the rest of the players' characters. Freelancers are a rare breed, after all. Still, it's reasonable to assume that psions take the chance to associate with others of their kind. Even those who come from different orders have something in common — the shared experience of noetic awareness. It's not so much that neutrals are always unfriendly, or impossible to talk to, but rather, say, that the electrokinetic you work with understands the singular change you undergo when the Prometheus Effect awakens your psionic talents.

If a truly lone wolf Gifted doesn't suit your taste, you can play a psion who's still affiliated to some degree with one of the orders or the Æon Trinity. Assistance is one thing, after all; taking orders is entirely different. A former Legionnaire might not want to join another order, but is still interested in working with docs. The agreement under which a former Ministry agent left the Ministry may not permit him to openly join Orgotek, so he must maintain a façade of independence. A former Norça may figure that being an Æon associate provides her with a nice balance of steady work and freedom of choice.

It's important to talk to your Storyteller before creating a freelance or rogue Gifted — not only to get her help in deciding how your character is linked with the team, but to find out if she's even willing to have an independent psion in the story.

So, why might a psion go independent?

Filthy Lucre

Thanks to their rare talents, psions command impressive salaries in the job market. While not always up to the standards of successful bang divas or movie stars, no Gifted choosing the commercial life ever goes hungry. In rules terms, a freelancer in steady employ should generally have at least 2 Resources, and often has 3 Resources. The best analogy is to computer professionals in the 1990s: not everyone needs to hire one, but there aren't really enough of them to fulfill the demand from those who do.

Lucrative wages are matched by a high degree of job freedom. If a psion doesn't like a particular position, it takes no more than a week or two to find another job. A freelancer's employers are generally well aware of this, and the wise ones treat their psions accordingly. Thus, even a permanently employed freelance psion has great freedom to pursue his own interests — coincidentally making it much easier to justify such a character's presence in the series.

Of course, if a psion chooses his employment for non-financial reasons, compensation may change accordingly. For example, a vitakinetic who leaves Basel to work with the Red Cross in the Middle East isn't paid as much as he would be if he took a job as personal physician to the MMI executive staff (hopefully his job satisfaction will make up for it). Note that a psion who's gone freelance for idealistic or personal reasons may be more sympathetic than one motivated by mere money; consider the options carefully.

Ideals

Despite the proxies' charismatic leadership and the other techniques by which the orders earn psion loyalty, there are always a few Gifted whose personal paths lead them elsewhere. The proxies prefer to recruit those people most likely to stay with the order; however, the percentage of latency in the human race is not so high that the proxies can afford to bypass most potential members. Besides, with the threat of the Aberrants so close, it's better to have more psions in the cosmos even if they aren't working directly for the orders.

Each order is handicapped, to one degree or another, by its strong identification with a specific area of settled space. Most psions feel some level of patriotism toward their homeland. Therefore, it's not at all uncommon for a Gifted to decide that he just doesn't fit into the Ministry's Asian-flavored culture or that the rewards of serving her home country are stronger than those of serving Orgotek.

On the other hand, there are those who believe that their government is *not* properly serving the people. These psions wind up feeling a different kind of patriotism and work for reform, either through established means or as resistance elements. Reformers may also wind up working for non-governmental institutions — this is how Æon Trinity and the UN recruit. Many find such groups' global altruism appealing. Finally, unsurprisingly, a few Gifted go solo, finding their own means of improving the universe.

Another motivation that causes psions to go freelance is religion — it's as common among the Gifted as it is with the rest of the population, after all. Organized religions are still struggling to come to terms with the existence of psi — invariably, some factions within every existing religion decry it as an abomination, other segments consider psions saviors... and the remainder tries to avoid committing until more facts become available. Some Gifted are committed enough that they leave their orders to use their talents in service to their faith, and/or to educate others on the truth of psi.

Mock Independence

Not all "freelance" psions are actually freelancers. Some of the orders spend considerable effort on infiltrating organizations that seem important. The Ministry, the Norça, and Orgotek are most likely to engage in this sort of activity (the Legion is too straightforward, the Æsculapians aren't much concerned with politics, the Upeo are more interested in exploration, and ISRA has never needed to infiltrate to gain information). Not surprisingly, Æon is also prone to a spot of espionage.

The most common targets of these *faux* freelancers are governments, particularly the Federated States of America. The FSA is the most prominent opponent of psions, after all; plus, there's that question as to where the FSA spends all its money. The United Nations is also a popular target, given its influence in the universe and its ties to Æon.

The orders seldom attempt to infiltrate each other; there are too many safeguards in place and too many ways for a fellow Gifted to notice something wrong. Still, such espionage happens from time to time, and the rewards often match the risk.

Slings and Arrows

Life outside the protective sphere of the orders isn't all happiness, naturally. The biggest problem facing any freelance psion is prejudice. The low-level bigotry that marked psion/neutral interaction before the events recounted in the **Darkness Revealed** trilogy was bad enough. Since the details of the Huang-Marr scandal came out — not to mention the reasons behind the Upeo disappearance — that bigotry has swelled into widespread distrust of psions.

It's become very difficult for a psion to make his way through neutral society on his own. Sure, the money's great and there's no doubt that Gifted are in demand by those too smart to buy into the hysteria. Still, the public fears a repeat of the Aberrant War and not knowing a psion's motivation does nothing to calm Joe Hologram. Additionally, a psion's employer must be prepared to adequately justify said employment in the public eye. The psion who doesn't toe the line to aid his employer will find himself out of a job more often than not.

Players who want to try such a character should remember that success isn't guaranteed; one needs to be prepared for exposure. Further, it can be difficult to be the outsider. Also, consider the possibilities that arise from playing an infiltrator who slowly gains respect for the organization being infiltrated. Still, a spy story of this sort provides the fun of playing someone sneaky and clever along with an interesting climax — and a wealth of options once you get the ball rolling.

Employment Opportunities

Æon Trinity

The Æon Trinity is, of course, the most common destination for psions who go freelance. Æon has a great deal of experience in making unique individuals feel welcome, and it knows how to present an attractive picture to its recruits. Details are covered in **Chapter One: The Æon Trinity**.

Corporations

Only the biggest corporations — Banji, ABI, MMI, Mashindano — can afford to hire psions. Smaller metanats and regional corporations may be able to hire a psion for a job or two, but they're unlikely to retain one long-term, let alone field a full psion team. Plus, such work generally focuses on research (providing fewer interesting alternatives for roleplay).

For metacorps, psion teams function as roving troubleshooters and security consultants. These may be publicly known or covert; in the end, it depends on the corporation's point of view. A company like Banji or Mashindano feels the prestige of having Gifted on call helps reduce the chance of corporate espionage. Places like MMI, on the other hand, don't want to risk the anti-psion bigotry, though, and keep their Gifted behind the scenes.

A corporate psion team is an excellent setup for a series. It gives players a wide range of possible personality types and inclinations and gives the Storyteller an equally wide range of scenario possibilities. A corporation team —public or not — can be sent anywhere their parent company has interests and become involved in almost any situation once they're there.

Corporation psions should spend points on Resources, representing both their high salaries and the materiel available to them. Similarly, Devices is also highly appropriate.

Governments

Every government wants to get its hands on psions — even the FSA and Nippon, although they'd never admit it. China and most of the South American nations may have ties to psi orders, but that doesn't mean that it provides those countries with a ready pool of psions. Cautious government officials gather reliable subordinates who answer only to them.

Government employment pays almost as well as working for a corp, and it has some notable advantages. Few corps have the kind of resources that a government can muster, not to mention that being able to twist the law to your own purposes is mighty alluring. The downside is that working for the state is more likely to be dangerous. The single most common job for a government psion is espionage, and while corporate espionage can get you thrown in jail, spying can get you dead and not only that, once you sign up with the government, it often becomes hard to quit and stay healthy.

United Nations

The United Nations has a range of psions working as staffers; some are even Æon Trinity associates. The Æon members are less likely to reach high rank in the UN hierarchy. After all, while the full extent of the Trinity's influence remains

Sample Team: Becher Ari

Israel, despite the tragedies plaguing the Middle East, refuses to give up hope. Self-reliance is at the core of the Israeli self-image. It seems unlikely that Israel will ever rely on the psi orders, not to mention other nations, for defense. That's not to say that Israel is against using psions.

The Israeli psionic research program, run out of a secret facility in the Negev Desert, has as yet been unable to reproduce a viable Prometheus chamber. It has not been entirely without success, though. The program led to the creation of a hardtech noetic detection device. Though crude, it's enough to sense latency with fair reliability. Israeli intelligence has used the device to send hand picked latents to the orders; after getting triggered, the individuals typically return to Israel as soon as possible.

Approximately a third of Israel's psions work in the research program, as scientists or as research subjects. The remaining two-thirds make up the Mossad's top secret psionic arm, Becher Ari. Israel mandates service in one of these forms for all its psionic citizens.

Re'ut Oded leads the Becher Ari with quiet efficiency. She herself is a telepath, one of the few high-ranking members of the Ministry ever to leave that order. She's organized the Becher Ari into five person cells that operate independently in the field, each with considerable latitude in accomplishing its missions. The distribution of Aptitudes in a cell is as diverse as possible. Between 10 and 20 cells exist at any given time.

Every now and then, a chipzine reports that Israel is the new home of the remnants of the Chitra Bhanu. Thus far, no one has found any real evidence to support the rumor.

unknown, the UN is well aware that there's more there than meets the eye.

UN psions are among the most likely to find themselves working with either the Æon Trinity or the orders. The UN very badly wants to keep abreast of what all these groups are doing and is willing to lend its resources to gain trust and knowledge. This is no small commitment, as the UN has an official standing that the other groups lack.

A UN psion with the proper authorization is welcome in most countries, and can extend his welcome to operatives in his company. His informational resources are also considerable. The UN databanks are better than any order's, and the UN has a small army of researchers, translators and bureaucrats at its disposal.

Besides the publicly known psions, the UN maintains a small group of covert agents. This group, informally known as the Blue Berets, is a typical black operations group specializing in intelligence gathering and analysis. The UN prefers not to use Blue Berets in physical actions, feeling that the UN peacekeeping personnel are better trained for such efforts.

Blue Berets are good candidates for characters tasked with infiltrating the orders or working with Æon Trinity operatives in order to learn more about what the Trinity is up to. Player characters should consider buying Status, Allies, or even Mentor (representing the UN) to reflect the many resources available. Abilities such as Bureaucracy, Investigation and Law are also very appropriate.

Religion

Both the Baha'i Faith and the Catholic Church were fortunate enough to have devout proxies of their respective faiths. Or, perhaps, unfortunate; certainly the Vatican has been known to engage in bitter disputes with Proxy Bue on the nature of her faith. In any case, no religion has a monopoly on the psionically gifted, and most organized religions have some psionic followers who have chosen to serve their faith directly.

The Catholic Church is most fortunate in this regard, drawing particularly on disaffected telepaths and Norça. There is a small division of the Swiss Guard made up entirely of psions, in fact. Other notable religious psionic groups include (but are certainly not limited to) the Noetic Brotherhood of the Mormons and the terrorist Islamic group, Undying Damascus.

Playing a member of such a group can be highly rewarding if the Storyteller and all the players are willing to conduct themselves with respect toward differing faiths. A religious group might be sponsored by the religion in question, or it might be an *ad hoc* gathering of people who share the same belief. In the 2120s, a few fringe religions still feel that psionic powers are a sign of corruption; one interesting series might involve a group of devout psions who want to prove that their belief is as strong as anyone's.

Sample Team: The Vatican Noetic Conclave

In 2113, Otha Herzog discovered and recruited a brilliant Protestant theologian, Enrico Valenza. Herzog's Baha'i faith fascinated Valenza, as did his newfound abilities. However, Valenza was above all else devout. He believed in the Christian God, and despite sincere efforts he could not reconcile his religion with what he perceived as Herzog's messianic nature. Herzog argued (yet again) that he had *never* positioned himself as a messiah. Unfortunately for Herzog, Valenza agreed with the Messianic Baha'i — whether or not Herzog was prepared to admit it, the Old Man was a religious figure.

Valenza's search for truth led him to study with the Ministry, hoping that Proxy Bue could show him a way to balance faith and noetic talents. His studies in China lasted until 2118, when he finally departed Beijing. During those years, Valenza grew to believe that the noetic totality revealed by his Clairsentience reflected the proper state of Christianity. With Bue's backing, he brought his arguments to the Vatican.

The Vatican was pleased to provide Valenza with a home. The psion had already made a name for himself in religious circles; while Benedict XVIII was glad Valenza was sympathetic to Catholicism, the pope preferred having him under close observation. Since then, Valenza has carefully assembled a group of psions dedicated to exploring the place of noetic science in religious belief. They are not all Catholic or even all Christian; the Vatican Noetic Conclave does not discriminate on grounds of belief. In the end, Valenza hopes that noetic science will prove to be the key to universal religion.

A group of this sort is quite different from the usual psion strike team, though it is no less involved in issues of exploration and discovery. Indeed, the Conclave might be more suited to uncovering the mysteries of the 22nd century than a group of Æon Trinity troubleshooters would be. The Conclave isn't limited to dry academic investigation, either; Valenza and his associates strongly believe that introspection without extroversion leads to stagnation. The Conclave's members can be found doing hands-on work around the Middle East, the Wycoff Blight and anywhere interesting noetic phenomena occur. Indeed, Valenza would love to study the Chromatics firsthand and may yet get his chance.

Entertainment

There are a few psion media stars, mostly actors and singers. In particular, Muzzein bang attracts numerous clairsentients. There are always rumors about psionically gifted actors but the bulk of them are false. Those psions in the entertainment industry who do "come out" find that the resulting notoriety can either make their fame or bring them down. The additional attention is usually a blessing, as long as one stays on the right side of public opinion.

There aren't many reasons why a group of psions would find themselves together in the entertainment industry. It's more likely that one psion might have an entourage consisting mostly of neutrals, which could be an interesting series setup in and of itself. Characters in this line of work should prioritize Social Attributes and performance skills; Influence and Resources are the most important Backgrounds. While entertainment skills aren't limited to any Aptitude, Clairsentience is the most common, followed by Biokinesis.

Rogue Psions

Sometimes, despite an order's best efforts, a psion goes rogue. This doesn't just mean leaving the order. No order keeps a psion against his will, after all (though some go to extreme lengths to convince a psion that he doesn't want to leave). Rather, a rogue psion is one who skips out before his noetic training is complete or his contract is up, or who commits a serious crime (generally one that harms innocents and paints all Gifted in a bad light).

Breach of Contract

New psions undergo instruction not only for the sake of the psion, but to ensure the safety of those around him. Untrained psions run the danger of having their emotions direct their powers, rather than their minds. What's worse, raw noetic awareness untempered by training often results in serious mental health problems. As a result, a novice psion on the loose is both a public relations nightmare and a danger to everyone in his path.

The orders use variations on the activation contract (called "paper shackles" by some) as the primary means of ensuring that a psion stays with his order during training. Each new psion must agree to remain a member of the order and perform required duties for a specified length of time to repay the costs of his activation. The length of time required varies greatly; ISRA requires only



enough time to complete the initial training, while the Ministry retains at least some legal interest in its telepaths in perpetuity.

If an individual breaks his activation contract or expresses the desire to do so, his order first points out the legal repercussions of such an action. All activation contracts are legal under the laws of the jurisdiction in which the order's Prometheus chambers are located, thanks to the Æon Trinity's lawyers. The legal penalties for breach of contract are severe, and include fines, incarceration, the application of a Biochemical Alteration Node (the BAN effectively lobotomizes the subject; see **Hidden Agendas**, p. 39, for details), or even stripping the psion of his powers. This last is a rare talent only the proxies posses, and knowledge of it is kept very quiet indeed.

Despite such cautions, if the recruit still leaves, the order sets the legal wheels into motion. This is a very important step; it helps the order's public image, insofar as it's a sign of respect for the local community and its laws. Also, it gives the rogue a chance to return to the fold without violence, saving at least a little face. He still faces fines and possibly jail time, but it's certainly a more healthy choice.

Most local courts are happy to enforce the provisions of an activation contract. Even in the FSA, judges tend to feel that it's better to get the rogue under Orgotek's control than to allow him to run wild. Of course, the FSA court isn't above losing the rogue in the system, never reporting the psion's apprehension, and instead redirecting him to the arms of the Central Security Agency.

When a rogue psion ignores a court order, direct action is necessary. Every psionic order has its own special operations team; retrieving rogues is one task of such teams. Sometimes an order will ask a fellow order or Æon for assistance.

When a rogue is retrieved (and almost all of them are), the apprehending order evaluates his mental state. In theory, any anti-social tendencies should have been detected before the psion was activated. In practice, there have been instances of previously stable individuals becoming unbalanced as a result of experiencing the Prometheus Effect. Knowing the reasons behind this is important to prevent future fugitives. Again, orders with particular expertise, most notably the Æsculapians, often assist in such studies.

If the condition is treatable, rehabilitation begins immediately and no expense is spared. If the

psychosis is untreatable, the rogue gets a BAN and is usually sent to the *Armstrong* Orbital Rehabilitation Satellite, a.k.a. "the Black Hole" (see **Luna Rising**) for further "treatment." In practice, this rehabilitation rarely succeeds, and the Black Hole simply serves as a dumping ground for psions nobody wants. The Ministry and the Norça do not use *Armstrong*, preferring their own closely-guarded facilities and their own rehabilitation techniques.

Very, very few rogues are ever stripped of their noetic talents. The procedure is draining to the proxy and tremendously traumatic to the psion. Not only does the subject forever lose his powers but is also virtually shut off from all connection to the subquantum stratum. The closest approximation one victim gave is to be healthy one moment and suddenly stricken blind, deaf, mute and parapalegic all at once. In game terms, a psion who suffers this procedure is reduced to one permanent Psi and zero current Psi; further, his Stamina, Wits and Manipulation are each reduced by one (to a minimum of one).

Criminal Acts

Most rogue psions are blatantly criminal. Most Gifted, deep down inside, would rather see a rogue suffer an untimely accident than let one go free to continue smearing mud all over the psion public image. It's hard enough being different without some idiot confirming all of Joe Hologram's worst fears.

Every order considers it part of their duty to track down rogues. ISRA is easily the best at it (and it's no fun being hunted by clairsentients). Moreso, the orders seldom hesitate to band together in the hunt. After all, the proxies are directly responsible for the psionic gifts of every person who's gone through their Prometheus chambers — those who use their powers to the detriment of others affect the image of every psion.

Rogues are, for the most part, irredeemable. The worst of the worst. As such, this isn't a recommended path for a player's character to take. It's important that a character is sympathetic on some level; while a short story arc about a really unpleasant person can be interesting, few want to play out the entire life of a true slimeball. Does that mean that a character should *always* be an upstanding, conscientious member of society? No; a character always has options and his life may take unexpected turns. Just make sure your character is ready for the almost inevitable discovery and subsequent events.

Not only that, it's difficult to hold a group together when one of their members is revealed to be a criminal. In some teams, it's OK to retire a character if this happens; in others, it can damage the series. Make sure your Storyteller is prepared to handle the consequences.

Check with the other players as well, since keeping a series going is as much the players' job as it is the Storyteller's. You need to consider the reaction of both the players and the characters, for even if the players don't mind the possible downsides, they might find that their characters are reluctant to allow new psions into their confidence. With care, playing a rogue can expand the possibilities of the series and bring new skills and attitudes to the group — without care, it can be disastrous.

There are a few ways to create a more sympathetic rogue story, but that still allow for the intrigue and subtle moral shadings common to Trinity:

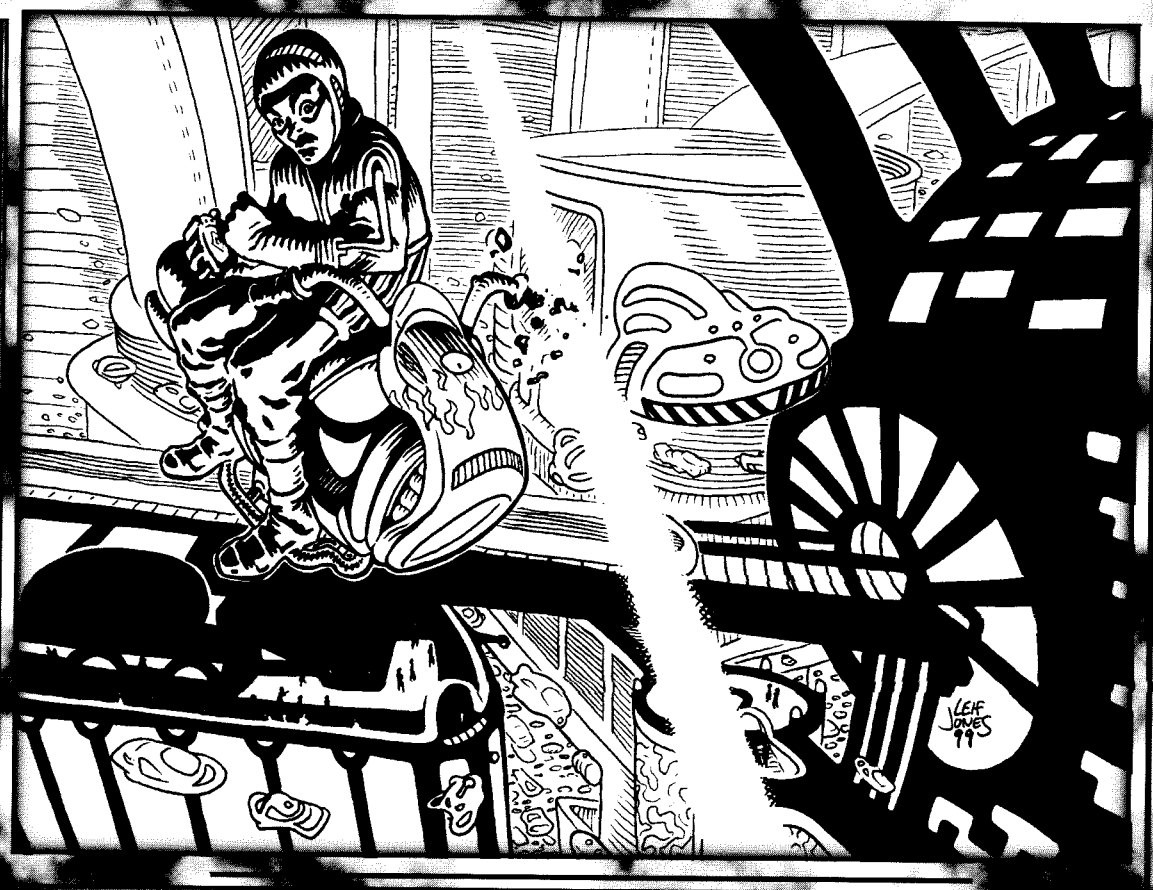
- **Lies, Damned Lies, and Accusations:** For better or worse, the law isn't always fair — and even when it is fair, it isn't always *applied* fairly. One story seen over and over is that of the man who's wrongfully accused or who's done wrong for all the right reasons and who is trying to clear his name.

Is someone in this situation a rogue? For all practical purposes, yes. Sure, maybe he didn't really kidnap that starlet — but everyone thinks he did, including the clairsentients trying to track him down and the studio that's put a reward on his head. He's not a rogue in his own mind but that won't stop the police from going after him and how will he prove he didn't do it when he's not even sure who framed him?

Such a character might associate with other player characters hoping that they might help him find out what really happened, whether incidentally or after he gains their trust. He might also want to hide among them, intending to avoid scrutiny by associating with known heroes.

- **The Life of a Gentleman Thief:** There's also the classic caper story. There are a number of excellent novels and movies about people who live on the other side of the law; Lawrence Block wrote an entire series of mysteries about the gentleman criminal Bernie Rhodenbarr. He's a burglar and makes no bones about it but in his career he's accidentally stumbled across (and solved) a number of more serious crimes. If he were a psion, he'd be classified as a rogue, but on the whole he does more good than harm.

A character like this could be a single member of a team — perhaps he's been discovered by the Æon Trinity and is performing services for



them rather than be turned in — or he might be one of a group of rogues in the Robin Hood vein. Cipher is a good Background for such characters; Contacts and Devices are also appropriate. In some cases, Mentor might be good also — a master thief who taught the character everything she knows.

Cautious characters of this sort can get away with their actions for a very long time. As long as the various organizations with an interest in rogue psions become aware of your character, there's little chance they'll stumble across his activities. His crimes may even be obvious, but his use of psionic powers doesn't need to be.

• **Redemption:** Not everyone who's committed a serious crime is unrepentant. Playing a redeemed criminal, or one who is seeking redemption in his own mind, can be a source of fascinating roleplay. The crime should not be beyond sympathy, but that leaves a wide range of possibilities. For example, breaking a man's arm is assault and battery. Breaking a man's arm because he demanded protection money is still assault and battery... but it's more understandable.

Of course, the right course of action would have been reporting the incident to the police. Crimes don't stop being criminal just because one has an excuse. However, someone who committed a crime under those circumstances is at least a little sympathetic and is more so if he repents.

In most cases, this type of rogue goes incognito; that's easy for shape-shifting biokinetics, or electrokinetics with the knack of manipulating electronic records. Those with other Aptitudes should consider buying high levels of Cipher, as long as it's properly justified within the events of the series. The more precautions taken, the better, as long as you remain aware that the police — or worse — will catch up with your character someday.

The Trinity Universe is remarkably different from our own. Many changes occurred in the time between the late 20th and early 22nd centuries. However, it's not easy to relate clearly just *how* things have changed. At first glance, it is clear that technology in the future is vastly superior to that in the present. However, 22nd century society has also experienced numerous problems. The powerful OpNet superceded the Internet, only to collapse and fragment during the Crash. Psions do amazing things but the far more powerful Aberrants threaten all of humanity. Alien races have proven to be not only bizarre but threatening in ways mankind little imagined.

Yet how much of this actually matters for the average citizen of the 2120s? How has the future Joe Hologram's life actually changed from that of today's Joe Schmoe? For now let's ignore the big stuff — the Aberrants, the OpNet crash, psions, advanced technologies, aliens, etc. Instead, let's look at the daily lives of the people who live in this universe.

Life in Modern Times

The single most important change in the Trinity Universe was the fragmentation of humanity. Most of the large nation-states still exist in the 22nd century, some even retaining the same names, but national boundaries are no longer the decisive factor they once were. Instead, people interact primarily within their own social class and usually within their own profession, often ignoring people who don't belong to these groups. Through the reconfigured OpNet and via rapid transport, an upper middle class engineer can interact with other upper middle class engineers throughout near space. This same person rarely deals with non-engineers — except for his family, boss, underlings and the personnel in those service occupations that haven't been automated.

This fragmentation is mirrored by increased physical isolation. Small self-sufficient communities like the outback enclaves thrive all over Earth, and there are even more underneath the sea, in near orbit and out in extrasolar space. In these isolated locales, communities of between one and 100 thousand people live in carefully controlled conditions. The isolation allows these settlements to largely avoid unwanted outside influences. Even in large cities like Melbourne, São Paulo, or New York, many groups exist in close proximity to — yet entirely separate from — one another. While such subcultures have always existed within larger urban environments, their isolation is much greater in the 2120s and is now more frequently based on profession, mutual interests, and social status rather than religion, race, or ethnicity.

This isolation is maintained in numerous ways. Advanced computer technology allows most people to get by with less direct interaction with others. An individual's computer agent, or even avatar can talk to anyone he doesn't want to deal with face-to-face. It's not uncommon for a person to program her phone to have her avatar, automatically answer any calls from strangers and/or selected people. Avatars' sophistication has created many instances where a person realizes only later (if at all) that he was talking to a computer construct.

With automated grocery deliveries and similar services available to almost every middle class urbanite, it's possible to avoid even the simple interactions common to shopping and other errands. Walking has also declined quite a bit. The majority of the population now lives in arcologies connected by elevators, hoppers and extensive maglev networks. Even in traditional cities, everyone but the desperately poor can afford to buy a ticket on an automated maglev. Yet despite how comprehensive the transit systems are, few people have spent any significant time in a community significantly different from the one they live in. Even fewer have been in a slum or the inside of an upper-class metroplex.

The combined ease of sending agents to find information, the rise of telecommuting and increasingly automated services serve to compress distance and reduce contact within the arcology lifestyle. Many city dwellers might as well be living on different planets for all they see of each other's lives.

The only exceptions to these trends are anti-technological eccentrics (many who refer to themselves as "Neo-Luddites"), the very poor and the vast number of refugees

in Europe, the Middle East and Australia. Members of the middle class look at holovid images of the poor and destitute but don't really comprehend their plight. Cut off from the OpNet, public transport, and sometimes even from electricity and running water, the downtrodden live in a different reality, one most would prefer not to think about.

In the 2120s the differences between different classes in a single nation are substantially greater than those of similar classes from different nations. An engineer in Sydney has a much easier time interacting with a teacher in Beijing than with the contract laborer living half a kilometer away.

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Where Are All the Robots?
— Nancy Vigil, *Automation In The Modern World* © 2117 University of Chicago

We've heard about the vast promises of automation for 150 years. First machines replaced factory workers, then they replaced office workers and most domestic servants. However, we still have people mining deep in the bowels of the Earth, constructing buildings and even clearing fields or planting trees. Why are humans still performing a multitude of dirty, dangerous, and often backbreaking labor?

The simple answer is because they're still the best tools for the job. Machines certainly can — and do — help. However, designing a mechanism to build skimmers or an agent to process insurance claims is very different from creating a device that can handle complex, chaotic, and variable tasks like welding girders while standing on a narrow scaffold 50 meters above the ground. It's even difficult to create a reliable machine capable of planting a tree in the wilderness without supervision. The more variables involved with a task, the harder it is for a robot to do.

Humans are considerably more clever and flexible than even the most advanced SI. We are also far more suited to working in complex environments. Also, machines are expensive and often difficult to maintain; humans are generally not. Until we have sentient biotech or self-replicating nano-machines, humans will continue performing many physical out-door jobs, especially in the poorer sectors of the world and on various off-world colonies.

Daily Life

So, what do most people in the Trinity Universe actually spend their time doing? The answer depends on whom you are talking about. For now let's confine this discussion to the largest single category: the working and middle classes. This category covers broad swaths of settled space, from China to Luna.

Between various disasters and simple poverty almost one in five humans are refugees or simply very poor. However, with the exception of these unfortunates and the very rich, the vast majority of humanity lives under similar conditions. Computer agents and robotics have eliminated most housework, service work, and office-work, just as most factory labor was automated in the early 21st century.

The majority of the middle class works in skilled professions like engineering, teaching, law or medicine. Most members of the working class are usually servants of the rich; maintenance and repair technicians for various automated factories, restaurants, and offices; or manual laborers. Having a large number of manual laborers may seem somewhat paradoxical in this post-industrial age. However, a century of disasters and ecological problems have greatly multiplied the need for new construction, as well as requiring a great number of people to help plants trees, clear away rubble, and otherwise assist in ecological recovery.

There are also more people in the arts and the sciences, especially since automation has created a high demand for fine hand-made goods among the upper class. Nevertheless, less than 10% of the population works in all artistic professions combined.

After work, many of the old pastimes of dining, partying, and dancing are still very popular. A number of people also pursue newer diversions like virtual-reality holosim adventures, cruising the OpNet or sampling the latest fancy and fully legal South American designer drugs.

Even so, the isolation continues. Many maintenance technicians and other lower-level personnel tend machinery in factories where the machines are their only company. Still, this trend is not universal; most engineers work in large research facilities, numerous teachers still teach live classes and most manual laborers work in moderate-sized teams.

Similarly, holosims and OpNet conversations make up a large portion of for many peoples' social lives. Add in the fact that a large number of OpNet users employ image programs to alter their

on-line appearances and it's not surprising that despite all this electronic interaction, few people truly know with whom they're dealing.

Where We Live

Cultural diversity has increased in the new century. The old divisions of language, religion, race and urban versus rural environments remain but now an increasing number of people live in new and extraordinary environments ranging from sealed cities deep under the sea to farming villages on planets circling other stars.

Just as every person is a unique individual, every human society is a singular entity. Nonetheless, some generalizations are possible. In this era, there are six primary types of human habitation: urban, suburban, rural, undersea, orbital, and extraterrestrial. While differences within each group can be vast, there are also important similarities worth examining further.

TRITON ARCHIVE

Subject: Simclub FAQ
From: Loraine Norvena
To: >>> simclub list <<<
Encryption: SPE
Transmission type: textfile
Date: 2:00:00 4.19.2114

So, you're thinking of going to a simclub. Well, it isn't like a normal nightclub or a holosim. Everyone who goes in wears a HUDset. If you see someone without one, they're either lost w/o a clue, or they're *trey-riche* and wearing a set of those new HUD contacts. It should be pretty easy to tell which is which, if you look. You won't be, though. Instead, you and all the other slicks will be looking at a mixture of real life and whatever your HUDset shows you. Each person's minicomp broadcasts info on their appearance and their menus. The menus are those little glittery things like stars, butterflies, or miniature angels floating over folks' right shoulders. Click on them and you get whatever data the person wants known. As for the appearances, well, that's obvious.

You'll see folks looking like everything from old 21st century vid stars, knights in armor or big scaly dragons, to Divis Mal or the pope. You can turn off your HUDset to see what's really going on, but be discreet and don't do it for long. It's not uncommon to do it perhaps once a night, but turning-off is majorly unslick, and if anyone catches you at it you lose serious glam points.

Urban Life

Since the mid 20th century, most of the human population has lived in cities. This trend has continued on into the 22nd century. However, the growth of arcologies altered city life in important ways. The greatest change that metroplexes created was in more rigidly stratifying urban life. Instead of buildings lining streets used by a vast mix of people, arcologies gave rise to a world of separate corridors where people can live for years without seeing the surrounding levels.

Different social classes or cultural groups often inhabit different sectors. The basic structure of arcologies makes it quite easy to limit access between levels, effectively cutting various groups off from each other. Many of the truly wealthy live on arcology levels that the middle class and poor cannot even visit.

This stratification isn't restricted to arcologies, though it is certainly not as severe in the more traditional cities. The most extreme examples include some Nihonjin neighborhoods in several major Australian cities that have almost completely cut themselves off from outside contact. The Nihonjin inhabitants can leave at will but only specially authorized visitors can enter. Such division has also allowed a wide variety of new and unusual sub-cultures to flourish. Certain exclusive religious groups have created closed neighborhoods, as have a number of sexual minorities, and even a few groups based on popular fictional cultures or idealized images of the past.

Some of the more extreme examples of these communities are the elderly neighborhoods set up as exact replicates of earlier eras. The period shortly before the Aberrant War is especially popular with those old enough to remember this less-troubled time. Still, while closed arcology levels and prefabricated neighborhoods are not uncommon, a fair portion of urban dwellers still live in cities more reminiscent of earlier days — open areas where people from all social classes and backgrounds are more likely to mingle.

Whether city or arcology, the traditional pattern of urban life is usually maintained. Most people actually leave home to go to work, the inhabitants live close together but rarely interact with their neighbors and everyone enjoys a wide variety of diversions like restaurants, sim arcades, casinos,

theaters, concert halls and sports arenas. The pace of life is rapid, and public transport is readily available. Still, there's no arguing that, each year, the degree of isolation increases just a bit more.

Suburban Life

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, the suburbs seemed like the future for middle-class inhabitants of the post-industrial world. The devastation of the Aberrant War, the Crash and the various disruptions afterward effectively destroyed this trend. The relatively long distance to either city services or arable land meant that the suburbs were hit extremely hard during the Crash. During the 2070s and '80s, most former suburbanites moved into new arcologies or settled in self-sufficient communities like the Australian outback enclaves. A number of traditional cities and even a few arcologies still have suburbs but they are small regions that appear unlikely to expand. The percentage of the population living in suburbs has fallen by a factor of four since 2050.

Many families that once lived in suburbs have relocated to the larger and more prosperous independent settlements. Known widely as outback enclaves, these communities usually have between 1,000 and 30,000 residents. With their own hyper-fusion generators, OpNet connections and a great deal of automated machinery, the outback towns have become major havens for the middle-class. While some of the larger communities are built around small high-technology firms, most enclave-dwellers are well-educated people who telecommute to jobs in science, law, engineering, education, the arts or even medicine.

Modern automation also allows these communities to exist with a minimum of support personnel. In many of these enclaves, the residents' teenagers and senior citizens hold the few service jobs. For goods or services not available in the community, residents must take a hopper or maglev to the nearest city, or pay to have the desired items delivered. A few such enclaves have become highly insular, even to the point of discouraging visitors. As a legacy of the troubles following the Crash, some outback towns still have a variety of automated perimeter defenses to discourage uninvited intruders.

Rural Areas

While the suburban enclaves are technically located far from urban areas, few people consider them truly "rural." In rural areas most people make their living farming, ranching, or providing services for farmers and ranchers. A substantial minority also works in the many wilderness reclamation efforts that are attempting to repair ecological ravages of the past.

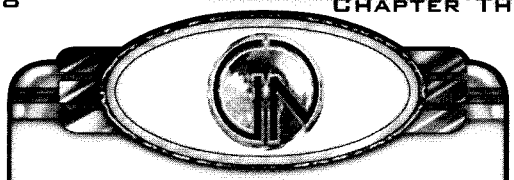
Extrasolar colonies produce most of their own food locally, either on planetary farms or in hydroponic tanks and meat vats. Similarly, almost all food consumed in near space is grown in Earth's soil. Before the Crash, it looked like agriculture would become a corporate affair conducted exclusively on highly automated factory farms. In the Aberrant War's aftermath, though, many of these "super-farms" were destroyed or simply failed from insufficient maintenance. Aside from the widespread famine this produced, the failures encouraged many members of the middle-class to flee the overly reliant urban culture in favor of more independent outback enclaves. Similarly, numerous members of the working class decided to return to their agricultural roots, growing their own food and selling the surplus. Most of these

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Annual Report on Aging: 2109
— Herman Dundee, Department of Social Welfare, Melbourne, Australia

Among middle class inhabitants living in fully modern nations, average life span is now 105 years. Even in the poorer and less advanced nations, the average life span is almost 90. Our best projections indicate that life span figures will continue to increase. Raising the retirement age to 75 back in 2095 helped a great deal, but we are still dealing with an increasing number of old people who receive some form of public assistance. We might want to look at the UAN; the program it introduced 10 years ago that trains retirees for a second career has produced excellent results. There are a number of inter-personal jobs where employees over 75 perform wonderfully. If these programs continue to succeed, most light service jobs could easily end up being performed by senior citizens.

However, it is important to remember that such plans may end up being merely stopgap measures. As researchers gradually recover the human genome data lost in the OpNet Crash, we are likely to look at even longer lifespans. While it's probably several decades too soon to worry about it now, we should have contingency plans if it becomes possible to drastically extend the human lifespan.



OpNet Fame

— Editorial: Joseph Methange, *Newsday* © 11.19.2118

The OpNet is the greatest blessing and the greatest curse ever inflicted upon reporters as well as media consumers. Almost every fact you can imagine can be found somewhere in the optic network. Unfortunately, lies outnumber truths on the OpNet by at least two to one. Nowhere are these facts more evident than when dealing with the lives and actions of famous people. Reporters and concerned citizens record daily the statements and actions of almost every major public figure in the Solar System.

Every head of state, prominent artist or social activist has one or more OpNet sites devoted to his exploits. Similarly, there are a number of sites that attempt to document information on every known psion, alien and Aberrant. Unfortunately, while there are a number of dedicated individuals diligently recording the successes of the humanity's benefactors and excesses of numerous tyrants, their careful work is mixed in with rumors, semi-sane theories and malicious lies spread by other less careful — and often less moral — individuals.

The challenge for you the private citizen, and we the media, is in separating truth from the many falsehoods. Many of our hottest tips, especially in nations where freedom of speech is restricted, come from people who risk imprisonment and death to spread knowledge. However, every tip must be rigorously tracked down and confirmed. Media consumers should do no less if they wish to base their opinions upon facts, not fancy.

agricultural enclaves have populations ranging from as few as a few dozen individuals to 5,000-person communities.

High-tech and locally operated, these farms and ranches currently produce almost 40% of the food distributed through the Solar System. A few throwbacks even eschew intensively mechanized agriculture and ranching, using draft animals to plow fields and cowboys on horseback to herd cattle. Of course, the crops are often genetically engineered and the cows are equipped with implanted radio-trackers, but the essential way of life is timeless. While these independent farmers and ranchers lack the wealth and many of the opportunities available in cities and the outback enclaves, they produce most of what they need to survive and feel that their lifestyle is much more rewarding than anything to be found in the cities. Except for infrequent contact with government officials, these people live free from domination by any external authority.

Others still living in rural areas are indigenous peoples like the Sami, Masai, or Hopi who practice traditional forms of subsistence. Amid the grass-roots lifestyle, though technicians continue working at the remaining automated corporate farms, mines, logging camps and ecological reclamation projects. There are also those who live in isolated camps and the paranoid fringe-dwellers hiding in decades-old ruins or scratching a living in unpatrolled wilderness regions. While the ratios of such people vary depending upon the resources and degree of freedom allowed in each nation, these groups make up the vast majority of other rural inhabitants throughout settled space.

The Fringe Dwellers

The most isolated of rural groups are fringe-dwellers. More common in seriously troubled regions like France, the Middle East or around the FSA Blight, they can be found in almost all nations with extensive rural areas. The Chinese are even rumored to have fringe-dwellers in Northern Mongolia. Regardless of were they live, fringe-dwellers have decided to turn their back on all governments and recognize no authority but their own. When possible, most are heavily armed and highly mobile. Fringe-dwellers living in especially lawless nations like France, Russia or the Middle East often exist through banditry, but elsewhere most of them simply attempt to avoid all contact with outsiders.

While some become fringe-dwellers as a way of fleeing prosecution, or simply to escape the pressures of modern life, authorities believe that a number of the fringe communities dwelling in the ruins of abandoned pre-Crash cities have existed since the last days of the Aberrant War. Three generations of people have grown up amid terrible desolation, with almost no outside contact. Some nations have attempted to offer fringe-dwellers a place in modern society, others seek to wipe them out, and many governments simply ig-

nore them. Regardless of where they live, these groups' paranoia and carefully learned survival skills are likely to insure that they will be around for generations to come.

Undersea Communities

While the various communities on the surface of Earth's oceans are little different from land-based arcologies or outback enclaves, deep sea colonies are unique environments different from life on land or even in space. Many first-time visitors expect the deep colonies to look and feel similar to orbital settlements. However, the vacuum of space is neither warm nor cold, and light from stars and planetary objects shines constantly. Undersea cities are situated amid the staggering cold and utter blackness of the deep ocean. A window under the sea looks out on a darkness previously outside of human experience. Additionally, the near-freezing water constantly sucks at the settlement's heat, drawing it through the walls. Living near the outer walls in one of these colonies means never being completely warm.

Because visiting the surface requires extensive decompression, deep colony inhabitants are almost as isolated from the rest of humanity as the asteroid belt settlements. The connection to the surface world is just as tenuous. Communication with the surface must go through slender bundles of optic cables which storms, large sea life, and the occasional Aberrant attacker can easily break. Even with extensive backups, temporary segregation from the surface occurs an average of twice a year. Contact is normally restored within a day or two but the intervening time creates a solitude as absolute as can be imagined.

Though the sense of isolation is similar, life in the deep colonies is fundamentally different from life in space. While most space communities earn their money making pharmaceuticals, high-strength materials and difficult to manufacture electronic components, most deep colonies are mining and agricultural stations for farming kelp and other sea life. Most work in these communities is extremely hard labor in an environment both more alien and more dangerous than vacuum. Creating industrial robots that can work in this environment has proved extremely difficult. The deep colonies most resemble rugged asteroid mining bases, with somewhat less automation. Luckily, modern technology continues to improve living and working conditions.



While the earliest colonies were simply a collection of tiny habitat domes connected by frigid corridors, the larger, more recent sites are larger and more expansive. FangTown and Atlantis Deep resemble normal moderate-sized arcologies and the Caribbean colony of Pearl City even has a large, almost airy, partially transparent bioglass dome. Some recent colonies have attempted to banish the endless night by placing extensive lights on their perimeter, allowing the inhabitants to see to the many wondrous creatures living just outside their windows. The deep blue, fading off into pitch black gives the ocean an almost surreal look.

While almost all of the early deep colony inhabitants were rugged miners, aquaculture technicians and engineers, by the 2120's many settlements have developed thriving middle and upper class districts. Pearl City and FangTown have recently become popular with tourists and eccentric rich people seeking an isolated location for vacations and private business deals. This same isolation has also drawn a number of corporations seeking a place to perform research that they wish to keep secret from their competitors. While the unusual environment makes it unlikely that the seas will ever become truly popular places to settle, immigration to the deep colonies continues to increase.

Near Space

One of the truisms of the late 21st century was that the middle class fled the devastated suburbs, first for the new outback enclaves and then for space. In the early 22nd century many millions of people live in the various stations in Earth and Lunar orbit, and over 500 million more live on Luna itself. In most ways, life on Luna is similar to that in large Earthside arcologies. The limitations of vacuum create unique restrictions in the size and configuration of orbital communities, however. There's plenty of space to build, but concerns of power and safety limit orbital stations to more manageable dimensions. As a result, none has a population of more than a million people, all of whom are acutely aware that they float in the ether without a safety net.

Many of the near space cities are compact enough that a serious accident could kill every inhabitant. Visitors, young children, and recent immigrants all get extensive drills on safety and weapons laws are extremely strict. With the exception of guards patrolling high-security areas and military personnel on active anti-terrorist or anti-Aberrant duty, no weapons except knives, tasers, and screamers are legal on any orbital station.

A number of the smaller and more exclusive stations are highly automated and, like some of the wealthier outback enclaves, fill their few service jobs with the inhabitants' teens or elderly. However, living in space is by nature a complex, demanding, and sometimes dangerous process. It is usually cheaper and more efficient to employ well-trained humans for most maintenance and repair duties. While the majority of near space cities are enclaves of the middle and upper-middle class, a number of poorer technicians and service workers also live there, often in their own separate habitat complexes. On a few stations like *Mujukuu* the service personnel must even put up with restrictions on their movements, clothing requirements identifying them as workers, and prohibitions against permanently settling there. However, in return for these limitations, workers are paid premium wages, so *Mujukuu* and similar stations always have a large pool of personnel eager to work there.

Even for the poorest residents, station life consists of clean, well-maintained quarters, abundant food and free medical care. For safety and aesthetic reasons, most stations are kept in near pristine condition and everyone living there receives regular medical checkups to forestall the possibility of disease outbreaks. A cluttered or run-down station, or one whose residents don't look fit, is likely experiencing very serious management and maintenance problems.

For those inhabitants who aren't working in service or maintenance jobs, life is even better. The near space orbital cities are among the most carefully controlled and monitored environments ever created by humanity. Their relatively small sizes and uniquely luxurious designs, combined with constant electronic monitoring, makes them among the most interactive communities in human history.

Unfortunately, while these communities are well protected against internal violence and mechanical failures, the Aberrants' return has proven a significant threat to their safety. Orbital settlements are extremely fragile environments. A single powerful Aberrant could destroy even the largest near space city. The *Esperanza* disaster proved that such attacks can also have much wider consequences. As a result of the continuing Aberrant threat, zealous attention to safety and minor paranoia are common in many long-term space dwellers.

Hansonists Petition for Space on Next Far Nyumba Trip

— *Newsday* holobrief © 3.9.2121

One of the four Hansonist communities on Mars has applied to the Æon Trinity for space on the next jump ship bound for Far Nyumba. Spokesperson Alexandra5 Valdez explained her community's decision to immigrate to Far Nyumba: "Our people are just like anyone else. We're looking for a place to live happy and productive lives; we want to raise our clones under open skies in a more natural setting than the frigid climes of Mars."

The Hansonists are a small group founded in 2079 by Danielle Hanson that seeks immortality though cloning. Each Hansonist settlement consists of anywhere from a dozen to several hundred individuals and their many clones. All inhabitants are sterilized, with genetic cloning and tube births providing the only offspring. Some Hansonists have started using biotech wombs to bear their clone-children. There are currently several Hansonist communities on Mars and in the Asteroid Belt; if authorized, this group would be the first to settle outside of the Solar System.

Deep Space

If near space and Luna are the new suburbs, the extrasolar colonies are the wild and distant frontier. Only rugged pioneers, restless explorers and those with nothing else to lose, head for these untamed regions. While the actual settlements range from domed asteroid mining bases floating in the vacuum of space to idyllic towns and farms resting under alien skies, the people and the basic way of life are quite similar (while still on Earth, Antarctica can also be considered a part of this new wild frontier).

As has always been the case with frontier settlements, resources the locals cannot make themselves are extremely scarce and valuable, life is full of long days and hard work, and survival is far from guaranteed. While the very brave or foolish can end up in one of these far-off worlds, the majority fall into one of three categories: seekers after wealth, prestige, or glory; the eccentric; and the desperate.

The members of this first group are the ones most commonly discussed by people talking about the frontier. These are asteroid miners who want to cash in on the Crab Nebula's wealth, scientists and explorers looking for fabulous discoveries and more modest entrepreneurs and settlers who simply want to live prosperous lives someplace they have made on their own. Out on the frontier, anyone with drive and determination to be a real pioneer — and enough basic skills to stay alive — can prosper. It also allows most residents the chance to experience something they might otherwise never have: the chance to strike it rich. Other than lotteries and similar pieces of pure luck, social mobility is not terribly common on Earth and Luna. However, on the fringes, courage, daring, and a good measure of luck has resulted in a number of people from modest backgrounds doing very well. Similarly, bold scientists, artists, or journalists have the chance to be the first human to ever experience an unique event. If they're lucky, they'll live to tell about it.

While explorers seek prosperity and new experiences, others go to the frontier to find a place where they can truly be themselves without risk of disturbance or censure. These eccentrics include researchers seeking isolated surroundings to perform odd or dubious experiments and hermits looking to truly leave their world behind. However, most people are driven by religious belief or controversial social convictions to set up their own utopias. Settlements of this sort exist on Mars, Khantze Lu Ge and most recently Far Nyumba. However, the largest single concentration of utopian experiments exists in the Asteroid Belt. Here, far from any outside influence, more than a million people live in a wild diversity of religions and cultures. While numerous subcultures choose to live in isolated arcology sectors on Earth, many smaller and more eccentric groups either lack the size to create an effective neighborhood or want to live far from the mass of humanity.

Dozens of small cults work for the common good, or sometimes simply for the advancement of their leader. Other communities experiment with pure forms of anarcho-communism, neo-feudalism, anarcho-capitalism, group marriage, or even mandatory use of mood-stabilizing drugs or plastic surgery. Obviously, such communities include a wide range of oddities. There are numerous cults where all of the members serve a single charis-

matic leader who directs every aspect of the community. There are also strange social experiments like that of the Juno colony where the young live to serve the elder members and are rewarded with revered elder status when they turn 45. One of the most bizarre is the Martian Nobuku colony, where everyone is given extensive plastic surgery to remake them into a single uniform standard of appearance. The residents, originally from Nippon but now including a number of racial stocks, claim that their near identical appearance eliminates all forms of prejudice and bigotry.

These settlements comprise a vast social laboratory where a wide variety of new ways of life attempt to flourish. Failure is often more common than success, some falling apart disastrously. The carefully regimented Martian town of Mangalaville fell apart in 2102 when the leaders' efforts to eliminate dissidents resulted in open warfare which eventually seriously breached the outer walls, instantly killing all 11,000 inhabitants.

The last group, the desperate, includes everyone from criminals fleeing prosecution to unfortunates who want to begin life anew. These people flock to the most isolated and remote places available. Many went to Averiguas and Karroo in those colonies' early days, with Mars and the Asteroid Belt holding increasing appeal of late as well. A number of the criminals who head to the fringe actually start more law-abiding lives. However, some take their pasts with them, as proved by the recent reports of criminal secret societies on Karroo Station.

These people usually lack professional skills and become service workers and maintenance technicians. On habitable worlds, farm work and manual labor posts are available as well. All of these jobs are essential, especially on isolated settlements where automated machinery is simply too expensive or difficult to repair. However, such settlers can easily become the nucleus of a long-term underclass who resent the more skilled and successful colonists... and who may seek to expand their own horizons through criminal activity.

Social Climate

In a few short decades a new and strange universe was revealed to humanity. Many people have embraced the emergence of psions, the discovery of alien life and the colonization of worlds beyond our own Solar System. Psion groupies, Qin worshippers and even Aberrant cultists are all proof that some people react to the unknown with fascination and even obsession. These individuals believe that they may finally discover the meaning of their life in observing pursuing or even serving the bearers of these unknown abilities. Even what was once feared is embraced by some. In the aftermath of the invasion of Chrome-Prime (as detailed in **Alien Encounter: Invasion**), for example, some concerned citizens formed the Chromatic Rights League.

Unfortunately, despite many impressive social and technological advances, prejudice and bigotry still haunt the 22nd century. Certainly, many people learned to see past superficial differences of skin color, religion or language. However, others became even more angry, terrified, and paranoid. Consider the wealth of new beings, worlds and information that has become available in a short period of time — not to mention the return of known threats to humanity's existence. Extreme reactions, bizarre religious cults and wild cultural splintering are a natural consequence of exposure to such pervasive change.

The Aberrant threat triggered an extreme reaction that has since bled into all new varieties of prejudice. Anti-psion and anti-alien prejudice now coexists with the old favorites of racism and religious intolerance. Regardless of the particulars, the root of all prejudice is xenophobia, the fear of what is different.

Consider that 60 years previously, the devastating Aberrant War ended. Many of the inhabitants of the 22nd century remember growing up with the threat of imminent destruction by vastly powerful, completely insane beings. The war produced a level of fear that took many years to abate. Of the many results, all experimentation on genetically engineering humans was banned, and people became more suspicious of anything or anyone that was too different. Then, in the first decade of the 22nd century, the monsters returned, more inhuman than ever.

Most people judge individuals by their actions. Both the psions and the Qin did fairly well in these regards. Their efforts gave the world biotech, near miraculous medicine and numerous interstellar colonies. However, some people can't see past the basic differences. If neighbors with different skin colors or religions can be seen as threatening, what about beings who can shift their forms or incinerate someone? Even worse, how do such people feel about secretive aliens who resist showing their true forms? Thanks to the enduring legacy of the Aberrant War, this sort of bigotry won't go away anytime soon.

At present, such paranoia is mostly confined to fringe elements. Nevertheless, the bigotry could easily spread. More scandals like the Huang-Marr incident could easily undermine the already shaken public confidence in psions, resulting in purges and pogroms throughout settled space. Most nations have laws protecting psions and the UN is dedicated to working with humanity's alien allies. However, rules and declarations are merely empty electrons if mobs of terrified humans look for a scapegoat to blame for their problems.

Admittedly, despite the threats and worries facing humanity, some cultures have risen to the challenge rather than give rein to their fears. Africa is unified for the first time in its history, South America is finally at peace, and China leads a trend of technological and scientific advancement. Unfortunately, the former United States languishes under fascist tyranny, the Middle East continues its long tradition of petty squabbling and the Nihonjin live in a regimented hive-like society that drives many of its own citizens mad. So although citizens of the 22nd century know that there are places and beings more wonderful than they could have dreamed, they must also face the grim fact that there are other things more powerful and more terrible than they could have previously imagined.

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Subject: Civilian Troubles
From: Lieutenant Florian Hale, First Legion
To: Major Devlin Womera, Legions Command
Encryption: SPE
Transmission type: textfile
Date: 11:46:21 9.4.2118

We need to come up with some way to deal with the damn groupies. Positive publicity is great and all that, but some of my men who went out for a drink in Perth just had most of their uniforms torn off by a mob of autograph-seekers. The OpNet sites describing the lives and actions of some of our more public members are also a wee bit disturbing. They have holos from my last vacation, for pity's sake!

I know that keeping these people happy helps our public image immensely, but we do need to consider some limits. I'm just waiting for some eager snooper to post sensitive maneuvers to the OpNet so his mates can all go out and watch us at work.

Being Normal

In the 22nd century, humanity has traveled to the stars, met aliens and developed all sorts of nifty technology. In this vast and open-ended setting, psions are just a small part of those who've made such grand accomplishments. The Gifted aren't the only ones who have the chance to be heroic and make a difference.

Some of you may be interested in playing neutrals — those entirely lacking psi powers — within the Trinity Universe. Indeed, an adventurous Storyteller may even want to attempt an all-normal series. And, of course, psion characters interact frequently with normals, from allies to followers to passersby. So, what exactly can a normal do in **Trinity**?

Varieties of Normal Characters

Most blanks in traditional **Trinity** games fall into one of three general categories: supporting cast, experts and sidekicks.

Normals acting as supporting cast are most often Followers or Allies of one of the central psion characters. These neutrals can be fully developed personas, interesting characters in their own right, even so, their primary function is to assist the primary (usually psion) characters. **Trinity**'s "Characters" section, pp. 291-293, includes more details on such supporting cast members.

Experts and sidekicks can fall into a similar category as supporting cast — experts as blank Allies and sidekicks as neutral Followers or Contacts. However, they can *also* be considered viable full-fledged (though still non-psionic) characters. Experts are normals who are a full part of the team and bring much-needed expertise to the group. Sidekicks, though sometimes less powerful than expert normals or psions, are fully independent characters who accompany the rest of the team for their own reasons. An excellent example of a sidekick character is Marty Blake, a reporter from **Alien Encounter: Invasion**.

Thanks to their unique abilities and focus, psion teams are often very closed groups. Normals, whether experts or sidekicks, may be seen as outsiders initially (much like psions are in general society). Still, psions are as human as anyone else and new members often become close and valued comrades after a major battle or an important mission, especially if the outsider has proved her worth.

Regardless of why they are along, supporting cast and sidekicks can be everything from useful assistants to enjoyable comic relief. In contrast, experts accompany the psions because the Gifted need them, or sometimes because the psions are actually working for them. Since supporting cast characters by definition play a secondary role in a series, they are not recommended as player characters except in groups using troupe-style play (see p. 91). Instead, normals in stories with psion characters should be either experts or sidekicks.

Expert and sidekick roles are explained more fully below. For additional advice on generating neutral characters, see "Option: Creating Latent and Neutral Characters," below.

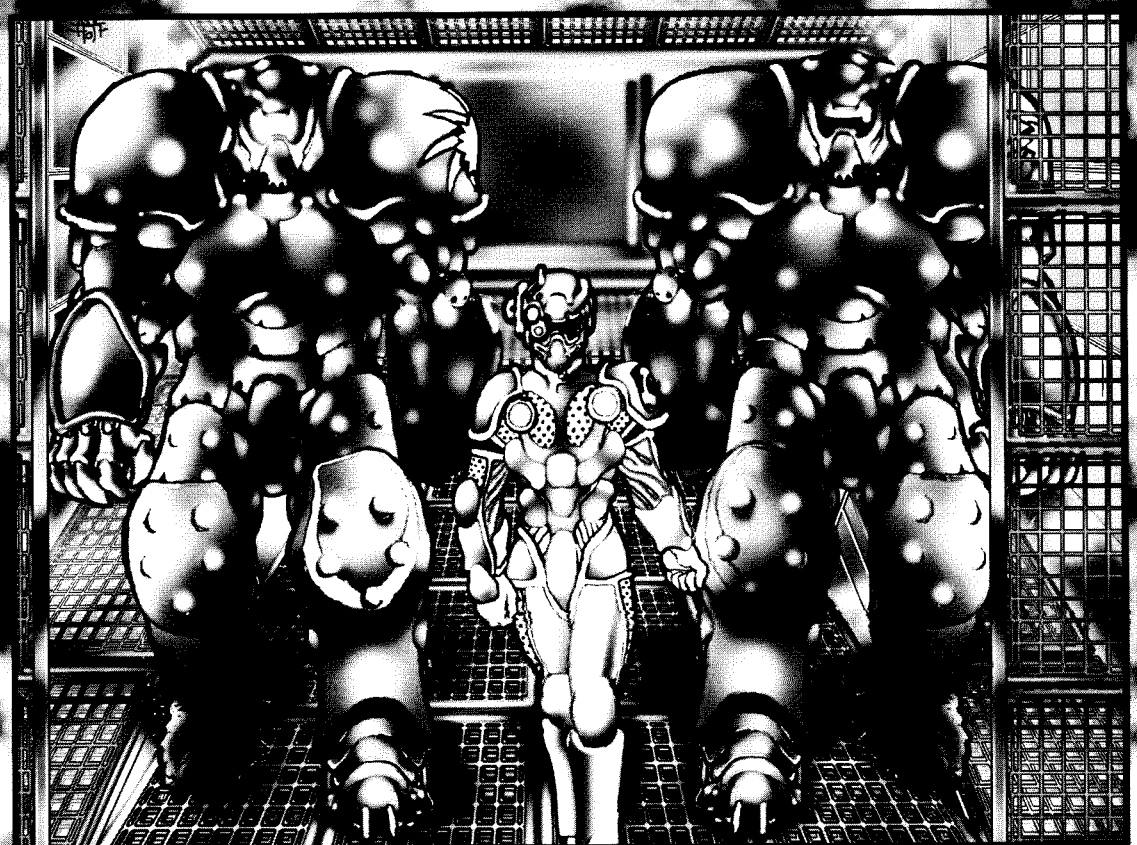
Experts

Experts are the most common type of blank characters. Such individuals share the same primary objectives as psion team members; indeed, they're functionally no different from Gifted except for the lack of psi powers. Instead, experts have Abilities and Backgrounds that help them to function effectively.

One of the major advantages to using expert normals is that there is no limit to the number of such blanks in a story. One series could have a single neutral character while another might have normals making up half or more of the team. In fact, considering that psions are a remarkably small percentage of the human population, such mixes aren't uncommon at all. Certainly, games where all of the players' characters are normals are also possible.

Normals master mundane abilities more frequently than psions tend to. After all, Gifted must also devote attention to developing their noetic talents. In contrast, a neutral can more easily focus his attention to excel in a given conventional area of study. While there are numerous psion lawyers, doctors, scientists, and engineers, blanks still tend to hold the top ranks of these professions.

Like a psion, a neutral, no matter how talented, still needs help in some situations. An expert hacker may need a team to get him into a restricted installation. A diplomat may need bodyguards to protect her from assassination. A top-notch scientist may want a team to accompany him down to the zep installation deep in Mgitu's atmosphere. However, once the expert character is in place, he is in his element, doing his part for the team as much as any other character.



The expert is generally a respected colleague, though he may instead be the team's boss or patron. Whatever the case, the normal should to be treated with respect, as an equal. The lack of psi powers shouldn't be considered a deficiency. Storytellers running series that include expert normals as characters should make sure that most game sessions include opportunities for the normal to use his primary talents.

When creating an expert normal, the player should first define the character's profession and his specific area of expertise. In general, an expert should have three or more dots in the Attribute(s) associated with his area of expertise, three dots in his primary Ability with one or more Specialties (effectively raising the skill to four dots in certain areas), and at least one related Ability at three dots.

Sidekicks

A sidekick is often a challenge to play, since his involvement with the rest of the team is usually peripheral. Fundamentally, the sidekick is not a standard team member; instead, the psions serve as a means to the sidekick's own goals. These agendas need not conflict but it's clear that the sidekick's loyalty does not lie first with the characters. As such, the sidekick's presence can add both depth and interesting sidelines to the series. His focus may often be on parts of the story that characters rarely deal with directly.

Considering these elements, a team can rarely handle more than one sidekick at a time. A single sidekick can push his own agenda to the point that it may seriously distract the team from its objectives. Multiple sidekicks, even those who soft-pedal their goals, can compound this danger exponentially.

The Storyteller must make sure that the sidekick's player is willing to limit pursuing his character's primary interests to occasions when doing so does not adversely affect the primary adventure. However, the Storyteller must also provide opportunities for the sidekick to pursue his own goals (and to involve the entire team in these sub-plots). Negotiating this process can be complex and difficult for the sidekick's player and the Storyteller, but done well, it adds a great deal of interest and depth to the series as a whole.

The Storyteller and the sidekick's player must cooperate extensively on working the sidekick's knowledge and interests into the various plot lines. Additionally, it's impractical to shove a sidekick into a scenario where he just doesn't belong — a war correspondent won't bother with a kidnapping investigation while a criminal snitch has no reason to join in a bug-hunt.

Such a restriction on a single sidekick character need not limit a truly adventurous player. Indeed, a player may decide to have a stable of sidekicks, each oriented to different aspects of the story. Whenever the team takes on a new type of mission, it acquires a new sidekick. This type of play only works if the individual missions are long enough to allow the sidekick's player to get a chance to fully explore her character. In general, an individual sidekick should be attached to a team for at least five or six game sessions.

Following are a few examples of how certain types of sidekicks can open up facets of the Trinity Universe that characters (and their players) may not have considered before.

- **Strike Team Reporter:** Whether through the questions he asks or simply by filming the psions' actions, a journalist can help a team focus on something other than just "shooting the bad guy." A new perspective can awaken characters to human issues relating to the conflict in which they're involved — the fate of noncombatants, public perception of the violence, motives of the enemy and so on. When the reporter interviews people rescued from Aberrant rule on KLG, the rest of the team may take part in touching scenes or even stumble upon vital information one of the humans possesses.
- **Field Journalist:** Keeping with the reporter idea, a journalist sent with explorers on a jump ship could uncover information from colonists that might not normally be revealed to psions or official personnel. Similarly, when exploring a new and unknown alien world this reporter is more likely to wander off and stumble onto something unique than the (presumably) more disciplined and cautious psions are.
- **Intelligence Expert:** An analyst or even a scientist accompanying a team can uncover all sorts of vital pieces of information about the environment they're in beyond the obvious. This is just as true whether the team is sent to investigate the alien Chromatic home world or the turbulent Middle East. These discoveries can then lead to other scenarios where the team must help the specialist track down further information about his discoveries.
- **Rebel Spy:** A dissident, whether in an oppressive regime like the Ukraine or a powerful po-

litical force like China, can provide the team with many contacts and a wide variety of local information. This data can be sensitive secrets or simply details about life in the area. In this type of game the Storyteller should work with the sidekick's player to provide information about the sidekick's contacts and allies, as well as more detailed information about the society and culture of the character's homeland. Storytellers who feel confident turning over some creative control to the players might even wish to have the sidekick's player help design some of the details of life in this region.

• **Liaison:** A team working for the Æon Trinity or one of the psi orders has no police powers. As such, many aspects of any investigations it undertakes could end up with the team members in jail. Gaining the aid of a law enforcement chaperone can save the characters much pain down the road. They may not be able to play as fast and loose with the law as they might like, but it's better than getting on the cops' bad side. The reverse is also possible — the team may need to look into the criminal underbelly of society, where the assistance of the reigning criminal power would be most helpful.

Option: Creating Latent and Neutral Characters

Trinity offers one system for creating non-psion characters (see p. 169). For those players and Storytellers who want more "heroic" neutrals, the following rules may prove effective. Be careful of overbalancing the game, though! Note that the following text refers to both neutrals and latent psions as "neutrals" and "normals" for the sake of simplicity, except where the two are specifically differentiated.

Step One: Concept — This shouldn't be different from creating a psion character. Psions have no monopoly on Origin or Nature.

Step Two: Attributes — The Prometheus Effect provides the recipient with somewhat enhanced genetic traits. Since a neutral character isn't dunked, he doesn't get as many Attribute points: six dots for his primary Attributes, four for secondaries, and three for tertiaries.

Once a latent is triggered to active psion, add one Attribute point (the Storyteller has final say on which Attribute is affected). This still doesn't bring the latent up to the full 15 Attribute points that a starting psion character gets, but it all turns out relatively even in the end.

Step Three: Abilities — This is where a neutral gets an edge on a psion. A psion character spends up to three years of her life in intensive noetic instruction, often falling behind an individual of the same age who's spent that same time in school or at work. A neutral benefits from this increased practical experience by getting 12 Ability points in his Ability group and 15 to place where he likes. Further, having an Allegiance and its corresponding Ability group assumes a degree of advanced training: a neutral may buy up to two of his Ability group's skills to four dots (remember, psions can't start with Abilities higher than three dots). A neutral without an Allegiance doesn't get this benefit but can spend the total 27 Ability points around where he likes.

Step Four: Advantages — A normal starts with seven points of Background points, having just as many social opportunities as a psion does. His starting Psi and Willpower scores are 1 and 3, respectively. A latent also starts with seven Background points, but her starting Psi is determined just like a psion's is (although she can't use any powers yet) and her Willpower is 4.

Once a latent is triggered to active psion, add one to her Willpower and recalculate any derived values accordingly (e.g. Initiative if Dexterity or Wits increased).

Step Five: Bonus Points — Again, a neutral gets an edge here, receiving 21 bonus points. Since a latent essentially must pay for her higher starting Psi and Willpower, she gets only 15 bonus points, the same as a psion. Both a neutral and a latent may spend bonus points on Merits and take Flaws for more points, with the limitations given in that section (see p. 127).

Bonus Point Costs for Neutrals and Latents

Trait	Cost per dot
Attributes	5
Abilities	2
Specialties (max. three per Ability)	1
Backgrounds	1
Willpower	2
Psi *	5
Initiative	1

* A character may purchase one additional dot for Psi 2 and still be considered psionically neutral. This is a one-time purchase made during initial character creation and does *not* give the neutral the option to later become a psion. A latent may purchase higher Psi just like a psion character can.

Roles for Normals

The section on sidekicks, above, noted a few good options for neutral characters. There are certainly other, more broadly applicable, opportunities for blanks in a given story.

Stories set within the FSA, Nippon, and China all create excellent roleplaying opportunities for neutral characters, even those in positions of power. A lawyer, judge, politician, law enforcement official, or corporate head provides a good role for a normal who works with a group of undercover psions. As this doesn't always lend itself well to the normal participating in action-oriented adventures, though, you might want the character to lead a secret double life as an active rebel. Otherwise, consider having the blank character instead be such an influential person's trusted aide or personal assistant. Truly adventurous players could play both the powerful figure *and* his aide, choosing between them depending upon the story. See "Troupe Style Play," p. 91, for more information on this type of roleplaying.

Alternatively, the normal could be some sort of celebrity. There are a number of famous psions but the vast majority are famous for being *psions* — which can be a bonus and a handicap depending upon who they deal with. Certainly, a psion could be a famous journalist but she'd also be known for being a psion unless she was exceedingly careful (and had many dots in Cipher). A blank celebrity isn't restricted by the same stigma that Gifted are and may even be able to help convince some people of the value of working with psions. After all, celebrities and other prominent individuals can have a great deal of influence on public opinion.

Generating a famous normal character can be a bit of a challenge. An otherwise perfectly ordinary individual who has 4 or 5 Influence most likely possesses his fame though association. Such a character may be a close relative of another famous person. The child of a popular and renowned elder statesman or brother of a holovid siren would have access to a wide variety of famous people.

Associating with a celebrity can be extremely useful for the rest of the team, opening doors and in general providing access from which psions would otherwise be restricted. With the help of the famous character, the entire group could gain entrance to parties for the rich and famous. Similarly, it is much easier to gain the ear of an important politician or other world leader if you are with someone they knew as a small child. With the help of such a famous normal, the team even stands a good chance of bluffing their way into moderately secure installations and performing all sorts of useful intelligence... or sabotage.

Unfortunately, associating with someone famous can also have serious drawbacks. Short of clear evidence for murder or terrorism, the famous character is likely to escape with at worst minor penalties if a mission goes wrong. However, the rest of the team could easily end up cast as "evil psions manipulating the hapless neutral for his power and connections." As such, the rest of the team could easily face much more severe penalties than it might normally. Plus, in some cases, the celeb himself may find *his* motives scrutinized more closely, due to his close involvement with psions.

A character who's famous by association relieves the individual of many responsibilities. However, a player may want a character who is famous in his own right. Creating someone who is justifiably famous for his own achievements involves giving the character something special. This applies less to a character's Trait ratings than it does to developing a convincing history for him. This can be reflected in the character's Background scores, but fundamentally it's most important to establish a plausible origin. Simply being incredibly wealthy often makes an otherwise undistinguished person somewhat famous, but true celebrities are famous (or infamous) for doing something.

Normals and Secrecy

Just as normals can have celebrity free of the occasionally dubious psion public image, they can also often hide much more effectively than most psions. There are fewer than 60,000 Gifted amidst the teaming billions of humanity, after all. Every psion is literally one in 100,000. There are numerous OpNet sites set up by fans and foes of psions to keep track of them. These sites contain data on many publicly known psions — often including a surprising amount of deeply personal information as well as a tremendous amount of rumor, speculation, misinformation and outright lies. It doesn't take much for those who have so far escaped the notice of the people who maintain and contribute to these sites, either. One public escapade and a psion can find his face plastered across the OpNet within a day.

In game terms, a psion with any dots in Influence or Status is on record in some public forum. Cipher can reduce this occurrence, with each dot negating a dot each in Influence and Status. How-

ever, the player must roleplay the character's attempts to keep his psi-related activities a secret. To make matters worse, there are numerous shady journalists and OpNet tabloids that make a practice of "outing" suspected psions. Even when they are clearly untrue, such allegations cause a great deal of controversy. Most individuals deny these charges but that doesn't always stop the public from thinking that the person is just concealing his powers.

There are also numerous OpNet sights discussing a wide variety of famous non-psions. A neutral celebrity generally need not worry about being "outed" or anti-psion prejudice, though notoriety by its very nature opens the individual up to rumor and speculation.

Clearly, it can be exceedingly useful to be entirely ordinary and without fame. Unless a psion is very careful about concealing his powers, he will attract attention. Much of this attention is positive outside of Nippon, the FSA, the Middle East and a few other areas, but it can still interfere with a character's freedom of action. In China, registered psions are watched carefully and sporadically accosted by friendly but persistent Ministry recruiters. In Australia, South America and the UAN, eager reporters want interviews with newly arrived psions, especially ones from orders based in other nations. On occasion, Gifted involved in well-known incidents have attracted large crowds of fans and groupies. In contrast, normals have no such problems. A blank with no dots in Influence is simply another Joe Hologram, no more worthy of public attention than any of the other eight billion people scattered across space.

Psion-Neutral Game Balance

Just because your normal character doesn't have psi powers doesn't mean he can't be just as heroic and important as a psion is. To help integrate a neutral into a mostly Gifted team, the Storyteller should give the normal character useful things to do and/or access to certain benefits unavailable to psions.

Blank is Beautiful

Psion characters often see their special talents as the obvious solution to any situation. However, in a complex, crowded, high-tech society the *obvious* option isn't always the *best* — and can even be an outright bad idea. Even when psi can do something better than a neutral can, using it may be risky. Every use of psi causes ripples within the subquantum stratum — ripples that another psion or psi detection devices can pick up.

Even worse, the residue of psi use can sometimes be picked up later. A telepath could dominate someone to let the team inside a secure facility, but the noetic tampering to the guard's mind could be discovered during a subsequent investigation. Often, normal means are necessary — or even superior — to using psi powers. This fact should be emphasized in any game, so that psion characters become more than simply walking collections of Modes and Psi Points. Plus, limits to the usefulness of psi powers can also become areas where the normal character can shine.

One of the easiest ways to place a neutral character in an essential role is to have something happen where psions can't go. For example, Nippon

PROTEUS CONFIDENTIAL

Subject: Yamata Psi Detectors
From: Jennifer Denton, Proteus Division
To: Zarah Malaaca, Triton Division
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: textfile
Date: 09:17:34 6.19.2121

Shipping is confirmed. Yamata did send 122 of their new psi detectors to the FSA. Next week they are expected to sell a similar number to China. Should make things a lot tougher on your end, I imagine.

There are a few good points, though. One of our Tekne associates finally got a complete look at the specs. The Yamata detectors have a very limited range, about five meters and they're bulky. I'd expect that they'd be set up at most main entrances but windows and other less conventional entrances will still be unmonitored.

Even so, getting psions into or out of Nippon, China or the FSA just got a whole lot harder. We have things monitored fairly well with respect to our Nihonjin friends. However, the situation in the FSA is not looking good. Some of the projections the comps are spinning out are really ugly. Fortunately, in spite of the rumors, truly reliable handheld detectors and ones with substantially longer ranges are at least a decade away (granted, the Israelis have their scanners, but those things conk out if you shake them hard).

Bottom line: We must keep abreast of any information on placement and proposed legal changes in all locations.



and the FSA are installing new psi detectors to make high-security locations completely off-limits to all Gifted. Other locales may have similar advanced devices or even psions on duty to sense for Gifted. If team needs to do something in such a location, a blank operative has a much better chance of slipping through than a psion does.

Rules-Related Benefits

The Storyteller could simply give a neutral character extra dots in his Abilities, but focusing purely on skills is limited in scope and can encourage rules abuse. There are other subtler and more interesting ways to ensure that normals are valuable team members. A neutral character may enjoy greater access to Allies, Contacts, Followers, Mentors and other non-psion associates. In some cases, these stronger ties could be due to anti-psion prejudice. However, it is equally true that many normals simply don't see psions as needing as much help because they have powers unavailable to ordinary "mortals."

In addition, a neutral might be allowed greater benefits from the Devices, Influence, Resources or Status background. Fundamentally, most players of psions should understand that giving a normal character a bit of additional aid through his backgrounds is neither unfair nor unbalancing. Just be sure not to let the extra edges get out of control.

Social Pressure

While only fanatics, eccentrics, and sociopaths join anti-psion hate groups, the majority of neutrals are ill at ease around psions. Even someone who would never make anti-psion jokes or vote for laws limiting Gifted rights might become somewhat uncomfortable if her brother started dating one. Most people tolerate difference easily enough at a distance but find previously submerged feelings of discrimination when it's thrust in their face. This doesn't mean most neutrals are hysterical xenophobes-in-waiting but it does mean that many blanks retain a bit of caution and discomfort when dealing with Gifted.

A common socially awkward moment that many psions experience occurs when dealing with a normal who suddenly realizes she is talking with a psion. Uncomfortable silences, glances away or even a brief look of fear are all common reactions. Such situations are the reason that some Gifted always wear symbols representing their order. These psions feel that letting everyone know exactly who and what they are dealing with helps to avoid any misunderstandings. Obviously, blanks don't have to worry about this particular foible.

Addressing Anti-Normal Bigotry

One of the problems with playing a neutral in **Trinity** is that your character is substantially less powerful in certain ways than characters with psi powers are. This, in and of itself, is not a problem since psi does create certain complications of its own (backlash, anti-psion sentiment, etc.). Plus, some people don't mind playing less powerful characters and those who do mind probably shouldn't play non-psions. However, there's a tendency for psions to develop feelings of superiority as a result of their special gifts. Having the rest of the team treat your blank character like a second-class citizen can cause resentment and other serious problems.

There are several methods of handling such problems. The easiest solution is to use in-game social conditions. While psions have equal rights in most nations, many people are still rather suspicious of them. Acting superior and putting your normal colleagues down is a sure-fire way to earn the enmity of every neutral who hears about this behavior. Given that blanks outnumber Gifted around 100,000-to-1 and that almost all high-ranking officials in the UN, the Æon Trinity, governments, corporations and crime syndicates are neutrals, getting a reputation as an anti-normal bigot is an extremely poor idea.

Employment Opportunities

Finally, the Storyteller could opt to have the rest of the team work under a neutral character. Æon provides the perfect premise for this, as the Trinity puts the best operative in charge of a team regardless of his status as normal or Gifted. The blank could even be independent of such a group — a famous scientist, high-ranking military operative, or eccentric millionaire can more than make up for his lack of psionic powers though a combination of wealth, power, and prestige.

Having the normal giving orders can produce a power imbalance within the team (but so can psi). As such, a game of this sort is most effective if there is only a single neutral character. Plus, that character's player must be willing to show restraint and not abuse his power. One of the more challenging parts of this type of series involves making sure that the normal character always has a reason to accompany his psionic underlings or employees. For this reason, scientists, intelligence operatives and military officers are all excellent character choices.

All-Normal Campaigns

The Trinity Universe is about more than just powerful psions battling evil Aberrants. The 22nd century is a rich and diverse milieu that is open to many different types of characters. While this section focused on integrating neutrals and psions into teams, some Storytellers may want to focus on a story who's characters are entirely non-psionic.

As noted above, normals make up the vast majority of humans in the Trinity Universe. Just because all of the characters in a series are blanks does not imply that the missions they undertake are any less important or difficult than those psions pursue. There simply aren't enough psions to handle every difficult or dangerous mission, after all. Whether battling Aberrants, uncovering dangerous plots by hostile governments or exploring the vast reaches of the galaxy, most of the people involved in these endeavors are normals. Such stories can be just as exciting and important as any involving Gifted. The only difference is that normals do not have psions' unusual capacities.

When sending a team of normals against Chromatics, Aberrants, or other serious dangers, the neutrals should be placed in situations where they will not be overwhelmed by powerful opposition. While one obvious way to do this is to call in a psion strike team when the blanks have found the menace, this is often disappointing to the players.

Allowing the normal characters to instead use guile, cunning, and a proper application of high tech devices is usually a better way of solving violent or action-oriented problems. Similarly, while telepaths and clairsentients can rapidly uncover all sorts of useful information about their opponents' schemes, normal humans are left with more mundane, but still potentially exciting, methods of investigation. In the Trinity Universe, this can include everything from bribery, blackmail and impersonation to high tech surveillance. An investi-

gation could even involve breaking into a home or office and stealing an object with the person's psi print on it, which is then taken to a psion to obtain further information. Even in a normals series, psions should not be avoided. They should, however, be used infrequently and with discretion. In the above scenario, after all, the focus is on stealing the object; the information gained from the psion is a reward at the story's conclusion.

Troupe Style Play

Troupe style play allows each player to have multiple characters in a given story. Generally, in a troupe style game, you generate several different characters with a variety of roles and power levels. There is usually a primary character, which in **Trinity** is almost always a psion. Then there are other minor characters who usually fall into the category of sidekicks or supporting cast. A secondary character is typically played when your psion is busy elsewhere.

Playing multiple characters simultaneously is usually distracting and often makes it impossible to roleplay any of them well. However, switching *between* multiple characters can lend an added dimension to a game. You may play one character for all or part of a session, then play a completely different character in the next game. Instead of having the Storyteller always play your character's neutral followers or allies, one of your fellow players does. Similarly, the team could have a blank ally or sidekick who was played by someone in addition to his regular character. No matter how many characters are established in the troupe format, though, each player only roleplays one character at a time.

While a troupe style game can be confusing if you're used to only a single character, it takes only a little practice to see the unique opportunities available to this type of roleplaying. Splitting up the team is often a Storyteller's nightmare because the players in each group want an equal time-slice. While the Storyteller is working with one group, the others players are simply left to sit around. However, using multiple characters allows every player to take on a role no matter which group he's in. In this way, a Storyteller can concentrate on one group for an entire session without depriving anyone of an opportunity to take part in the story.

Additionally, with a secondary character you can still participate in the main storyline even if your primary character is badly injured, captured, or simply busy elsewhere! Even if you're not normally interested in playing two characters, temporarily playing a sidekick or one of your own character's allies or followers can be a way to keep you active in the game until your primary character recovers or is rescued.

The most important thing about troupe style play is making sure that every player knows that each character must be roleplayed as a *separate individual* with his own motives and goals. Having a psion's followers willingly giving money, property and even their lives to assist the psion is exceedingly unrealistic unless a plausible reason was established for why these followers are so staggeringly selfless and loyal. The best way around this is for the Storyteller to have a character's allies or followers played by someone else instead of having a single player handle all his own characters.

In addition to preventing abuse, where the ally or follower is treated as the primary character's tool or possession, this also allows interesting interactions between a character and his followers or allies. This interplay can add a great deal of depth to a story and often illuminate the motives and personalities of all the characters involved. A psion who treats his blank followers as second-class citizens rapidly gains a reputation as an unreasonable bigot, while a psion who treats normals with kindness and respect is readily accepted into neutral society.

Troupe style play also allows for new and entertaining dynamics between characters. Followers and other minor characters can gripe with each other about the quirks and failings of their various psion allies and employers, while the heroic psions blast Aberrants and uncover mysteries, completely unaware of the gossip they are generating. This can also serve to remind everyone just how rare and special psions are in Trinity.

The United Nations

One of the most important changes coming out of the Aberrant War was the broadening of the United Nation's powers. After the devastation of the Crash, the UN's purview was expanded to help with desperate issue like famine and disaster relief, as well as putting down warlords and preventing further warfare. With humanity's expansion into space, the return of the Aberrants and the war against the Chromatics, the United Nations has taken a primary role in unifying humanity against external threats.

Membership

Issues relating to interplanetary and extrasolar colonization complicate UN membership. While all extrasolar colonies are technically under the control of a single Earth-based national government, there are independence movements on several of these colonies. Some may soon formally petition for UN membership free of a patron nation. Most notable in recent years, the Lunar Advisory Council was granted UN observer status in 2102. Members of the Martian independence movement have recently petitioned for Mars to be granted a similar position.

In an effort to promote international unity and avoid complaints of favoritism (not to mention the more practical concern that the old site was falling into serious disrepair), the United Nations headquarters moved to the Olympus metroplex on Luna in 2097. Since Olympus is a multinational cooperative venture, it fits well with the UN's interests. Unfortunately, being the seat of the UN makes Lunar independence rather unlikely, since once again charges of favoritism and undue influence could be raised. A few Lunar independence groups have recently begun agitating for an orbital UN space station to be built.

The UN complex in Olympus is technically part of the colony's Mezzanine sector. It is located in a near-surface cavern adjoining the lavish Olympean Towers. The UN habitat dome features a lush park, several small museums dedicated to humanity's various accomplishments, plus offices, public buildings and more than enough residences to house the 8,000 local employees. The UN dome is outside of any national jurisdiction and is only subject to UN and LUA law.

Luna Rising provides more details on Olympus' general setup and the UN's place within it.

UN Political Structure

The decline of the old 20th century superpowers and the devastation of the Aberrant War rendered the old structure of the United Nations, with a large General Assembly and a smaller Security Council, meaningless. In 2071, Secretary General Claudia Santos formally restructured the UN into two divisions, the Upper and Lower Councils. The Upper Council contains a single representative from each of the almost 200 human nations. Each representative has a number of votes equal to the proportion of the population living in that nation. The Upper Council sets UN policy, under the direction of the Secretary General. The Lower Council also contains one representative per nation; however, each nation has only one vote. The Lower Council must ratify most major policies, but the Upper Council can pass temporary emergency measures and direct many local operations. A coalition of China, Nippon and several other Asian nations control over 1/3 of the votes in the Upper Council. This dominance does not allow the Asian bloc to control the UN but it does give them what many other nations regard as undue influence.

Fundamentally, the United Nations is something more than a simple advisory council yet less than a world government. This situation is inherently unstable and will eventually have to be resolved one way or another. Everyone involved in international politics is aware of this fact but no one really wants to press the issue while humanity is in the midst of several conflicts with monstrosities and aliens. One serious problem is that China and Nippon use their high populations and their vast resources to sway many UN decisions. Other powerful nations like the UAN, the FSA and especially Brazil and Colombia feel that they lack comparative influence in determining UN policies. The leaders of these nations frequently complain about unfair UN policies — not to mention being occasionally slow to pay their portion of the UN budget and reluctant to sign some UN agreements.

Currently, the various national governments and even many of the UN departments are deeply divided as to whether it would be desirable for the UN to expand its powers and become a full world government. If the UN picks its battles carefully it has the power to curb the excesses of even the most powerful nation. However, this is a far cry from actually *replacing* such a government.

The United Nations Military Command

With the violent social and political upheavals of the Crash era, Secretary General Santos also expanded the United Nation's powers and its role in international affairs. UN troops were authorized to intervene in any conflict that threatened the whole of humanity, in all UN designated disaster areas and in any wars that threatened a nation's neighbors. This mandate allowed UN troops to help restore order in many of the war-torn regions of the globe. While this mandate is still officially in force in the 2120s, its application is somewhat more limited.

While few nations are adverse to aid against alien threats, once order was restored after the Crash many governments objected to the UN interfering in civil

wars or similar disturbances. While the UN still theoretically has the right to intervene in both civil conflicts and international warfare, it often chooses not to. In practice, the UN generally only intervenes if its help is requested or if no one is in a position to object. Currently, UN troops are involved in Middle Eastern skirmishes largely because there is no government or other authority to stop them.

To avoid conflict of interest issues, the bulk of UN troops are made up of soldiers recruited specifically by the UN. National troops sometimes join UN troops in larger military actions but these soldiers are deployed in separate national units. Regular UN troops owe their primary loyalty to the United Nations itself. For many young men and women from poor or repressive nations, joining the UN military forces represents a chance for both freedom and advancement. After a five-year tour of duty the UN provides significant benefits to veterans, including assistance in obtaining citizenship to other nations.

UN troops provide the first line of defense against all external attacks by either Aberrants or Chromatics. Their role in the defense of Earth and of human-inhabited space as a whole is largely unquestioned. Most powerful nations like China or the UAN insist that UN troops work with their own people in combating threats to their own territory, but almost every nation welcomes UN involvement in external ventures.

The United Nations Aberrant Command (UNAC) serves as humanity's first line of defense against Aberrants and coordinates with various national military organizations, often with the Æon Trinity's subtle aid. All UN member nations are expected to provide money and equipment to support the UNAC, but the troops themselves are selected from UN forces. With the recent Chromatic invasion of Earth and humanity's retaliatory strike on Chrome-Prime, discussions have begun to change the UNAC to the United Nations External Command and to give it formal authority over all extrasolar threats to humanity. At present, aside from the UNAC troops involved with the Chromatic struggle, others are deployed on Khantze Lu Ge, France and other hard-hit areas of Western Europe and the Middle East.

The World Court

Just as the UN's military arm acts to protect all of humanity and supplement national military forces, the United Nations World Court (which includes such divisions as the Committee on Human Rights Abuses) acts as a judicial body that works to settle international problems and to try crimes against humanity. The world court is often best known for its extradition policies but it also tries cases against metacorporations who break international law, settles disputes between nations and pursues investigations involving areas where clear jurisdiction is in doubt (most notably in near space and matters involving psi orders). Thanks in part to the backing of the UN military, the world court has prevented or rapidly resolved several minor wars. It also recently absolved the Æsculapian and Orgotek orders of involvement in the recent Huang-Marr scandal (a decision helped by the two orders' full cooperation and rounding up of the conspirators).

While smaller nations rarely resist its edicts, more influential nations — especially Brazil, China,

·TRITON CONFIDENTIAL·

Subject: KLG's Future
From: Director Min-Fang Zhao, Office of External Territories
To: Juenke Tsai, Ministry of Psionic Affairs
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: textfile
Date: 06:41:21 9.3.2120

On your upcoming trip to Khantze Lu Ge I would ask that you pay special attention to the efforts of the local independence movement and the attitudes of the local United Nations and Æon Trinity officials toward their cause. The war against the Aberrants is predicted to last no more than two years, with UN martial law lifted shortly afterward. At this point we expect that the leaders of the independence movement will petition the UN for fully independent status.

Representative Yih has reported widespread sympathy for independence among many of the foreign leaders there. She has also indicated that Chairwoman Jiang is also quite sympathetic to the cause. Projections suggest that even with all our allies voting with us, the UN may well take Khantze Lu Ge away from Mother China.

We must prepare now to fight this ruling. Uncovering information on the feelings of the various UN officials and any illegal activities performed by the independence movement are important long-term priorities. The world is ours and must remain so.

Nippon, and the FSA — have sidestepped minor rulings by the world court. No country has yet deliberately questioned the court's authority, but the world court has also refused to hear several cases that might have resulted in clashes with major political powers. The world court is an incredibly valuable tool for peace and justice. Still, its position is unchallenged only because it avoids direct opposition to its authority by the most powerful nations.

United Nations/ Æon Trinity Relations

After the Crash, the Æon Trinity provided essential assistance to UN rebuilding efforts and also negotiated concessions from all major governments. Like it or not, ever since the Crash, the UN has had a partner in its efforts to protect humanity. The UN controls the distribution of vast national resources. However, the Æon Trinity has an enormous, completely separate international infrastructure with great influence of its own. In addition, the Æon Trinity is closely tied to the psi orders and controls the jump ships' maintenance and allocation. While the vast majority of UN officials are happy to work with Æon, a few (notably those from the FSA and Nippon) are not at all fond of working with psions or their allies.

Also, while the UN can sometimes become deadlocked in arguments over policy, the Æon Trinity usually has bold, rapid directives. Discussions of proposed Æon policies can often help gather UN support or galvanize coherent UN opposition to the Trinity's plans. A few cynics claim that the Æon Trinity leadership has actually proposed heavy-handed plans in direct opposition to its own desires in hopes of tricking its opposition into actually voting *for* Æon's true agenda.

Whatever their political goals or personal feelings, though, everyone in the UN recognizes that the Trinity is far too widespread and influential to ignore outright. Even the most narrow-minded officials see the utility of having psions help fight the Aberrants and the Chromatics and of drawing upon Æon's complex information network. Most people involved in both organizations realize that the UN and Æon both have the same goals: to protect humanity from external threats, to unify humanity and to help mankind grow to its full potential. When members of each group can overlook the paranoia and jealousy inherent to organizations of their size, they can achieve great things. The successes in the jump ship project and the recent invasion of Chrome-Prime clearly demonstrate how much can be accomplished through mutual cooperation.

In disaster areas and war zones UN and Æon Trinity forces cooperate for the common good. However, in more peaceful locales, this cooperation can become somewhat strained. The dispute over who should formally direct Project: Recontact, for instance, was only the most recent of these problems. Currently, the majority of UN delegates support the involvement of the Æon Trinity, thanks to its ties to the Ministry and the Legions. As the Ministry's patron, China's clout within the United Nations is undeniable, and the Legions are internationally respected. No delegate is comfortable making a resolute enemy out of a group that has the ear of two such influential groups.

·TRITON CONFIDENTIAL·

Subject: Recontact Questions
From: Kenji Okubo, Nippon Ministry of External Affairs
To: Denice Hirioshi
Encryption: DSE
Transmission type: textfile
Date: 04:11:53 8.21.2119

I need more data on the Æon Trinity's activities. Somehow it managed to convince the UN council that *it* should be in charge of the new jump ships. Directors Sumitomo and Pham were initially opposed to this being mostly an Æon Trinity project and seemed to be winning support for bringing the entire project under full UN control.

Yet on Wednesday, after a six hour closed session, they announced that previous disagreements had been cleared up and that the Æon Trinity was now formally directing the project, with full UN backing. I am assuming the Ministry got to Pham, but Sumitomo is one of ours, and he had a number of supporters. You are authorized to use any discreet means necessary to uncover the source of the pressure Æon used.

Aberrants

Aberrants represent the greatest continuing threats to humanity, a fact no one in their right mind can deny. Individually these beings possess incredible powers, and together they have the potential to wipe out all of mankind — or worse, to transform humans, even Earth itself, into their own image. The fact that no one, not even the Æon



Trinity, knows what the Aberrants actually plan and how they operate only serves to make the beings all the more dangerous.

Through a combination of past deeds and propaganda, most people in the 22nd century have the impression that all Aberrants are insane, utterly evil beings with no rhyme or reason to their horrible actions. The first two parts may be true, but those who look closely at Aberrants' recent actions must admit that there is indeed a method to the madness. These monsters have plans, they have strategies and, most probably, know more about what they're going to do a year from now than the orders know about what they're going to do tomorrow.

Plans Within Plans

The Æon Trinity has analyzed every reported Aberrant incursion on record from the moment the creatures attacked Research Outpost Vesta. Analysts from the UN and every order have pored over this data, and patterns are finally emerging from the chaos.

First and foremost, they have confirmed significant details about the organizing force behind most of the Aberrant attacks, a powerful being known only as The Colony. The Colony commands the allegiance of an indeterminate but large number of Aberrants; most experts estimate it controls about 80% of the known Aberrant population. Guesses as to the exact number vary wildly, ranging anywhere from a several hundred to two or three thousand first line Aberrants and several times that many support troops (in the end the exact number isn't vital; the Storyteller has as many of these monsters to throw at Earth as she needs).

The Colony is well known in Æon files (more specifically, in the Trinity's secret Babel Dossier). A powerful figure throughout the 21st century Aberrant era, it rose into prominence in its quest for dominance over mankind during the Aberrant War. Æon feels it's safe to assume that The Colony decided the time is now right to continue these efforts. Based on Aberrant activities, it seems the plan is to focus on human colonies and installations in space before moving on to conquer Earth itself. One obvious reason for this is that the Aberrants don't want to leave humans anywhere to run when they make their final move. Also, The Colony seems to want Earth and humanity relatively intact, at least if one can extrapolate any meaning from the creatures' behavior on Khantze Lu Ge.

Other Aberrant Involvement

Not every Aberrant follows The Colony's grand plan. There have even been rivalries, disputes and violent conflicts within The Colony's own ranks (as between Kali and Yog-Death on Khantze Lu Ge). Æon knows nothing about what became of Divis Mal and his followers, for example, and the Aberrants of the recently discovered Eden colony bear humanity no ill will (see **Stellar Frontier** for more details).

There are still Aberrants out there following their own twisted desires. Unfortunately, there is no way of telling who's who among these monsters. Was the latest attack part of The Colony's master plan or just some bored Aberrant showing off?

The Abberants on Khantze Lu Ge have taken hundreds of thousands of humans prisoner, a course they seem likely to continue following if and when they take more territory. In fact, the Aberrants under The Colony have gone out of their way to take prisoners, sometimes (but not always) sparing lives when it would be easier to kill. This has led analysts to conclude that The Colony wants these humans for some purpose. Certainly, holding hostages prevents the use of fusion weapons against Aberrant held regions (even though many of the "prisoners" seem to have joined cults dedicated to the Aberrants, though whether this is voluntary or under duress remains to be seen). However, it's likely that the Aberrants want these hostages for more than a simple defensive advantage.

The Ultimate Goal

This section contains details unknown to all but a select few humans (and most of them are in league with the Aberrants...). If you want your character to remain ignorant of the Aberrants' full scope and intent, skip on to the next chapter.

The Colony's forces intend to grind away at humanity's ability to resist. As noted above, cutting off the extrasolar colonies and near space communities ensures that humans have no place to run. At that point, it won't matter how many ships or psions humanity has; any use of fusion weapons or other large-scale destructive devices will assuredly result in the deaths of thousands of non-combatants. This prohibits a repeat of the Ultimatum and leaves Earth dangerously exposed to total Aberrant invasion.

The Colony has a very specific plan for those being taken captive, a goal it wants to achieve with all humankind. Among its various abilities, The Colony (and offspring like Kali and Yog-Death) can inject taint into normal humans, thus creating a kind of sub-Aberrant mutant. The Colony hopes to effectively wipe out the human race as we know it and replace it with millions of sub-Aberrants, ruled over by pure Aberrant masters!

When The Colony takes prisoners it injects the recalcitrant ones with taint radiation, effectively converting them — at least those who survive the process — into mutants. These "sub-Aberrants" are warped by the taint, transforming into things out of a horror vid. Although they possess none of the staggering power of true Aberrants, these mutants make handy cannon fodder. Additionally, the transformation alters the subject's brain chemistry, making him frothingly loyal to his Aberrant master. Most disturbingly, the process dramatically increases the chance that the mutant's offspring is born with the Mazarin-Rashoud sequence to become a full Aberrant— for those who aren't rendered sterile by the change, anyway.

Thanks to their own genetic reconfiguration as a result of the Prometheus Effect, psions are immune to this mutation. The Gifted can still be injected with taint, but instead of transforming into sub-Aberrants, they die (a small consolation, some might say).

For those humans who express a desire to cooperate, The Colony gives them a chance to prove themselves. These men and women basically sell their souls to retain their humanity, agreeing to betray Earth in return for future consideration from The Colony. Perhaps not surprisingly, some of these sycophants ask to be transformed, hoping to gain the legendary powers of an Aberrant as a result.

Methods of Travel

Aberrants move over great distances using the warp ability, but not all of them possess this skill. The rest must rely on other means, most notably hardtech devices of one sort or another. Flyers, spacecraft, even tunneling devices have all been found in the hands of Aberrant invaders. No Aberrant can use bioware of any sort. Biotechnology feeds off of psi, after all — something the Aberrants cannot access or manipulate.

Traitors and Spies

Earth remains relatively secure largely because the many psions can detect an Aberrant from its taint radiation (at least outside of the Blight). Unfortunately, untainted humans loyal to the Aberrant cause could infiltrate virtually any part of human society without anyone being the wiser.

At this point, Æon has no solid proof that such agents actually exist — some members of the Æon Council even suggest that the whole affair could be a feint by The Colony aimed at diverting valuable resources and fostering paranoia among humanity. Still, Triton Division, working closely with ISRA, the Ministry, and the Norça, recently began a long-term operation aimed at detecting and eliminating these "hidden Aberrants."

In truth, the first wave of this hidden invasion has long walked among humans — some within the United Nations and the Æon Trinity. One of The Colony's most trusted agents, Elizabeth Gaynor, even maneuvered herself to help direct the Triton project. As she has for years, Gaynor subtly guides the information distributed to keep evidence of key Aberrant sympathizers secret.

Qin Aberrants

Recent rumors from the Qin (who are not known for leaking rumors) indicate that there appears to be some form of Aberrant developed from Qin, rather than human, stock. There has been no previous data on how taint might affect Qin. Considering the energy's impact on Earth life, though, it's plausible to assume that there could be a Qin equivalent to Aberrants.

The only evidence extant is a bit of biological matter left over from an Aberrant attack. Analysis of the matter (once an Aberrant's foot) showed that it has no relation to human DNA. The implications of Qin transforming into Aberrants cannot be ignored and human science is already in a panic over the ramifications.

In reality, the DNA evidence is a false lead planted by Aberrants. There are no Qin Aberrants, as such a thing is not even possible. The Colony sent minions to Qinshui to plant this evidence as a fear tactic, hoping to scare the Qin into withdrawing from the fight while at the same time raising suspicions about Qin motives.

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Taint Diseases

— Analysis: Dr. Allen West, Æsculapian Order

Prolonged exposure to the radiant energy popularly known as "taint" can cause numerous diseases, none of which we have yet found cures for. Taint works much like radiation: the longer you are exposed to it, the more damage you sustain. Like radiation as well, it damages the body on a cellular level, causing diseases not unlike cancer in their basic structure — although far worse in their actual effects.

It is worth noting that, due to the polar natures of psi and taint, active psions seem immune to all taint-related illnesses. However, it appears that this same opposition makes it virtually impossible for even Æsculapians to cure these infections once they set in.

Wexler's Disease is one of the worst, principally because it masks its effects for so long. Taint takes hold in the brain and subtly alters its chemistry, causing erratic behavior, uncontrolled hormone shifts and other problems often misdiagnosed as mental illness. It then spreads to the rest of the body, causing the internal organs to malfunction and even shut down. In the final stages, victims find their bodies swelling out of control, their pores leaking blood and other fluids as well as other signs of a body gone mad. Worst of all, none of this is fatal for quite some time. The victim lives in agony, growing more and more deformed until, most often, they take their own life.

The disease known simply as D (an abbreviation of "decay," of all things), is less gruesome but no less horrific. The patient's entire genetic structure atrophies, resulting in nerve decay and slow mummification. About the only consolation of D is that in the latter stages, the patient feels little immediate pain.

Other diseases like Compound Breakdown Disorder, and TriFal cause similar disfiguring and or wasting effects in victims. Fortunately, none of these disorders seem contagious. As far as we know the only way to contract them is from exposure to taint itself.

This chapter is devoted to giving your **Trinity** characters more depth, expanding on existing Traits and adding some new ones. The following sections, though intended to be used together, are completely optional. Storytellers and players can feel free to take them or leave them piecemeal; do whatever works best for your series. As always, the Storyteller is the final arbiter of what's acceptable in his game.

Origin

There's a tendency common to both novice and veteran roleplayers to ignore a new character's history in favor of what she can do *now*: Attributes, Abilities, equipment lists, all the "crunchy" stuff that is often the focus of a cutting-edge epic science fiction game. In some ways, the **Trinity** character sheet encourages this. The space labeled "Origin" asks the player to compress decades of his character's life into a one- to three-word description of that individual, a catchy phrase that might show up on the psion's business cards or be the words that her friends use to introduce her at noisy parties.

It's ironic that Origin is, in many ways, the most overlooked aspect of a **Trinity** character. After all, it has more potential for true roleplaying than just about any other entry on the character sheet.

No One Exists in a Vacuum

Let's look at it from the top. What is "Origin"? At its base, the word means "the place from where something comes or begins." A character doesn't just spring full-grown from her order's Prometheus chamber like a psi-wielding Athena leaping out of a bioapp Zeus' forehead. She was (probably) someone with a life completely independent from the orders or the Æon Trinity before she tested positive for psi latency. She was born, grew up, went to school (or avoided it), made friends and enemies, matured, learned, felt joy and pain and went through all those thousands of experiences that made her into what she is in the 22nd century. She came from somewhere, just like her player did, and she's going somewhere, just like her player is.

Start Small...

Take a look at **Trinity**'s "Spark of Life" section (p. 168). Many of those questions go toward determining a character's origin. Those preferences and dislikes had to come from somewhere. Okay, so your character's favorite food is strawberry ice cream and she despises Marrakesh bang with a passion. Why? Maybe there's no reason — she just likes the dessert's taste and the music's rhythm interferes with her concentration. That's fine; every single facet of human existence doesn't have to have a rational explanation. However, maybe her first boyfriend had a thing for strawberry ice cream and the taste reminds her of kissing him. Maybe her junior-year roommate at college played 'Kesh bang incessantly while the character was trying to study.

If you're not sure what answers to provide for these questions then don't hesitate to draw on your own experiences. Often, more of your character comes from you than you first recognize. A few minutes spent thinking here can go a long way toward a better roleplaying experience later.

Don't forget to share your thoughts with your Storyteller; he may find story hooks in the most innocent of details. What if that first boyfriend happens to show up in mid-chronicle as an innocent bystander or plot complication? It's been 15 years — will the character even recognize him at first, or will a mysterious stranger bearing a lop-

Using What's Out There

Trinity's combination sourcebooks — **Luna Rising, America Offline,** et al.— can be great resources for figuring out a character's origin. Each one details a given geographic area and psi order, which may give you all sorts of jumping-off points for a psion's history.

These books are also useful for a look at just how to construct a character history if you're not sure how to go about it. The end of each book has a handful of sample characters whose entries are actually extended origins.

Storyteller Option

Encouraging Your Players to Develop Origins

One of the most frustrating aspects of being a Storyteller can be getting your players to get into character instead of just counting dots. As shown here, well-developed origins can help you as well as your players — you can easily plan an entire session around a character's history coming back to bite him. So how do you encourage your players to buy enough rope to hang their characters with?

Bribe them.

Offer two to five extra bonus points for a page or so of well-thought-out character history that contains good plot hooks. Granted, it's a cheap, unsubtle tactic but it *will* encourage your players to put enough effort into their character histories that they may start thinking of those characters as developed personalities rather than collections of dots with nifty powers. Eventually, they'll become accustomed to thinking in such a manner and the result will be better stories for all concerned.

After all, you *are* reading this so you can tell stories, aren't you? If you just wanted to kill some bugs, you'd be playing **Trinity: Battleground** instead (not that it's a bad way to spend a Thursday night).

sided smile and a dozen roses show up on her doorstep one evening? In this manner, the character's history continues to play a part in her present life.

...and Work Up

Details are great, but don't forget the big picture either. What were the major events in the character's life? What made her what she is today? Go back and decide what made her do what she does — or, alternately, figure out what happened to her and then go from there to reach a conclusion as to what she's doing now.

You can start with a concept like "inquisitive clairsentient private investigator" and work backward to explain how she reached this point. Maybe her father was murdered when she was young and the crime was never solved; she became a tortured idealist trying to prevent anyone else from going through the horrible *not knowing* that she experiences.

On the other hand, you can start with the history first and work forward to the concept. Taking that same past event, you could create a different concept. Maybe that individual's loss drove her to decide that she'd never allow such a crime to happen again, and now she's a telepathic vigilante who scans everyone around her to prevent violent crimes by stopping them before they start.

Such groundwork can also lead into determining a character's Nature; Nature and Origin are often very closely intertwined.

Nature

In many ways, a character's Nature is as important as her Origin. If Origin is *where* the character came from, Nature is *who* she is — not in the sense of a name on a passport, but rather as a means of expressing the intangible core motivations that give the character a reason to live from day to day. It's a one-word summary of the character's ultimate goals and drives and may well determine many of her actions and perceptions.

Nature is her core personality type, and, as such, is far more complex than the one-word statement that gets written on the character sheet. Still, it's a good summary of the process by which the character reaffirms her self-esteem and regains her drive to continue fighting against the universe's "slings and arrows." This is represented in game terms by the process of regaining Willpower points, which measure the character's currently-felt strength of purpose.

New Archetypes

The following personality archetypes are intended to supplement the existing ones in **Trinity** (p. 177). Even so, this isn't an exhaustive list; players and Storytellers are encouraged to come up with their own options.

• **Competitor:** It's not enough to be good — you have to be the *best*. The desire to be at the front of the pack dictates your every action, whether you're at a gala social event or in the middle of a raging firefight. If you're not the winner, you're nothing — so you do everything possible to ensure

that you're *always* the best. Still, sometimes you go too far when stacking the deck in your favor.

Gain Willpower whenever you win any sort of contest, formal or otherwise.

• **Confidant:** Your world revolves around other people and the more you know about what makes them tick, the better. You may be someone who listens well and gives advice or you may just collect secrets and store them away for later use. Whichever is the case, you're an innately social individual whose innermost joy is getting someone to open up to you — even if they don't necessarily want to, which can make you come off as an annoying busybody.

Gain Willpower when someone confides in you on a level beyond general social interaction.

• **Cynic:** You're grim, morbid, and bitter... and you've just got to share this with the rest of the universe. The thing is, your "the-worst-is-about-to-come" observations are right more often than not. Your naysaying is the stuff of legend and a positive outlook is the last thing anyone ever expects from you. You have to constantly watch yourself, though, to keep from going into an inactive depressive funk, paralyzed by your own certainty that nothing will come out right.

Gain Willpower whenever someone screws up or something goes wrong like you predicted it would (either out loud to the rest of the group or in private to the Storyteller).

• **Fanatic:** You've devoted yourself to some particular cause. More than an Allegiance, it's your overwhelming passion and your sole (or at least primary) reason for existing. You're willing to sacrifice your friends, your possessions, and yourself for the cause, whatever it may be — and if things get too tight, you *will* make these sacrifices. Be sure to specify what your chosen cause is and why you're so fixated on it.

Gain Willpower whenever you accomplish an act, especially one involving personal sacrifice, that furthers your cause.

• **Gallant:** You're similar to both the Competitor and the Hedonist in mindset but your particular kick isn't being the best so much as it is making an impression that *implies* that you're the best. You're flamboyant, brash, outspoken, and oh, so very charming. You're a very social creature for somewhat selfish reasons: you love the attention that your escapades bring you. In extreme situations, you'll ignore all other tasks, making your highest priority the act of ensuring that you're the center of attention.

Gain Willpower whenever you substantially impress another character.

• **Innocent:** Though you may be an adult in terms of age and education, you're still stuck in a pre-teen mindset of naiveté and reliance on others. Your guileless nature can be a boon among the world-weary, but it comes with a price. You're little prepared to cope with seeing the dark side of the human soul; exposure to human foibles can hurt you more than a laser shot.

Gain Willpower when your unsullied perspective uncovers an answer that more world-weary people have overlooked.

• **Monster:** You are grotesque, sociopathic, or just plain *wrong.* Even more extreme than the Deviant, you subscribe to your own inhuman moral code that affirms your strength over those weak, mewling masses of neutrals. You are not human; you are so very much better than them — a step above on the evolutionary scale and on the food chain. If you run out of Willpower, you're likely to resort to extreme and vicious acts just to prove your superiority. This Nature is common to serial killers, psions in irreversible tolerance overload, and high-taint Aberrants (though it is by no means the only Aberrant Nature).

Gain Willpower when you assert your dominance (usually violently) over humanity as a society or as a species.

• **Perfectionist:** Anything less than total success isn't really success at all, in your eyes. You must do it completely right every time — no practice runs, no second chances. You're obsessed with details and spend an inordinate amount of time making sure everything is *just so.* Still, more often than not your obsession pays off where less complete preparations or efforts would meet with failure. However, you run the risk of polishing and sharpening your current project into the ground when "just good enough" would be sufficient for the task at hand.

Gain Willpower when your total attention to detail is the difference between success and failure. Alternately, gain Willpower whenever you completely succeed at an incredibly difficult task (Storyteller's discretion, but usually four or more extra successes on a roll of +1 difficulty or greater).

• **Psion:** Being a psion is more than a job — it's the whole core of your being. You are one with the noetic totality, you live and breathe psi. It's just not a complete day unless you've had the opportunity to stretch your powers to their fullest, and you'll almost always look for a psionic solution to any prob-

lem before you consider doing something mundane. In extreme circumstances, you may well concentrate on nothing *but* psi, completely ignoring things that "ordinary folks" could do to save the day (obviously, neutrals can't take this Nature).

Gain Willpower when you use your psionic powers in an unusual or creative fashion to succeed in a goal.

• **Unwilling Psion:** Although you've experienced the Prometheus Effect, you did it somewhat against your will. You weren't dragged into the chamber kicking and screaming (or maybe you were...), but it wasn't what you saw your future being. You were perfectly happy being "normal;" you never wanted to test positive for latency. Whether you became one of the "Gifted" out of obligation, guilt or even honest interest, you've found that so-called "gift" is one hell of a white elephant as far as you're concerned (once again, neutrals cannot take this nature).

Gain Willpower when you come to terms, in small ways, with your own psionic nature. Gain a permanent point of Willpower and a new Nature when you finally come to accept existence as a psion. Your new Nature should be somehow related to the circumstances under which you throw off this one.

• **Xenophile:** Humanity has made contact with alien races, and you're right there at the forefront of the human efforts to establish a galactic community. While there's nothing wrong with your own species, the other ones are just so incredibly *fascinating*. You're convinced that there is some way to establish a common trans-sentient culture and much of your time is spent sublimating your own identity in favor of something more "universal." Be warned, though, that you run the risk of dissociation from humanity if you spend too much time in total immersion in an alien culture.

Gain Willpower when you manage to learn something new and critical about an alien race, or whenever you have a meaningful dialogue with an alien that furthers mutual understanding. Your achievement must be significant — learning that your Qin friend likes jump! music doesn't really count.

Allegiance

What exactly is Allegiance? It's not necessarily an expression of loyalty unto death but it's definitely something more than just a line on the character sheet indicating the source of an individual's paycheck or her holovid rental store membership. Allegiance is kind of a nebulous quality in many respects and that's what it should be. In the constant chaos of the 22nd century, a person's priorities may change daily and the group to which she officially belongs may not necessarily be the one that holds her heart.

Despite this intended ambiguity, though, there's still a lot of room for expansion on Allegiances and how they work for your character.

Where the Heck Did *That* Come From?

Throughout this chapter, you'll find references to Abilities and Backgrounds that aren't in **Trinity.** This information is sort of self-referential, because those Traits are included in this chapter. Any information that references something *not* found in this book or in **Trinity** has a parenthetical title and page number to point you to the relevant **Trinity** supplement.

Multiple or Split Allegiances

There are several manners in which a character can have a dual Allegiance, owing "fealty" to two separate organizations, or be a product of one and a member of another.

Psi Order Cross-Pollination

As noted in **Chapter Two: The Psi Orders**, it is possible for a psion to hold membership in an organization other than the one to which her Aptitude belongs. This can happen either through "reciprocal triggering" (generally referred to as "horse trading" by the Æon Trinity, which coordinates it) or by the psion simply leaving one order for another.

The first method occurs when one order discovers a latent psion whose latency leans toward another order's Aptitude, such as a Filipino Ministry recruit with strong tendency for Psychokinesis. In this case, the psion is sent to the Legions to get dunked and basic instruction in Psychokinesis, then returned to the Ministry for assignment and non-psionic training. The new Ministry agent has Psychokinesis as his Aptitude, but chooses the Ministry Ability Group (**Trinity**, p. 166). For more information on latent trading, see "Reciprocal Triggering," (p. 47).

The second means involves the Gifted resigning from her first order after her term is up (un-

less the time is waived by her superiors), then signing up with a new one. So an Æsculapian could join the Legions as a combat medic after finishing her basic Vitakinesis instruction and medical training. In this case, the character retains both the Aptitude and the Ability Group of her parent organization (the Æsculapian Order), but presumably swears allegiance to her new employer (the Third Legion) as recorded in the "Allegiance" slot on her character sheet.

Psions who leave their parent orders can experience social consequences that range from annoying to humiliating. The vitakinetic combat medic is probably respected by the troopers around her but is viewed as something of a "weak little sister" due to her lack of combat training. The psychokinetic is accepted within the Ministry's ranks but is something of an outsider among his telepathic colleagues because he's "head-blind." The Norça may view a shifter who leaves the order for ISRA as a coward, while the Upeo may consider a teleporter who takes a job transporting Orgotek executives to be a sellout. It's all a matter of perspective.

Freelance Psions

Freelancers are a special case, as they exist outside the orders' support network. Any psion who's not a member of any of the orders is lumped as a "freelance" psion, even those who have secure jobs with established psion-friendly organizations like the Æon Trinity or the Orgotek-spawned Data Hounds.

Generally, freelance psions owe their loyalty to whatever group currently employs them, which means that they're not going to have much opportunity for advanced psionic training. As a result, a non-order affiliated psion without a Gifted mentor pays inflated costs for psi Traits (see the chart below). A freelance psion fortunate enough to have a psion mentor pays normal experience costs for Modes up to the Background rating of the Mentor. Any Aptitude Modes developed past the character's Mentor rating are subject to the increased experience expenditure.

Trait	Experience Cost
Raise Aptitude Mode	current rating x 6
New Aptitude Mode	10
New Auxiliary Mode (max. one dot)	15

As for Abilities, freelancers can generally pick up a few more social skills than their order-employed counterparts do (being personable helps in finding work). As a result, the player of a freelance psion substitutes his choice of Etiquette or Savvy for one the Abilities in the parent order's Ability group — and *must* buy at least two dots in that chosen social Ability during character creation. Etiquette is eminently useful in finding proper work, while Savvy is needed to track down less... savory employ. If the psion already has one of these Abilities in her Ability group, she needn't make the switch, though she must still buy the minimum initial rating in that social Ability.

Multiple Membership Cards

Yes, it is possible for a character to hold Allegiance to more than one organization or cause. For a psion, this is usually the result of maintaining significant ties with an organization she was part of before she was recruited by an order. An example might be a commercial transport pilot who joins ISRA and, after being triggered and getting training, returns to her previous position. For neutrals, this may be a situation of holding two jobs, such as an Æsculapian file clerk who's also a Neptune Division associate. It may even be a "cover" identity, such as a CSA agent who's infiltrating the Halifax Irregulars.

A multiple-Allegiance character doesn't get any particular benefits outside of roleplaying; she is created with the same number of dots and bonus points as anyone else. However, her Ability group is an amalgamation of her two Allegiances. To determine a dual-Allegiance character's Ability group, compare the two organizations' skill lists side-by-side. Any Abilities that both groups have in common go into the character's "custom" Ability group; the player then chooses a roughly equal number of Abilities from each group to round out the custom one with six Abilities.

For Example: *Consider the clairsentient character who claims dual Allegiance to her shipping company and ISRA. The Storyteller decides that her company's Ability group includes Astrophysics, Bureaucracy, Command, Engineering, Pilot and Savvy. The ISRA Ability group is Athletics, Awareness, Investigation, Meditation, Pilot and Rapport. Pilot is common to both groups, so the character picks that up as the first Ability in her dual-Allegiance group. No other Abilities are common to both groups, so the player picks a roughly equal number from each: two from ISRA — Athletics (for zero-g maneuvering) and Investigation (to check out those questionable contracts) — and three from her company — Command (to keep control of her crew), Engineering (she came*

up in the ranks as a technician) and Savvy (to reflect her familiarity with the grimier side of the Belt and Luna). The character's new Ability group then consists of Athletics, Command, Engineering, Investigation, Pilot and Savvy.

New Allegiances

The following Allegiances and their Ability groups are merely a list of suggestions for Storytellers and players to work from. If you want to create a secret criminal organization that specializes in abducting and brainwashing Ministry agents and thus has Noetics and Rapport in its Ability group alongside Savvy, go for it. We won't stop you (though Bue Li might object).

Æon Trinity Allegiances

Considering how many and varied the Æon Trinity's pursuits are, it's a good option for characters who want to be part of one of the biggest movers and shakers of the 22nd century. Generally, Æon characters tend to be strong in the Influence, Contacts, and Allies departments, as their assignments lead them into all sorts of interesting social situations. Characters with one of these Allegiances usually claim such loyalty because of the unique job opportunities, the humanitarian outlook of the organization, the pay, or some combination thereof.

• **Neptune Division:** Neptune is the Trinity's administrative wing, handling paperwork, public relations, diplomatic maneuvering, and coordinating affairs between the orders and with outside organizations. Without proper planning, all of Triton's collected intelligence and Proteus' technological capabilities and specialized talents are meaningless. Only Neptune can articulate Æon's dream for the future in ways that Joe Hologram can understand and support, and harness the other divisions' resources to make that dream a reality.

Ability Group: Bureaucracy, Command, Rapport, Subterfuge, one combat Ability (Brawl, Firearm, Martial Arts, Melee), one communications Ability (Etiquette, Linguistics).

• **Triton Division:** Triton is the research, investigative, and scientific arm of the Trinity. Information is the fuel that propels the Æon Trinity forward. Secrets are dangerous; only through learning the truth can we distinguish friend from enemy. Triton is the key to investigating these enigmas and exposing the truth hidden behind ignorance, misunderstanding and fear.

Ability Group: Academics, Awareness, Intrusion, Linguistics, one learned Ability (Investigation, Medicine, Science, Xenology), one technical Ability (Computer or Engineering).

• **Proteus Division:** Ostensibly, Proteus is the Trinity's security and logistics arm. In actuality, Proteus conducts many operations that other organizations would not be pleased to learn of. Saving the world is a difficult task. There is a time for thinking and talking, for the operatives of Triton and Neptune to compile their data and formulate their plans. When it's time to get things done, however, they call on us. Proteus carries the hopes of humanity squarely on its shoulders and still stands tall when the fight is over.

Ability Group: Awareness, Firearm, Investigation, Resistance, one close combat Ability (Brawl, Martial Arts, Melee) one survival skill (Streetwise, Savvy).

Government Allegiances

Mostly under the aegis of the United Nations, national governments are still the most powerful independent forces in the Trinity Universe. Even the influence exerted by the orders and the Æon Trinity pales in comparison. Government characters generally have a decent amount of Influence and some strong interpersonal connections (Al-

Storyteller Option

Ability Group Experience Costs

The Ability groups for various Allegiances may seem to be pointless after character creation, since they're normally only used to determine initial Ability dot distribution. A Storyteller who wants his game to reflect the specialized training inherent in a character's Ability group may elect to reduce the experience costs for improving Abilities in the Ability group.

The precise amount of reduction is up to the Storyteller. A good rule of thumb is to charge [current level x 3] experience points to improve the core six Abilities, while maintaining the normal cost of [current level x 4] experience for every other Ability. This reflects the fact that characters who maintain Allegiances have access to advanced training opportunities in the areas of endeavor that the organization in question finds most important.



lies, Contacts, or Followers). Depending on the government, paycheck or patriotism are the most likely motivations for selecting Allegiance (or idealism, in the case of the United Nations, which encourages its employees to distance themselves from nationalistic concerns).

• **United Nations Xenorelations Division:** When humanity made first contact with the Qin, the UN scrambled to assemble a multinational task force capable of dealing with the Qin — and of acting as liaisons between human governments and aliens. UN "xenos" are curious blends of scientists and diplomats, able to relate (at least on some level) to the enigmatic extraterrestrials and to act as observers as well as negotiators. They take their work seriously, knowing that their work represents the foundation upon which all future human-alien relations will be built.

Ability Group: Etiquette, Interrogation, Linguistics, Survival, Xenorelations, one scientific Ability (Medicine, Science, Xenology).

• **UAN Ambassadorial Corps:** The UAN's Ambassadorial Corps is representative of most national governments' diplomatic divisions. The UANAC is unique, however, in that it manages both external relations with other Earth nations and internal relations among the UAN's member states. It is the rare UANAC employee who is not at least trilingual; even the most sophisticated vocoder isn't capable of capturing all the subtle nuances of diplomatic negotiations.

Ability Group: Bureaucracy, Etiquette, Intimidation, Linguistics, Subterfuge, Rapport.

Corporate Allegiances

Modern corporations range from small firms struggling to stay out of bankruptcy to monolithic multinational metacorporations that effectively own entire cities. A corporate Allegiance may indicate that the character is capitalistic, idealistic, or just trying to make ends meet. It's a rare corporate-allied character who is without some Resources (at least on the management end of things), and many who work for the cutting-edge companies have access to nifty Devices. Multinational corporations also help smooth the way for their employees to gain multiple citizenships, the better to conduct business. The most likely reason for choosing a corporate Allegiance is money, though many also go to work for certain businesses out of family tradition or the desire to continue a

certain line of work or experimentation that they can't do anywhere else.

• **Wazukana:** The Nihonjin giant Wazukana is humanity's largest supplier of computer hardware and software. This corporation definitely tends toward the "owning entire cities" end of the spectrum. Employees of Wazukana are often technically proficient, with secondary emphasis on management and public relations skills. Wazukana pays very well — 2 Resources is the absolute low end of the spectrum.

Ability Group: Academics, Bureaucracy, Computer, Engineering, Etiquette, Subterfuge.

• **Comstock Heavy Ores:** This Luna-based mining corporation employs about 1200 personnel, from engineers to field workers to clerical staff. Comstock's business focuses entirely on ore acquisition and processing. The organization is largely unremarkable and its primary claim to fame is as the nominal experts on Lunar geography and cartography. By necessity, Comstock employees are self-reliant and methodical; the environment in which they work demands such qualities for survival.

Ability Group: Demolitions or Drive, Endurance, Engineering, Might, Navigation, Science.

Criminal Allegiances

The old adage "crime doesn't pay" is not necessarily correct. Crime, done right, pays very well — indeed, the turmoil since the Aberrant War made it something of a growth industry. Criminals tend to have decent amounts of Contacts and the organized crime families have access to considerable amounts of Resources. Many also have at least a couple of dots in Cipher. Most members of criminal organizations have Social Flaws (see "Merits and Flaws," below) such as Dark Secret, Enemy or Fugitive.

• **Vor V Zakone:** More commonly recognized as the Russian Mafia, the collection of organized criminal groups known as the Vor V Zakone is a significant presence in eastern Europe and Luna's Downside. VVZ groups tend to go for pretensions of gentility and white-collar crime, though they're not above enforcing their decrees with force if necessary. There's a definite split in this organization between the street-level thugs and the businessmen (though some of the latter are hired muscle who made good through sheer luck and chutzpah).

Ability Group: Brawl, Bureaucracy, Etiquette, Firearm, Savvy, Style.

• **Blue Circle:** The terror of downtown Sydney's on-street parking, Blue Circle is a 20-member thrill gang specializing in vehicular theft. Few of the members are serious criminals in the violent sense; their top priorities are excitement and fast yuan. Most Blue Circles have a couple of points invested in Devices, representing either their B&E (Breaking & Entering) tools or their personal vehicles and at least one Contact in the form of a chop shop.

Ability Group: Drive, Intrusion, Melee, Savvy, Stealth, Style.

• **Doc's Merry Men:** This four-ship pirate fleet is one of the more prosperous and professional ones in near space. They primarily prey on ore carriers destined for the orbital refineries around Luna and Mars, but the Merry Men have been known to hit the occasional military transport as well — and every successful raid on a weapons shipment makes them even more effective in their chosen occupation. Unconfirmed rumors state that the Merry Men receive corporate backing from one or more FSA-held dummy corporations and are, in fact, privateers targeted at Chinese and Nihonjin interests. The degree of truth that these rumors hold is up to the Storyteller, but should determine the levels of Devices and Requisition available to them.

Ability Group: Firearm, Intimidation, Pilot, Savvy, one close combat skill (Brawl or Melee), one technical Ability (Astrophysics or Engineering).

Military Allegiances

The Legions are far from the only military force in existence. From the elite Orbital Marines of the Chinese fleet to the irregular Trumerican guerrilla forces of the Free Mountaineers, humanity may have a higher percentage of its total population under arms in the 2120s than at any time since the Second World War. Most military forces share two common traits: they are highly trained in the arts of war and they are considered expendable by their political masters. Military characters usually have Devices (or at least Clearance), and high-ranking ones are certain to have assigned Followers and the ability to Requisition some serious heat. Characters generally claim military Allegiance for adventure-seeking, patriotism or an escape from legal charges — they're definitely not in it for the pay.

• **Chinese Orbital Marines:** The elite of the Chinese fleet, the Orbital Marines are trained as boarding parties and as internal security for sta-

Storyteller Option

So How Do I *Use* All These Allegiances?

The Allegiances presented here are by no means the only possible ones in the Trinity Universe. In fact, some of these would be downright inconvenient or implausible to incorporate into a **Trinity** game. Can you imagine the cross purposes created by mixing a First Legion VARG pilot, a Blue Circle carjacker, and a UN diplomat? These Allegiances can be used to create characters, true, but they can also serve as jumping-off points.

Say you want to run a game where the characters are members of a UN public relations holovid crew. Look at the United Nations and Media Allegiances presented here, make a few guesses as to the likely motivations and Abilities of such a group, and present those to your players as their characters' options.

Likewise, such profiles are good starting points for determining what your Storyteller characters are likely to be capable of doing if they're working for a given group. Such an individual is likely to have a couple of Abilities from his Ability group at three dots and the rest at two, with a couple of appropriate supplementary Abilities at one or two dots.

tions such as *Liaowangta* and *Lulong*. They were also the core of the Chinese contingents of the recontact missions sent to the extrasolar colonies in 2120. Most Orbital Marines tend to be specialists in one field, such as infantry or aviation, and the particular Ability group options chosen by the individual will reflect his field of expertise.

Ability Group: Athletics, Firearm, Martial Arts, one piloting Ability (Pilot, VARG), one combat skill (Demolitions, Gunnery, Heavy Weapons), and one of Command, Engineering, Intrusion, Military Science.

• **Texas Rangers:** Scattered across the FSA are dozens of paramilitary forces who ostensibly stand opposed to the current American government. The Rangers, a band of self-proclaimed freedom fighters based in the Tex-Mex District, are one such group. The Rangers mainly operate as a highly mobile mechanized infantry force, living off the charity of small settlements and what they can capture from FSM convoys. They tend to have high Cipher ratings, as many of them were born in unregulated areas of the country, but not much in the way of Resources. As with Doc's Merry Men, the Rangers are suspected to have mysterious backers capable of providing them with high-level hardware — in this case, the Fifth Legion.

Ability Group: Awareness, Drive, Navigation or Savvy, Stealth, Survival, one weapons Ability (Firearm, Gunnery).

Espionage Allegiances

Like military forces, espionage agencies are usually controlled by some government sponsor. Unlike military forces, intelligence organizations are neither expendable nor public. Intelligence agents are usually highly loyal, and a dual allegiance is rare unless the agent is infiltrating another organization. Most characters assigned to field operations with intelligence agencies have one or more alternate Identities, while desk personnel usually have some pretty spectacular Access (see "Backgrounds," below). Both jobs include a certain amount of Influence and Cipher, and many espionage characters have a few bonus points invested in the Merit: Law Enforcement Powers (see p. 135).

• **IIS (Field Division):** The British Integrated Intelligence Service is the 22nd century's answer to the legendary MI-6 and its sister agencies. The IIS performs the same roles as most other national intelligence agencies: gathering data on other countries that those nations like to keep secret. The Field Division is the portion of the IIS responsible for the classic "spy" operations: deep cover operations in other nations to dig up information. As such, it's usually the most interesting choice for a character; IIS agents in the Analysis Division don't get out of their offices much.

Ability Group: Athletics, Intrusion, Linguistics, Subterfuge, one combat Ability (Firearm, Martial Arts), one Social Ability (Command, Etiquette, Interrogation, Savvy).

Alternate Legion Ability Groups

Psi Order Legions is the premier military force of the 2120s, and are the most likely military association for characters to belong to. Several of the more common (or more glamorous) units and divisions are listed here.

• **Aerospace Pilot:** Most of the other Legions maintain individual squadrons separate from the Seventh for reconnaissance and close air support. The Legions restrict aerospace pilot status to officers (minimum Status [Legions] 3), though senior enlisted personnel may serve as flight engineers, systems operators, or gunners on space-capable craft and are assigned as pilots for atmosphere-limited ships. A pilot must also allocate Device points for his assigned aircraft: two for a transport, three for a fighter (larger vessels are usually assigned to top-ranking personnel).

Ability Group: Astrophysics, Engineering, Gunnery, Pilot, Resistance, and either Athletics or Command.

• **Combat Engineering:** Combat engineers tend to do two things: build improvised or prefabricated structures and blow up things that other people built. In the field, Third Legion combat engineers are attached to the headquarters groups of company-sized or larger forces and are in charge of building command bunkers, roads, bridges, airstrips, and fortifications. They're also tasked with EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal — getting rid of other people's bombs and mines) and demolitions work. While they may know a great deal about the hardware that the troops they're supporting use, fixing it isn't their primary concern — that's the job of the neutrals and electrokinetics in the maintenance detachments. Combat engineers tend to have access to some very nice tools (Devices and Requisition).

Ability Group: Demolitions, Endurance, Engineering, Firearms, Might, and either Drive or VARG Pilot.

• **Internal Investigation:** This subsection of the First Legion is charged with keeping the Legions clean of internal corruption. Consider them the most bloodthirsty (yet most ethical) police Internal Affairs division you've ever heard of. II agents tend to have Status above that which their actual rank would dictate, due to the weight they can throw around within the order. Legion telepaths tend to be assigned to II when they're not placed in Military Intelligence staff slots.

Ability Group: Command, Firearm, Interrogation, Intimidation, Investigation, one close combat Ability (Brawl, Martial Arts, Melee).

• **Logistics:** While logistics — the science of getting men and equipment from place to place — isn't all that exciting, it's a vital part of military operations. Most Legion logistics personnel are neutrals with desk positions, though some have gone on to work in both the operations and law enforcement aspects of the black market. Logistics personnel tend to have incredible networks of Contacts, and active-duty ones may well have substantial leeway to requisition hard-to-get equipment.

Ability Group: Academics, Bureaucracy, Endurance, Investigation, Military Science, one combat Ability (Brawl, Firearm, Martial Arts, Melee).

• **VARG Cavalry:** The First, Seventh, and Fifth Legions have the vast majority of the order's VARG troopers. Legions policy states that only sergeants and above may undergo VARG training (Status [Legions] 2 or higher). Additionally, a VARG pilot must invest three points in Device to represent his assigned hardware. The VARG isn't a unique prototype; this expenditure represents the time commitment and amount of responsibility invested in a battle suit (most VARG troopers do the majority of their own maintenance for jobs that don't require a depot overhaul). Storytellers should only allow VARG pilot characters in certain circumstances, as the firepower controlled by even a lightweight unit can radically unbalance most teams — and blow big holes in the story.

Ability Group: Awareness, Engineering, Gunnery, VARG Pilot, two of Athletics, Command, Firearm, Navigation, or Pilot.

Media Allegiances

The Comm Crunch and the restructuring of the OpNet were only temporary setbacks to mass media. Holovision, data magazines or "chipzines," and hardcopy publishing comfortably coexist throughout human space. Media-affiliated characters may have Access and Influence, and most are fairly well-paid. However, they're not always universally regarded in a good light...

• **Newsday:** One of the more respected news providers in the Solar System, *Newsday* has been on top of current events since Australia-based Genman Enterprises founded it in 2078. *Newsday* investigative news crews are generally cross-trained in both technical and presentation aspects of their jobs, though individuals do specialize.

Ability Group: Interrogation, Investigation, Perform, Style, one technical Ability (Computer, Engineering), one Social skill (Etiquette, Savvy).

Social Allegiances

"Social" is a catch-all term for organizations that fall through the cracks of the major types of Allegiances listed above. Social loyalty can be to a community, a people, a religion, or a political action group. They are as diverse as are human modes of thought. Their only common theme is that they are composed of people who share a belief in a tangible society or an intangible ethic.

• **The Divisians:** Believed by many to have survived its official disbanding in 2061, this offshoot of the 2030-era Divis Mal fan club may be the universe's largest Aberrant cult. Urban legend states that Divisians are behind many seemingly innocent social organizations — charity soup kitchens, youth sports leagues, recreational roleplaying groups. Under the veneer of respectability, however, lurk shadowy conspiracies dedicated to converting everyday folk to the blasphemous worship of Divis Mal and his fellow Aberrants.

Ability Group: Academics or Noetics, Etiquette, Intimidation, Savvy, Subterfuge, one combat Ability (Brawl, Firearm, Martial Arts, Melee).

Abilities

While the Abilities presented in **Trinity** encompass the vast majority of endeavors available to characters, occasional individuals do acquire expertise in other fields of study. This section introduces some new Abilities and redefines some old ones to broaden the options available to players and Storytellers.

Note that some of the new Abilities can be particularly unbalancing, and Storytellers should have no qualms about restricting or banning them. Not everyone has the security clearance required for entry into the elite Legions War College or the innate talent necessary to excel in LIT's Astrophysics graduate program, after all. Also, as noted above, this section also includes a new look at some old Abilities. As with the new Abilities presented here, these rules suggestions are to be used strictly if you so desire — no one says you *have* to play with these variations in your game.

And, as always, these Abilities should not be taken as an exhaustive list of all available options. If you come up with something that you think is enough of a separate field of expertise to be a new Ability (and your Storyteller approves), feel free to add it.

Learning Curves

New Abilities may be purchased at character creation or during the game with the Storyteller's approval. Their cost is the same as that for the Abilities listed in **Trinity** (pp. 168 and 172). To record one on your character sheet, simply write its name on the blank line provided under the appropriate Attribute.

Several Abilities supersede those given in **Trinity**, either by expanding certain specialties into new Abilities (as in the case of Engineering and Computer) or by specifically removing certain tasks from the aegis of the basic Abilities (such as Pilot and VARG). This may cause consternation for players and Storytellers who designed characters around the basic Abilities — say a Legionnaire bioVARG pilot with Firearm [VARG weapons, cover fire] 3 and Pilot [bioVARG] 4. According to these new rules, she can no longer operate her VARG or fire its weapons. Don't fret; the following section shows you how to modify your character's existing dots to fit the new parameters.

If the character was designed to perform a specific task that's no longer covered by the Ability she has, the fix is relatively easy. Simply transfer the rating in the previously-used Ability to the new Ability, then adjust the old skill to a rating three dots lower than what it previously had (to a minimum of zero). If the old Ability had specialties, add one more specialty slot and split the amount between the old and new Abilities. If the old Ability was already reduced to zero, knock off a specialty and bring that Ability up to one dot.

For Example: *Our intrepid Legionnaire goes from Pilot [bioVARG] 4 to Pilot 1 and VARG 4.*

Her main area of expertise is in operating the humanoid battle machines, but she does know how to perform basic maneuvers in aircraft (probably thanks to training with VARG flight packs). The character's bioVARG specialty converts to two specialty slots; the player allocates one to Pilot [VARG Flight Pack] and the other to VARG [Precision Maneuvers].

The character's Firearm situation is a little trickier. The player wants her character to be skilled in both personal and VARG weapons, but Firearm 3 means that the Ability will drop to zero when those three dots are transferred to Gunnery. However, the character has two Firearm specialties. Instead of gaining an additional specialty slot as normal, the player drops the extra specialty to raise the zeroed-out Firearm to one dot. Two specialties then remain, one of which goes to Firearm [Cover Fire], and the other to Gunnery [VARG Weaponry].

The second situation that may arise is a character that *should* logically have a new Ability but doesn't have anything that would "spawn off" directly into it — like an ISRA planetary scout who really should have a decent Navigation rating. In this case, the suggested procedure is to give the character the new Ability, with a rating of one less than the average of the skill's base Attribute and the other two Attributes in that category.

For Example: *Navigation is based off of Perception, which is a Mental Attribute. The player takes his ISRAn character's Perception 4, adds in his Intelligence 3 and Wits 2 for a total of nine, which then averages out to three. Reducing this by one results in a two — the character retroactively learns Navigation 2, the dots magically appearing on his sheet!*

Bear in mind that these are only suggestions provided to save you angst. It's the goal of these rules to allow you to expand your characters, not to make them obsolete or overly powerful. If you and your Storyteller come up with a dot-shuffling system that works better for you, go for it.

New Abilities

Strength

• **Heavy Weapons:** As any Legionnaire lucky enough to survive a close encounter with an Aberrant will emphatically state that some situations require the application of more force than personal armament can provide. Heavy Weapons covers the training necessary to employ such drastic measures as anti-vehicle coilguns, tripod-mounted heavy lasers, plasma throwers and man-pack guided missile launchers. In short, this skill allows the character to use anything that puts out death and destruction on a vehicular or area-effect scale, is manually controlled by a single operator, and is larger than a grenade launcher or heavy sniper's rifle. Heavy Weapons does not encompass the use of any vehicle-carried weaponry that uses a mount and interface more sophisticated than a simple mechanical joint and a holographic sight. Anything that boasts computer-assisted targeting, remote control or servomotor alignment falls under the province of Gunnery, below.

Specialties: Antipersonnel Fire, Specific Weapon Class, Surface-to-Air Combat, Zero-g Combat

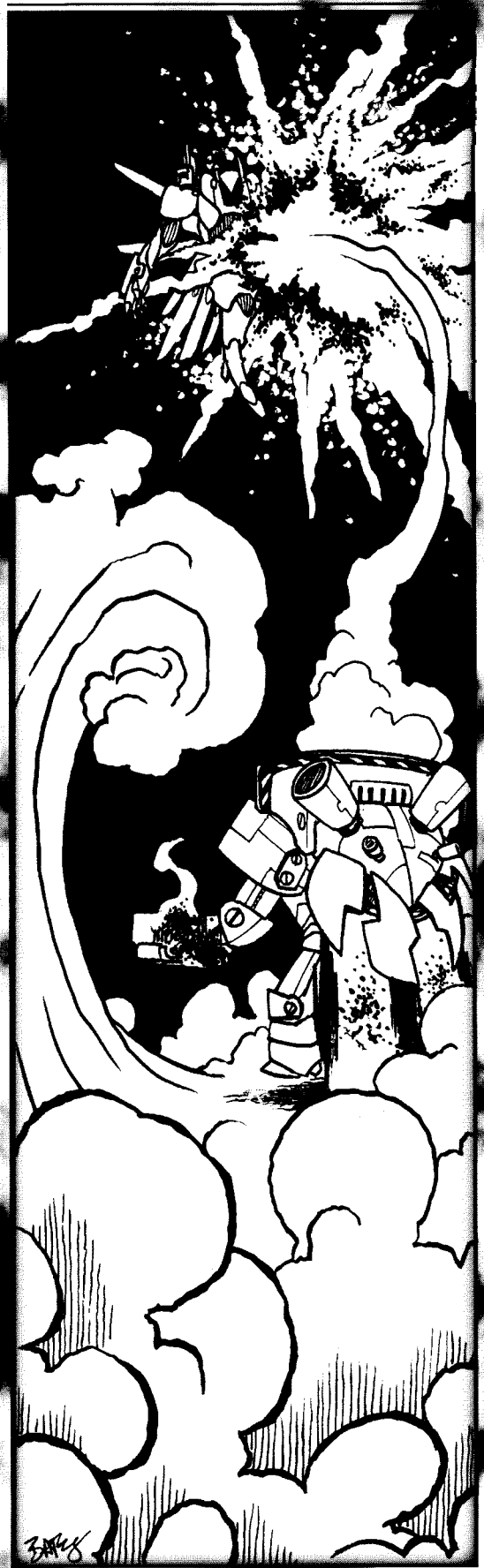
Dexterity

• **VARG:** Despite the popular image generated by the 22nd-century entertainment industry, piloting a VARG is notably different from operating an aircraft. While the early-model VARGs did incorporate many aircraft-style controls into their cockpits due to the use of modified aerospace avionics in their construction, design philosophy has rapidly diverged since the introduction of the humanoid fighting machines. Aircraft pilot training enables a novice to utilize basic controls to start the VARG up and walk it out of its bunker. Any sort of maneuvering past straight-line march requires this Ability, especially such efforts as hand-to-hand combat with Aberrants or other VARGs. Operating a VARG is a mixture of aerobic dance, computer programming, martial arts, juggling, and (in the case of bioVARGs) animal handling. This Ability does *not*, however, encompass the act of maneuvering a VARG in air or space while using a flight pack. That task requires the Pilot Ability, and so VARG pilots assigned to air mobile or space operations units undergo cross-training in both Abilities.

Specialties: Close Combat, Industrial VARGs, Non-Humanoid VARGs, Precision Maneuvers, Running, Stealth Maneuvers

Perception

• **Artillery:** Modern combat relies on the dual principle of "if I can see it, I can hit it/if I can hit it, I can kill it." However, many soldiers realize the value of being able to hit a target *before* they can see it. Artillery governs the fine art of indirect fire: lobbing a projectile in an arc over obstructions or the horizon to hit a target out of direct line-of-sight.



Artillery is used for indirect fire of any weapon including grenade launchers (direct fire for these still falls under Firearm), catapults, mortars or field howitzers. It is also used by forward observers to spot targets and to "talk" fire onto them via a radio link to a distant gunner ("Come left 350, drop 80 meters and fire for effect!"). This Ability is restricted to use on a planetary surface, as, obviously, there is no "indirect" fire outside a gravity well (firing at out-of-line-of-sight targets in space combat requires both Gunnery and Navigation to get the projectile course calculations right).

Specialties: Forward Observation, Low-Gravity, Specific Weapon Class, Suppressive Fire

• **Demolitions:** Highly restricted in its availability, Demolitions covers blowing things up — or keeping them from blowing up. This Ability gives a comprehensive knowledge of military, industrial, and improvised explosives, from stage pyrotechnics to the "rock-crushing" 10-kiloton fusion charges used for asteroid mining. Demolitions also allows a character to disarm bombs or warheads and to analyze the effects of a blast to determine what detonated. This Ability is extremely rare outside military forces and construction and mining firms. Many 22nd-century governments keep databases on all known experts in the field.

Specialties: Blast Analysis, Fusion Warheads, Improvised Charges, Mining Operations, Shaped Charges

• **Navigation:** Before the Aberrant War, navigation on Earth was a fairly simple and mainly automated matter, thanks to the GPS (Global Positioning Satellite) network. However, the GPS satellite constellation was destroyed in the early months of the conflict and it has never been completely rebuilt in an open-access configuration for many of the same reasons that the OpNet no longer provides unlimited global access. Colony planets do not support the level of technology necessary to keep such a sophisticated and vulnerable system in constant operation either, so maps, charts, magnetic and gyroscopic compasses, inertial navigation computers and dead reckoning are once again the tools of the navigator's trade.

This Ability allows the character to perform such tasks as accurately deciphering various types of maps (civilian road, geological surveyor's, air navigation, military tactical), determining her position and plotting minimum-time and minimum-fuel courses with respect to a planetary surface. It does not allow for operations beyond atmo-

sphere; orbital and interstellar travel is the province of individuals skilled in Astrophysics, below.

Specialties: Air Travel, Evading Detection, Ocean Travel, Surveying, Urban Travel

Intelligence

• **Astrophysics:** This Ability encompasses the areas of science that deal with near and deep space, from the movement of satellites to the effects of vacuum and cosmic radiation on starship hulls to large-scale planetary sciences. Astrophysics is also used to plot ship movement inside a solar system and to perform the intricate mathematical operations that give a jump ship's Tesser a basis for its pre-jump calculations.

Specialties: Interplanetary Navigation, Jump Calculation, Orbital Bombardment, Orbital Mechanics, Planetary Survey, Stellar Cartography, Vacuum Chemistry

• **Computer:** The Computers specialty of the Engineering Ability deals with the physical construction of 22nd-century computer hardware and most agents are sufficiently simplified that the average user can access their basic functions with little to no specialized training. However, any individual wishing to perform extensive programming or to do a little hacking needs this Ability as well. In short, Engineering covers hardware and physical repairs and modifications; Computer covers software and nonstandard operations.

Specialties: Application Programming, Avatar Programming, Data Manipulation, Encryption, Hacking, Security

• **Military Science:** This is the specialized knowledge of armed conflict. From Marathon to Midway, from the First Aberrant War to the Second Coalition Incident, this Ability covers the sum total of human experience in warfare. Military Science provides the character with a detailed knowledge of how to fight — and how to avoid fighting — on a level beyond that of the individual combatant. It also provides a comprehensive overview of the capabilities and statistics of archaic, modern and future-theoretical armament (even so, the proper specific Abilities are still necessary for the character to actually *use* said weapons — knowing optimum range and warhead mass isn't the same as knowing a fire control system layout). Finally, Military Science includes knowledge of historical and current military units' composition, fighting styles, and commanders. Academic specialists and military officers generally have this Ability — it's not restricted in the same sense as is demolitions training but most individuals just don't have a reason to spend that much time studying it.

Specialties: Equipment Recognition, History, Logistics, Non-Human Forces, Strategy, Tactics, Unit Recognition

• **Noetics:** The newest star in the constellation of human scientific knowledge, noetic science is also the most rapidly-expanding field of study. This Ability rates the character's understanding of such concepts as ISRA's holographic reality theory, Bhurano's early work on subquantum particles, psi, taint, and the unique biology of Aberrants and psionically-active humans. Noetics also encompasses the nonphysical principles behind bioware and how it can utilize psi in concert with a sentient mind. Noetics is a must for any character who wants to create new and unique manifestations of her Aptitude Modes.

Specialties: Aberrants and Taint, Bioware, Psion Biology, Specific Aptitude, Subquantum Physics

• **Xenology:** Before 2107, the field of xenology was an entirely theoretical one. When humanity first contacted the Qin, this area of science experienced an immediate order-of-magnitude shift, a phenomenon that has been repeated with every new alien contact. Xenology is the study of life forms not native to Earth, from the Chromatics to the indigenous plant life of Far Nyumba. It also covers non-human terrestrial biological sentience, specifically that of dolphins, whales, and octopi. In addition to the physical biology of alien species, this Ability also includes their social structure, biospheres, histories, and theologies — in short, everything that makes them alien.

Specialties (usually prefixed with xeno-): Archaeology, Botany, Ecology, Psychology, Sociology, Terrestrial Sentient Species, Zoology

Wits

• **Gunnery:** In many ways, the use of modern vehicle-mounted weapons is similar to playing a sophisticated computer game and so this act depends less upon physical agility than it does on the gunner's ability to assess situations and reflexively react to them. Gunnery encompasses the use of any weapon that is not directly aimed and fired by a human hand on the weapon itself. This includes a VARG's handheld laser rifle, a cruiser's orbit-to-surface missile battery, a hovertank's turreted coil cannon or an arcology's internal security sonic stunner pods. Gunnery also provides a basic understanding of computer-assisted targeting sys-

tems and weapon-control SIs and the methods of utilizing or evading such systems.

Specialties: Evading Fire, Fighter Guns, Missile Targeting, Orbital Bombardment, Ship Main Batteries, Tank Turret Weapons, VARG Armament

Manipulation

• **Xenorelations:** While Xenology, detailed above, covers many aspects of alien life forms, the one that cannot be defined with textbooks and OpNet reports is perhaps the single most important one: communication between humans and nonhumans. Early contact with the Coalition and Chromatics was marred by a lack of knowledge in this field and trained Xenorelations specialists are still extremely rare and must often gain their expertise on the job. Xenorelations functions as a substitute for Etiquette, Subterfuge, and other Social Abilities when a character interacts with an alien.

Currently, the only formal Xenorelations school is operated by the UN on Luna in conjunction with the Qin embassy (though the Æon Trinity was instrumental in its establishment and still maintains a close watch on its continued operation). Access to this training program is limited, less by security clearances than by a lack of truly qualified instructors. The psions most likely to have more than minimal training in Xenorelations are Ministry agents and ISRAns.

Specialties: Diplomacy, Formal Etiquette, Interpreting Reactions, Lying, Social Situations

Charisma

• **Instruction:** An old saying states, "those who can, do; those who can't, teach." However, those who can do but choose to teach instead need this Ability to impart their knowledge to their students. Instruction allows one character to impart information to another, whether through formal lecture or informal demonstration. Generally, every week of intensive instruction (minimum four hours a day in one Ability) allows the teacher to roll Instruction once. The minimum number of successes required for a successful lesson is equal to six minus the average of the student's Mental Attributes. If this degree of success is attained, the student gains one experience point that may be spent only on the Ability being taught; every two additional successes add one more experience point. A student cannot use these experience points to raise an Ability higher than the level of what his teacher possesses.

Specialties: Lecture, Mental Abilities, One-on-One Lessons, Physical Abilities, Social Abilities, Textbooks

• **Sentience Relations:** This is perhaps the most nascent field of human knowledge, having only emerged from the shadow of computer science in late 2119 with the discovery that the monolithic Leviathan-class jump ships and several other sophisticated bioware constructs were emerging as self-aware minds. While full artificial sentience has not yet been confirmed, there are enough avenues of development to warrant this field of study.

As such, Sentience Relations is a unique blend of high-level programming, evolutionary theory, biotech engineering, aerospace design and child psychology. Bioware sentiences are unsophisticated socially, although this should not be mistaken for simple-mindedness — any being that can calculate an interstellar jump "in its head" is worthy of considerable respect for its intellectual prowess even if it is a machine. However, effectively relating to these sentiences as personalities and individuals rather than "just" machines requires a great deal of patience, insight and social flexibility. Sentience Relations functions as a substitute for Etiquette, Subterfuge, and other Social Abilities when a character interacts with an artificial intelligence.

Storyteller Option

Using New Abilities

Just because these Abilities are available doesn't mean a character can get them. Remember: the Storyteller is God. It is your inalienable right to say "no" when a player hands you a character sheet with "Demolitions (fusion warheads, killing Aberrants, blowing big holes in plots) •••." Likewise, just because your players' characters don't have access to certain training doesn't mean you should be afraid to confront them with Storyteller characters who have those same forbidden Abilities. Don't forget the nonphysical Abilities in such cases, either. An enemy commander with a high Military Science score can be a substantial threat to a team. Even if he's not very tough in a pure physical sense, the characters must definitely work hard to outguess him.

Currently, the only truly artificial sentient minds in existence in the Trinity Universe are the Leviathans — and they're something on the order of 320,000-ton friendly puppies. The Storyteller should decide their level of intellectual and psychological development and whether or not any other true artificial intelligences have been created... or have created themselves. Just about the only people in human space with formal (or informal) knowledge of this Ability are science fiction authors and jump ship crews — Leviathan sentience isn't exactly public knowledge due to the potential social repercussions.

Specialties: Abstract Concepts, Commands, Conversation, Diagnosing Problems, Humor, Instruction, Lying, Translation

Revised Abilities

Intelligence

• **Engineering:** In **Trinity**, Engineering is denoted as total comprehension of all electronic and mechanical devices. This makes for a pretty broad-spectrum knowledge base to begin with; not only that, but it's contradicted by the introduction of Computer, Demolitions, Navigation and Noetics. Considering the addition of new Abilities, Engineering is now redefined to cover all physical aspects of hardtech. Biotech falls under the aegis of Noetics, while software and computer operations (hardtech computers and biocomps use the same programming structure) fall under Computer.

• **Linguistics:** The 22nd century has seen multilinguality grow more and more common as linguistic instruction techniques improve and national barriers blur. Thus, the original listing of one extra language family per point in Linguistics is artificially limiting. This Ability has the structure below; note that the numbers are cumulative — so going from Linguistics 2 to Linguistics 3 gives the character two new language slots, not four.

- • 1 additional language
- •• 2 additional languages
- ••• 4 additional languages
- •••• 8 additional languages
- ••••• 12 additional languages

There are other refinements beyond simply allowing access to more language families. First, alien languages are more complex than others, requiring more than one "slot." Specifically, Qin is the equivalent of two additional languages and the Chromatic color-communication is the equivalent of three additional languages. Second, formal academic training (including historical, cultural and literature-related aspects) in a specific language is the equivalent of an additional language. So a German college English professor with Linguistics 2 has "English" and "formal English" as her additional languages. If English were her native language, though, she'd need only Linguistics 1 with "formal English" as the additional language.

After character creation and initial language selection, experience points apply differently to Linguistics as well. Language families are purchased *individually*, at a cost of [9 minus current Linguistics rating] per slot. When the character fills up her current number of language slots, she gains the next dot in Linguistics automatically (though all the language slots remain empty until she starts learning more). This reflects the fact that greater linguistic comprehension allows easier access to multiple languages. So a character with Linguistics 3 spends six experience points for each of her next two additional languages. She then moves up to Linguistics 4, where she has four more language slots at five experience per slot.

Linguistics rolls should be kept to a minimum, usually coming into play only when the character is trying to convey a particularly difficult concept or attempting to understand a new language or dialect. With this system, the character's Linguistics score reflects comprehension of the mechanics and structure of languages more than it denotes how many items are on the character's linguistic menu.

• **Science:** This Ability originally covered all areas of human scientific knowledge, from quantum physics to gene therapy to stellar fusion to organic chemistry. However, certain areas of expertise are too specialized and others too vast to be contained within the bounds of one Ability. Some have already been expanded into Astrophysics, Noetics, and Xenology. With this change, Science is now used for the "basic three" fields: biology, chemistry, and physics. The new Abilities cover the more esoteric and specialized disciplines.

Expanded Personal Combat Systems

A dizzying array of armed and unarmed martial arts forms exists — which are pared down in **Trinity** to the rather general skills of Brawl, Martial Arts, and Melee. The fighting techniques profiled here provide you with the opportunity to add

a little more depth and complexity to these basic Abilities. As always, if such combat-heavy rules don't work for your game, don't use them.

With these rules, a character may use experience to specialize in a specific fighting technique — though she must have at least three dots in the Ability to do so. This is not to imply that characters with lower scores do not study specific forms; rather, for **Trinity**'s purposes, the maneuvers various forms use are not significantly different at lower levels of proficiency. Although a character cannot specialize in a fighting technique at lower levels, she may still buy one or more of the standard specialties — Blind Fighting, Multiple Opponents, Improvised Weapon and the like.

A character with five dots in her Ability can specialize in two specific fighting techniques. This simulates the time and effort necessary to master two separate forms to the degree needed to provide an effect in the rules. These limitations are cumulative with **Trinity**'s "no more than three specialties per Ability" rule — a character with Brawl may *not* specialize in Combinations, Dirty Maneuvers and Zero-g Fighting and *also* specialize in the Savate technique.

Each specialized technique provides its own type of benefit (and, in some cases, limitation), as listed below. Note that, except where explicitly stating otherwise, all benefits drop by one die when the character fights in zero-gravity.

Lethal Close Combat Damage

Some of the forms listed below give their practitioners the option to inflict lethal damage with attacks that normally inflict bashing damage. Since these attacks are still low-velocity, though, padding protects more than ballistic armor does. As such, all unarmed close combat attacks are reduced by the target's bashing soak value, *not* his lethal value.

As this refers to attacks made using the unaltered human body, they can still be parried or blocked bare-handed. However, a character who can inflict lethal close combat damage because of a special technique can't block swords with her bare hands. Also, a biokinetic who can reshape his hands into scythes or a psychokinetic who can create blades of force are not subject to this modification. Be sensible in your rulings.

Brawl Techniques

• **Boxing:** Boxing no longer enjoys the popularity that it did in the 20th and 21st centuries, as it was gradually shunted aside in the media by more complex sports (and was never incredibly popular outside of English-speaking nations). However, the art of semi-refined fisticuffs is still taught across the globe, and many street-trained fighters independently develop their own forms that mimic boxing.

A boxing specialist gains +2 accuracy to strikes and two additional dice to blocking or dodging strikes. If a character performs two or more strikes in one turn, her initial dice pool penalty drops by one. So a boxer who throws three punches loses two dice, then three dice, then four dice — instead of the standard three/four/five. She may take no other action in the turn to gain this benefit, though it *is* cumulative with the strike bonus.

• **Savate:** Savate is a French hybrid of English boxing and improvised kickboxing. Never incredibly popular outside France, savate is slowly gaining acceptance across human-controlled space as French refugees spread the art. A savate practitioner gets +1 accuracy to strikes and +2 accuracy to kicks and sweeps (the character may use Brawl to perform a sweep).

• **Wrestling:** Possibly the earliest form of martial art, wrestling has an equivalent in nearly every human culture. Its primary focus is to ground and pin an opponent, subduing him through raw strength. Wrestling provides the character with +2 damage to clinches, +2 accuracy to holds and tackles and two extra dice to the character's attempts to dodge tackles or resist clinches and holds.

• **Zero-g Wrestling:** Less a formal martial art than a progressive improvisational development, Chinese Orbital Marines pioneered this technique as part of their boarding party training. Zero-g wrestling's primary goal is similar to that of normal wrestling — to subdue and pin an opponent — but it focuses on keeping the opponent away from any surface he could use to gain momentum or leverage. As such, the character gains the same benefits as normal wrestling when fighting in zero-g; however, they drop by one die if she's fighting in gravity. Further, a zero-g trained wrestler fighting in weightless conditions may add her Brawl rating to her Initiative.

Martial Arts Forms

• **Aikido:** Founded in the mid-20th century, aikido is taught as a purely defensive form of combat. This "passive" martial art incorporates no offensive strikes whatsoever, concentrating on turning opponents' energy against them or evading attacks entirely. Aikido nearly faded into ob-



scurity in the 2070s and 80s, as the generation of fighters trained after the Aberrant War concentrated on more offensive techniques. It underwent a minor resurgence due to its widespread use among ISRA and the Æsculapians.

An aikido-specialized martial artist suffers +2 difficulty to all strikes and kicks. However, she gets +2 accuracy to holds, blocks and close combat dodges as well as +3 accuracy to disarm and throw maneuvers. Further, she may ignore the penalty for multiple opponents (**Trinity**, p. 244) unless she is fighting a number of enemies greater than her Martial Arts rating.

• **Capoeira:** This Brazilian martial art form is immensely popular with the Norça, and is well recognized (though by no means widely taught) throughout human space. Capoeira originated with African slaves brought to South America during the Terrestrial Colonial Period and concentrates on kicks and agile maneuvers. It was developed to resemble dance so it could be practiced under the eyes of overseers without fear of reprisal. This fighting style retains its acrobatic roots and any practitioner must be capable of a wide variety of non-combat maneuvers (minimum Athletics 3).

This specialty bestows +2 accuracy to strikes and +3 accuracy to kicks. Also, as capoeira was intended to still be effective even if the subject's hands were tied, a *capoeirista* takes no penalties for any Athletics or Martial Arts rolls made while her hands are restrained. Additionally, she may declare "evasive acrobatics" for the turn, cartwheeling and flipping around at up to her full Run movement rate. This requires a standard Athletics roll, with successes adding to the difficulty of all physical attacks made against the character for the remainder of the turn. This includes all conventional ranged attacks, but not psi powers.

• **Jujitsu:** This Nihonjin martial art is a millennium and a half old. It places emphasis on grappling, leverage, and ground-fighting rather than direct striking. As such, it has traditionally enjoyed moderate popularity, particularly among women and smaller men who do not have the strength and size to engage in knock-down, drag-out combat.

A jujitsu specialist gains +1 accuracy to clinch and hold maneuvers and +2 accuracy to disarm and sweeps moves. She also gets one extra die to her attempts to resist clinches and holds and an extra three dice to the knockdown recovery roll.

• **Karate:** Karate is perhaps the most widely recognized martial art, second only to kung fu in its diversity of schools and styles. This Nihonjin form originated on Okinawa in the first millennium and spread across the world during the 20th century. Karate concentrates mainly on direct attack and defense, while eschewing the more circular movements such as throws and grappling work.

Specializing in karate gives the character +1 accuracy to strikes and +2 accuracy to kicks and disarms. The specialist also gains one die to blocks and close combat dodges.

This system may also be applied to the Korean martial art tae kwon do, which is radically different in real life but breaks down into similar game mechanics.

• **Kung Fu:** This widely-taught Chinese martial art is the most diverse form in known space, with literally hundreds of separate styles of the art in existence. The only certain statement that can be made about kung fu is that no two students of it fight in the same manner.

To reflect its diversity of styles, kung fu has no set list of bonuses and penalties. Instead, add two dice to one offensive and one defensive maneuver of your choice, then one die each to two more maneuvers (offense and/or defense). Thus, a student of "drunken style" kung fu gains two dice on dodges and sweeps and one die on blocks and throws, while a practitioner of Wing Chun gains two dice for strikes and blocks and one die for kicks and holds. If the Storyteller approves it, you may also add three dice to another move if you apply +2 difficulty to a separate one. You may not double up bonuses on a single maneuver.

• **Muy Thai:** Perhaps the most brutal martial art in existence, this Thai form is more popularly known as Thai kickboxing. It is popular among First and Fourth Legion troopers and biokinetics. Muy thai emphasizes shrugging off injury rather than avoiding blows. It is an incredibly demanding art and few who are in less than top physical condition (all Physical Attributes at three dots or higher) can master it.

A muay thai practitioner may not use the clinch, hold, or throw maneuvers; further, she suffers +3 difficulty to dodge in close combat. When kicking, she has two options: inflict bashing damage at +4 accuracy, or inflict lethal damage at +1 accuracy. A muay thai artist may add half her Endurance score (round up) to her Stamina for the purpose of soaking bashing damage.

• **Tai Ch'i Ch'uan:** Tai ch'i is another "nonaggressive" art, and as such is looked upon favorably by organizations that favor truly defensive self-defense techniques. Considering the Æsculapian Order, the Ministry and the United Nations are among the modern proponents of tai ch'i, the art is enjoying increasing prominence. Tai ch'i emphasizes maneuvers that compliment an opponent's motions, responding to strong attacks with withdrawal or weak motions and balancing the opponent's moments of weakness with strong retaliation. As a result, tai ch'i is more intrinsically philosophical than many other martial arts and its practitioners tend to have training in Meditation as well.

A tai ch'i artist gains one die to all blocks, dodges, and throws and +2 accuracy to strike an opponent who attacked the character on the previous turn.

• **Uchukukando:** The "Way of the Void" is officially still in development by the members of Phoenix Squadron, though independent Legionnaires and Al Alif ISRAns laid the groundwork in the early 2100s. The object of "gee-jitsu" (as it is irreverently referred to) is to use the zero-g environment to fight in all three dimensions without losing one's balance or going into a helpless tumble. The Seventh Legion program draws heavily on the lessons of tai ch'i and of various zero-g acrobatic performers. Uchukukando is highly strenuous, requiring both mental and physical flexibility (minimum Wits and Dexterity 3) and previous acrobatic training (minimum Athletics 3, or Athletics 2 with zero-g specialty).

An uchukukando practitioner gains +2 accuracy to all Martial Arts rolls made in zero-g, but is at +1 difficulty in a gravity environment. She also adds her Athletics rating to her Initiative when engaged in zero-g combat.

Melee Schools

• **Bojutsu/Quarterstaff:** Specific training with a staff (generally a two-meter length of wood or orbital steel) allows the skilled fighter to use superior reach to keep attackers at bay.

A character specialized in bojutsu (Nihonjin) or quarterstaff fighting (European) may add her Melee rating to her Initiative if engaged in close combat with opponents with shorter weapons, thus reflecting her superior reach. She may also parry one close combat attack per turn without the parry counting as her action for the turn.

• **Escrima/Jojutsu:** Escrima is a Filipino form while jojutsu is Nihonjin in origin. Both of these techniques are oriented around fighting with short staves, generally about 0.8 meters long, and emphasize dual-weapon and multiple attacks. Many

More Sharp Pointy Things

Some of the swords referred to in the fencing and kenjutsu entries are not listed in **Trinity**. The following are suggested game statistics for them, along with a couple of other blades for those swashbuckling psions to wield.

- **No-Dachi:** A Nihonjin two-handed sword, similar in style to a katana but close to a meter and a half long. Damage: Strength + 6d10 L, Maneuvers: D P W, Conceal: N, Mass: 3, Cost: •••.
- **Katana:** The traditional Japanese long sword. Damage: Strength + 4d10 L, Maneuvers: D P W Tw (if the second weapon weighs less than 2 kg), Conceal: O, Mass: 2, Cost: ••.
- **Wakizashi:** The short counterpart to the katana. Long, relatively light blades such as machetes also fall into this category. Damage: Strength + 3d10 L, Maneuvers: D P W Tw, Conceal: O, Mass: 1.5, Cost: ••.
- **Two-Handed European Sword:** This category includes such blades as the Scottish claymore and the German flamberge. This weapon requires a minimum Strength 3 to wield effectively, and a minimum Strength 5 to swing with one hand. Damage: Strength + 7d10 L, Maneuvers: D P W, Conceal: N, Mass: 3, Cost: •••.

Characters can also try to purchase weapons of exceptional craftsmanship that have near-perfect balance (conferring an additional die to strike accuracy). Generally, such items have a Cost of one to two dots higher if bought on the open market or are the equivalent of a one-dot Device. This only applies to swords, knives, clubs, and staves (yes, clubs can be well-balanced too; look at the difference between a tactical baton and a chair leg). True masterworks, such as a Muramasa katana or a Damascene scimitar, cost a minimum of three dots more than basic items — if they are available at all — or are four-dot Devices. Such an incredibly rare item adds two dice to the weapon's strike accuracy and one die to all other Melee maneuvers made with it.

amateurs scoff at the use of blunt weapons over blades; those who know better treat practitioners of these forms with great caution.

An escrima or jojutsu fighter may ignore the penalty for two weapons and offhand attacks (**Trinity**, p. 243). She may also choose to have her clubs/short staves inflict lethal damage instead of bashing, with a +2 difficulty to hit.

- **Fencing:** Fencing is the art of fighting with light, thin blades, such as rapiers and foils. It is not usually favored by combat troops who prefer melee weapons that are more durable than fencing swords but is still highly practiced as a form of recreational combat among the European and European refugee upper class. It is also the primary form of melee work taught for stage combat.

A fencer gains one die to all weapon strikes and parries made with a foil or rapier and may add her Melee score to her Initiative when facing an opponent with a weapon of lesser or equal length. However, fencing foils are delicate weapons; any parry against a heavier weapon stands a chance of breaking the blade (roll one die after every successful parry against a heavier melee weapon; if the result is greater than 3 + the number of successes rolled for the parry, the foil snaps).

- **Kenjutsu:** The Nihonjin style of sword-fighting originated in the 5th century and is still popular to the present day, though not always viewed in an accurate light. Kenjutsu is the art of fighting with the samurai's swords: the no-dachi, katana, and wakizashi. It emphasizes striking speed and accuracy over brute force and dodging over parrying. Kenjutsu practitioners must be adaptable in mind as well as body (minimum Dexterity, Perception, and Wits ratings of 3 each).

A character with a kenjutsu specialization suffers +3 difficulty to all parry attempts (kenjutsu avoids parrying techniques in order to avoid damaging the expensive, relatively fragile swords). However, the individual gains two dice to dodge melee attacks and +1 accuracy to all weapon strikes made with a no-dachi, katana, or wakizashi.

Backgrounds

Backgrounds are more than just a few more dots on a character's sheet. They represent her degree of connection to the rest of human society, who she knows and what she can do when it's time for her to act in a manner other than completely on her own. Backgrounds are often tied to a character's history and origin, especially in the case of the interpersonal ones like Followers and Mentor. The people who are now her Contacts or Allies might have been her college roommates or co-workers at her first job. This section gives a little more insight into how to apply some of the less concrete backgrounds to your character and provides three optional backgrounds that may give your game a little more flavor.

Storyteller Option

Required Backgrounds

Don't be afraid to tell your players that they *must* buy certain Backgrounds for your game. A series whose player characters are all members of a deep-cover Norça espionage team will be pretty ineffective if the player characters don't have the Cipher ratings necessary to keep their covers intact or the Identity ratings necessary to masquerade as CSA officials. However, if you require such Backgrounds to be bought, make sure they come into play enough for the players to feel that their point expenditures were worthwhile! Particularly kind Storytellers may choose to assign a few such Background points for free if every member of the group is supposed to have a certain position or level of experience.

Clarifying Backgrounds

Allies

A character's Allies are more than just friends or sources of guns. They're her boon companions and may be closer to her than the rest of the player characters are. Each Ally should have a well-developed connection to the player's character that explains how they first met and why the Ally continues to stick his neck out for the sake of the player character. The player and Storyteller should work together to establish this relationship. However, it's entirely up to the Storyteller to nail down the Ally's history and determine his Traits. No one knows precisely what her friends are capable of, after all. The abilities a character expects her Ally to have may be much greater than she'd guessed — or they may be nonexistent products of a carefully-constructed bluff and the Ally's true talents may lie in a completely different — but still useful — field. Most importantly, the Storyteller should not let players use Allies as an excuse to have crack drivers, expert marksmen, and Kama Sutra-grade courtesans on tap. Conversely, be careful of making Allies total parents'-basement-dwelling losers...

With the background established, an Ally must still be nurtured and maintained — not abused. An Ally who is repeatedly called upon to save the character or place himself in jeopardy for her sake may well grow tired of it and cut her off. Whether this is permanent or just until amends are made is a matter for the Storyteller to decide; making up can have boatloads of roleplaying potential.

Accordingly, be nice to your Allies. Think of them on holidays. Inquire how their families are doing before you hit them up for military-grade body armor. If they call you in need of help, give it to them. You can never be on too good of terms with Allies.

Allies can also provide good hooks for new players to join the game. An Ally can even serve as a new player's character, with a relationship and reason for joining the team already established. Of course, once an Ally becomes a full player character, he's no longer an Ally. At that point, the original character should receive some (minor) compensation for the loss of her Background — perhaps the Ally-turned-player character sets her up with his brother, who just happens to work for the FSM's Military Reconnaissance Office....

Cipher

Cipher is a passive Background rather than an active one (one doesn't usually roll Cipher for anything). It's more of an invisible data shield between your character and all those nasty people who want to find out who she is, what her weaknesses are and who sent her to root around in their secret facility in the wee hours of last night. Cipher isn't any form of physical protection — it's not going to keep a trained investigator from lifting your character's fingerprints off of a door panel or stop him from spotting your character's face in a crowd. However, it *will* keep his OpNet search from finding a match for her fingerprints in the criminal records of the IIS or return a blank when he goes data-diving for a photo to hand out to his security teams.

Cipher isn't even necessarily a deliberately acquired Background. In fact, in many ways, it's harder to create than it is to acquire naturally. Many characters with high Cipher ratings were born below the poverty line and outside the system. They never moved in circles high enough for official records to be made of their existence.

Note that a high Cipher rating isn't always completely beneficial. Characters with Cipher 4 or 5 can have problems with "lost" hotel reservations, "missed" hovercar payments and "nonexistent" bank accounts. Some of these events can be ex-

plained away by the fragmented nature of the OpNet, but occasionally something happens that even Orgotek's best data technicians can't explain.

Citizenship

The 22nd century universe is in many ways the "global village" theorized a century and a half previously. A recent Æon Trinity report estimated that some 18% of humanity holds citizenship in more than one nation. While that's a low percentage in absolute terms, think about it for a minute. Slightly less than one in five humans is a citizen of two or more countries. How many 20th-century people do *you* know who are citizens of more than one nation?

Multiple citizenship has several perks. First and foremost, travel and business are much easier in nations where a character holds citizenship. The 22nd-century is paranoid in terms of government watchfulness. It's not uncommon for a non-citizen to be held up at points of entry for several hours while background checks are run and her luggage is searched for contraband — especially if she has a suspicious background or employer... as many player characters do. Simply being a member of a psi order is enough for the FSA to quarantine an incoming individual for up to three days "to ensure that the traveler is not bringing potentially hazardous biological technologies into the country." Once that character has been released, she can expect to be periodically monitored by CSA operatives assigned to "maintain national security by conducting random threat-level verification checks of foreign nationals." In contrast, an American citizen usually slides through customs by providing proof of citizenship and officials usually won't check for order affiliation or shadow her once she leaves the spaceport. Citizenship also allows ownership and purchase of civilian weapons in most nations.

Storytellers should keep a character's Citizenship(s) in mind when the team is traveling. An individual who's using a passport issued by a nation that's currently hostile to the one that she's trying to enter may be hassled or "detained for questioning," circumstances that few players or characters enjoy.

Contacts

Contacts aren't exceptionally close friends like Allies or Followers are. Rather, they're casual acquaintances with whom your character has established enough of a mutual rapport to occasionally do business. This business is most usually in information but it can also be under-the-table hardware deals or a five-minute security camera "malfunction." Bear in mind that a Contact doesn't have any personal stake in a character's well-being — he's a business partner and he's going to look after his own interests first and foremost. If a Contact is asked to do something that he considers too risky or unprofitable then he'll turn a character down flat.

Unlike Allies and Followers, Contacts don't generally need to be very well-developed. They're static characters who won't be with the player characters for more than a scene, and that scene will usually involve the team going to the Contact rather than the other way around. Even so, Contacts can be sources of good roleplaying and/or story hooks, sometimes when least expected. Indeed, continued dealing with a Contact could develop the relationship into that of an Ally, Follower or Mentor (or even an antagonist, depending on how the Contact is treated). Players and Storytellers should always be ready to take full advantage of the roleplaying opportunities such supporting cast members can provide.

Devices

Devices are staples of science fiction — advanced technology isn't much fun if it's all commonplace and a signature Device can be as much of a roleplaying trait as anything else. Try to imagine Luke Skywalker without his lightsaber or Han Solo without the *Millennium Falcon* and you'll see what we mean.

The difference between a Device and an item that's available through regular (or illicit) channels is twofold: function and reputation. Devices are pieces of technology that are unique, or at least available in very, very limited numbers. They're prototypes, limited editions, customized collector's pieces, homebrew modifications and alien artifacts. For standard-issue gear, rely on Resources; for standard equipment that's listed as "restricted," use the new Requisition Background below.

Devices can also be items that are only slightly modified, if at all, but have acquired their own reputations and thus impart a certain amount of fame (or infamy) to their owners. There should be a story behind every Device — its origin, its functions, who knows how it works (if anyone) and how the current owner acquired it.

Some Devices don't have easily-gauged cash values. A good rule of thumb is that a Device's Cost Trait should be three dots higher than the Background value of the Device in question. This can change, how-

ever, based on the condition of the Device, the local economy, or the whim of the Storyteller.

The following section helps further clarify the average parameters of various Device levels:

Device •: This item is distinguished from run-of-the-mill hardware and software by only a tiny margin. It may be of superior craftsmanship, ornately decorated, or just "lucky." A one dot Device generally adds one die to a specific combat roll, two dice to one specific non-combat roll, or has a reputation recognized within a specific subculture in a specific area. A Device of this level generally confers its bonuses on the owner and maybe one other person.

Examples:

Chris configured his computer agent's "personality" to mimic that of a fictional shipboard AI from an old flat-screen vid. In the process, he inadvertently tinkered with the agent's basic logic algorithms. Chris isn't quite sure what he did — and definitely doesn't know how to duplicate the effect — but his agent receives two additional dice on all Intent rolls when dealing with Chris' verbal commands.

Lara's weapon of choice is the L-K Avenger. Her personal sidearm is fitted with custom grips designed specifically for her hand so the hardtech weapon feels almost as "natural" as a formatted biogun. Lara's Avenger gives her an additional die to accuracy for all shots she makes with the pistol, but anyone else who tries to fire it suffers a +1 difficulty to his attack roll.

Hammar has a leather jacket that once belonged to Alex Cassel when the Prexy was in college. Orgotek hangers-on in Hammar's home town think this is a giga-yeh thing and so Hammar gets more than his share of free drinks and one-night stands when he wears the jacket to the local bangclubs.

Device ••: A Device at this rating has been moderately modified to enhance its capabilities, or has a reputation that is a bit more widespread than those of one-point items. A two-dot Device may give one bonus die to a commonly-made roll, or two to less frequent rolls. It may also merge the functions of two similar pieces of low-level standard equipment. Another option for a two-point Device is a common collection of up to four one-point Devices, such as a quartet of computers with unique Data Hound-developed search agents.

Examples:

Katryn was just transferred to VFS-2, the Seventh Legion's prestigious Yellowjacket Squadron. Her assigned Locust was previously flown by the infamous Robert Linsey Marsden during his brief tour with the Yellowjackets. Katryn's kept the paint scheme that Marsden had on the fighter and the bioship is easily recognized by any Legionnaire or pilot-groupie as belonging to one hot pilot who's definitely deserving of respect.

Wade traded a few favors with a guy he knows at Orgosoft Farms' Weapons Research Division and managed to get himself hooked up with a copy of the prototype M variant of the Orgotek Iris enhancer gauntlet. The Iris-M has all of the capabilities of the previous version but also accepts standard Orgotek Wasp battery cells for extended endurance in firefights. Wade has to file after-action evaluations so his buddy can write the gift off as "field testing" but he figures it's a small price to pay for his toy.

Rumor has it that Alchemy is working on a fifth-generation biolaser carbine. No one's seen one of these things yet but the speculation on the OpNet is that Alchemy has found a way to buffer a small bioapp's impact on the psion to whom it's formatted. If this is true, such a weapon would only have a Formatted Tolerance rating of one dot and might be as accurate as the competing Orgotek designs.

Storyteller Option

Device Control

Don't be afraid to maintain rigid control over the Traits of the Devices that appear in your game, lest one gear-happy player unbalance the entire story with an uber-gadget. The dice bonuses given here are only suggestions and you should feel free to modify them at your whim. A Device should never be the be-all-end-all of weapons/vehicles/computers/bioapps; every Device should have some sort of limitation or Achilles heel. Bear in mind that prototypes don't have all of their kinks worked out yet and may malfunction at dramatically appropriate times — if you need your characters to stay on that asteroid for the plot to work, feel free to crash their scout ship's navigational computer. Just remember to eventually restore the Device to some semblance of working order at a later date — no player likes to permanently lose those hard-spent Background points.

Device •••: At three dots, an item starts getting into the "impressive" range. Such a Device is noteworthy for its ability to extend its capabilities far beyond those possible for a "normal" item of the same type, and any technologically savvy observer will take note of such an item's performance. A three-point Device generally adds two dice to a common roll or to a wide variety of less frequently-made rolls or is favorably recognized by a large group of people. Alternately, a three-dot Device Background can cover a common collection of up to four two-point Devices — say, a set of encrypted tactical radio modules that can be plugged into any standard computer and provide a strike team with full holographic data feeds (adding two dice to all Command and Military Science rolls made to coordinate team activities).

Examples:

Yousif is an excellent driver and he's put a lot of time and money into his heavily modified Banji Zephyr. Specifically, Yousif has upgraded to military-grade fans that give him +3 handling and a top speed of 310 km/h (the base Zephyr has +2 handling and tops out at 260 km/h). He's also replaced the body panels with plastic-ceramic composites that provide 2 [5] armor — after all, even Yousif can't outrun bullets.

Andrea had a data acquisition assignment a while back, and she managed to keep some of the software after reporting it "destroyed." Her computer agent has integrated the applications in question and is now much more effective at accessing things it shouldn't. Andrea's agent gives her two extra dice to all her hacking rolls and all attempts to trace or identify her hacking are made at +2 difficulty.

Device ••••: A four-dot Device is extremely rare and powerful. It may be the product of a master craftsman or technician, modified to far exceed its original design specifications or even be a bleeding-edge prototype. A four-point Device gives its user two bonus dice on a wide variety of rolls, has a mixed bag of enhanced capabilities, or is favorably recognized by a majority of the population of the Solar System. It's also likely to be a target for thieves and con men, so the owner had best beware. Alternately, a four-point investment in Device can indicate a small group of related three-point Devices, such as a trio of armed police pursuit skimmers.



Examples:

Ron is an accomplished marksman and his weapon reflects this. The rifle was built on the base of an L-K Junior light coilgun but it's now a sniper's weapon rather than an antitank rifle. The barrel and coils were precision-machined at the L-K factory at the same time that the frame was rebuilt from orbital steel to make the gun lighter and more durable. Ron's new coilgun features an additional +2 Accuracy, weighs only 9 kg, and has a range of 1200 meters.

Black Hammer III *was one of the first Peregrines (see the* ***Trinity Technology Manual****, page 126) out of the Banji orbital shipyards. It was originally destined for the Æon Trinity but was purchased under the table by a team of freelance psions who currently use it as both transportation and home during their covert missions. The* BH3 *has developed quite a reputation thanks to its crew's three-month stint with a camera crew from* Strike Team!. *The ship's crew quarters were refitted into six semiprivate suites and the extra space was converted into a state-of-the-art laboratory (two additional dice to appropriate Investigation, Medicine, or Science rolls performed on board). It also features an advanced SI that's capable of interpreting vocal commands from any authorized individual and performing anything short of combat maneuvers with an equivalent 6 Pilot skill total, or of increasing Handling by +2 for a human pilot. The ship features a double handful of other modifications that have little to no game effect but vastly enhance crew comfort and maintenance efficiency.*

Device ●●●●●: The stuff of technicians' urban legends, a five-dot Device is a completely unique item whose reputation overshadows that of its owner. Such an item is rare and powerful beyond comparison and any character who owns one should have a very well-developed story and justification for how such a potent object came into her possession — and how she's managed to hang onto it. A five-point Device generally adds three dice to all rolls made with it, augments its owner's Modes to a substantial degree or has some unquantifiable but *very* significant capabilities.

Example:

Victor Three-Seven Zulu *is the project number of an experimental, highly classified Orgotek bioVARG model that was never put into production. Only one fully operational prototype was grown and it disappeared from an Arizona test facility in late 2119 during a ferocious thunderstorm. The V37Z project is a favorite topic of discussion on OpNet conspiracy forums, because one of the* Leviathan *jump ship project's original file designators was "Victor Three-Seven Echo." The popular belief is that V37Z was designed for tactical battlefield teleportation and its disappearance was staged by Orgotek so that testing could continue in secret. Alternate theories state that V37Z was stolen by the FSM, Norça, Aberrants or the Upeo, or that its onboard biocomp attained sentience and teleported away on its own.*

Followers

Like Allies, these characters should be fully developed. However, like Contacts, Followers aren't likely to be as powerful as the character with whom they usually deal (unless one Follower is taken as a three-point or higher Background). They're aides, bodyguards, chauffeurs, boyfriends, publicity managers, secretaries, interpreters... but never independent characters capable of taking the spotlight away from the main heroes, the player characters. Also like Allies, Followers need a certain amount of care and respect, lest they find someone else who's more deserving of their loyalty.

Remember that Followers don't necessarily have to be human. While true AIs aren't yet in existence in **Trinity** (with the possible exception of those that are far outside the reach of player characters), an advanced SI is almost as good. Also, the occasional Qin diplomat might take it into its head to follow a human or group of humans for unspecified purposes. Likewise, trained animals can be good Followers if the setting is right — especially BEngiBeasts (see the **Trinity Technology Manual**, p. 106).

Influence

Influence is a measure of a character's ability to get ordinary society to do her bidding. Influence can be from an official source, as in an elected official or a police officer, or it can come from unofficial sources such as the traditional "15 minutes of fame." Influence is not always universally-recognized — a UN Special Inspector may find that she's quite well-respected on the upper levels of Luna but trying to throw her weight around out in the Belt may get her into more trouble than it's worth. For that matter, Influence can also be a bad thing when a character is trying to keep a low profile ("Hey, wait a minute! Aren't you Wade Cox? I saw you on *Strike Team!* last month! I'm your

Storyteller Option

Applying Followers

Followers make excellent supporting cast, useful for a Storyteller who doesn't want to bog the player characters down with all the details. If the player characters are a First Legion strike team, their Followers (probably purchased by the highest-ranking character) might be the pilot, copilot, and crew chief/medic on their drop ship. These individuals can step in when their services are needed but don't have to be with the team all the time and are a convenient solution to the problem of "who do we leave with the ship?" They can also act as a *deus ex machina* to save the team — or the plot — when the inevitable happens and something goes horribly awry. If the characters are a team of MMI investigative reporters then their Followers might be their cameramen, trid editors and a van driver. This takes the burden of tech support work off of the player characters and leaves them free to pursue their stories while the Followers tag along behind.

Note that while the Storyteller has to apply the points used to generate a Follower, there's no reason that the player whose character the Follower is attached to can't play that Follower as a supplementary role. However, this is an option designed to take some work off the Storyteller's hands, not to let the player run the Follower like a self-sacrificing fawning toady. The Storyteller always has the final say on what the Follower does in a given situation. See **Troupe-Style Play**, p. 91, for more details.

biggest fan!"). Accordingly, players should specify just where their characters' Influence originates.

Influence is a rather general form of authority. Players who want their characters to have specific forms of leverage, such as law enforcement powers, are directed to the **Merits and Flaws** section of this chapter.

Mentor

A Mentor, like Contacts, is generally best left offstage. The Storyteller should handle the Mentor with particular care since he is, by definition, more powerful than the character whom he's taken on as his protégé. A Mentor should offer advice, training, the occasional bail-out or equipment loan — but he should never appear to magically (or psionically) save the day. If he keeps helping the character then how will the youngster ever learn anything?

Even so, a Mentor doesn't necessarily have to be an older, wiser psion — or even human. A clairsentient might rely on her first *sensei*, a man who's a total flatline where psi potential is concerned but who offers the most penetrating insights in known space. A junior Orgotek executive might have a senior investment specialist who occasionally offers him stock advice. A vitakinetic could have an enigmatic Qin Mentor who occasionally tosses her insights into advanced bioapp theory as if they were candy.

Resources

Resources are an abstract measure of something that's very concretely measured in the real world: money. Accordingly, this Background encounters a bit of a problem when translating between its zero-to-five scale and the pricing options of various items. **Trinity** offers a set of suggested price ranges for Storytellers to use in assigning values to specific items based on their Cost Traits (p. 259). As a general rule of thumb, assume that one yuan has roughly the same buying power as a late 1990s American dollar. However, exactly how much money do characters have to spend on those wonderful toys?

No Resources: A character without Resources has absolutely no reserves. She has at best a rundown, one-room apartment with sporadic electricity or barely maintains his share of a larger shared dwelling. More commonly, she lives on the street or in the wilderness. She has a few salvaged possessions, none of them complex machinery or electronics. This individual has no spare cash whatsoever, unless you count the change in her pockets.

Resources •: This character is living like the average college student. She's got a small apartment, no larger than two bedrooms, and probably does not have reliable personal transportation — vehicles are much more expensive in the 2120s than they were a century ago. Through a low-paying job, trust fund, or scholarship, she pulls in about ¥400 a week. After expenses, she has about ¥100 a week for spending money, with ¥200-¥600 in cash reserves. If she sold off everything but her essentials and pulled up stakes then she'd have about ¥5,000 in cash to her name.

Resources ••: A character at this level of financial stability is relatively comfortable. Her expenses are a bit higher than someone with one dot in Resources but she also has a steadier flow of income and more savings in the bank. She earns about ¥1,000 a week before expenses and has maybe ¥250 to play with or save up after she pays her bills. She's most likely got a large apartment or a small townhouse, a workhorse computer, a handgun if her profession so dictates, and maybe a used vehicle in decent condition. Her savings are in the ¥2,000-6,000 range, and she could sell off everything she owns to get about ¥50,000 if she were absolutely pressed.

Resources •••: Upper middle class, this individual is doing quite well for herself. She owns either a commuter vehicle and a suburban home (a relative rarity in the overpopulated 22nd century) or a worn and weary spaceship of the "small transport" category. Before expenses, she pulls down around ¥5,000 a week; afterwards, she has about ¥1,000 to spend or save. If she put everything she owns up for auction, she'd gather the modest sum of ¥750,000. An individual with this level of Resources can support two employees, dependents, or guests at the Resources 1 level without affecting her permanent stability, but things will be tight in the short term.

Resources ••••: An individual with this degree of wealth definitely qualifies as upper class. She owns a city home and a vacation home, or one larger residence — perhaps a pressurized dome on Mars, a well-off ranch in the outback or a medium-sized interplanetary freighter. She possesses one luxury vehicle or two utilitarian ones and may, depending on her job, have access to exotic weaponry. Her usual weekly income is in the ¥10,000 range, of which she has around ¥3,000 to play with or re-invest after paying off expenses. Were she to sell everything, she'd pull in around ¥1.5 million. She has the financial wherewithal to support a handful of employees at a Resources 2 level without an inconvenient level of drain.

Note that Resources 4 is above the pay range of all but the most experienced order-affiliated psions; most characters with this level of Resources need a good explanations as to the source of their money. Paradoxically, freelance psions often make more than their order-employed counterparts, unlike freelancers in many other fields.

Resources •••••: This character is about as rich as you can get without being the head of a small metacorporation — and for that matter, if she has the appropriate Backgrounds in other places, she may *be* the head of a small metacorp. She has the proverbial "more money than God," and is pulling in something on the order of ¥200,000 a week, with a good ¥60,000 of that remaining after the bills are taken care of. Her total value, were she to check, is in the ¥20 million range, and she can afford to pay a couple of Resources 4 right-hand men and a staff of a dozen Resources 3 underlings and a score of Resources 2 flunkies.

A character with this level of Resources needs a darn good reason for it, and must either devote a substantial portion of her time to managing her funds or have an executive assistant or investment banker as a full-time Follower or Contact. Most individuals with Resources 5 are neutrals — only the most elite psions are in positions to draw this sort of income.

Status

Status measures a character's standing in one particular organization. Note that this isn't necessarily an actual measure of rank; an incompetent buffoon who's somehow managed to attain the rank of colonel may have less Status than a tactical genius lieutenant. A character with Status 3 or higher needs to have a reason for such a position and will probably have a large stack of responsibilities that she needs to juggle lest she lose some of that Status. A character's Status isn't necessarily in the same organization as her Allegiance, although this is the most common situation. Further, she can have Status in more than one organization (such as a Legionnaire on detached duty with the UN).

If a character tries to apply Status from one organization to another ("But I'm a high-ranking Orgotek executive! I should talk to your Legion field commander immediately!"), the effect depends on the state of relations between her "parent" organization and the one she's trying to influence ("Eh, sod off, ye wanker, what d'ye know about covert ops?"). Closely allied groups, such as the CSA and the FSM, generally recognize Status at one level lower. Loosely allied groups, such as Æon and the orders, will usually carry Status over at the cost of two levels. Groups that are coolly neutral toward one another, like ISRA and the Norça, tend to recognize each other's Status as three levels lower. Obviously, organizations that are having poor relations won't recognize Status from the enemy at all, except to determine how rudely the character is treated.

New Backgrounds

The following three Backgrounds are intended to supplement those that already exist. Storytellers should feel free to incorporate or ignore them as per the needs of the individual story and players should not feel compelled to use them.

Clearance

In many ways, Clearance is a direct counterpoint to Cipher. Clearance represents a character's ability to access data that may be encrypted, hidden, or classified under various levels of secrecy. This Background may stem from a legitimate right to know or it may be the result of months of searching for backdoors and stealing passwords. Clearance generally adds to the dice pool of any attempt to unearth rare or hidden data and cancels the Cipher rating of the search target on a one-for-one basis. Thus, a character with Clearance 2 searching for information on an individual with Cipher 3 makes her Engineering (Computer) roll at +1 difficulty, not +3.

Note that Clearance is only good for finding data that's on the OpNet or in an offline archive that the character would otherwise be denied access to — it won't help find information that wasn't written down, no matter how hard the character looks. Neither does Clearance help with attempts to circumvent computer fail-safes. So if the data in question is stored in a vault, applying Clearance is like pinning on a fake ID badge; hacking is like using a set of lock picks (note that Clearance is purely the electronic equivalent of the ID badge and doesn't really help the character get into a physical vault).

- x None: like most individuals, you don't have any special access to information.
- • Minimal: you know a few back doors.
- •• Extensive: you have the passcodes for a couple of classified archives.
- ••• Comprehensive: top secrecy is no bar to your queries.
- •••• Disturbing: you have a degree of access greater than that of many high officials in the agencies whose databases you regularly plunder.
- ••••• Electronically omniscient: if it's out there, you know the codes that'll get you into it.

Identity

The Identity Background is quite difficult to acquire and is usually bestowed upon a trusted operative by an organization that deals in secrecy and deceit. This Background represents a full cover identity, complete with falsified records and identification documents. Note that this Background isn't always used for malicious purposes. Many Norça maintain alternate Identities as a matter of course, just in case they have to hide out for a while. It's something of a fashion among some clairsentient factions to go on walkabout under an assumed name in order to discover higher truths about one's true self.

Higher levels of Identity usually incorporate some amount of independent Influence or Status; these Backgrounds only function when the character is operating within the assumed Identity's expected role. An Orgotek operative masquerading as an FSA government official couldn't use his FSA Status to convince his Orgotek superiors to reassign him.

- x None: you only have your real name and face.
- • Transparent: you have a driver's license and a holovid rental account under an assumed name.
- •• Flimsy: you've got official current records that stand up to a casual glance, along with a passport and a bank account. You have one point of Status in the organization to which your cover identity holds Allegiance.
- ••• Sturdy: your records and documents can handle casual scrutiny, up to the level given during international travels or misdemeanor arrests. Your cover identity has two points split between Influence and Status.
- •••• Solid: it would take a detailed records check to uncover your duplicity. You have three points to allocate between the Influence and Status of your other self.
- ••••• Ironclad: even the Æon Trinity would have difficulty finding out that this Identity doesn't "really" exist. Your records are more complete than those of many actual people. The person you claim to be has a total of four dots of Influence and Status.

Requisition

Many pieces of standard equipment listed in the various **Trinity** books are labeled "restricted." This indicates that they are only available to personnel with the correct training and certification. Requisition is a measure of the character's ability to acquire such items, whether through honest competence and authorization ("Checked out on it? Hell, I wrote the operator's manual!") or less



honest means ("Hey, don't worry, Sergeant; my money's always good."). Characters with high Requisition tend to be military or law enforcement personnel as most restricted items are held tightly by the authorities due to their potential to cause massive damage.

Note that requisitioning something does not automatically grant the character the ability to use it properly, nor does it supply personnel to help operate a requisitioned item. Requisition usually lasts for a specified period of time — these items aren't all that commonplace, and they need to be returned to the armory once the mission's over. Note that some of the following examples refer to items published in the **Trinity Technology Manual**.

x None: you only have access to civilian or standard-issue hardware.

• Minimal: you can get your hands on law enforcement equipment that's little or no direct threat to other people, such as a Wazukana Lt. Bushido or DataWarp Patton computer agent or a shock ring.

•• Useful: you have the ability to acquire items that violate privacy or electronics laws — surveillance equipment, an advanced implant radio or a reality-grade hologram projector. Alternately, you can access mass-produced military-grade small arms up to a coil carbine.

••• Dangerous: you're cleared to use advanced espionage/covert operations bioapps such as a wingpack or a poison glove, vehicles with armor options and non-lethal weapons and experimental (still in field testing or first-generation technology) military small arms like plasma pistols.

•••• Deadly: if the assignment warrants it, you can acquire demolitions equipment, support weapons, or (if you have a properly-certified operator on hand to take control of it) a military vehicle or light VARG. You can also access the Psicomm Net or garner space for a team on an outbound Leviathan mission (though scheduling or redirecting a Leviathan mission is beyond the capabilities of player characters).

••••• "Sorry, maybe next game:" you are authorized to deploy tactical fusion warheads or Code Indigo bioapps... but you'll have to explain yourself if you use them.

Storyteller Option

Buying Restricted Hardware

Sooner or later, purchasing such plot-shaking gear is going to come up. There are several ways to handle it. The first is to make a "best guess" estimate of the Status, Influence, and/or Resources levels that the character needs to get his hands on that BFG9000. The second is to just say "no, you can't get it permanently." The third is to require both the minimum level of Requisition and a standard Resources check as per **Trinity**, p. 260. This last option is probably the most systematic one but the Storyteller always has the final word.

Merits and Flaws

Merits and Flaws are optional characteristics that you may apply to your character with Storyteller approval. These Traits help specialize and personalize characters, giving them abilities (or liabilities) beyond those found in the normal array of dots. *Merits* are special advantages that can benefit a character in a variety of ways, while *Flaws* are disadvantages that make life a little more interesting from time to time.

Merits and Flaws can be added to a character only during character creation and are purchased with bonus points. Each Merit has an indicated cost in bonus points and each Flaw has a value that *adds* to the number of bonus points available during the character creation process. A player can purchase as many Merits for his character as he can afford but no character may have more than seven points' worth of flaws.

Why Only Seven?

Two reasons. First, because allowing players an unlimited number of flaws opens a door to the *munchkins* — the power-players who are more concerned with kicking ass than roleplaying. Second, because the bookkeeping involved with more than seven points of flaws gets to be pretty annoying. A Storyteller is hard-pressed enough to keep track of all the abilities of the various characters in his game — imagine his frustration if he had five players, each of whose character's had 10 or 12 Flaws!

Listings

Merits and Flaws fall into one of four categories: Physical, Mental, Social, and Noetic. Physical Merits and Flaws deal with a character's body, reflexes, and physical senses. Mental Merits and Flaws are those that affect the character's thought processes or emotions. The Social category encompasses all Merits and Flaws that deal with a character's ability to relate to other individuals. Merits and Flaws in the Noetic category are those that relate to psi (often the most mysterious and unpredictable of the four). Storytellers and players are encouraged to expand on this selection, especially if a particular new Merit or Flaw seems appropriate to the series.

Note that when a Merit or Flaw description refers to "you," it's speaking of your character unless otherwise stated.

Physical

Acute Sense [1 point Merit]

One of your normal physical senses (sight, smell, taste, touch, or hearing) is preternaturally sharp. If you take Acute Vision, you may be 20/10; if you purchase Acute Taste, you might be a natural gourmet. You gain one die on most Perception-based rolls that directly relate to that sense, at the Storyteller's discretion, and you may be privy to occasional details that lesser individuals are incapable of detecting. You may purchase this Merit separately for more than one sense. This is a very common Merit among biokinetics, teleporters and especially clairsentients.

Ambidexterous [1 point Merit]

You can use both hands to perform tasks with equal precision, either through extensive training or natural agility. You take no penalty for wielding two weapons (**Trinity**, p. 242) — in fact, you may add one die to your dice pool when making multiple attacks while wielding a weapon in each hand. You do, however, still suffer the normal penalties for multiple actions. You must have a minimum Dexterity 3 and Wits 3 to purchase this Merit.

Catlike Balance [1 point Merit]

You have a high degree of natural agility and may add two dice to any roll relating to maintain-

ing your balance or footing (e.g. walking a tightrope or a slippery ledge). You also may add one die to any roll to resist a deliberate attempt to knock you down (such as a sweep maneuver in melee combat). You must have a minimum Dexterity 3 to purchase this Merit.

Exceptional Potential [3 point Merit]

Something in the Prometheus Effect altered your genetic structure for the better, giving you the potential to reach superior levels of development in some aspect of basic human nature. You may raise one Attribute to a maximum value of six dots with experience (though it may not be higher than five dots during character creation). Exceptional Potential may be purchased for more than one Attribute.

This Merit is only available to active psion characters.

Huge Size [4 point Merit]

You are substantially larger than the average human, standing well over two meters in height and massing more than 150 kilos. You have one extra Bruised health level and gain one point of Stamina for the purpose of soaking Bashing damage. However, there are disadvantages to your condition: clothes and armor in your size are much more difficult to find and you do not fit into the pilot's seats of most vehicles or VARGs. At the Storyteller's discretion, you may gain additional bonuses to rolls for such purposes as bashing down doors, avoiding being knocked down, and getting things from high shelves. You must have a minimum Strength 3 and Stamina 3 to purchase this Merit.

Hard of Hearing [1 point Flaw]

Your auditory capabilities are significantly impaired. All rolls involving hearing are at +2 difficulty. This may be corrected with a hardtech hearing aid (Cost: ••). This Flaw cannot be taken in conjunction with the Merit: Acute Hearing.

Short [1 point Flaw]

You are very short — substantially under 1.5 meters in height. Your running speed is half that of a normally-proportioned human and you may have difficulty using things constructed for individuals of average height. Obviously, you may not purchase both this Flaw and the Merit: Huge Size.

Poor Sight [1 or 3 point Flaw]

Your eyesight is permanently impaired, either from aging or from neurological defects. All rolls you make that involve vision are at +2 difficulty — including most combat maneuvers. If you take this Flaw for one point, your vision can be corrected with the use of glasses or contact lenses (Cost: •). For three points, the problem is completely neurological and cannot be affected mechanically. This Flaw cannot be taken in conjunction with the Merit: Acute Vision.

One Eye [2 point Flaw]

One of your eyes is missing or does not function. You have no depth perception; you make all attack and dodge rolls in ranged combat at +1 difficulty and all Perception rolls at +2 difficulty. This

Flaws and Psi Powers

Many of the Physical Flaws (and a substantial number of the Mental ones) are ailments that, in most of the population, can be corrected through Vitakinesis or Biokinesis. However, Flaws aren't supposed to be easy power-ups that can be corrected by a quick visit to the local Æsculapian clinic during the first game session. If a character receives the bonus points for such a flaw, it's pretty much a permanent condition.

Such an impairment (Hard of Hearing, One Eye) may derive from a few different circumstances. It may be a birth defect that cannot be healed noetically — as part of the individual's genetic template, psi considers such a defect a normal condition. It may instead be due to injuries caused by Aberrant powers or taint, which psi typically has trouble combating. Also, it may simply fall into the 10% or so of such defects that vitakinetics *should* be able to fix, but can't — and the rexs haven't yet figured out the reason why.

Alternately, the condition could be corrected but the character refuses such treatment for her own reasons — perhaps a severe phobia of surgery or a mistrust of "piss-ons." These Flaws *may* be selected for psion characters — the Prometheus Effect does not automatically shift a subject's physical structure to match the human ideal, after all. However, no Storyteller should allow a player to select a Flaw that can be immediately erased for the cost of a few points of Psi (thus the "no vitakinetic healing" ruling).

Some of the Flaws in question (e.g. Addiction) may be bought off at the Storyteller's discretion. A good rule of thumb is 10 experience points per bonus point of the Flaw's value, and the Storyteller should challenge the player to roleplay the character's rehabilitation. The Storyteller's decision as to how a particular problem can be corrected, or if it can at all, is always final.

Flaw can be taken in conjunction with the Merit: Acute Vision, in which case you have one functioning eye that's very sharp — but you still suffer the penalties listed here.

Addiction [2 or 4 point Flaw]

You have become physically addicted to some substance — examples include neocaffeine, nicotine, marijuana-III, and heroin. This Flaw is worth two points if the substance is legal where you normally operate, four if it's banned. For every 24 hours after the first 24 that you go without your fix, you are at +1 difficulty on all rolls. This penalty is cumulative — if you go without for four days, you'll be at +3 difficulty on all rolls.

Lame [2 or 4 point Flaw]

Your legs do not function as well as those of most humans do. This restricts your movement both in and out of combat. For two points, you have a limp that reduces your movement rates by one quarter and applies +2 difficulty to any actions that require rapid lower body movement, such as running down stairs or dodging in combat. If you select the four-point version of this Flaw, your impairment is more severe — you must use crutches, a cane, or a prosthetic to walk farther than 10 meters and may even be missing part or all of a leg. Your movement speed is one quarter its normal value, and you are at +4 difficulty on all affected actions (this may prevent you from dodging at all).

Spacesick [2 point flaw (4 points for clairsentients)]

You don't adapt well to microgravity. In fact, the lack of a definite "up" and "down" makes you violently ill to the point of constant nausea once you've emptied your stomach. In game terms, whenever you're in a microgravity environment, you're at +3 difficulty on *all* actions. Spending a Willpower point and a standard Resistance roll can reduce this penalty for one action; each success on the roll knocks off one point of additional difficulty.

It is possible to obtain over-the-counter drugs to combat this Flaw (cost •, available in all major spaceports and orbital facilities and standard in shipboard medical kits). With such chemicals in your system, you're at a flat +1 difficulty on all rolls (which can't be eliminated by the above roll), your effective Wits score is reduced to one dot and your base Initiative is a flat zero.

Deformity [3 point Flaw]

You have a physical defect that impairs your ability to function in some significant manner, such as a twisted spine or hyper-developed sweat glands. The precise nature of your deformity is left to you and the Storyteller, but this Flaw should apply at least a +2 difficulty on one significant set of rolls. A hunchback would be at +1 difficulty on all Appearance-related rolls except Intimidation and +2 difficulty on most Dexterity rolls related to speed, while an individual with overactive sebaceous glands would be at +2 difficulty on most Social tasks.

Disfigured [3 point Flaw]

Your natural Appearance is zero (remove that free dot in it, and you can't raise it above zero during character creation), most likely due to an injury caused by a mutagenic Aberrant power or thanks to a taint-related disease. You automatically fail most rolls involving looks or first impressions (though you're considered to have Appearance 5 for the purposes of Intimidation rolls). You may not spend experience points to raise your Appearance.

Elgee [3 or 5 point Flaw]

You were born in low gravity (e.g. a poor sector on Luna) or microgravity and spent the first two decades of your life in such conditions. As a result, your skeleton and muscles are poorly adapted to higher gravity fields. The point value of this Flaw depends on the severity of your condition.

For three points, you were born on Luna or a similar planetary body (1/3 to 1/8 Earth normal gravity). All Physical Attribute-based rolls are made at +2 difficulty when you are on a planet with Earth-normal or heavier gravity. Additionally, your bones are more fragile — any blunt trauma inflicted on you increases by one die, whether it's bashing or lethal damage. However, you're used to low gravity; any dice pool penalties are negated if you're in a gravitational field similar to that of your home and halved for microgravity.

If you choose to take this Flaw for the full five points, you were born and raised in full microgravity, away from any strong gravity field. The penalties described above apply if you're in a low-gravity area. If you're in full Earth-normal gravity, the penalty for Physical Attribute-based rolls rises to +4 difficulty and bashing dice pools against you are doubled. However, you may completely ignore all penalties

for performing tasks in microgravity and, in fact, add one die to all Dexterity-based rolls made while weightless (some of the best fighter pilots in human space were born in weightless colonies in the Belt). You are also completely incapable of getting spacesick (which makes this flaw mutually exclusive with Spacesick, above).

Deaf [4 point Flaw]

As the name of the Flaw suggests, you are unable to hear at all, and automatically fail all rolls involving hearing. Your options for conversation are a voice-to-text conversion computer application (Cost: •• for basic models, •••• for sophisticated ones that also display readouts of nonverbal sounds such as doors opening or guns firing; either type requires a HUDset or other visual display) or a dot in Linguistics devoted to lip reading.

Low Potential [4 point Flaw]

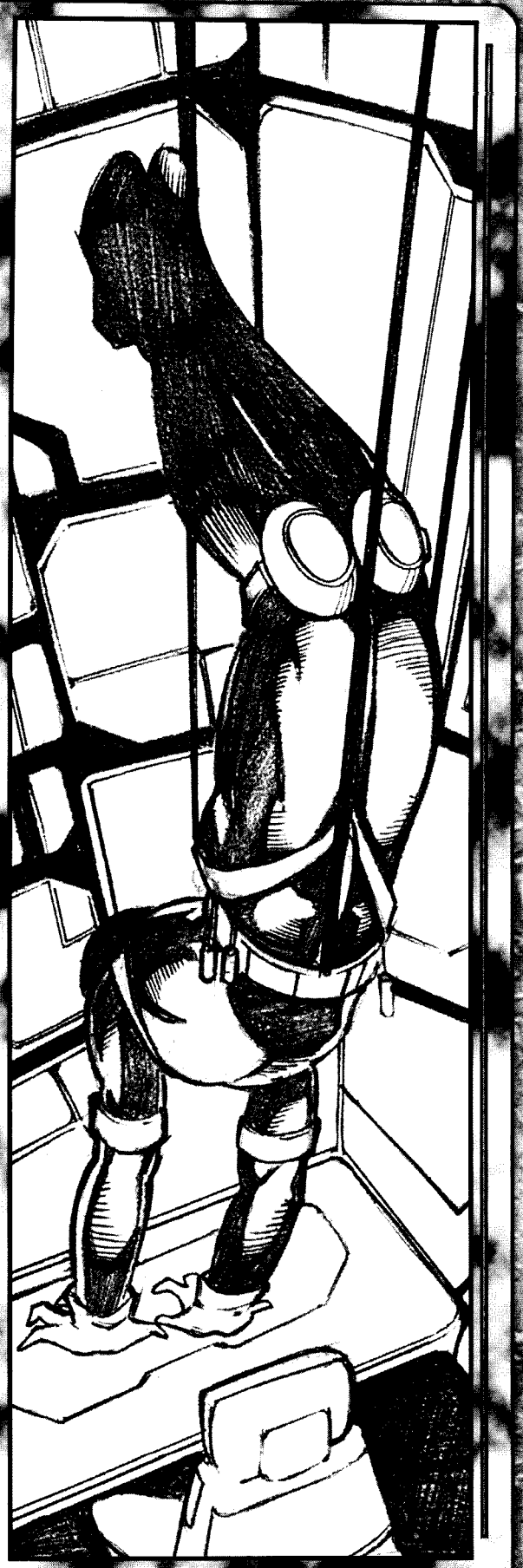
You are significantly less able than the human norm in one area of basic development. You do not receive the usual free dot in a single Attribute of your choice; it still must be raised to at least one dot during character creation, whether through allocation of Attribute dots or with bonus points. Your experience cost for raising this Attribute is Current Level x 9, and you may never raise it above four dots.

Mute [4 point Flaw]

You are unable to speak — either your vocal chords do not function at all or you suffer from some psychological or neurological trauma that has rendered the speech center of your brain inoperative. You may speak to the Storyteller but may not communicate in-game without the aid of a specialized linguistic computer agent and a keyboard, written notes or sign language. Note that this Flaw also renders you unable to use most voice-command technology, such as computers without keyboards, radios and some security devices. If taken in conjunction with the Flaw: Deaf (above), Mute is only worth two points.

Blind [6 point Flaw]

Your vision is completely gone. You were most likely born this way, though you may have been exposed to hard radiation or strong taint instead. You automatically fail all rolls for actions that require effective vision unless you have some means of compensating, such as certain psi powers. Any roll made with such assistance (e.g. using an Attunement roll to aim a gun at a nearby Aberrant) requires you to first roll for the power's ef-



fectiveness. You may then, if the power worked, make your roll for your normal action at +5 difficulty. Every success over the sensory power's difficulty reduces this penalty by one.

Example: *Chen, a blind telepath, knows that a biokinetic named Ron is in the room with him. Chen's dealt with Ron before. He attempts to pinpoint Ron's exact location using Mindscan. As Ron is a casual acquaintance, Chen's Psi roll is at +1 difficulty. He scores four successes, giving him two over the power's difficulty. Those two extra successes are subtracted from his blind attack penalty for a net +3 difficulty. Chen waves his L-K Personal Protector in Ron's general direction and pulls the trigger, hoping for the best....*

Paraplegic [6 point Flaw]

You are paralyzed from the waist down and must use a wheelchair (Cost: • for manual, which gives movement equal to the character's Strength in meters; ••• for a motorized version that can move eight meters a turn) or a custom bioapp walker (two-point Device, Tolerance2, must be formatted to function, gives half normal movement rate) to move any distance. You are effectively a non-dodging target and all attacks against you gain two dice. Any vehicle must be altered for hand control only for you to drive or pilot it, including a VARG.

Mental

Common Sense [1 point Merit]

You may not be the best mathematician in class but you have a high degree of ordinary good sense. You may ask the Storyteller for advice in any situation that could reasonably be solved through uneducated reasoning ability. This is a particularly good Merit for players who are not familiar with the Trinity Universe or roleplaying in general.

Concentration [1 point Merit]

During times of stress, you are able to focus to an uncanny degree, shutting out all distractions as you concentrate on the task at hand. In game terms, you may ignore all penalties for distracting conditions (though not wound penalties) and gain one die to all Meditation rolls made for the purpose of focusing or recalling information.

Daredevil [3 point Merit]

You perform better under stress, and you're at your absolute best when your life is on the line. Whenever you attempt a particularly difficult and dangerous action, you may add three dice to your roll — and any botch result that only involves a single rolled "1" is considered a failure, not a botch. "Difficult and dangerous" includes actions made at a minimum of +2 difficulty and that have the potential to inflict immediate and grievous harm if failed.

Note that an individual who relies too heavily upon his luck (e.g. abuses this Merit to the point of annoying fellow players or the Storyteller) may find it deserting him at inopportune moments.

Internal Compass [1 point Merit]

It's almost impossible to make you lose your sense of location and direction. You can tell which way is north, even indoors, with an Awareness or Navigation roll at base difficulty; you can also retrace a path you've traveled only once with a +1 difficulty Awareness or a standard Navigation roll. Additionally, you never suffer any ill effects or disorientation from low- or zero-gravity. This Merit is particularly useful for clairsentients and teleporters.

Patient [1 point Merit]

You don't lose your temper easily and you have an unusual degree of persistence. You gain one die to all rolls that involve remaining calm (or at least appearing to do so) and may add one die to every roll after the first on extended actions.

Time Sense [1 point Merit]

Even in total darkness or while you're asleep, your internal clock runs flawlessly. You can estimate the time to within a minute or two and can give near-perfect countdowns for short time periods. You also can gauge an object's speed to within a few kilometers per hour if you have a visual reference point.

Code of Honor [2 point Merit]

You have a particularly strong moral code, which you must specify during character creation ("No hits on women, no hits on kids."). Any attempt to force or persuade you to take an action that breaks this code is made against a +3 difficulty. This does not include applications of Vitakinesis, Telepathy, or other powers that directly affect your brain chemistry or thought processes.

Crack Driver/Pilot [2 point Merit (1 point Merit for clairsentient characters)]

You seem to have been born with a joystick and throttle in your hand. You can force your vehicles through maneuvers that lesser pilots would swear are impossible. You gain two dice for all maneuvers that are +2 or higher difficulty and any attempts to fire on your vehicle are at +1 difficulty if you're aware of the enemy and taking any sort

of evasive action. You must purchase this Merit separately for each of the three vehicle control skills (Drive, Pilot, and VARG Pilot).

Lightning Calculator [2 point Merit]

Advanced calculus was a snap for you. You can perform complex mathematics in your head, including such intricate calculations as ballistic arcs for artillery, the odds on a given BEngiHorse, or the burn time and force necessary to intercept a runaway frigate. At the Storyteller's discretion, you gain two dice on any appropriate Academics, Engineering, or Navigation roll. You also gain three dice when gambling or playing games of chance (usually a cross-matched [Wits + Savvy] roll).

Combat Veteran [3 point Merit (2 point Merit for Legion characters)]

The 22nd century is a violent time. You've seen an enormous amount of action and it left its mark on you (perhaps with one or more Physical Flaws, Combat Stress, Nightmares or Flashbacks in addition to this Merit). Your fighting reflexes have been honed to a razor's edge and you're used to making life-or-death decisions in a split second. You may roll two dice for Initiative and apply the result you prefer (most likely the higher of the two). You must have a military or similar character history and at least two combat-related Abilities (Brawl, Firearm, Gunnery, etc.) at three dots or higher in order to purchase this Merit.

This Merit should by no means be common to any character who's been in a bar fight. Modern combat, even by 20th century standards, is an insane and dehumanizing situation and only one in several thousand individuals actually thrives in such an environment enough to develop the reflexes this Merit reflects.

Eidetic Memory [3 point Merit]

You have a holographic memory. While not *truly* perfect, this does double your dice pools for all attempts to recall information.

High Pain Tolerance [3 point Merit (2 point Merit for biokinetic characters)]

You get hurt just as easily as everyone else, but you don't *feel* it as severely. Either through naturally strong nerves or a gradual buildup, you may ignore certain wound effects — specifically, all wound penalties are reduced by one (so you function as if unhurt when you're Injured and are down only three dice when you're Crippled). Upon reaching Incapacitated, however, you collapse just like everyone else.

Natural Linguist [3 point Merit]

You're naturally talented with languages — you can put them together and take them apart like building blocks. This Merit doesn't allow you to actually learn *more* languages per dot of Linguistics, but it does help you learn or interpret new ones. Specifically, you pay Current Level x 3 experience points to raise your Linguistics score (if using the optional Linguistics rules presented in this chapter, you only pay [7 minus current Linguistics score] for each new language). You also gain three dice on any roll to decipher a new language and one die on all codebreaking attempts.

Natural Technician [3 point Merit (2 point Merit for electrokinetic characters)]

Machines like you, sometimes better than people do, and the sentiment is mutual. Difficulty modifiers for constructing or repairing one specific type of device are reduced by two. The specific device type must fall under one of the basic Engineering specialties (**Trinity**, p. 184). This Merit may be bought separately for more than one field of technology. Note that Natural Technician does not apply to *operating* the devices in question, only working on them. You can't reduce Firearm difficulties just because you're a natural gunsmith.

True Love [4 point Merit]

You have found the semi-mythical true love (or at least something you believe to be that particular emotion). This has reaffirmed your sense of purpose and gives you a reason for existing above and beyond mundane concerns. In game terms, any attempt to force you to betray or harm the object of your affection is at a minimum +4 difficulty and you gain two dice to any rolls where directly helping or protecting your love is involved. However, such a strong bond is not without responsibility — your love may need protection from time to time and the relationship might not be truly equal. Be warned: this is a very taxing Merit to roleplay.

Centered [5 point Merit]

Your sense of self is extremely strong and any attempt to sway you, whether conversational or psionic, meets with a high degree of resistance. You may spend a Willpower point to completely nullify any attempt to control your mind, be it hypnosis or Telepathy. You may declare your intention to spend this point after the aggressor makes her roll or you can "let her in" if you so choose. You must have a minimum Willpower 8 to purchase this Merit.

Impatient [1 point Flaw]

Instant gratification isn't always fast enough for you, and you certainly don't have the discipline to wait for results on a long-term project. You are at +1 difficulty on every roll after the first on an extended action and all attempts to make you lose your cool gain two dice. Obviously, you may not take this Flaw along with the Merit: Patient (above).

Nightmares [1 point Flaw]

You regularly have screaming, sweat-drenched nightmares at least two nights a week (the kind that most people only have once or twice a year). Roll one die every time you wake up; on a result of 1-3, you're at +1 difficulty on all of your actions for a number of hours equal to the die result. At the Storyteller's discretion, you may also mistake particularly vivid nightmares for reality or vice versa. This Flaw is particularly common among low-Willpower clairsentients, telepaths and vitakinetics specializing in Mentatis. This can easily fall by the wayside in comparison with other events you're involved with; the Storyteller is encouraged to maintain the nightmares' influences at appropriately dramatic points in the story.

Shy [1 point Flaw]

Social situations are the utmost form of torture for you, particularly when you're the star attraction. Whenever you're the center of attention, you're at +3 difficulty on all Social actions and +1 difficulty on everything else (it's hard to program a decryption application on the fly when everyone's hero-worshipping you!). You may spend a Willpower point to ignore the effect of this Flaw for one scene.

Soft-Hearted [1 point Flaw]

Suffering of any kind is anathema to you. You feel bad when you see a hurt puppy and killing another human is an unspeakable act under your moral code. You must make a Willpower roll at +1 difficulty to keep from interfering in any situation where someone is causing another individual to suffer. You must expend a Willpower point to initiate combat and you may only use non-lethal weapons. Many Æsculapians have this Flaw.

Speech Impediment [1 point Flaw]

You have a lisp, a stutter or a stammer that makes you difficult to understand when you get excited and forget to speak plainly. Whenever you're under stress, listeners must make a cross-matched [Perception + Linguistics] roll to understand what you're saying. You may spend a Willpower point to speak clearly for a scene.

Curiosity [2 point Flaw]

Secrets were meant to be shared! While you may have an intellectual understanding of privacy and security regulations, your morals are a little... flexible. You must make a Willpower roll to avoid nosing around whenever you're presented with an obvious chance to learn a secret. The difficulty depends on how tantalizing the secret in question is and how significant it appears. Avoiding the impulse to peek at Christmas presents in your boyfriend's closet is standard difficulty, while not reading those classified technical manuals on his desk would be +1 difficulty. If they were plainly marked "Top Secret — Burn *Before* Reading," the difficulty might rise to +2, or even +3 if they pertained directly to an investigation on which you were currently working.

Overwhelmed [2 point Flaw]

You suffer from overstimulation, a common problem in the overcrowded 22nd century. Unless you are in an area of complete calm and relative silence, you're distracted as you try to filter more sensory input than you can comfortably handle. All tasks attempted under chaotic conditions are at +1 to +3 difficulty, depending on the level of turmoil around you — combat is usually good for a +2 difficulty. You may temporarily focus and ignore this penalty for a number of turns equal to your Wits score by spending a Willpower point. You may not take this Flaw in conjunction with the Merit: Concentration.

Phobia [2 point Flaw]

Fear is a self-preservation mechanism but you go overboard in one particular area. Specify the nature of your phobia (heights, enclosed or wide-open spaces, dogs, spiders, aliens, biokinetics) when you purchase this Flaw. Whenever you are confronted with the object of your phobia, you must make a Willpower roll at +1 difficulty to avoid retreating from it. If you botch this roll, you go completely catatonic for the rest of the scene and are reduced to zero current Willpower. You may purchase more than one phobia.

Territorial [2 point Flaw]

You've got an area of home turf that you don't like leaving — or having uninvited guests in. Whenever you're away from home, you're at +1 difficulty on most Mental and Social rolls due to the distrac-

tion of unfamiliar surroundings. You must also make a standard Willpower roll to keep from reflexively attacking anyone who willfully trespasses on your territory. "Territory" in this case may be from a single vehicle or dome habitat up to any area of ground up to 10 square kilometers, a single high-rise building, or any rough equivalent.

Vengeful [2 point Flaw]

You don't let go easily. This Flaw can have two permutations but if you purchase both you only get a total of three points for them. The first is general vindictiveness: you never forget a slight and must make a Willpower roll at +1 difficulty to keep from repaying any injury in equal measure at the first opportunity. The second variation on this flaw is a grudge against a specific group or a powerful individual that can only be made even with the death, destruction or disgrace of the subject. In this case, you must make a standard Willpower roll to avoid pursuing any opportunity to strike back at your target.

Combat Ineffective [2 point Flaw (4 point Flaw for Legion characters)]

Although you may have the basic training that lets you do well on a firing range or in the dojo, you just don't have the guts to deal with an actual firefight. You have the bad habit of freezing on the battlefield, or at least taking substantially longer to react to threats due to indecision or confusion. You roll two dice for Initiative and apply the *lower* of the two rolls. Legionnaires with this Flaw tend to be shunted into Third Legion administrative positions where they can't do too much damage; a character with this Flaw may not have Legion Status above one dot.

Amnesia [3 or 5 point Flaw]

Your mind is a partial or total blank. You don't remember your past, your name, or, in extreme cases, what you can do. For three points, you don't know your history, and rest assured that the Storyteller will come up with something soon enough. If you take this Flaw for five points, you not only don't know who you are, but you're completely in the dark as to what you can do. The Storyteller keeps your character sheet; you get a blank one with only your Attributes and Willpower filled in. Whenever you succeed in a task that uses a given Ability or uncover a Background that you didn't know you had, the Storyteller should tell you which dots or specialties to add to your sheet. You may eventually find out your full story but the road back to memory recovery should be a long and dangerous one.

The five-point option for Amnesia requires a lot of extra paperwork on the part of the Storyteller. Don't take this unless you and your Storyteller are in complete agreement as to the satisfactory nature of this additional complicating factor — and you're comfortable trusting your Storyteller to keep accurate track of all your Traits.

Combat Stress [3 point Flaw]

You've spent a good portion of the last five or more years in combat situations and it's beginning to wear on you. You don't handle social interactions with civilians well (+1 difficulty for Social rolls that deal with non-military personnel, raised to +2 or even +3 if the people are completely clueless). Furthermore, you tend to react violently to any perceived threat, whether or not it's real. Any time you're surprised by an event that may be seen as threatening (e.g. fireworks, a kid with a toy L-K Avenger jumping out of a dark alley), there's a good chance that you'll respond with violence before your thought processes catch up with your threat reactions. You must succeed in an Awareness roll at +1 difficulty to accurately assess the situation as safe. Failure indicates that your next action is an attack with whatever weapon is at hand, while a botch means that you start shooting at anything that's not a known friendly until you succeed in a Willpower roll at +2 difficulty.

This Flaw may not be taken in conjunction with the Flaw: Combat Ineffective, though it is very commonly seen in characters with the Merit: Combat Veteran.

Flashbacks [3 point Flaw]

There's some great psychological trauma in your past, most likely due to combat or injury but possibly from abuse, humiliation, or another source. Whatever the case, whenever you're in a similar situation, you must make a Willpower roll at +1 difficulty to avoid being overwhelmed by memories of the experience. If you fail, you may mistake events, people and objects around you for their rough equivalents from the past. A botch indicates that you fall into a catatonic state — lying on the ground in a fetal ball as you re-live your experiences. This Flaw is common to inept telepaths and Fourth Legion personnel.

Low Pain Threshold [3 point Flaw]

"I'm allergic to pain — I break out in wounds." You just don't deal well with physical trauma. All wound penalties are one higher than they would be for a normal individual. You're down one die as soon

as you're Bruised, and a Crippled result knocks you down five dice on all your rolls. You may not spend Willpower to overcome your wound penalties.

Uneducated [5 point Flaw]

Although the standard of education in the 22nd century is fairly high, you've missed out on it in a big way. Your measure of literacy and general knowledge is around a fifth-grade level. During character creation, you must spend two Ability points or three bonus points to gain one dot in any Intelligence-based Ability, and may not raise any of these Abilities higher than two dots. Once the game starts, you must pay six experience points for a new Intelligence-based Ability and [current level x 5] to raise one. Linguistics is an exception to this Flaw; you pay normal prices for it.

Social

Animal Magnetism [1 point Merit]

There's just something about you that makes members of the opposite sex (and a few individuals of your own gender) lust for you on a primitive, feral level. You gain two dice on any attempt to seduce or otherwise influence another person through sexuality. However, you may be seen as competition by jealous individuals — be careful whose girlfriend you steal. This may be taken in conjunction with the Flaw: Horny (below).

Enchanting Voice [1 point Merit]

Whether through resonant, imposing tones or via a dulcet croon that goes straight to the heart, your voice has a certain natural mesmerizing effect on listeners. You may add two dice to any attempt to charm, seduce, or impress that directly involves your speaking or singing voice. You must have Charisma 3 or Manipulation 3 or higher to purchase this Merit.

Law Enforcement Powers [1 to 7 point Merit]

You work for one of the myriad agencies charged with enforcing laws across human-controlled space. You have certain responsibilities with this authority but also certain rights and powers. These include relatively unrestricted access to crime scenes and sensitive information, the right to arrest or detain suspects and cooperation from members of other agencies. This Merit's point value is determined by two different categories: the character's standing within the agency in question and the agency's size and scope.

The default agency standing (at no point cost) is an associate or consultant — you can't make arrests but you can investigate in the name of your employer (though you don't actually have the authority to flash a badge and force your way into someone's home). For one point, you're a full-fledged member of the agency (though at a very low rank unless you also purchase the appropriate Status Background). For three points, you're not only a full member but you have an unofficial "license to kill" — you can employ deadly force within that agency's jurisdiction without expecting serious repercussions, as long as you can provide vaguely nebulous proof that you were justified in shooting first. This isn't an actual ID card that says "allowed to use deadly force;" it's more of an unspoken acknowledgement that you're competent and responsible enough to be trusted to know when to shoot first — and when not to shoot.

Second, the agency's size and region of authority is a factor. One point indicates that the agency is a minor local one, such as a municipal police department. For two points, the organization has fairly wide-reaching enforcement rights, such as a state police force. Three points indicate that you work with a national law enforcement or espionage agency and four points make you a member or affiliate of an international organization (most likely the UN's International Capital Crimes Council). So if you were authorized to use deadly force as a member of a state police force, this Merit would cost five bonus points.

Note, however, that members of military forces (including the Legions) cannot purchase this Merit as UN law prohibits such personnel from conducting independent law enforcement operations. It is very rare among members of other orders, and is actually most common among neutrals. Æon Trinity employees likewise have no law enforcement powers of their own — the Trinity is an advisory agency, not a police force. However, many Trinity members are associates of law enforcement forces, and are called in as consultants in such areas as forensic anthropology or abnormal psychology.

Natural Leader [1 point Merit]

People flock to your banner — or just naturally go along with whatever you suggest. You gain one die on most Social rolls involving leadership, and two dice if you're commanding from the front or leading by example in a situation that obviously puts you in some form of jeopardy.

Debt [1 to 3 point Merit]

Somebody owes you big-time and you're sitting on his marker until you decide to call it in (at which time this Merit disappears — you can't milk his sense of gratitude indefinitely). For one point, he owes you a socially or emotionally significant favor (maybe you provided him legal advice with regards to his divorce). For two points, he owes you a favor that might have serious financial implications (maybe you alerted him to the fact that his ex-wife was embezzling several million yuan from him). For three points, he owes you his life (perhaps you saved him from the hit man his ex-wife hired with those several million yuan). The individual in question is substantially more powerful than you are — generally at least three dots of Influence or Status above you in terms of standing and ability to pull strings.

Big Mouth [1 point Flaw (2 point Flaw for clairsentients and telepaths)]

You've got an opinion on everything and you're not at all hesitant about letting people hear it. You tend to blurt out painful truths at the worst times. At least once per high-tension social scene, you must come out with your thoughts. You can avoid this by biting your tongue — literally. This inflicts one health level of Bashing damage and costs a Willpower point. Big Mouth is particularly dangerous for clairsentients and telepaths, as they tend to blurt out other people's secrets as much as their own observations ("Yeah Chris, why don't you tell her about that girl on Luna?").

Dark Secret [1, 3, or 5 point Flaw]

Oops. You screwed up big-time at some point in the past and you've managed to keep the evidence hidden so far. However, you know you didn't do a complete job of hiding the bodies (perhaps literally!), and there's always a chance that someone might find out and use that knowledge for blackmail or just to bring you down. For one point, your dark secret would cost you a substantial about of prestige and money if it were revealed. If you take this Flaw for three points, your dark secret is a felony and its revelation would result in at least a decade in prison. For five points, your dark secret is an act so heinous that you would be executed on sight by most law enforcement authorities and military forces were it ever unearthed.

Storytellers should have no qualms about imprisoning or killing characters with this Flaw if the player purchases it at 3 or 5 points respectively. The player had his chance to enjoy his extra bonus points and the piper needs to be paid. This is one of the few situations in which a Storyteller should deliberately contrive a character's demise — the player knew exactly what he was getting into when he chose Dark Secret.

Horny [1 point Flaw]

Crass but accurate, this Flaw's name refers to your penchant for hounding after the opposite (or same, depending on your orientation) gender. You enjoy sex, or at least what you've heard about it, and it's never far from your thoughts. You are at +1 difficulty to resist hitting on someone you find attractive, and attempts to seduce you gain two dice. You may spend a Willpower point to ignore the effect of this Flaw for one scene. This may be taken in conjunction with the Merit: Animal Magnetism (above).

Mistaken Identity [1 or 2 point Flaw]

"Hey, aren't you...?" You bear an uncanny resemblance to someone else who's known across the solar system. For one point, they're a celebrity — but the extra attention you get is distinctly uncomfortable and aggravating. Alternately (for a high-Influence character), you're famous but look so different from your publicity holos that no one recognizes you in person. If this is a two-point Flaw, you look like someone who's wanted for capital crimes and may be hassled by law enforcement agents until you manage to present valid identification.

Enemy [1 to 7 point Flaw]

Sometime in your past, you yanked someone's chain enough to give her a permanent dislike for you. This Flaw gives bonus points for two categories: the degree of the individual's hatred for you and her potential capacity to cause you grief.

For no bonus points in the "degree of hatred" category, it's an unfriendly rivalry. One point indicates a distinct desire to see you humiliated and ruined, while two indicates a distinct desire to see you dead in an unpleasant fashion.

As for the individual's relative "power level," for one point, she's less powerful than you in terms of experience or ability to make someone's life uncomfortable. Two points make her your rough equal. For three points, she's substantially more powerful than you and you'd be hard-pressed to stay afloat if she engaged you in a direct confrontation. Four points indicates an individual who would stand a good chance of ruining you in whatever manner she chose were she actually to try



(why hasn't she yet?). For five points, you've managed to piss off a proxy or a Prime Threat Aberrant — pray her calendar doesn't get a sudden opening or you'll never know what hit you.

Generally, a character with more than four total bonus points invested in this Flaw is a candidate for a sudden death or disappearance — players should be warned and Storytellers should take note.

Creepy [2 point Flaw]

It may be pheromones, body language, bad teeth, or an unpleasant noetic bleed effect, but you exude bad vibes and most people are rather uncomfortable around you. You're at +2 difficulty on most Social rolls just because other individuals are less inclined to listen to what you have to say. However, you *gain* two dice on all Intimidation rolls — you're significantly more disturbing than an ordinary person.

Provisional Member [3 point Flaw]

You've recently joined your current organization (see the Allegiance section of this chapter) and are not yet fully trusted by your new employer. Your responsibilities are limited to those that can't damage your superiors' reputations and your security clearances are quite limited. All Social rolls involving other members of this group are at +2 difficulty and you may not have more than one dot of Status in the organization. Many Æon Trinity associates are considered Provisional Members. You can take this Flaw in conjunction with Law Enforcement Powers; this indicates that you may have the badge, but you're going to be *very* closely supervised while doing field work.

Order Outcast [4 point Flaw]

Your parent psi order has openly blacklisted you. You're a freelance psion, a member of another order or the Trinity, but you may not declare your Aptitude's corresponding order as your Allegiance. You may have no Backgrounds that stem from that order and no member of it would willingly have anything to do with you. Any instruction in your Modes must come from other renegades or publicly-accessible data, which means you're not likely to learn the alternate powers (see the various combination sourcebooks for specifics). Members of your parent order will most likely shun you on sight, and you may be rewarded with a few bruises or broken bones if you show up in the wrong place. This Flaw may not be taken by

former members of Norça, as the shifters tend to dispose of renegades rather swiftly and permanently (being a former Norça member who's now on the outs with the order is considered a five-point Dark Secret).

Ward [4 point Flaw]

You have a family member who relies on you and you alone for financial and other modes of support. This may be a child, an invalid spouse, or an ailing parent. Whoever your Ward is, he is totally dependent upon you and must be cared for and occasionally protected. Unlike a Follower, a Ward doesn't really contribute anything besides roleplaying complications and the occasional bit of moral support.

Fugitive [5 point Flaw]

You are wanted by the UN, the psi orders and/or the Æon Trinity for one or more capital crimes or crimes against humanity (whether or not these charges are true is a matter for discussion with the Storyteller). Your face is plastered on "wanted" posters across known space and you may not hold Status in any organization that operates within the law. Any given law enforcement official will recognize you with an Investigation roll at +2 difficulty (standard difficulty if he's with the agency that first opened the case against you). To make matters worse, you're fairly certain that there are one or more investigators hot on your trail. If you take this Flaw in conjunction with Order Outcast, the two are worth a combined total of 7 points. Characters with both Fugitive and Order Outcast are generally those individuals classified as rogue psions.

Noetic

Several of the Noetic Merits and Flaws are intended for active psions. These can be purchased for latent characters at the Storyteller's discretion, though they won't have any game effect until the latent character undergoes the Prometheus Effect. The Storyteller also has the option of making these Merits and Flaws worth one less point if the Prometheus Effect is more than a few sessions away — after all, they're not going to be assisting or hampering the character for quite some time. When in doubt, design your character with the full point values for the Merits and the lower values for the Flaws and ask your Storyteller about picking up the extra points. You won't be out anything if he says "no," and you might gain something if you catch him in a good mood. The specific Merits and Flaws that fall in this category are indicated by an asterisk (*) after their point values.

Also, neutrals may purchase some of the following as well. Merits and Flaws restricted to psions (and, by default, latents) are noted as such in their descriptions.

Enhanced Attunement [2, 4, or 6 point Merit]

Your psionic sensitivity is substantially greater than the norm for someone with your Psi rating. For every two points spent on this Merit, your Psi is considered one point higher for purposes of Attunement rolls and range. You don't gain any extra Psi points, just extra dice on Attunement. Latents may purchase this Merit as they can still roll Attunement to detect things, albeit at a higher difficulty than an active psion could (see "Attunement," p. 142).

Lucky [3 point Merit]

ISRA calls you a Temporary Focal Entity. The Legions call you a point man. Whatever you are, there's a certain subquantum current around you that occasionally turns probability to your advantage. You may repeat one failed roll per game session. With the Storyteller's permission, you may expend three Psi points (one Psi point if a neutral) to repeat a second failed roll during that same session.

Detached [4 point Merit] *

You have the rare ability to view your psionic abilities as separate from your physical existence and you can maintain this distance even under adverse conditions. Any wound penalties don't affect your Psi rolls until you reach Incapacitated. If you are Incapacitated then you may spend a Willpower point to attempt to use a psi power at half your normal dice pool (rounded down). This action may only be performed once per scene, after which you fall unconscious, so choose your last ditch efforts carefully.

This Merit is only available to psion characters.

Mode Natural [5 or 7 point Merit] *

You are particularly strong in one of your Aptitude's Modes, though you haven't necessarily trained heavily in that Mode yet. Designate one of your Aptitude Modes when you purchase this Merit. If you take the five point version of this Merit, you may add one die to all Psi rolls for that Mode. If you take the seven point variation, in addition to the benefits of both, your Psi costs for use of that Mode

are reduced by one (to a minimum of zero). You may not purchase this Merit more than once.

This Merit is only available to psion characters.

Strong Template [6 point Merit]

For some reason, your subquantum pattern is very strongly bonded. You are very difficult to alter with Psi or Taint powers — any such effect that has a *direct, physical* effect on you or an item with your psi print rolls at +2 difficulty. Note that this does not include powers that affect your environment, such as Plasma Manipulation, nor does it include those that affect your mind or emotions, such as Mind Bomb. Additionally, you stand out like a beacon to clairsentients and other sensitives — any Attunement roll or other means of subquantum perception gains an automatic success for the purposes of detecting your presence.

Psi Sink [7 point Merit]

You are as close to noetically neutral as is possible without having a Psi rating of zero and being considered an Aberrant. Psions (the subquantum energy packets, not the human beings) seem to flow into you at an accelerated rate, an effect that is vaguely disconcerting for psionically sensitive individuals in your immediate vicinity. Every time a psi power is used on you (even a beneficial one), roll Willpower. Each success cancels one success on the power in question and each success beyond the amount needed to reduce the Psi roll to zero drains the psion of one temporary Psi point. Additionally, any psi power used in an attempt to detect you, including Attunement, is rolled at a +2 difficulty.

This Merit is only available to neutral characters with Psi 1.

Strong Latent [7 point Merit]

You are a latent psion who has not yet undergone the Prometheus Effect, but you already have a natural bias toward one specific Aptitude. Once per session, you may roll Psi; if you succeed, you gain your preferred Aptitude's basic technique for the remainder of the scene. If you are ever activated to that Aptitude, you gain one additional dot to spend when selecting your initial Modes (for a total of four points) and a permanent point of Willpower. If you are activated to a different Aptitude, you gain one Auxiliary Mode in your previously-biased Aptitude and you may purchase the other one-dot powers of your previously-biased Aptitude as auxiliary Modes at half the normal experience cost.

This Merit may be purchased only for latent characters. Only one of the six core Aptitudes — Biokinesis, Clairsentience, Electrokinesis, Psychokinesis, Telepathy, Vitakinesis — may be selected. Teleportation and Quantakinesis require higher latency than other Aptitudes do.

Increased Tolerance [3 point Merit]

Although you lack the noetic strength to become a psion, your biological template is strong enough to maintain a surprisingly high degree of bioware — and even have devices formatted to you!

While your actual Psi score remains at one and you are still incapable learning psionics, your biotech Tolerance rating equals your Stamina + 1. You still cannot use any biotech that increases psionic powers (since you have none) and you also cannot use any biotech that requires the expenditure of Psi points. However, you can now use various unformatted or formatted weapons, vehicles, or even bioVARGs up to your Tolerance rating.

This Merit is only available to neutral characters.

Noetic Sensitive [2 point Merit or 2 point Flaw] *

You're more in tune with the subquantum universe than most other psions are, and can get more detail from your psi-related senses. This can be a blessing or a curse, depending on which way you go. If you purchase this as a Merit then you have the equivalent of Acute Sense for your Attunement rolls: you can intuitively sense subtle but important details that other psions would miss, at the discretion of the Storyteller.

If you opt for Noetic Sensitive as a Flaw, however, you're unable to effectively manage your subquantum perceptions and any Attunement roll you make is an unpleasant experience that leaves you nauseated or dizzy. Whenever you voluntarily extend your perceptions with an Attunement roll, you're at +2 difficulty on all actions for the next five minutes as you shake off the flood of extrasensory information. You can take Noetic Sensitive as a Merit *and* a Flaw if you're feeling sufficiently masochistic.

This Merit is only available to psion characters.

Mode Dysfunction [1, 4, or 6 point Flaw] *

Something went wrong when you experienced the Prometheus Effect or maybe you have some sort of psychological block that keeps you from using one of your Modes effectively. Whatever the

case, you're now impaired when using one of your Aptitude's Modes. The least damaging version of this Flaw, worth one point, inflicts +1 difficulty on all Psi rolls involving the selected Mode. If you take the four-point version, you not only have to roll against +1 difficulty for that Mode, but must spend an additional Psi point for all uses of powers from that Mode. For six points, you're permanently blocked from ever using that Mode and may only purchase powers from your other two Aptitude Modes or auxiliary Modes. Characters with this Flaw are often looked upon with a mixture of pity and contempt by other psions.

This Merit is only available to psion characters.

Poor Tolerance [1 to 5 point Flaw] *

For some inexplicable reason (perhaps undiagnosed allergies?), your system doesn't respond well to bioapps. For every point you receive from this Flaw (maximum of five), your Psi is considered one point lower for the purpose of determining when you've reached Tolerance Overload.

Poor Attunement [2, 4, or 6 point Flaw] *

You don't quite have the range or perceptions that most other psions do. For every two points you receive from this Flaw, your Psi is considered one dot lower for the purposes of Attunement rolls and range. You cannot have below an effective Attunement 2 with this Flaw — so a psion with Psi 4 could take the two or the four point versions of this Flaw, but not the six point version. Obviously, this Flaw is incompatible with the Merit: Enhanced Attunement.

This Flaw is only available to psion characters.

Imprecise [2 point Flaw] *

You've got the basics down, but you don't quite have the fine control you need for some effects. Whenever you're trying for a specific level of success with a Psi roll, such as *exactly* three net successes on that important Telepathy attempt, your roll is at +1 difficulty. This Flaw does not come into effect in situations where you're going for brute force, such as throwing a telekinetic punch with all your "strength."

This Merit is only available to psion characters.

Damaged Template [4 point Flaw]

Whether through a Vitakinesis or Biokinesis botch, exposure to Aberrant taint or just plain bad luck, the subquantum pattern that makes up your



physical body has been permanently weakened. Perhaps a skilled quantakinetic could correct the problem... if there were any left. As a result, you are highly susceptible to Psi and Taint attacks. You suffer an additional health level of the appropriate type of damage from all such effects.

Visions of Death [5 point Flaw]

You have foreseen your own death through visions (if you're a clairsentient) or been told about it in vivid detail. You don't know the precise date and time, but you have a pretty good idea of what's coming, and it's going to be highly unpleasant. You find yourself looking over your shoulder for signs that your fate is drawing near and you devote an inordinate amount of time to taking preventive measures to avoid it. On the other hand, you might have become resigned to your fate and are clinically depressed — or even developed the habit of taking insane risks because you know you can't die "before your time." However you deal with your knowledge, it *will* come to pass some day. No one can outrun Fate.

Storytellers should have no qualms about killing characters with this Flaw. The player had his chance to enjoy his five extra bonus points, after all. This is one of the few situations in which a Storyteller should deliberately contrive a character's demise — the player knew the choice he made when he purchased Visions of Death.

Weak Psi [5 point Flaw] *

You're just not as strong, psionically speaking, as most other psions who share your level of potential development. Reduce your starting Psi rating by one dot (though it can never fall below Psi 2). You can spend bonus points to increase your Psi if you really want to and your experience costs for raising Psi are the same as they would be for anyone else — you just start at a disadvantage.

This Flaw is only available to psion characters.

Psi is the core of **Trinity**, in terms of both the game's universe and its core metaplot. Without it, humanity would never have achieved interstellar travel — and would quite possibly be completely defenseless against the renewed assaults of the Aberrants. Without it, all characters would be normal humans with neat technology at their disposal (not that there's anything wrong with that, mind you, just that the game would be a wee bit different). Psi is one of the fundamental forces that keeps the universe intact and working and psion characters have only managed to fumblingly grasp the barest fundamentals of its functions. Even the most knowledgeable noetic scientists know little more than the basics of psi's import and intricacies. Pretty humbling, yeh?

The Very, Very Basics

In a nutshell, here's what we know about psi so far:

• Psi energy can be quantified, at its lowest, most fundamental level, by counting *psions* — not psionically active humans, as the media has bastardized the term, but subquantum particles that bear properties of both matter and energy, much like photons.

• Psi energy permeates the entire known physical universe — with one notable set of exceptions (we'll get to those in a moment). For right now, however, assume that there's a sort of constant flow of psi energy, much like an invisible breeze, that's passing through all of reality. In addition, all matter has its own innate psi energy — think of it as another form of potential energy. Living things have a little more innate psi energy and psionically active individuals have even more.

• Psi energy is interchangeable with other forms of energy — and with matter. This follows the known laws of matter-energy conversion and allows such effects as a biokinetic growing wings or an electrokinetic generating laser beams. Matter and radiant energy aren't being created from nothing in these instances; psi energy is being *converted* to matter and radiant energy. Yes, this means that a quantakinetic could, theoretically, reduce a human to his component psion particles — and possibly absorb that energy in an act of "noetic vampirism." Good thing they're not around any more....

• Psi energy can only be manipulated by a living organism. Purely mechanical devices just don't have enough innate psi energy (see above) to exert enough force on the universe's psi energy flows. A conscious mind behind the process helps a lot but a bioapp can pull off some simple tricks. The fact that the Tessers on the Leviathan-class jump ships can perform complete interstellar jump calculations is a major point in favor of the ISRA argument for their sentience — such intricate work is just too complex for an unthinking semi-animate tool.

• Here's the one that keeps a lot of people up at night. Psi energy, in addition to flowing physically, flows *temporally*. Events that disturb the flow of psi in the present — which include both physically significant happenings, like a bomb blast, and emotionally charged occurrences, like a religious rally — send "ripples" in the subquantum universe both forward and backward in time. This is what allows clairsentients both to perceive the past and to make educated guesses about the future.

• In addition, psi is resonant with conscious and subconscious mental processes — it can affect, or be affected by, emotions and rational thought. Clairsentients, telepaths and vitakinetics are most in tune with these manifestations of psi's relationship to the rest of the universe.

So. You now know as much about psi as the average noetic science undergraduate does. There's a lot more math to what that character knows, of course, but that's basically an adaptation of existing physics equations. The time and consciousness angles still have the scientists stumped but humanity's best minds are working out theories for those.

Attunement

Attunement isn't easily definable in any terms more specific than "subquantum sensitivity." It's not an exact science — most of the precision that clairsentients can get from their perceptions comes from years of trial-and-error experimentation. The average psion can't close her eyes, send out a

Non-Psions and Attunement

Like an active psion, a latent and even a neutral may make Attunement rolls to detect noetically significant objects or events. However, the latent or normal individual can never consciously focus her Attunement; any use of this talent is subject to the Storyteller calling for a roll. Also, the result is never as precise as that attained by even the clumsiest psychokinetic. In general, a latent psion makes all Attunement rolls at a +1 difficulty, in addition to any modifiers from the chart below. A neutral character makes all Attunement rolls at +2 difficulty — in other words, automatic failure for a character who can never have higher than Psi 2... unless the neutral also spends a Willpower point or has some way of getting extra Attunement dice.

psychic radar pulse and say "There are three electrokinetics at a range of 430 meters at bearing 275. All of them are carrying bioapps with Stage II or higher Tolerance Benchmarks. One has a hangover." Instead, Attunement is more of a general awareness of the subquantum flow, an intuitive trickle of data in the back of the psion's head that tells her "there are three big blue-glowing things over there, and they all have little greenish glowy things with them." The various sensory powers (e.g. Biosense) are "tuned in" to specific elements of this flow, such as life-forms' subquantum patterns or electromagnetic energy sources.

Generally, the subquantum universe is like a pond (at least that's how clairsentient Zen masters describe it to novices). Psi energy (water) is slowly circulating through the entire pond. Everything that happens in the universe that involves a shift of matter or energy sends tiny ripples through this pond. Close to the source, they're strong; as they spread, they gradually weaken until they're so insignificant as to be almost imperceptible. In game terms, a character's Attunement range determines the maximum distance from the source at which she can sense the ripples of a given event — how sensitive she is to those disturbances.

The pond analogy weakens a little when discussing perception of objects and beings that are simply sitting there and existing but the principle remains the same. A solid object in the pond causes eddies and ripples near itself as the water flows around it, even if the object itself isn't doing anything at the moment. Each physical object has its own concentration of psion particles that cause it to have a higher "noetic density" than the empty volume of its surroundings. Living beings are even more noetically dense (which has led to some theological speculation that the human soul can be quantified in terms of psi energy) and individuals who are psychically active have yet greater concentrations of psi within their physical forms. Thus, they make larger disturbances as the universe's psi flows around them. These disturbances are what's actually being sensed when a character uses Attunement to determine whether or not someone else is a psion.

Backlash

Sudden releases of energy — physical, noetic or emotional, as mentioned above — are like pebbles thrown into the pond. Their ripples are much more pronounced, and can be felt at greater distances if the originating events were truly significant. If there's enough of a disturbance, the ripples become waves, washing over the observer and temporarily blinding her. This is backlash: more noetic sensory input than the observer can comfortably (or safely) handle. It's the psionic equivalent of looking directly into a strobe light. The destruction of France and the *Esperanza* was the largest release of energy (kinetic and nuclear in the physical event, which translated into subquantum fluctuations and raw psionic and emotional in the deaths that the crash caused) in the recorded history of human psionic activity up to that time. Its impact was something that virtually no psion was prepared for and its noetic effect was the equivalent of a wave generated by throwing a bowling ball into the pond.

This is why backlash causes actual damage (albeit only bashing) — it's sensory overload and hurts just as much as staring into a welding torch or walking past a roaring jet engine. Neutrals, not having their "inner eyes" open, suffer very limited effects from even the most significant subquantum disturbances, though they'll often experience some sort of sympathetic pains, nausea or depression if they're particularly strong latents.



Prominent events also send shock waves forward and backward in time. Generally, it's much harder to sense an event *before* it occurs than it is to view a record of it *after* it's happened. This is because the future isn't a set sequence — clairsentients sense only the most likely probabilities. The larger the event, the greater the advance warning an alert psion is likely to have. Still, even the greatest catastrophes' lead times are measured in hours at the most (Otha's an exception). Think of the after-the-fact echoes of the event as ripples rebounding off the pond shore after the bowling ball splashes in. The advance notice is more like the really tiny ripples caused by the compressed air in front of the bowling ball (it's moving *really* fast, y'see... hey, it's a simple analogy).

Attunement and Taint

So far, so good. But what about detecting Aberrants and other sources of taint using Attunement? Taint innately involves a *lack* of psi energy. Searching for an Aberrant using Attunement is like trying to prove a negative — the psion is searching for something that's *not*. Aberrants are empty holes in noetic reality. The most powerful Aberrants, such as those labeled Prime Threats, are obvious because they're *so* not there, but lesser ones often escape detection by virtue of being "bland" enough to not stand out in a psion's field of psionic view — they're Somebody Else's Problem. See "Psi and Taint," below, for more details.

Noetic Resonance

Because of psi's emotional resonance, events that are meaningful *to the individual observer* are more prominent in a psion's noetic field of view than similar occurrences that don't matter as much. Most psions don't get that much of a twitch from just anyone's childbirth, but the toughest Legionnaire can be laid out for hours when her sister goes into labor halfway around the globe. Noeticists use this effect to explain 20th-century records of "psychically linked twins" and similar events. In game terms, this gives a player a bonus of between one and five dice to her Attunement rolls (strictly Storyteller's discretion) to sense events that are happening to people, places, or things that she cares about.

Oh, yes, childbirth. Attunement doesn't just allow a psion to sense events with *negative* emotional loading. If that were the case, more psions would be asking Norça to develop drugs to block

Attunement. Strongly positive events can give off just as much energy as negative ones (though some would argue that the 22nd century just doesn't see that many positive events). A psion can get a warm, tingly feeling from walking through a field that a traveling circus performed in and many holy sites have subtle but extremely powerful noetic signatures. Attunement can also cause all sorts of problems in relationships — imagine that same Legionnaire sensing her husband having an incredible orgasm while he's nowhere near her...

Detecting Psi

In a few repressive nations, and more recently in parts of the FSA, psions are illegal. The Chinese require all active psions to be registered and Nippon and most of the FSA severely restrict psions' activity. So how do these people go about detecting psions? Previously only an expensive and lengthy blood test that took up to three days to process could reliably detect psions. Due to its expense this test was only used on people receiving high-level security clearances and in similarly sensitive positions. However, recently the Nippon-based company Yamata Micro-electronics released a reliable psion detector. Currently, the capabilities of this device are extremely limited. With a range of only five meters, the device is normally made in the form of a large arch that individuals walk through, much like conventional airport scanners.

Their size, expense and limited range means that the devices are normally only installed in important locations with controlled access, like airports, many government buildings and sensitive corporate research facilities. In Nippon, these detectors have already been installed in such buildings. Both the FSA and China each recently bought more than 100 psi detectors from Yamata and are currently installing them. The devices are exceedingly sensitive. Attempting to use Electrokinesis to disable them usually sets off a special alarm (+2 difficulty to all attempt to use Technokinesis to control or disable this device, failure sets off a loud alarm).

Psion detectors perceive the subquantum psion particle flux (in game terms, a psi detector has Psi 5 for purposes of the Attunement ability, though the range is only five meters). While a low level of such particles can be found around all living things, psions produce them to a much higher degree even when they are not using their powers. While the present psion detectors are large, stationary units, researches at Yamata are currently attempting to develop a handheld model with a longer range.

Sample Attunement Difficulties

Event or Object	Difficulty to Detect
Sensing a latent psion...	
weak (Psi 2)	+3
average (Psi 3 – 4)	+2
strong (Psi 5+ or appropriate Merit)	+1
Sensing a psion...	
weak (Psi 2 or 3)	+2
average (Psi 4 – 6)	+1
powerful (Psi 7 – 10)	standard
proxy	automatic success
Detecting psi power in use...	
low-level (• or ••)	+2
mid-level (••• or ••••)	+1
high-level (•••••)	standard
Detecting a bioapp...	
insignificant (Tolerance 0 or 1)	+4
small (Tolerance 2 or 3)	+3
hefty (Tolerance 4+)	+2
vehicle-sized	+1
ship-sized	standard
Detecting an Aberrant...	
weak (Taint 1 – 3)	+3
average (Taint 4 – 6)	+2
powerful (Taint 7 – 10)	standard
Prime Threat	automatic success (and run like hell!)
Detecting a tainted area...	
room-sized	+2
building-sized	+1
block-wide	standard
massive	automatic success
Sensing death as it occurs...	
one death	+4
two deaths	+3
three deaths	+2
five deaths	+1
10 deaths	standard
Using Attunement inside a tainted area...	
Mild ambient taint	+1 modifier
Moderate ambient taint	+2 modifier
Severe ambient taint	+3 modifier
Character is...	
a latent	+1 modifier
a neutral	+3 modifier
under the influence of light drugs/alcohol	+1 modifier
under the influence of heavy drugs/sedated	+3 modifier

Fortunately, none of the present detectors are capable of detecting psionic activity directed into a restricted region. Parties who send normal infiltrators into restricted locations can use Clairvoyance to monitor the neutral's activities and Telepathy to communicate with them. One of the better reasons to send a normal into a restricted location is to disable the psion detectors so that his psionic team members can join him.

Psi and Taint

Psions must concentrate carefully to detect low-level taint sources with Attunement but powerful taint manifestations force themselves on noetic awareness. The orders carefully guard the secret that high taint levels, such as those found at the site of Wycoff's detonation or given off by a high-taint Aberrant, can actually *interfere* with the use of Modes. Some noeticists cite this as further proof of the theory that psi and taint are polar opposites, like protons and electrons.

"Permanent Taint Areas," as ISRA labels them, occur generally as a result of exposure to Prime Threat-class Aberrant powers or as home to powerful Aberrants for extended periods of time. "Transient Taint Areas" are usually quite a bit smaller —covering no more than a few hundred square meters — and form from irradiation by lower-level powers, or the current presence of powerful Aberrants. Both types of taint areas interfere with the local subquantum flow. There are four levels of ambient taint:

• **Mild Ambient Taint** remains after massive uncontrolled use of taint-based powers, such as a firefight involving a handful of Aberrants. It also surrounds fairly powerful Aberrants (Taint 7 to 8) to a distance of about 20 meters. Mild ambient taint applies a +1 difficulty to Attunement rolls (other than sensing the Aberrant in question) and to the use of basic and one-dot psi powers.

• **Moderate Ambient Taint** comes from the prolonged application of specific Aberrant powers, or wide-scale taint discharges such as a large battle involving Aberrants. The most powerful Aberrants (Taint 9 or 10) also radiate it to a distance of 50 to 100 meters. Moderate ambient taint applies a +2 difficulty to the use of Attunement (other than sensing the target Aberrant) and basic and one-dot psi powers and a +1 difficulty to two-dot powers.

• **Severe Ambient Taint** stems from the use of Prime Threat-class Aberrant powers, such as Wycoff's detonation. It also extends for half a kilometer around the most powerful Aberrants (Taint 10). This grade of taint imposes a +3 difficulty on Attunement (except, once again, for perceiving the Aberrant) and basic and one-dot psi powers, +2 difficulty to two-dot powers, and +1 difficulty to three-dot powers. It can cause taint-related diseases in neutrals and latents if they are exposed to it for prolonged periods of time (generally ranging from a few hours to days), and plants and invertebrates exposed to it mutate.

• **Critical Ambient Taint** is purely theoretical. Hypothetically, it surrounds the Aberrants that the

Storyteller Option

Taint-Based Interference

Taint doesn't follow quite the same rules as does psi. It's not fully understood, even by the best noeticists in the human race. Therefore, you don't have to play by hard and fast rules either. Feel free to apply the taint-based interference as described above *if it fits your story.* No one knows if the "subquantum static" that surrounds powerful Aberrants is a deliberate manifestation or just a side effect of their existence. Play that up accordingly; don't let the players know just how their characters' powers will be affected until they try to use them in a tainted area.

The same goes for psi's disruption of taint, actually. Since the two oppose one another, strong concentrations of noetic energy can mess with an Aberrant as much as taint screws with a psion. As far as the rules are concerned, you may choose to have four- and five-dot Modes inflict increased effect upon Aberrants. This may involve halving the Aberrant's defenses against a psi-based attack, treating the damage as lethal instead of bashing, or adding dice to the psi power's damage effect.

Putting these elements in your story can increase drama and excitement, but can apply a greater degree of record-keeping. This option is meant to be used only if it enhances the fun of your game, not to turn the series into a number-crunching slug-fest.

Æon Trinity classifies as Prime Threats (Divis Mal, The Colony, Cestus Pax) — Aberrants whose power levels far exceed even those of the proxies. The effects of critical-level taint are pure conjecture, but can be assumed to be orders of magnitude more dangerous than those of severe-level taint.

Bioapps, Tolerance, and Overload

All bioapps are alive. However, not all of them use any more than their own innate psi energy for any of their functions. A good example of this is a biowelder (**Trinity**, p. 274): it generates its polymer through chemical processes without manifesting any psi effects. However, because it's a biological entity, it still has the same level of psi energy flowing through it that any other organism of comparable size would — about the same as, say, a chinchilla, but much more than an orbital steel wrench would possess.

When a bioapp that *does* use psi comes in contact with a stronger aura, such as that of a sentient entity, there's a slight rush of psi from the stronger aura to the weaker one. This is similar to the effect seen in two spaceships with different internal pressures being connected via an airlock that is just *slightly* cracked open — the pressure naturally "wants" to equalize. However, there's not full equalization of psi concentration in the aura-to-aura contact because the stronger aura has a certain amount of natural attraction for its own psion particles and "wants" to keep them to itself, much as all the atmosphere can't rush through that tiny crack in the airlock seal.

Formatting synchronizes the auras of the bioapp and the psion to whom that device is formatted, much like opening that airlock door all the way. When the auras are in close physical proximity (usually less than half a meter), there's a constant interchange of psi between them to keep them at equal strength. This equalization of psi concentration allows the psion in control of the device to work with it as if it were a natural extension of her own body — which it is, in a noetic sense, since the internal psi concentrations of the psion and the object are the same.

Larger or more complex bioapps can "absorb" more psi energy from a psion than smaller and simpler devices can — and, in fact, they *need* to in order to function at optimum capacity. This greater need is reflected in game terms by Formatted Tolerance. Unformatted bioapps with the potential to be formatted have built-in buffers that keep them from leeching too much psi away from their users, which is why they all have Tolerance 1 when they remain unformatted. However, formatting allows the bioapp to drain the full amount of psi possible from its user.

Because a certain amount of psi energy is necessary for every living being to thrive, losing too much of it can be both psychologically and physically dangerous. Losing too much psi to formatted (or even unformatted) bioapps leads to the condition known as "tolerance overload." This occurs when so much of the individual's own psi energy is in the attached bioware that she's symbiotically reliant on them to provide her with the energy that

Option: Zero Tolerance

Because unformatted bioapps still draw energy from their users, they're assumed to have Tolerance 1. However, this severely limits the number of unformatted bioapps that neutrals can use, as something as simple as carrying two Orgotek Wasps can send a blank into tolerance overload! While this does serve to play up the uniqueness of psions in **Trinity**, it's more than a small aggravation for players of neutral characters.

Players and Storytellers who want series wherein bioware is more common may want to instead assume that unformatted bioapps have Tolerance 0 (formatted bioware retains its listed Tolerance rating). This makes bioware substantially more accessible to Joe Hologram and even more potent for psions. However, this does make the chance of overload much less common — occurring only when a psion takes on too many formatted bioapps. Thus bioware abuse is more of a threat to the story. Of course, if that doesn't bother you, go for it!

There is a compromise between the two extremes if you prefer. You may let the unformatted Tolerance 0 rule stand, but note that a character at two points past her Tolerance limit may still suffer overload if she handles another bioapp. In the end, go with whatever works for the tone you want to set for your series.

she needs to function. This leads to dependence on and addiction to the bioapps, and can cause one or more psychological disorders (**Trinity**, p. 257). The precise nature of the disorders depends on the bioapps and the Nature of the psion. An overloaded individual with too many bioweapons might become a violent sociopath, while one with multiple formatted biocomps could turn autistic.

Latency

In the Trinity Universe, a *latent* is an individual who has the potential to become a fully active psion after experiencing the Prometheus Effect. Not everyone has this potential; as a matter of fact, most of humanity doesn't yet. Those who do — the "Gifted" — are subject to a wide variety of social reactions, depending on the local culture's attitude toward psions.

In game terms, every living being (except an Aberrant) has a minimum of Psi 1. This represents the basic connection to the subquantum universe that life bestows on every living thing. A latent psion has a stronger connection — a rating of Psi 2 or higher. A Psi of 2 often shows up negative on testing, and may mean the individual is still a neutral (see sidebar). The rare cases of false-positive test results, where a neutral mistakenly registers as latent, happen with Psi 2 individuals. A rating of Psi 3 or more almost always tests positive on the first try, with Psi 4 or better sometimes even indicating tendency for a particular Aptitude.

Powerful psions and the proxies can usually sense a latent, with the subject showing brightly against the background subquantum flow when a psion focuses his Attunement (see the Attunement chart, p. 145). It's often a subtle thing, and such a flash can also mean the individual was being affected by a psi power, was using a bioapp, was recently exposed to a psi effect or was simply a false reading (on a botched roll). Still, a psion character who gets three or more successes on his Attunement roll when sensing a latent target can be confident that the source of the flash is latency.

Detecting Latency

Any psion can determine if another individual is a latent psion via Attunement. However, this is a relatively short-range effect (conversational distance or so), since latents stand out only a little more than neutrals do in terms of noetic "here I am!" perceptibility. The player for the sensing character makes an Attunement roll, difficulty dependent on the latent's current Psi (see the chart above). A latent can be sensed within a number of meters equal to the psion's Psi rating. Success reveals the subject as a latent or a neutral. Three or more successes indicate the Aptitude toward which the latent has a tendency, if there is one (see below).

As mentioned before, official latency testing is a more involved process that uses psi-sensing bioware, physiological scanning equipment and psychoanalysis software. All the orders, the Æon Trinity and a few other organizations have noetic testing centers that house at least one of these devices. A latency test takes about an hour, involving various blood and tissue samples, psychological tests and minor noetic checks to note psionic reactions to various stimuli. No rolls need be made for such testing; the gear used is state-of-the-art and seldom comes up with a false positive (except when it makes for a good plot...). The testing bioware is quite delicate, though, and can suffer backlash from strong noetic flux (a device has Psi 7 and Stamina 1 for the purposes of determining backlash).

Since psions are in great demand, the test is free to anyone who requests it (although an appointment may have to be made, and neutrals that keep coming back may be flagged as nuisances).

High-Psi Neutrals

Yes, it's technically possible for a neutral to have higher than a Psi 1 rating (note the chart with "Option: Creating Latent and Neutral Characters," p. 86). About one in 8,000 neutrals benchmarks at Psi 2 on the standardized noetic aptitude tests. A neutral with Psi 2 is more psionically "solid," enjoying a strong biological template — however, he is *not* a latent and may *never* become an active psion. A high-Psi normal does enjoy more sensitive Attunement and can handle twice as many unformatted bioapps without going into Tolerance Overload, though. Further, noetic science suggests that the child of a high-Psi neutral has a much greater chance of latency, just like offspring from a full latent or active psion.

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Testing

— Journal: Michael Leese, 3.24.2120

Well, I tested positive. Mom and dad were worried that something bad was gonna happen, like I'd end up a freak or an Aberrant or something. I think the FSA propaganda about psi is getting to them.

Miss Kaylee, that nice woman from Knowledge in Motion, was there. I took an immediate liking to her. Probably because she paid attention to me and showed me all kinds of neat circuits and optical effects with the prisms and holograms.

When she sent me the letter that KIM would be in town a day early and invited me to see a special demonstration, I was thrilled. Afterward we talked and she said I should stop by the Orgotek office and get tested for psi.

I sorta skirted around the deal when I told my folks but I finally had to spill why I wanted to visit Orgotek. They relaxed a bit when I said I doubted I was a psi but that I should find out. They're big on us reaching our potential, so they agreed, but insisted on finding out everything they could on the tests to make sure nothing bad would happen.

So when I got the news, I was surprised more at how I felt than that I was latent. I was shocked! I never seriously thought it could happen to me, but I guess it shows up in the weirdest places. Turns out I don't have and special focus — "tendency," they call it — but word is I should make a decent tek. And would be cool, since I'd get to play with gigayeh technology and still stay close to home so Mom won't worry so much.

Tendency

Most latents have equal potential (or lack thereof) to become active in any of the core six Aptitudes (Teleportation and Quantakinesis require a higher base latency). This provides the orders with relative freedom in recruiting candidates. However, some latents display a tendency for one or more aspect of psi. In most cases, only a full latency test shows if the subject would prove to be a strong psychokinetic or clairsentient. Sometimes, a previous physical, psychological or even spontaneous psionic manifestation can indicate a tendency — *a pronounced adrenaline surge* might imply biokinetic tendencies, sudden intuitions about others may suggest Telepathy, a brief telekinetic shove revealing Psychokinesis potential. Such occurrences are very subtle and uncontrolled, though, and may be overlooked in favor of a more conventional explanation.

A latent's personality may indicate a tendency for a certain Aptitude but such conclusions can lead to stereotypes. A latent psychokinetic may be insightful or thoughtful because he's more in tune with the implicate order than those around him, as opposed to having a hot temper being pushy as some have come to expect. Psi is a tricky thing and a much larger concept than most people realize.

The unique status of a latent with a tendency for a given Aptitude is primarily considered only for the purposes of drama. There is normally no rules basis for noetic tendency (though the Strong Latent Merit, p. 139, does provide one if you want to use Merits and Flaws in your game). If you want your character to have had a tendency toward Biokinesis but ended up being dunked by the Ministry instead, fine. The only real impact it's supposed to have is to help serve as a story hook or simply as an interesting background element. A latent who displays an Aptitude tendency is greatly sought after by that order, after all. Such a latent has greater psionic potential in general, and so would be a valuable addition to any order's ranks. This can also make the latent a useful commodity to trade to the order that matches his tendency, with the latent even trying to gain certain favors or status in exchange for agreeing to join. Of course, that's a tricky game to play. The order may always decide it isn't worth the trouble to negotiate with an obviously greedy or troublesome applicant.

As noted above, channeling Teleportation or Quantakinesis effects require latent tendencies. This is, again, primarily a setting-based rationale, though relevant specifics on Teleportation are covered further in **Stellar Frontier**. Although the Chitra Bhanu Prometheus chamber was destroyed, having potential in Quantakinesis can create interesting story possibilities — ranging from being monitored by other orders and Æon to getting locked up and studied. This is especially true if the latent experiences the Prometheus Effect for another Aptitude and later manifests a Quantakinesis auxiliary Mode!

Spontaneous Latency

For most latent psions, latency has always been there — it usually shows up at or just before pu-

berty and is just one more minor complication thrown into the pre-teen hormone soup. A natural latent doesn't feel any different from his peers, with the exception of the occasional strange tingle inside his head. He may not even realize he has latent psionic potential until he goes to the hospital to visit a relative and get an awfully *strange* look from an Æsculapian in the hallway. It's estimated that for every latent psion the orders do find, there are five who are never discovered.

Some individuals, however, spend most of their lives as neutrals and get dragged, kicking and screaming, into latency after some traumatic event. Noeticists aren't fully certain how this occurs; there are several hundred documented cases of "awakened latency." The most common manner in which neutrals are activated to latency is extreme emotional trauma. Fighting for your life (and almost losing), meeting your true love or losing someone close to you in a particularly tragic fashion are all potential catalysts for latency. The second most prevalent form of accidental psionic activation is exposure to a massive surge of psi energy, such as sustaining injury from backlash. In one well-documented case, the entire 18-man neutral crew of a Brazilian surveillance ship was blasted into latency due to its proximity to a Leviathan test jump. A third method of awakened latency is cranial trauma; many borderline latents are pushed over the edge after suffering concussions or similar injuries.

None of these processes are recommended for widespread application in the creation of new latent psions, due to the risk of permanent mental, psychological and physical damage. "Trauma" is just that and many new latents have traded emotional stability and/or a few dozen IQ points for their psionic potential.

Obviously, the idea that even neutrals can someday become psions greatly expands options for **Trinity**. Still, this information isn't intended to be an excuse to switch every blank into a psi-wielding Gifted. As far as the rules are concerned, a character who starts out neutral and later tumbles to latency should still be written up as a latent in the first place — just hold off on the extra Psi until the trigger event. As the rules see it, a neutral is a neutral is a neutral.

Still, there may be an unforeseen occasion in the course of a series where a normal experiences some event that seems perfect for awakening latency. If it works well for your game, go with the flow. The Storyteller can have the character spend 15 experience to shift to latency; the character's Psi is then re-calculated in the traditional "[Stamina + Wits + Charisma] ÷ 2, rounded up." The newly latent character must then cope with the subtle but profound change that's occurred (perhaps even gaining a Flaw — though without the point benefit — or mental disorder in the process). Fundamentally, though, this should be a rare and profound moment in the series if it happens at all. Spontaneous latency should never be a humdrum event.

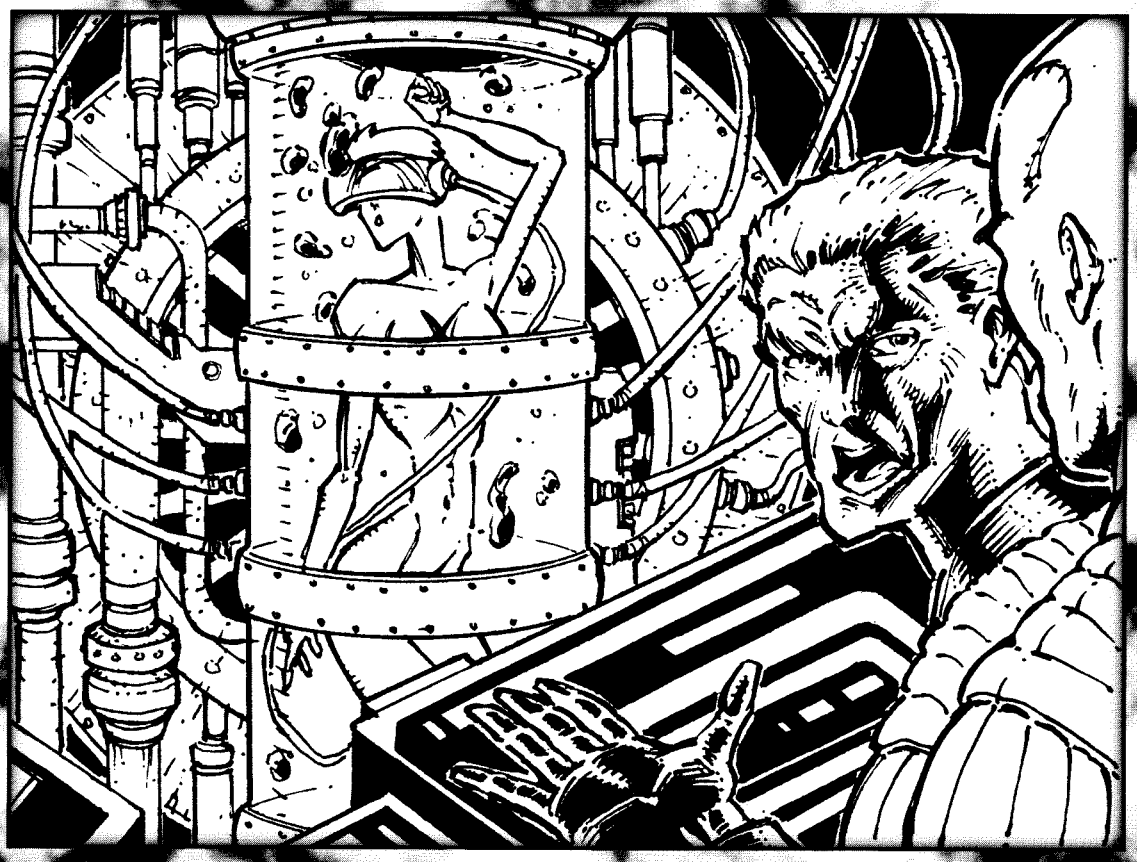
The Prometheus Effect

Humans have been evolving toward natural psionic capability for millennia. We're not there yet though, which is why the Prometheus Effect is necessary. The process artificially awakens a latent's nascent psionic potential. For each latent, the Prometheus chamber determines the Aptitude that actually manifests, even if his tendency was for another Aptitude. The Prometheus Effect (a.k.a. "getting dunked") reconfigures his genetic structure to enable him to channel subquantum energy in a certain way, as designated by the Aptitude.

A latent can only undergo this procedure once. A second dunk, even in the same chamber, kills him, since his body can't take the stress of physiological reconfiguration that the process requires. A blank is even less able to handle it: her body and mind cannot handle the stress involved, driving her insane and killing her shortly thereafter. Further, no one with any sign of taint (such as that manifesting from a taint-related disease) is ever allowed anywhere near a Prometheus chamber. Dunking an Aberrant would kill it, destroy the tank and cause a massive noetic disruption (there is absolutely no way an Aberrant can ever become a psion or vice versa).

Those with a tendency for an Aptitude will become powerful in that Aptitude with training (as indicated in the Merit's description). For those awakened in an Aptitude other than the one for which they show tendency, their development may be slower than other psions but they will still be perfectly capable psions. This is often how auxiliary Modes arise — the noetic tendency is so strong that it manifests even after the body is programmed for another Aptitude. Auxiliary Modes are still limited to one dot, though; psi energy may have no real limits, but the human body does.

Before being dunked, the latent cannot eat for 12 hours and undergoes decontamination to



prevent any foreign objects or organisms from interfering with the process. The naked latent is hooked up to various pieces of biotech that administer the treatment, allow him to breathe in the biogell that fills the chamber and to monitor his vital signs. He is then lowered into the chamber and the transformation occurs. The Prometheus Effect takes two to four hours to complete, depending on the Aptitude being triggered, the genetics and health of the latent and some other random factors. To the latent, the process seems to last anywhere from an instant to several days. Surprisingly, the procedure does not generate any notable psionic disturbance.

Orientation

Before a latent undergoes the Prometheus Effect, he is subject to some evaluations, including physical conditioning, academic study on how powers will work and what they're supposed to do, psychological tests and whatever other checks the order deems necessary.

Once the psion emerges from the Prometheus chamber, he undergoes a subsequent round of medical tests and has some time to rest and get his energy back. Psychological testing is often done to be sure the Prometheus Effect didn't scramble the psion's moral or ethical compass.

The new psion is usually confused and disoriented for the first couple of days, his powers unrefined and not completely under his control. This can be especially true for those emerging with two or three dots in a Mode (as indicated in the character's initial write-up), and for those with sensory powers, which can take longer to process fully at first.

The relevant combination sourcebooks detail what this is like for the psions of each existing order. The goal is to get them comfortable with their new powers quickly and with their sanity intact. Such orientation typically lasts from one to three months. Sporadic flares of power happen during this period, as does bonding with fellow new psions and the order personnel.

Training

Psi is arguably a psion character's most important Trait. It's the center of his existence, in addition to being his player's base dice pool for all those cool powers. So how is it determined and why is it so expensive to raise?

A character's initial Psi score is half the sum of his Stamina, Wits, and Charisma. This wasn't an arbitrary decision during the initial game design. Psi energy isn't easy to manipulate — if it was, there wouldn't be much difference between psions and neutrals. Performing all those energy manipulations and transformations requires a lot of physical endurance, just like any purely physical exertion (or mental exertion — take an advanced calculus course and see how much the homework wears you down if you don't believe that). It also requires a great degree of mental agility; there are thousands of calculations that have to be performed on a purely instinctive level, much like juggling while riding a unicycle requires a good physical sense of balance. It's not a matter of raw intelligence so much as it is the need to be able to react quickly and reflexively to whatever the subquantum universe is doing at any particular moment. Finally, a strong sense of self and a good degree of empathy for other sentient minds helps — force of personality, oddly enough, goes a long way toward determining noetic strength and few psions are bland and unremarkable individuals.

These factors translate into the three Attributes that determine a character's starting Psi score — his base psionic potential, if you will. Not all psions are created equal. The Prometheus Effect coalesces that raw potential into a concrete, finite capacity to store and manipulate psi energy. Some individuals get a little more initial capacity than their benchmarks seem to indicate they should. This is attributed to irregular performance of the aging, high-maintenance Prometheus chambers (and is reflected in game mechanics by the bonus point option that allows players to raise their characters' starting Psi value during character creation if they so choose).

Once the psion is activated ("Prometheized" or "triggered," as the media refers to the process), his order puts him through an initial period of mandatory training — a freshly-activated psion is dangerous to himself and everyone around him because he doesn't have control over his powers. The form this training takes varies from order to order but the common factors are both field and classroom instruction in basic noetic theory, Mode-specific powers and the legal and moral implications of being psionically active. This covers between three months and three years, depending on the order and the psion in question. At the end of that training period, the psion is assigned to field duties (or, less frequently, goes freelance) and picks up further training as circumstances permit.

Option: Psi Pool

Characters who throw around a lot of psi powers in tight situations tend to run out of Psi points pretty quickly. While this lends itself to creative tactical uses for powers, it's not always the most suitable limitation to impose if you're going for a high-heroism game. Players and Storytellers who want more flash and bang in their series may want to modify characters' current Psi.

Normally, a psion's maximum current Psi score is equal to his permanent Psi rating. With this option, the character gets *double* his permanent Psi rating as his maximum current Psi. Thus, a psion with Psi 6 has a Psi Pool of 12.

Everything else remains the same — permanent Psi, the cost of techniques, recovery time — but the character now has twice the amount of Psi to throw around.

Psi can be raised without individual instruction, though some individuals find it helpful to have the guidance of a more experienced, more powerful psion. The Psi Trait represents the character's capacity to guide and store energy, so it's sort of like a mental muscle — it can be built up by constant use. However, there are specific methods that a psion can use to build this strength in a more efficient fashion, such as meditative focusing techniques or rigorous field exercises.

Modes, by contrast, are the psionic equivalent of Abilities, with Psi as an Attribute analog. Modes don't confer any more raw power on the psion — his Psi doesn't go up when a Mode does. Modes represent the psion's mastery of the various ways in which his Aptitude works. Think of the psion as a martial artist. His Psi represents his physical body: reflexes, endurance, raw hitting power. His Modes are the various techniques he's learned: strikes, blocks, katas and so forth.

Using a Mode a few times at a certain level does not automatically mean a psion can learn or use the next power — just like a character must first study

Option: Perpetual Psi Buildup

Psions who are constantly pushing their Psi powers to the limits (such as most player characters) are more likely to develop faster and farther than desk-bound bureaucrats who only keep their noetic muscles in good enough shape to pass their annual certifications. To this end, Storytellers who want their players' characters to develop at an accelerated rate may want to keep secret records of the experience points those characters earn over the course of a story.

A good way to do this is to tag a sticky-paper note somewhere where the players won't see it and keep a running tally of Psi-specific experience for each character. Add a point at the end of each session; add an extra point whenever the player rolls all successes on a Psi roll (conveying that the character pushes his powers to the absolute limit). Conversely, subtract a point when the player botches a Psi roll (the character loses his link to the subquantum universe for a second). When a character has accumulated enough Psi experience to raise his Psi Trait a point, inform the player that this improvement has taken place and start the tally over.

Some players may want to set aside additional experience (the points that you give out at the end of every story) to improve their Psi. That's fine — just ask how many points they want to dump into Psi, then add those points to your secret total. Don't tell them exactly how close they are to gaining another point of Psi, however. The character *should* feel some sort of increasing awareness, though, so hints along the lines of "you feel as if you're on the cusp of something significant" should be offered. Psi increase should be more of an internal process than an external one, after all.

extensively in a given Ability before spending the experience to master the next level. Mastering an existing set of capabilities certainly helps, and provides a firm foundation for further advancement, but without at least some basic training, learning new psionic powers is very difficult.

Your character does need training, though not a great deal of it, to improve his rating with each Mode and, of course, to learn new ones. Each order and organization has its own training methods, detailed in the appropriate combination sourcebooks and summarized below.

The training need not be formalized. It can be like martial arts, with the psion learning the basic forms and techniques and then practicing them on his own, discovering how they all work together and gaining mastery through his own trial and error. It can also be like learning a new language or effective public speaking. You get the tools and parts, and must work at putting them together in controlled and real-world situations to gain control and confidence with them. Or like learning chess; you learn the rules and how the pieces move, then must play a few games to get a sense of how it all flows and what combinations of moves work best.

Whatever the analogy, the student needs at least marginal training from a more experienced psion. The time required varies; some psions learn faster than others, some don't have the right mental model for the training method being used... we all have bad days and mental blocks. Learning a new effect can take a few days to a few weeks. In most cases, a week per dot is a good base time. Go ahead and set a standard that works best for your game.

As noted in **Trinity** (p. 194), the Storyteller may impose a +1 difficulty or +1 Psi cost on using any newly learned psionic power until she feels the psion has grown truly comfortable with its use (generally a month per dot of time within the game).

Instruction, Meditation and Rapport can help with training. Psi isn't really a factor, since that Trait is a measure of an individual's connection to the subquantum stratum. A character can train other psions in any techniques he already possesses.

Restricted Modes and Techniques

Certain Modes, like Algesis, are not taught to all psions. Restricted Modes usually require psychological evaluations, proven loyalty or performance and assurances of the moral responsibility to use them properly before they are taught. Occasionally some psions fall through the cracks or have a change in attitude after the training — still, Storytellers should remember that psychological evaluations are quite advanced in the 22nd century and catch many more problems than those of today. Certain powers (usually the alternate techniques) within a given Mode are also restricted, for a variety of reasons. The power may be secret, brand new, very dangerous, or there may be health or legal concerns. Controlling such effects' development is more difficult, especially if psions who know the techniques have left the order.

If a psion doesn't belong to an order or to Æon, then learning a restricted ability is harder since finding a teacher is more of an effort and payment for training may be higher or at least more creative. Once a teacher has been found, things get easier since the order's restrictions usually don't apply. This assumes the non-order even knows about the power or the freelance psion trainer has it.

Training Focus

Each Aptitude's and Mode's training has certain core parts that are included in all programs. The orders also have their own training styles, which are often imposed over the training elements for the given Aptitude.

The Legions, Norça and Upeo use field exercises in all their training. The Basel Æsculapians use a clinical model with lots of study while the Port-au-Prince rexs use a more spiritual and holistic model that is still intensive but not so academic. Orgotek runs training like the post-dunk indoctrination course that all new teks take or like an executive retreat. ISRA combines directed meditation and debate in its training, with clears assigned tasks in areas of importance. The Ministry uses a healthy dose of formal testing and frequent mentor evaluations.

Aptitude Specifics

Psychokinesis is easy to measure and often concentrates on focusing one's psi energy outward. Field exercises are done with devices present to measure energy output. Electrokinesis is evaluated in similar ways. The secondary effects caused by affected technology or energy fields are also checked. Results are what matter; finding the most efficient way to reach those results is the goal of the psion's training.

Clairsentience also focuses psi outward but combines that with internalizing the effects of the Mode and understanding what was sensed. Controlled conditions determine the accuracy and range of the trainee's abilities and field exercises allow them to stretch their psionic muscles in uncertain situations. The trainer's viewpoint and idiosyncrasies have some effect on the trainee. Perception is everything; debate and interpretation are key. Refinement of one's Vision is the goal of training, with a variety of circumstances essential to help the psion build a good frame of reference. ISRA training encourages the latent to expand his worldview and get used to looking at the big picture.



Training in Telepathy tends to be teacher-student. By necessity, you need another human being to practice the Modes properly and improper use of the powers can leave both people with mental and physical damage. But another telepath can easily evaluate the Aptitude, and a more experienced one generally has the necessary defenses to avoid injury.

Vitakinesis can be practiced on animals, tissue samples and terminal cases before being applied to patients and in the field. Improper use of these Modes can also cause injury to the patient or even the healer, so control is very important. Knowing the bodily processes involved and the biology of the systems is important. Healthy subjects are examined to get a good sense of an intact template, to help visualize the goal for healing an injury. The Æsculapian Order imposes standard medical ethics on most uses of and training in Vitakinesis. Advanced medical training is encouraged for greater mastery. Non-order training may be more lax or lacking in the established safeguards.

Since Biokinesis affects the psion only, a great sense of how one's own body works is important. Trainers often describe what happens in great detail and trainees are under medical observation the first few times before going on their own to practice or being put through field exercises. Creativity is encouraged once the psion has firm control of the basics. The Norça often have trainees compete to see who can master the new powers first. Their field exercises often involve some unexpected twist.

Teleportation training has obvious dangers but, like Clairsentience, is ideal for controlled environments. Practice uses a one-on-one teacher-student model, with the tutor providing encouragement and critiques at appropriate points along the way. Accuracy and precision are obviously paramount for a teleporter, especially if he is teleporting someone or something else, but the effects and results of using the Aptitude are easy to quantify. Teleporters are taught how to pay attention to their surroundings and judge distances.

Since there are no new quantakinetics, no training is provided for Quantakinesis even as an auxiliary Mode... at least officially.

Auxiliary Modes

All the Aptitudes require a different view of the noetic universe and use Psi differently. The human mind is very adaptable and can grasp new concepts and ways of focusing one's will. Still, it's like learning a new trade or learning to play music while being tone deaf — there are easier ways to spend one's time and you're not always guaranteed success. In the end, there is absolutely no guarantee that a psion can manifest an auxiliary Mode no matter how hard he tries. It's already been noted extensively in **Trinity** that auxiliary Modes are quite rare — around one in 100 psions ever manifests one. This is related in the rules with their increased point costs, but the Storyteller is also encouraged to keep a lid on them.

The desire for psions to learn Modes from outside their Aptitude gives psions of the other Aptitudes something of value to offer an order. It also provides opportunities for the orders to work together and is one of the ways Æon interacts with the orders, since they are a ready source of psions of all the Aptitudes and can act as an intermediary.

To learn an auxiliary Mode, a psion can go to through normal channels within her order, approach to the order representing the desired Mode (either openly or covertly), ask the Trinity to arrange for training, or see if Æon can take care of training itself. The psion can also seek out a

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Epiphany

— Journal: Cheung Lu, 8.17.2118

My head is still spinning. The thoroughness of the exercise was intense. I heard professor Lambert was a former Jesuit, but I had no idea what that meant. Juggling three contradictory yet complementary thoughts in my head at once was very hard. I can't even think of how he managed to have the examples of the entire class dancing around in his. On top of it he played what the new Nordamerican student called "devil's advocate." It was more like mental torture. Having to defend the contradictions and find the one truth they all revealed through the adversarial questioning was nerve-wracking.

It was all worth it when it made sense, however. It was like opening my eyes for the first time, or seeing a storm clear to reveal a perfect seaside scene. They tell us these exercises will make sorting the jumbled thoughts of humanity easier. I surely hope so. A sunny beach is much nicer than a thunderstorm.

freelance psion to avoid official channels and the orders completely. Sometimes this is necessary due to political concerns, disciplinary actions or the lack of access to the needed resources.

Some psions actually join an order to learn its Aptitude as auxiliary Modes. This can be the price of training or as a way for the psion to show his commitment to his new loyalties. In turn, he can be of value to the new order by training other members in his Aptitude's Modes.

Self Training

You've probably heard it by now. "But I don't like the next power in that Mode. Can't I develop my own nifty über-power?"

Well, yes. But it's damn hard.

With enough dedication and effort, a psion can learn a new effect without a teacher. Many of the alternate powers in the combination sourcebooks were developed that way and in some cases are still learned in that fashion. It generally takes twice as long, since the psion does not have the guidance of a more experienced trainer. Think of it like trying to create a new martial art by yourself.

Innovation in psi powers is dangerous and time-consuming. Most player characters aren't laboratory-bound noetic theoreticians (and a game centered around such characters would be pretty boring: "Okay, everyone roll Noetics seven times to account for this week's work... okay, good game! Same time next Friday night?"), and so are going to have one hell of a time doing all of the theory necessary to define a new technique before that power even gets used.

A good rule of thumb is to require an extended Noetics roll for the initial theoretical work, one roll per week of game time, with a number of total successes needed equal to [level of the power being developed x 3]. Once that's done, the character can start implementing his theory. Gaining the new power, in game terms, costs double the normal amount of experience points for a power of that level.

These rules are designed to allow Storytellers to put the brakes on too-eager power players. Some people simply can't learn in a formal setting or even from a tutor, though. Either through a mental block or stubbornness, they need to discover everything new on their own. This is still possible to roleplay while using the above method, but you need not abide by that suggestion. Feel free to allow spontaneous development of new applications for the existing Modes, or use the optional free-form psi rules presented in Chapter Six.

Psionic Dysfunction

Psionic dysfunction is what occurs when a single Mode is taken to the extreme. When a psion focuses on only one Mode at the expense of the other two within that Aptitude, he develops a noetic imbalance. His personality or other abilities start to suffer. It is recognized by noetic science as a real condition and not "just in the psion's head," as some doctors claimed early on. Some say the madness is insight, a sign that we're on the cusp of new understanding or potential. That's a nice thought, but if there were more to learn, the effects of dysfunction would seem to indicate we're not ready for it yet.

Psionic dysfunction is rare but not as rare as one might think. Focusing on one Mode is a very natural process for many psions. They advance as far as they can go before realizing they should have stopped along the way and checked out other paths. The general public is not aware of psionic dysfunction. The orders and Æon keep it quiet; no need to give psion haters more ammunition, after all.

The fact that a lack of balance in Modes messes up a psion implies that, like nature, psi abhors a vacuum. Having psionic dysfunction means being out of balance with the subquantum universe and therefore with yourself. Like a stray electron seeking a positive charge, dysfunction sufferers find balance in their other Modes.

Gaining Dysfunction

Psionic dysfunction occurs if a psion character buys one of his Modes up to the five dot level but goes only to the one dot (or zero dot) level in her other two Modes. So (5, 1, 1) for example. The ratings of any auxiliary Modes do not count.

Characters overbalancing in one direction like this suffer psychological stress and personality abnormalities. The dysfunction continues until the psion develops another two dots in his other Modes (this can be two dots higher in a single Mode or one dot higher in each of the other two Modes).

The dysfunction goes away once the psion brings his abilities more into balance by increasing the rating in his other Modes. The Storyteller may reduce the dysfunction's severity when the character raises another Mode by a single dot, but it doesn't vanish completely until he develops the second dot in one of his other Modes.

For Example: *Malik, an up-and-coming biokinetic, has Adaptation 4, Psychomorphing 1, Transmogrify 0. If he buys Adaptation up to 5 (5,*

Social Effects of Dysfunction

Psionic dysfunction doesn't usually trigger prejudice in other psions beside how the dysfunctional psion's new personality quirks and psi use affect his companions. Some psions may have a general reaction, seeing dysfunction sufferers much the way the rest of humanity sees those suffering from more conventional psychoses. Some Gifted feel genuine compassion for sufferers, since they know all too well how tempting it is to develop one's power to the exclusion of everything else.

Psionic dysfunction is related to other psychoses only insofar as each type of dysfunction contains elements of conventional psychoses — mania, obsession, etc.

A recent theory making its way around noetic circles suggests that there may be a link between psionic dysfunction and taint exposure, since both can disrupt psi manipulation. No psion suffering from dysfunction has ever been reported as showing signs of taint, though, so the effect may be orthogonal, achieving the same result from an independent direction. The theory holds that methods for overcoming the blocking effects of taint can help overcome dysfunction.

1, 0) he suffers dysfunction. However, if he raises Psychomorphing to 2 (4, 2, 0) and then Adaptation up to 5 (5, 2, 0) he does not gain dysfunction.

So, having two or more Modes at two dots eliminates the worry of getting the disorder. A second Mode at two dots provides enough of a counter-balance to the primary Mode's focus. For darker campaigns, the Storyteller can have dysfunction set in when the psion buys one Mode up to the four dot level and the other two are still at zero dots; or at least have some personality effects emerge by (4, 1, 1).

The Storyteller may also decide that it is harder to train while suffering from dysfunction. The difficulty of focusing on another Mode requiring extra development time or costing more experience points.

Therapeutic techniques can blunt some dysfunction-related quirks, but the psion's own will is tied too closely to his Aptitude for it to have a permanent effect, especially if the dysfunction is very pronounced.

The Effects of Dysfunction

Overall, dysfunction tends to make psi more static. For the psion, it loses some of its dynamic, living energy qualities. A psion's powers do not change overly much. The main problem is that the psion's *personality* suffers. He tends to focus on his primary Mode and thinking about anything in terms other than those dictated by this Mode is difficult.

General Effect

The dedication to one Mode may cause problems with the other two and even to basic techniques and any auxiliary Modes. A psychokinetic who focuses on Pyrokinesis might have greater difficulty with teke effects, a telepath who only focuses on Empathy may have trouble reading more rigid and formal thought patterns, vitakinetics who only indulge in latrosis will have problems with psychological ones.

Perceptions and viewpoint can also shift as a result of dysfunction. For instance, ISRA theorists refer to it as "seeing only one side of the hologram." Clears notice psionic "noise" caused by living beings (a.k.a. the Din from **Luna Rising**) more acutely or more often than normal — or sometimes less since their own perception is skewed — or they "hear" it differently or only certain parts. They also have a tendency to withdraw and immerse themselves in seeing the big picture. Eks, on the other hand, view of natural energy vortices (a.k.a. biogalvanic flow from **America Offline**) becomes distorted. Or Kirlian Eye can display slightly off results, perhaps indicating minor ailments or missing them entirely; Biosense may miss smaller life signs, or blare out the presence of strong ones.

Personality and Physiological Effects

Since psi is such an integrated part of a psion, a single-minded dedication to a Mode leads to single-minded effects on a psion's personality. Psions who only use one Mode tend to take on the traits of that Mode and their abilities start to influence their perceptions and reactions.

The effects of dysfunction can also be physical, as visible changes or in the psion's activities and body language. Psionic dysfunction also affects the psion's tactics and reactions to stress. Overcoming any short-term effects requires a Willpower roll at a minimum.

Biokinesis

- **Adaptation** makes you focus on survival over everything. Your body counters for the smallest variance in acceptable or standard environmental conditions even in otherwise safe circumstances. Further, you'll walk (run, jump) into anything because you believe you can handle it.

• **Psychomorphing** means your body is what you make it. You have no sense of modesty or that any modification is wrong. You are eager to try new biotech and test the limits of how far you can shift your physiology. The body is the sum of well-connected parts, and you enjoy the shock and surprise your many additions engender in others.

• **Transmogrify** makes you see your body as the ultimate tool, where nothing else is needed. You have no sense of body image and will change yourself to fit in — or dramatically contrast from — those around you. You seldom stick with one appearance, shifting forms like others change clothes.

Clairsentience

• **Psychometry** leads to focusing on minutia, to distraction of all the details around you. You'll stare at an object for a while, unable to take your gaze away as you walk past.

• **Psychonavigation** limits one's ability to do up-close work and to judge short distances. Very often, you aren't able to concentrate on what's going on right in front of your face.

• **Telesthesia** results in vertigo and disorientation; you want to remain standing, faster than walking activity becomes difficult.

Electrokinesis

• **Electromanipulation** causes a compulsion to manipulate bioelectricity. You won't hesitate to get in people's personal space or initiate physical contact to get closer to the source; indeed, you feel cut-off and frustrated when this urge is resisted.

• **Photokinesis** makes one want to expand one's vision; you never focus on one part of the spectrum, never turn off lights or dampen your senses if you can help it. Even more, you become very fond of sensory bioware.

• **Technokinesis** makes one act like a machine or computer. You strive for logic and predictability around you, social skills suffer (except with other teks) and you get uncomfortable around people and bioapps. You might develop a fidget or become inarticulate if there's no electronics in the room.

Psychokinesis

• **Cryokinesis** makes your attitudes and perceptions calcify — the essence of cold, the lack of molecular motion. Your social skills suffer, as does your ability to think quickly.

• **Pyrokinesis** leads to frenetic behavior. You rarely sit still for long and your body temperature increases to an alarming degree. Your control over heat keeps it from inflicting damage, but you light up on infrared and give off perceptible heat.

• **Telekinesis** leads to losing track of the nature of objects. You tend to forget about the nature of possession and often end up damaging or destroying objects by moving them without consideration for their surroundings. This cavalierly destructive behavior also hinders your social skills.

Telepathy

• **Empathy** makes you very sensitive to what people say to or about you. Working a room is done by habit, yet you can become completely isolated and draw so far into yourself you almost get lost. Mood swings are common are also very common.

• **Mindshare** makes you want to be in the know at all times. You will use mental communication in favor of speaking, considering words inefficient and bland. You tend to overthink and look for the subtext in everything. You may even take on the thoughts and opinions you read as your own.

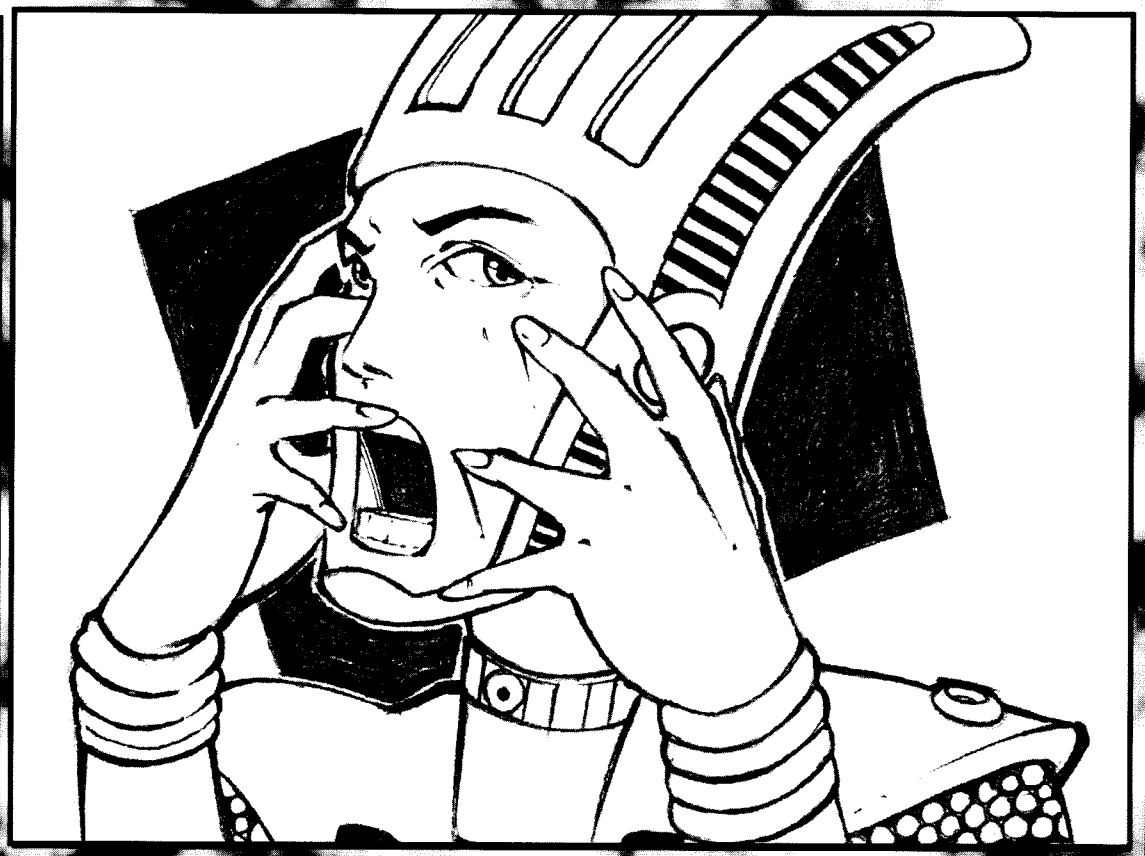
• **Psychbending** leads to control and manipulation and a healthy dose of paranoia about Telepathy and control powers. You need to be the one calling the shots at all times, seeing behavior as stimulus/response and deterministic. Nonsensical action disturbs you and makes you think the person is being controlled.

Teleportation

• **Translocation** causes a form of agoraphobia, ironically enough. The ease with which you can flick between familiar locations makes you feel uncomfortable, vulnerable and helpless when in an unfamiliar area. Your unease and sense of confinement makes socializing more difficult. You also put things back exactly where you found them and keep an orderly and neat living area.

• **Transmassion** causes you to become emotionally detached from others, seeing them as objects to be manipulated. You also develop a phobia of being hopped yourself (since that's something that "only happens to others"). You also have difficulty dealing with non-jumpers on a social level; you tend to come across as an arrogant, uncaring jerk. Furthermore, being moved with Teleportation can cause nausea for the rest of the scene.

• **Warping** results in you creating unconscious and steady waves of low-grade local fluctuations around yourself. In other words, space around you tends to shake and wobble like gelatin. Attempts to hit or touch you are more difficult and you have difficulty with hand-eye coordination, throwing,



and hitting as well. You also lose one point of permanent Psi until the dysfunction is resolved.

Vitakinesis

• **Iatrosis** makes one become immersed in the complexities of the human body. You trace the steps for enzyme reactions in your head. Bodily processes become more interesting than anything on the macro scale. You tend to pay lip service to what's going on around you until you can pull yourself away or are forced to focus elsewhere.

• **Mentatis** causes detachment from social context. You analyze human action in terms of neurological components. Beliefs and thoughts are a vast sea of neurotransmissions. You have difficulty treating people's reactions as anything but interesting manifestation of biology in action.

• **Algesis** turns you into a sociopath. Normal restraints of conscience and morality slip away. You approach situations with an eye to giving and receiving pain. Long term effects of this dysfunction can be quite unfortunate for others.

Acting With a Dysfunction

A dysfunctional psion keeps trying to use his powers whenever possible. He often seeks a psionic solution to a problem, even if a conventional one is readily available. Prejudices, religious fervor and phobias tend to be enhanced as well. Some suspect more than one member of ISRA's Messianic Baha'i suffers from this condition.

Some dysfunctional psions believe their powers are greater than they really are. A need to challenge others skilled in the same Mode may also develop. The psion assumes his powers are superior, and acts appropriately — bullying "lesser" psions, attempting difficult techniques, pumping a lot of Psi into a power to make as spectacular an effect as possible, etc. Also, any mental fragility begins to show more cracks. Old addictions and bad habits can resurface — alcoholics start to drink, the psion takes up smoking or experiments with new drugs. Gambling, lying and risky behavior are common among sufferers of dysfunction.

Whether a psion suffering from dysfunction is allowed to continue his day-to-day life is up to the order or his employer. It's rare that the onset of psionic dysfunction goes unnoticed but it does happen. If the psion can do his job well and security and performance aren't compromised, nothing may change. Once the dysfunction does get in the way, though, something will definitely be done about it.

Game Effects

The exact role-playing effects of dysfunction are for player and Storyteller to work out. The previous section provides guidelines regarding dysfunction effects; the combination sourcebooks for each order have further details. You should keep in mind the psion's Nature, the effects of a low Willpower and his current level of tolerance load from bioapps. Psions suffering from dysfunction tend to have more pronounced reactions and greater mood swings, or none at all.

Mechanically, the Storyteller may impose a difficulty on using the neglected Modes (generally +1 or +2), or impose an increased Psi or Willpower cost to use them (generally one additional point), or require another turn of concentration to use a power. Dysfunction can also affect Attunement, either an increased difficulty or decreased range. Additional Willpower rolls may be required at the Storyteller's discretion (stressful situations, a change in environment, something new and unexpected enters the scene). Regaining Willpower or Psi points may also be a bit harder.

The overall effect of psionic dysfunction is story and group dependent. Darker series have more dysfunction showing up, lighter or more cinematic stories have less of it. Some teams may use it as part of character development. Series set in the early days of the orders may use it more to emphasize psi's newness, though in those days most psions were trained in all the Modes of their Aptitude.

· TRITON ARCHIVE ·

Power Corrupts
— Journal: Lisa Trivolli, 9.28.2117

I feel so much better now, I can't believe what I jerk I was before this training. I'd heard that intense focus had some side effects but when you're there and learning and improving and growing with your powers, you just don't see it.

I guess it's true what they say about power. It was so easy to stay focused. I was getting stronger and getting more done and growing more effective. So what if I couldn't do the other effects as well? I was damn good at what I did and *nothing* got in my way.

Still, when Rebecca finally knocked me to the ground and started crying and screaming at me to get my act together and get into the recovery program, I knew something was wrong. Dysfunction isn't something that "only happens to someone else."

The doctors were great and my trainers understood my needing more time to get the basics down than the new kids did. It was a long couple of months, but now it's worth it. People like hanging out with me again and say I'm back to my old self!

This chapter presents a new system for **Trinity** psi use, allowing free-form generation of psi effects. Players and Storytellers do not have to adopt this system and should not use it in the same series as the regular **Trinity** Aptitude system. If you do adopt this replacement system, make sure you familiarize yourself carefully with how it works and create a few sample techniques to see what kinds of rulings might be required.

To enhance the versatility of this free-form method, we developed a number of key reference charts. The charts are consolidated near the beginning of this chapter for ease of reference, but there's still bound to be some degree of page-turning as you begin using the system. Once you get a feel for how it works, though, the whole thing should run smoothly.

Due to this system's flexibility, there are bound to be disagreements among players and even with the Storyteller as to what the limits of a given Aptitude may be. It's important that everyone work toward a solution that best benefits the enjoyment of the game. If using the optional system results in increasing arguments rather than encouraging roleplay, you should return to the standard psi system in **Trinity**. After all, the point is to have fun.

Summary of Unchanged Psi Rules

The free-form system establishes a distinctly different method of creating noetic effects. However, there are a few key elements that remain exactly the same as with the original system in **Trinity**:

- A psion can be fully active in only one Aptitude.
- Each Aptitude is divided into three Modes; each Mode has a rating from zero to five dots. This score represents the psion's level of mastery in that aspect of his Aptitude.
- A psion can purchase auxiliary Modes from other Aptitudes, but is limited to one dot in each auxiliary Mode.
- The Psi Trait has a *permanent* score and a *current* rating. A psion's permanent Psi indicates the size of his dice pool for rolling psi effects. Current Psi is the psion's "energy reserves" and is used to power or enhance psi effects.
- Rules regarding Attunement, bioware Tolerance and psi prints remain the same. Refer to **Trinity** (pp. 192-195) and the Psi chapter of this book for more details.

Power System

Each Aptitude enhances a psion's ability to interact with one particular aspect of the universe. Although psi itself is a fundamental cosmic force, our understanding of it filters through humanity's unfortunately limited perceptions. As such, psions invariably associate the application of psi with certain concepts common to human experience. Biokinesis relates to the human form. Clairsentience taps into the informational universe. Electrokinesis governs electromagnetic energy. The other Aptitudes represent similarly fundamental abstractions.

This conceptual picture of each Aptitude provides the general parameters that guide a psion's use of noetic energy. Using the free-form system here, each psion creates his own techniques on the fly — but these abilities must still abide by the Aptitude's overall paradigm. Thus, a telepath cannot induce cellular regeneration, since that talent is exclusive to a vitakinetic. A PK cannot directly enhance his own perceptions, since that's a clairsentient's area of expertise. The lines can blur but never break.

A psion using this system no longer develops regimented "powers" as he grows stronger. Rather, raising his Mode ratings reflects increasing mastery over the total capabilities offered by his Aptitude. Like a mathematician, a psion can solve many new problems each time he learns a bit more. Unlike a machine, he learns in a holistic manner with each bit of knowledge and skill harmonizing with the others. A skilled psion has raw power but also versatility and a genuine intuitive understanding of his Aptitude.

By applying this understanding, a psion can improvise effects on the spot. He focuses his Aptitude's raw potential to perform some specific function. Braiding his hair without hands exemplifies a simple Biokinesis effect. Telepathy powers include a talent for impressing executives and the ability to mentally enslave rivals.

Since this optional system allows for a greater degree of interpretation of how psi works, the Storyteller should always make sure that the desired effect fits within the Aptitude's established parameters. Further,

she shouldn't be afraid to modify the possible effects to maintain an appropriate game balance. For example, a Norça who alters his voice box to sound more impressive cannot increase his Command dice pool by more than two dice, even with 10 successes on the Psi roll. However, the Storyteller might give him a free bonus on Interrogation rolls.

Improvising Techniques

A psion can develop or improvise techniques with effects relating to one or more of his Aptitude's Modes. Noetic science divides each Aptitude internally into three Modes. You can think of Modes as conceptual tools and structures for learning. In a similar way, mathematicians divide the whole of mathematics into algebra, calculus, probability theory and many other sub-fields. These sub-fields have arbitrarily set boundaries, which mathematicians cross frequently when studying or solving problems. In a similar way, electrokinetics study Electromanipulation separately from Photokinesis or Technokinesis but the three Modes interweave — and possess fundamental similarities. The tek can solve some problems by using only one of his Electrokinesis Modes but others are best addressed by *combining* Electromanipulation, Photokinesis and/or Technokinesis.

The level of a given effect that your character wants to create equals the highest Mode level used. So shorting out a computer using Technokinesis 4 is a level four effect. A telepath using Empathy 1 and Mindshare 2 to tap into a subject's true feelings and confront her with them has a level two effect.

Generating Psi Effects

This improvisational system is designed with flexibility in mind. Toward that end, the result that your character shoots for dictates the difficulty and degree of effect involved.

You roll Psi for the character normally against the difficulty of the desired effect. You must always spend at least one success to trigger the power. Any extra successes from the roll may then be used to "boost" the various parameters of the effect. An example parameter is Range, which defines how far the power can reach. Refer to "Primary Effect Parameters," below, for specifics.

As long as you get one success on the roll, you may spend Psi to improve it. Each Psi point spent counts as two successes. These successes can help overcome the effect's difficulty, just as a rolled success can.

For Example: *Maria Sindwe, sedated and thrown in an airlock by unsavory businessmen, uses an Adaptation 4 technique to prepare her body for the coming vacuum. This hard Biokinesis effect has an inherent +3 difficulty and the sedative in her system adds another +2. Her player rolls Psi, getting three successes — normally a failure. However, she spends two Psi, bringing the total up to eight successes. After the +5 difficulty and spending the mandatory success to activate the power, she has one extra success with which to improve the effect parameters.*

Your character is committed to the general effect declared once you roll Psi. While he can modify the specific parameters with extra successes or additional Psi expenditure, the psion cannot suddenly change the final result. A Legionnaire spitting fire could spend Psi to split the stream and hit two targets or to exhale weakly like a butane lighter. However, he couldn't decide to create a shield of flame or outright "cancel" the power.

If the character rolls no successes or does not spend enough Psi to overcome the technique's difficulty then the power fails — the psion simply didn't gather enough psi energy to generate the desired effect. When a power fails, the psion loses one current Psi. A character with zero current Psi cannot even attempt an effect.

Modifying the Effect Roll

There are a few key modifiers that can adjust the number of successes and/or Psi points spent on the initial Psi roll. Options are listed step-by-step below, with a chart following for quick reference.

• **Power Difficulty:** Psi powers have their own built-in difficulties. **A power normally has a difficulty equal to one less than its effect level.** That is, a level one effect is a standard roll; a level two effect has +1 difficulty; and so forth.

For Example: *Maria manages to flush the sedative from her system and grab hold of the locked airlock door as the air inside rushes out into space. She figures that her enemies might stay in the vicinity, and so, before breaking back into the station, she builds tough retractable claws into her fingers. This Transmogrify 2 effect has an automatic base +1 difficulty.*

• **Boosting the Effect Level:** Your character can actually use his talent with his primary (highest) Mode to achieve greater effects with his other Modes. It's by no means easy but the results can be spectacular. When creating a power, the psion

can increase any of his Mode ratings up to his highest Mode score. Each dot temporarily added to the Mode's rating adds to +1 to the effect's difficulty.

For Example: *Maria figures that her best chance is the captain's voice override — luckily, she has enough air left in her lungs to whisper a few words into the intercom. Copying the captain's voice is a Transmogrify 3 effect, with a +2 difficulty. Maria, however, only has Transmogrify 2. This is one level less than the effect would normally require; however, she has Adaptation 4, so she can boost her Transmogrify up to that level. She only needs one added dot, though, so that adds +1 difficulty to the effect for a total of +3 to the roll.*

• **Reducing the Effect Level:** Obviously, your character can use effects at a level lower than his current Mode rating. The minimum level for a given effect indicates the appropriate Mode rating required to accomplish it. In most cases, there's no need to boost the technique beyond this.

For Example: *Maria, after getting back into the station and vivisecting several businessmen, celebrates her victory with altogether too much alcohol. When the effects become unpleasant, her body reflexively uses Adaptation to cleanse her system and restore her sobriety. She has Adaptation 4 but only needs Adaptation 1 to cleanse her system. Maria could use the base level one effect or boost it up to a level four if she wanted.*

• **Covering a Mode:** Modes are areas of focus that each draw from the same root ability: the Aptitude. As such, your character can try to create any type of effect within his Aptitude — even if he doesn't have a rating in the relevant Mode! This is similar to boosting the effect level, above, except the character doesn't have *any* dots in the needed Mode. The psion uses his training in one area to "cover" his lack of skill in another part of the Aptitude. This isn't easy. After determining the appropriate effect level and applying any modifiers, covering a Mode suffers an *additional* +2 difficulty and one point Willpower cost.

For Example: *Benjamin Schindel, an Orgotek psion skilled in Electromanipulation and Photokinesis, never studied Technokinesis. At the key moment of an important presentation, the building power — and his graphic display — dies. He decides to power the machine himself, using a level four Technokinesis effect, so he can continue his presentation. This incurs +3 difficulty (a level four effect), +4 difficulty (he's is four levels below the needed effect), and +2 difficulty (he has no dots in Technokinesis). Aside from having to beat the staggering +9 difficulty, he must also spend one Willpower to succeed.*

Basic Techniques

Each Aptitude has at least one "basic technique." Regardless of the psion's Mode ratings, he can always use these powers. He can set a basic technique's effect level to any value up to his highest Mode rating.

Basic techniques usually have strong limits on their efficacy, though. For example, the Electrokinesis basic technique Static Burst does damage — but not enough to seriously injure a human. No matter how many levels of lethal damage you buy for this effect, your character still cannot reduce a target below (at worst) "Wounded."

Auxiliary Modes

A psion can create improvised effects with an auxiliary Mode. However, he cannot combine an auxiliary Mode as he can with his three Aptitude Modes — even if he has multiple auxiliary Modes from the same Aptitude. Thus, a biokinetic who also has Pyrokinesis and Telekinesis as auxiliary Modes cannot combine those Modes to improvise effects — even though Pyrokinesis and Telekinesis belong to the Psychokinesis Aptitude.

The chart below lists the relevant difficulty modifiers depending on what you're trying to do. Apply the number from each column (if any) to get the total difficulty for the effect.

If these difficulties seem high, remember that Psi points can be spent to make up the difference. Using a level five technique without spending Psi may be as difficult as draining a swamp with a straw — but spending three Psi points to get six additional successes makes it as easy as draining a swamp with a high-tech work crew.

Mode Level Used	Levels Boosted	Mode Covered?	Difficulty
1	None	No	+0
2	1	—	+1
3	2	Yes (one Mode)	+2
4	3	—	+3
5	4	Yes (two Modes)	+4
—	5	—	+5

• **Mode Special Properties:** Some Modes limit or enhance parameters like range, duration and area of effect. When the psion combines two or three Modes, determine which Mode description

Psionic Teamwork

Sometimes, when reasonable, two or more psions can combine their powers toward a single effect. Vitakinetics often use this technique when struggling with the nearly dead, and psychokinetics pitch in to strengthen their attacks. Each psion involved declares his intent to work together and attempts the technique normally. All the successes rolled and any Psi points spent are pooled together to determine the technique's final success and parameters.

For Example: *Pietro Citrakantha and Damianos Koklos, vitakinetics, attempt to revive a friend several minutes after his brain dies. This is a level five Iatrosis technique; luckily, each has Iatrosis 5. The attempt suffers +4 difficulty for the effect level, plus another +2 because their friend has been dead a bit too long. Pietro rolls three successes, Damianos rolls four successes, and each spends one extra Psi point, for the final equivalent of 11 successes. After accounting for the difficulty and base success, this yields four extra successes.*

fits the power best. Any enhancements and/or penalties for that particular Mode are then applied normally. The Storyteller can also mix and match the modifiers, average them, or ignore them altogether — just bear in mind that such adjustments may detract from the flow of roleplaying.

Investing Psi

Some psi powers can be made to last indefinitely. A psion wishing to establish an enduring effect "invests" an extra point of Psi in the power, separate from any other Psi costs involved. The power then remains active until the psion cancels it. Note that the psion cannot recover the invested point of current Psi until after he cancels the power; it is then restored as normal. The psion can turn off an investment at will, even if the effect was applied to someone else and regardless of the subject's location. A character can invest in a number of different effects at the same time equal to his highest Mode score.

Neither your character invest in a power that increases an Attribute or Ability pool beyond the human maximum nor can your character invest in sensory powers that have more than two parameter points in Sensory Result (see below). Most



generally, your character cannot invest in anything the Storyteller feels provides a benefit far greater than losing a point of current Psi. The technique can be something more useful at the time or more useful given the psion's attitude toward life, but it cannot just be a permanent blanket improvement.

Mastered Effects

A psion can spend experience points or bonus points to improve his skill with a specific effect — thereby "mastering" that technique. This refers to specific improvisable effects, like growing wings or generating an X-ray laser — not to the entire suite of abilities associated with given Mode level.

A mastered effect's difficulty is reduced by two. Mastering an effect costs two bonus points at character creation or twice the effect level with experience. A psion can only master a given effect once.

Primary Effect Parameters

To build an improvised power, certain system questions must be answered. You need to define its duration and range, who or what the power affects and, of course, what it actually does. The four "effect parameters" — Duration, Range, Target, Result — measure and rate these characteristics: Duration measures how long a power lasts; Range describes how far it reaches; Target defines what it can affect; Result measures its actual impact on the environment. Each parameter has a rating from one to five with some higher scores denoting even more powerful effects.

• **Initial Ratings:** Your character receives a "free" starting rating in each of the relevant parameters, equal to the desired technique's effect level:

Effect Level	Parameters Begin At
1	One dot
2	One dot
3	Two dots
4	Two dots
5	Three dots

• **Lowering Parameter Ratings:** You can voluntarily lower any parameter's rating — indeed, the power definition *requires* this sometimes. Most biokinetic techniques affect only one person — the psion himself — and hence have a maximum Target of one. Similarly, if your psion's attack power can affect two people but she only has one enemy in the room, you can lower her power's Target rating.

• **Improving Parameter Ratings:** Extra successes allow you to improve parameter ratings on a one-for-one basis (one Psi point still gives you two successes). You can also spend a single Willpower point in the same manner that you'd use Psi to get two additional successes that you may spend to boost parameters.

A five-dot parameter rating — like a range equal to 30 times the psion's Psi score in meters — approaches the limits of an Aptitude's potential. This can be improved further but each point spent adds a consistent degree of effect. So Range 5 gives you 30 times the reach of Range 1, but Range 8 only reaches twice as far as that. See below for specific information on effect parameters.

• **Using Bioware:** Some bioware can enhance a character's mastery of her Modes. Each dot by which a bioapp "improves" a Mode gives a psion one extra parameter point to spend on relevant effects. It does not change the effect level or effect difficulty in any way.

For Example: *Julio Juarez, a clairsentient, dons a MARS suit, which adds two dots to both his Psychonavigation and Telesthesia. In this system, this translates to two extra parameter points that Julio may spend on Psychonavigation and Telesthesia effects.*

• **Resisting Effects:** Targets can *resist* certain psi powers (primarily those that use the Control Result; see below). A target who rolls more successes than the psion rolls is unaffected by the power. Otherwise, subtract the victim's successes from the power's Result, to a minimum of one dot. If a power successfully affects multiple victims, only the one who resists best subtracts from the power's Result.

The psion builds the power *after* the victim resists but *before* points are subtracted from the Result (see the Power Improvisation Chart below).

For Example: *Wilford Duke, a telepath, gets five successes to mind control Moraine Brusche. Moraine's player rolls four successes on Willpower to resist, dropping the mind control to a mere one level of potency.*

Power Improvisation Chart

Step 1: Determine the effect that your character wants to achieve, and combine the relevant Modes needed.

Step 2: Apply difficulty equal to one less than the effect level used.

Step 3: Add +1 difficulty for each Mode level your psion is short. If "covering" a Mode, also add +2 difficulty and spend a Willpower for each necessary Mode your psion lacks.

Step 4: Roll Psi. If you roll no successes, you have failed and lose one Psi.

Step 5: If the victim can resist the power, his player makes an opposing roll.

Step 6: Spend Psi. Each Psi point spent beyond basic power activation counts as two successes.

Step 7: If you can't or don't spend enough Psi to overcome the difficulty and any resistance, lose one Psi instead and declare that the power has failed.

Step 8: If the power succeeds, use any extra successes to improve effect parameters. See **Initial Ratings**, above, for the default score on all relevant parameters.

Step 9: Subtract points from Result if someone resisted the power.

Step 10: Describe the outcome, applying any modifiers, damage or other appropriate details as necessary.

Parameter Descriptions

Now, finally, come detailed explanations of the effect parameters. They are designed as simple, quick references that work with equal ease on anything from a pyrokinetic blast to a telepathic probe. The Storyteller should adjust individual effects at her discretion in the interests of the story and of game balance.

Impressive Feat

The Mode descriptions here summarize the basic abilities associated with each level of mastery. Sometimes a psion wants a bit of extra *oomph* — instead of freezing a pond, a cryokinetic might write her name on it in ice or reduce its temperature far below zero. Clearly, unusual skill or power is required. The psi power remains a Cryokinesis 3 technique — but an extra dimension has been added.

The price the psion pays for such feats is simple: improving the effect parameters costs double.

For Example: *Ren Jiao-long, an electrokinetic, uses a Photokinesis 3 effect to analyze an object's chemical structure. This is based on Spectrum Sight, a level two ability, but Jiao-long wants to use his full ability. Although Spectrum Sight provides the necessary effect, this analysis applies it in an extremely sophisticated fashion. The power has a default Range 2; if he wants a Range 5, he must pay* six *points in the parameter instead of two.*

For Example: *Jiao-long later uses Photokinesis 3 to create a laser that inflicts a base four lethal damage levels — an impressive feat based on the level one power "Illumination." This requires a level six Damage Result, which costs him eight parameter points.*

Target

This chart describes the limits on "how much" a psi power can affect. Target is divided into three categories: Mass, Subjects, and Area. Use the single Target parameter best suited to a specific effect.

For instance, Pyrokinesis can use each of the columns depending on how the Mode is used: melting an object uses Mass, burning several enemies uses Subjects, warming a room uses Area. Telesthesia can use any one of the columns similarly: analyzing structures uses Mass, enhancing your hearing uses the Subjects column (since *you* are a living subject), studying a room uses Area.

A psion can voluntarily reduce the mass, number of subjects, or area affected. However, the intent still dictates the column applied, and the Storyteller has final say on how to most appropriately present the effect.

Mass: This column determines how much mass a psion can affect when he manipulates inanimate objects directly. This works for effects like telekinetically lifting cargo bins or teleporting rubble away.

Subjects: This column determines how many human targets a psion can affect simultaneously. Use this chart for techniques like establishing a Mindshare-based communications network, firing a photokinetic laser, and yanking friends out of danger with Transmassion.

Area: This column measures the maximum spherical diameter a psion affects when he manipulates (or studies) the environment, rather than a specific physical target. The psion can form the area into another similarly-sized shape (say, to fill a rectangular room instead), but cannot leave gaps within the space — so a pyrokinetic could fill a room with fire, but couldn't have the flames avoid specific individuals therein. A psion can elect to have area effects that are centered on himself move with him for the power duration. This chart works for powers like psychometrically studying a corner store, filling a hall with photokinetic holograms, and dampening the electricity in a room with Technokinesis.

Rating	Mass	Subjects	Area
•	Psi score in kg	one	one meter
••	Psi x 10 kg	two	Psi score in meters
•••	Psi x 25 kg	three	Psi x 3 meters
••••	Psi x 50 kg	five	Psi x 5 meters
•••••	Psi x 150 kg	seven	Psi x 10 meters
+1 point adds	Psi x 50 kg	two	Psi x 10 meters

Duration

Psi effect durations fall into one of two categories: instant and continuous. An instant effect lasts a single turn, while a continuous power can go on for minutes, even hours (though it can be terminated by the psion at any time). The exact length of time depends on the technique's Duration parameter. When a psion improvises a power, he chooses whether it is instant or continuous based on what he wants and what his Modes allow him to do.

Whether instant or continuous, an effect is normally subject to the Target parameter when determining the degree of impact it has. A *reactive power* is an exception to this. A reactive power automatically affects each subject who fulfills an appropriate condition (anyone who touches the psion, anyone who steps on a certain stone) while it's in effect. Each time a reactive power activates, it drains one point of current Psi from its creator.

Rating	Duration
•	three turns
••	10 minutes
•••	30 minutes
••••	60 minutes
•••••	one scene
+1 point adds	one additional scene

Range

This parameter falls into one of two categories: Short Range and Long Range. Use the former when creating a delicate and precise effect (healing patients at a distance, stretching your limbs while keeping them functional). Use the latter for imprecise effects that require no fine manipulation (firing ice bolts at enemies, sensing through walls).

Rating	Short Range	Long Range
•	one meter	Psi score in meters
••	two meters	Psi x 5 meters
•••	three meters	Psi x 10 meters
••••	five meters	Psi x 20 meters
•••••	seven meters	Psi x 30 meters
+1 point adds	two meters	Psi x 10 meters

Result

Some psi powers enhance Abilities, while others gather information. Some techniques heal, while others harm. In truth, with psi, almost anything is possible. The charts below measure how well the power does what it does — the impact it has upon the universe.

Result is the most involved of the four primary effect parameters. The most relevant categories are the Damage Result and Modifier Result. The former comes into play when the effect inflicts some form of damage; the latter is used when the technique alters a Trait in some way. The power descriptions provide examples of each.

Those aren't the only Result options, though. Other Result charts address circumstances not covered by modifiers or damage — mind control, movement, sensory ability, and the like. You may use *any* of these charts to describe psi power results, as long as the chart suits the effect well.

Note that some Result tables may only apply to a single Aptitude, or even just a single Mode. They're all listed here for ease of reference.

Damage Result

This chart is used when a psi power causes or removes levels of damage directly. This damage may be bashing or lethal, depending on the power effect itself (it's hard to simply "bruise" someone with a power that degrades flesh to sludge).

Inflicting Damage: How the damage applies also depends on the power. Some effects work much like firearms — your character must hit the subject first, reduce the damage effect by the listed soak and then roll damage. Powers that operate this way state explicitly "roll to hit the target." Otherwise, the power strikes automatically; once any soak is subtracted, the victim takes the remaining damage outright (if his soak exceeds the damage, he still takes a minimum of one level). In either case, you first determine the full Damage Result from the chart below.

Healing Damage: Healing simply functions in the opposite fashion. The bashing column notes the levels of bashing damage the psion can heal and the lethal column the number of lethal levels.

Individual power definitions may restrict the amount of damage a psion can inflict or heal.

Rating	Bashing	Lethal
•	2 levels	n/a
••	3 levels	n/a
•••	4 levels	1 level
••••	5 levels	2 levels
•••••	6 levels	3 levels
+1 point adds	1 level	1 level

Your character can "store" an effect for later use to damage or heal the target at some future point. She can also create a reactive damage result (so an electrokinetic might sheath herself in an electric aura that shocks anyone who touches her). Either application adds another +1 difficulty to your character's initial roll. The power's Duration determines how long your character can store an effect.

Option: Damage Boost

Some damaging effects — such as attacks based on low levels of Pyrokinesis, Cryokinesis and Electromanipulation — ignore artificial soak (armor and the like) but must still overcome the target's natural soak. Others — like those associated with Algesis and more powerful Psychomorphing effects — bypass any soak rating at all.

So that the latter types of effects don't totally outstrip the former, the Storyteller may want to give a bonus of two extra damage levels to powers reduced by a target's natural soak. Such powers still have comparatively reduced effectiveness on average but this helps level the playing field somewhat.

Modifier Result

A power can adjust a character's Traits in a number of ways. Blocking pain adds dice to cancel wound penalties. Enhanced reflexes cancel multiple action penalties. Noetically created darkness adds a difficulty to sight-based Awareness rolls. Enhanced physical stamina makes the subject more resistant to lethal attacks. This variety of options is represented by two categories: Bonus and Difficulty.

Bonus: This is the added number of successes or the level of effect the target enjoys for the power's duration. Bonus can be applied in one of two ways: as automatic successes to a specific Ability, or as extra levels to any other Trait (Attributes, Willpower, Psi, Backgrounds, Health Levels). While spending the bonus on a single Ability provides a limited benefit, it *guarantees* the character the successes. Added levels for other Traits give the character more dice to roll but there's no guarantee of success. Any effect that increases a target's Psi rating is subject to Storyteller approval, since it can tremendously enhance the character's further Psi use.

For Example: *Maria Sindwe uses Transmogrify 3 to increase her soak. This gives her a Result 2, which improves her bashing* or *lethal soak by two. She can spend a point in the parameter for a Result 3, adding another soak level.*

Difficulty: Pretty much the reverse of the bonus category, this lists the difficulty the target suffers to a single action for the power's duration.

In the end, a power's Result is limited by the effect's definition. A cryokinetic ice pack cannot negate the "Maimed" dice pool penalty in one shot — no ice pack could!

Rating	Bonus	Difficulty
•	+1 success/level	+1
••	+2 successes/levels	+2
•••	+3 successes/levels	+3
••••	+4 successes/levels	+4
•••••	+5 successes/levels	+5
+1 point adds	+2 successes/levels	+1

The modifier, whether bonus or difficulty, applies to the turn as a whole. If the subject takes multiple actions, the modifier is split as evenly as possible among the actions taken.

Communication Result

Some Modes (primarily those in Telepathy and Electrokinesis) involve communication exchange. This chart outlines the degree of communication possible, depending on the result attained.

Rating	Communication Possibilities
•	A handful of words (yes, no, simple signals)
••	Basic concepts
•••	General speech or specific-subject technical conversation
••••	Workable language
•••••	Surpassing normal speech; intuitive understanding
+1 point adds	Increasing nuance and efficiency of communication

Control Result

Mind and body control effects (which can be created with Electrokinesis, Psychokinesis, Telepathy, Vitakinesis, and even Biokinesis) impose the psion's will upon that of a target. The degree of this control depends on the final rating achieved, as indicated in the chart below. Although subject to the power's influence, the victim may perform subsequent or even multiple actions that don't contradict the psi effect.

A target can use Willpower to resist a mind control effect and Might to combat physical control. The target may only resist if she's aware of the control (this encourages subtle use of psi over applications of brute force). Each success rolled reduces the Control Result by one, modifying the command appropriately. Specific alterations to your character's desired effect are left up to the Storyteller but should somehow suit the original intention.

For Example: *Andrea Deitrich uses Telekinesis 3 to make a guard fire his laser carbine at a fellow guard instead of at Deitrich. She gets seven total successes — easily enough to accomplish the intended effect. The guard gets five successes*

on his Might roll, though, reducing Deitrich's domination to two. The guard struggles against the telekinetic control, firing his weapon harmlessly against the wall instead of at his comrade.

For Example: *Wilford Duke hears a guard approaching around the corner. Duke, telepathically linked to Deitrich, saw the difficulty in psionically manhandling a target. Wilford tries the subtle approach instead. He applies Psychbending 2 to make the guard think she heard footsteps running away behind her and decide to check it out. This is a major degree of control ("turn around and follow the sound"), but since the guard has no reason to think it's merely a phantom noise in her mind, she doesn't get to resist. Duke's player rolls six successes, enough to achieve the desired effect.*

Rating	Degree of Control
•	Subconscious (you forget the name of someone you just met; sneeze)
••	Minor (you remember seeing someone other than who was actually there; face the other direction)
•••	Major (you now consider a sworn enemy a close friend; put away your pistol)
••••	Severe/Complex (you forget your native language; climb up that ladder and put on a vac suit)
•••••	Epic (you assume an entirely new personality; reprogram that computer and attack anyone who enters the room)
+1 point adds	An additional degree of complexity

Disability Result

Disabilities can be cured or inflicted just as damage can. Primarily used for Vitakinesis effects (though Biokinesis and Telepathy may also apply), this chart describes how many "levels" of disability a given effect causes or removes. The disabilities are split into "minor" and "severe" categories, since some ailments are mere inconveniences compared to much more devastating conditions. See the "Sample Disabilities" sidebar for examples of each type.

A target can use Resistance or Willpower (whichever is higher) to resist an effect that induces a physical disability. Meditation or Willpower is used to oppose a mental disability. Most imposed mental disabilities should use the Control Result system above, unless it obviously does not apply.

For Example: *Anaharath Khol attempts to cure a friend's blindness, healing three levels of disability. Since true blindness involves four levels of Severe disability, her friend has only one level of disability left, and can see vague shapes. One more application of Vitakinesis is sure to do the trick.*

Rating	Minor	Severe
•	2 levels	n/a
••	3 levels	n/a
•••	4 levels	1 level
••••	5 levels	2 levels
•••••	6 levels	3 levels
+1 point adds	1 level	1 level

Sample Disabilities

Level	Minor Disability Type
1	Numbness in one limb; common cold; drunkenness; acne
2	Seizure; chicken pox; disorientation
3	Hallucination; influenza
4	Despair; momentary paralysis
5	Rage; terror
6	Temporary unconsciousness
8	Trauma aftereffects; hormonal imbalances
Level	**Severe Disability Type**
1	Small tumor; permanent cosmetic damage (baldness)
2	Nerves dead in one limb; amnesia
3	Addiction; malign tumor; learning disorder
4	Blindness; AIDS; psychosis; symptoms of old age
5	Severe cancer; Ebola; deep psychosis; paralysis
6	Taint infection; symptoms of extreme old age
7	Complete mental or physical degeneration
8	Brain death (if recoverable at all)

A toxin or disease converts to a number of disability levels equal to its Toxin Rating. Usually, toxins with Toxin Rating 1-3 correspond to Minor Disabilities. Toxins with Toxin Rating 4+ correspond to Severe Disabilities.

Movement Result

Powers that impart or remove velocity use this chart. Instant powers simply increase or decrease the target's velocity, after which the object once again speeds up or slows down as it naturally would. Continuous powers either provide a constant motive force or a constant "drag." Bear in mind that the psion can move an object in any one of three dimensions.

These ratings may obviously increase the subject's running, leaping, swimming or climbing speed. They may *also* be used to give the target a new form of locomotion. The psion may initially spend extra successes to "cling" to walls, gain the ability to fly, move through zero gravity, or even burrow into the earth (generally achieved with Biokinesis or Psychokinesis). Moving on a vertical (or near-vertical) surface costs one success, flight or 0g movement costs two successes, tunneling costs three. The character then starts from a standstill, with increased velocity applied as shown below.

For Example: *Andrea Deitrich (Psi 6) wants to fly to a rooftop 25 meters away. She'll get to the roof in a single turn if she spends five successes (base two to gain flight, plus three more to move at 30 meters per turn). Alternatively, Andrea could spend a mere three successes to make a tremendous leap of up to 30 meters.*

Rating	Velocity
•	Half Psi score in km/h
••	Psi x 3 km/h
•••	Psi x 5 km/h
••••	Psi x 10 km/h
•••••	Psi x 15 km/h
+1 point adds	Psi x 5 km/h

One kilometer per hour (km/h) very roughly corresponds to one meter per turn.

Precision Result

For some powers (most notably Clairsentience, Telepathy and Teleportation), it's the psion's familiarity with a target, not the distance, that defines his psi range. If the psion cannot visualize the subject precisely, he can take his best guess — or allow the power to "fail," costing the minimum one Psi.

The Familiarity column below describes how well the psion must know the target. If the psion does not know the target well enough, the Accuracy column describes the accuracy of his guess (obviously, the more points spent, the greater the degree of accuracy). So with a one Precision Result, a teleporter can hop to a bookstore he knows very well. Teleporting to a market he doesn't know that well can be accomplished with roughly 15% accuracy. Whether he actually gets where he wants to go is determined by Storyteller fiat, but at least a portion of the details will be correct. In this case, the jumper might arrive in a similar market on the wrong continent.

Rating	Accuracy	Familiarity
•	15%	"Known" (one year constant contact, have a psi print, it's in view)
••	40%	"Familiar" (six months constant contact, good friend)
•••	60%	"Acquaintance" (three months constant contact, current associate)
••••	80%	"Remembered" (one week constant contact, long-ago mentor)
•••••	95%	"Named" (evocative memory, item is one of a kind)
+1 point adds	0.5%	n/a

"Constant" contact averages 10 hours a day. Double the necessary time for contact averaging six hours a day, and again for less frequent but still regular contact. Once the psion has grown familiar with an area, the memory fades very slowly.

Sensory Result

A number of Aptitudes can generate special sensory effects (Clairsentience can remote view, Vitakinesis can diagnose physical condition, Biokinesis can create night vision, Electrokinesis can "read" the electromagnetic spectrum). The visual scope involved is much like that of normal perception. When a clear "looks" in a given direction, he can sense things as far away as the Range parameter allows. He also sees things a little bit off to either side, much as normal peripheral vision would.

The actual range depends on the type of sensory modification applied. Powers that allow the psion to "access" a specific subject's perspective (on past, present or future) or to scrutinize something in detail require being familiar with the subject or its psi print and fall under the Precision category. A psion "looking" behind himself, casting his senses through a wall or generating sonar use the Long Range scale. To simply sharpen a psion's natural senses, it's generally easier to instead use the Modifier Result to add dice to his Perception-based dice pools.

If a clairsentient casts his senses through time, use Duration *instead of* Range. This is the temporal distance into the future or past that he can see. Some senses use the Area Target instead of (or in addition to) the parameters above. This represents

a spherical area around the psion that he senses constantly, much like normal human hearing.

Projecting one's senses beyond the normal human scope (through walls, originating from a single remote point of view) requires first spending one success. To look from a subject's point of view in the past or future or to allow for changing perspective in the present costs two successes initially. Sensing past or future as if actually "there" costs three points to start with. The degree of detail gained is then determined by any remaining successes, as noted on the chart below.

Result	Sense Detail
•	General data ("four blobs here and an opening there")
••	Basic information ("those two are humans and those two are rocks")
•••	Standard detail (distinguish between individuals, sense distances)
••••	Subjective or abstract information (danger, "the way to Tokyo")
•••••	Highly accurate information (detailed description of individuals, determine spatial dimensions to the centimeter)
+1 point adds	Unique or highly specific details

Survival Result

"Survival" in this case refers to overcoming environmental hazards. Personal disabilities — blinding, poison, etc — falls under the Disability Result. Depending on the environment, some psi effects completely negate any hazards. Biokinesis and Vitakinesis are the most obvious but some Electrokinesis and Psychokinesis effects are also appropriate. Such techniques include forming a thick hide; drawing in ambient heat to resist frigid temperatures; processing toxins in a poisonous environment; or creating a shield to protect against harmful radiation.

The simplest way to convey this is to use the Modifier Result to provide the subject with additional levels to counteract any harmful environmental effects. If the levels purchased or soak added is greater than the environment's damage effect, the harsh surroundings have no impact. The same goes for extra dice purchased to resist sedatives and other toxic effects. If the environment inflicts damage automatically but the psion has an appropriate defense — say Adaptation, Photokinesis or Iatrosis versus radiation — instead translate each level of automatic damage into three damage dice and roll



the result after subtracting the character's relevant Mode score from the total as a soak.

This also applies if the psion uses his powers to protect others from harmful environments.

For Example: *Cryokinesis 4 can snuff a fire, using the Modifier Result to effectively suck away heat from the flames until the fire finally dies out.*

Utility Result

Biokinesis, Psychokinesis, and even Electrokinesis can be used to effectively channel psi energy as a tool. So a biokinetic can spit trauma foam onto someone else's wound and a psychokinetic can shape noetic energy into a wrench-like shape. If no other Result fits the particular tool function, refer to this chart to find the appropriate effect.

When a power mimics the effects of a device, the Tool column compares the technique to purchasable technology. It describes, for example, whether wire clippers created from pure psi energy are actually any good.

When an effect is not easily quantifiable in system terms, the Application column acts as a catch-all to measure how well the psion performs the effect. Squishing yourself into living paste to squeeze under a door, for example, uses the Application column.

Rating	Tool	Application
•	Semi-functional	Pitiful
••	Working approximation	Sub-standard
•••	Quality substitute	Fitting for the Mode used
••••	Exceptional equivalent	Exceptional
•••••	Superior	Superb

+1 point adds appropriate degree of added finesse

Aptitude Descriptions

Now that you have the rules on creating improvisational effects, it's time to look at the Aptitudes from which they're drawn. Each Aptitude is described briefly in terms of what a psion with it can do. A section on benefits and drawbacks specific to that Aptitude comes next. Then comes a description of a basic technique that all those with the Aptitude share.

The three Modes are covered next. Each Mode has general benchmarks for each level of ability (there's also a quick-reference table on p. 217 of each Aptitude, its Modes and their benchmarks). Following this is an extensive list of examples showing how you can create a number of different effects with various Mode levels. Certain examples restrict the Result you can buy, or impose a limitation — for example, the Transmogrify 1 power Bony Plates allows extra soak but only four dice worth. This kind of restriction represents a constraint imposed by the nature of the power itself. If the psion uses a different approach to the same problem, the restrictions may be different. Similarly, the Storyteller can always change this aspect of the power to reflect her perspective on game reality.

Do not expect perfectly balanced limitations — after all, you can escape handcuffs by cutting off your hand or by charming the man with the key and, in the end, it's up to you and your fellow players to maintain appropriate game balance.

Biokinesis

A psion with Biokinesis has unusual control over his own physical form. His mind tangles itself in his biomass, at times creating feeling without nerves, thought without a brain and life in once-dead cells. He commands the structure and form of his body from gross physical details to cellular interactions. More than that, he can supercede the normal functioning of his body, controlling its motion and functions with will alone. He can spin his finger bones in their sockets, survive hard vacuum for short periods, remain alive when reduced to organic paste and create functional wings.

Benefits and Drawbacks

Investment: A biokinetic can use a variant form of Psi investment (see p. 164) to make long-term changes to his body. The psion invests as normal, but gets the Psi point back after three days even if he continues to maintain the effect for another three months (or if the effect itself only lasted 10 minutes).

Reflexive Techniques: A biokinetic may reflexively activate one purely defensive Adaptation power per turn, even while unconscious. Reflexive effects don't count toward figuring out your character's total actions in the turn.

Transformation Time: Biokinesis Modes require time to invoke — at least several minutes per level. A psion can hurry this, changing in a single turn, but risks injuring himself. The damage of this quick change equals the effect level minus the level of Adaptation employed, if any (Adaptation helps the psion weather the strain on his body). So a level five effect using Transmogrify 5 and Adaptation 3 inflicts two dice of bashing damage. This damage cannot be soaked.

A Biokinetic who hurries a transformation, whether it causes damage or not, feels ill and out

of sorts for one to two hours afterwards. The player is encouraged to roleplay this (the Storyteller may wish to inflict increased difficulties if the player is disinclined to do so).

Basic Technique

Biosense: A biokinetic perceives the energy patterns that all living things in the universe share. With a particular affinity for organic material and life force, a biokinetic can concentrate to separate nearby life forms from the ambient noetic flux.

A psion can use Biosense to detect life in a small radius around him. He can also use it directionally, checking a selected point in space some distance away. Regardless of the Result rating, the psion can only learn the life form's location and general size.

Adaptation

Every living body wishes to survive. When danger threatens, the heart beats faster, adrenaline levels increase, and perceptions sharpen. When disease or poison enters the system, the body marshals defenses against it.

Adaptation takes the body and mind's fundamental drive to survive to a new level. The psion reflexively protects himself against recognizable dangers that no other human could survive.

• **Resistance:** These techniques help a psion throw off the effects of damage or adverse environments. Only small threats can be completely negated. Resistance can also be used to reduce the strain on the body from a very fast transformation or a shift that unbalances some physical process. A psion can resist acute effects with this level of mastery, but not terribly well — he has no time to adapt.

•• **Acclimatization:** At this level, a psion can adjust his form to best suit the environment. A small effect would be changing the eyes to reduce glare; at the highest levels, this can be used to survive Jupiter's atmosphere unprotected.

••• **Manual Override:** A psion can use Adaptation 3 effects to override a normal physical process or to make it hyperactive. He can shut off the flow of blood, speed up his metabolism to remove unwanted weight, or put his reactions in overdrive.

•••• **Preparation:** The psion's body trusts his assessment of potential dangers. Therefore, he can use Adaptation to defend against a perceived future threat as well as his immediate environment. This means that if the psion sees someone about to shoot him with a laser, he can defend against it instinctively with Adaptation. Similarly, if he knows that leaving a room could kill him, he can use Adaptation to adhere to the floor.

••••• **Survival:** An Adaptation 5 effect enables the psion to cope with even the most serious physical threats, reducing — if not negating — their effect. The psion can invest Psi in additional Wounded health levels (at most three per attempt).

Sample Adaptation Effects

Bounce Back (Level 1): Recover an extra level of bashing damage when you heal naturally.

Comfort Range (Level 1): Feel comfortable in deep winter or high summer, no matter what you wear. If you invest Psi in this effect, you can reduce the daily damage from temperature extremes by one lethal damage level.

Hot Shower (Level 1): Shed dirt, grime, and spilled syrup. Relax your neck muscles. Rinse sweat out of your hair — all without the inconvenience and dampness of an actual shower. Investing Psi makes the effects constant. This effect is invisible under normal circumstances, but looks quite bizarre when you're filthy or in an environment that gets you dirty fast.

You could purchase this power as a Modifier Result to Style and/or Meditation pools. Alternately, buy a Utility Result and receive no system bonus save that of cleanliness.

Purify (Level 1): Sweep your system clean of things like minor illnesses, fatigue poisons, and alcohol.

Gills (Level 2): Gills are a useful adjunct to the Fins effect, adapting you to breathe underwater. A similar power, with a higher Result rating, allows you to survive even a vacuum for hours on end.

Shock Resistance (Level 2): If you accidentally grab hold of a source of direct current, you have two options: unlock your muscles or learn to enjoy it. Both of these alternatives are available at Adaptation 2.

Take a Beating (Level 2): When you take damage consistently — once or twice per turn — it becomes an environmental factor. This applies whether it's a bunch of thugs beating you or a rain of stones. You can use this to improve your soak but only if you're just taking the damage. If you're dodging or otherwise trying to avoid the injury, it becomes a situation rather than an environment.

Visual Acuity (Level 2): Improve visual acuity in a low-light environment or a constant sandstorm. Alternately, negate glare penalties. Note that eyes adapted for dim lighting may take an extra penalty from sudden glare until you adapt

again. A similar penalty may apply going from glare to darkness.

This effect modifies all dice pools penalized by glare, darkness or other similar conditions; alternatively, you may add the points as automatic successes to a single appropriate Ability (Awareness, Investigation).

Chemical Celibacy (Level 3): Turn off those annoying hormones when they start to distract you.

Heightened Reflexes (Level 3): Speed up your reflexes, thereby reducing multiple action penalties. Shifters have learned that maintaining heightened reflexes for great lengths of time tends to have negative effects on their health, though.

Memorization (Level 3): "Set" your brain temporarily to dump everything you sense into long-term memory. There might be a test later!

Muscle Development (Level 3): Speed up the effects of exercise. Purchase the resulting increase in your Physical Attributes with experience points, not invested Psi — but this reduces the *time* you have to put into the process. (Can also be a Psychomorphing 2 technique.)

Pain Resistance (Level 3): Remove current wound penalties resulting from pain by turning off your pain centers.

Better Part of Valor (Level 4): Now that your body trusts you, you can take any number of *preemptive* actions when threatened by a bunch of thugs. For example, you can toughen yourself up, enhance your running speed (adjusting yourself for four-limbed locomotion) or emit a vile skunk-like odor. Adaptation 4 can simulate many Transmogrify and Psychomorphing powers, but only in a defensive manner.

Energy Resistance (Level 5): Stand in the middle of a raging inferno, swim a lake of virulent acid, walk on a subway rail and romp amid lethal radiation — it's all in a day's work.

Resiliency (Level 5): Give yourself extra Wounded health levels — up to three per power use.

Ultimate Survivor (Level 5): Walk through a collapsing building, shrugging off the rubble that falls on you as unimportant. Add as much to your soak as you can afford.

Psychomorphing

Biokinetics can adjust the internal structure of their bodies with the Psychomorphing Mode. Due to this ability to consciously manipulate cellular structures, the difference between "self" and "other" blurs — one cell looks very much like another. This Mode offers a wide selection of subtle abilities, but it can be hard for the trained shifter to work on a grander scale.

• **Biokinetic Awareness:** This gives the psion a more detailed understanding of the effects of Biokinesis on the body, expanding his Biosense and allowing him to detect biokinetic modifications. If the psion takes enough extra time, it can also be used to reduce the effects of Biokinesis botches.

•• **Internal Adjustments:** The core Psychomorphing effect, this allows a psion to fine-tune his inner self. The psion can invest Psi in these adjustments to make them enduring. For example, he can change his odor, close wounds, and optimize his muscles and bones for a given task.

••• **Incorporation:** A psion can use level 3 Psychomorphing effects to mix something else into his biomass, maintaining as many of its original characteristics as he sees fit. A psion can use this to store a person's DNA, to integrate bioware or to eat almost anything. If a psion knows he is being poisoned before it spreads through his system, he can incorporate the poison and render it harmless. A proper incorporation takes a good deal of time.

•••• **Metamanipulation:** The psion does not depend on nerves, organs, or joints but can control even mechanical bodily processes "on the fly." He can easily bend his fingers to touch the back of his hand, use his feet as a second pair of hands, even control a body part linked to him by the smallest thread of flesh.

••••• **Manipulate Others:** At this level, the psion can shift other organic beings upon attaining physical contact. Unless the victim also has Biokinesis, the shifted flesh no longer truly "belongs" to her, and can become necrotic in short order (see "Living Vicariously"). Manipulating others adds +2 to difficulty and costs one Willpower. The psion can use this power to reduce an opponent to sludge or to "enhance" her with Biokinesis abilities. A shifter cannot invest Psi in someone else, though.

Sample Psychomorphing Effects

Analyze Adaptation (Level 1): Get a detailed picture of someone's current biokinetic alterations. A Sensory Result 2 describes "all her dangerous alterations," "her most artful modifications" or some other appropriate list. More successes reveals all the modifications she has.

Spot Norça (Level 1): Determine if someone shows the residual physical effects of regular shapeshifting. A Norça can "conceal" these traces with Psychomorphing 2, but only when no other body modifications are in effect. Use Sensory Re-

Living Vicariously

Eventually, biokinetic alteration applied to another person fades as that individual's natural "biological template" reasserts itself. The length of time before the subject returns to normal is determined by the effect's Duration.

Once the effect dissipates, the subject's flesh may turn into dead tissue due to the extreme treatment it received. The body decays like any other dead flesh — gruesomely and within a matter of days.

The amount of her body affected in this fashion depends on the degree of change she underwent initially, as noted by the technique's initial result level less her natural soak. So a character with Stamina 3 subtracts three from the Biokinesis effect's four rating — she suffers one lethal damage level as a portion of her body atrophies. If the subject's soak is higher than the Result's rating, her body was hardy enough to successfully combat the after-effects of biokinetic manipulation.

An individual suffering in this fashion can heal the damage through immediate treatment from advanced medical techniques or with the aid of a helpful vitakinetic. Otherwise, the body part withers and becomes useless (vital organs must be replaced with cloned organs). The brain is resistant to this disturbing effect for reasons that noeticists have yet to understand.

sult for this and other sensory effects. This requires a Sensory Result 1, unless combined with Analyze Adaptation.

Adjust Biomass (Level 2): Adjust your muscle and bone resiliency and strength. This improves one Physical Attribute but adds a difficulty to all rolls involving another Physical Attribute. Thus, you could take a Modifier Result 4 to add five dice to your Strength and a +4 difficulty to Dexterity-based rolls.

Bloodhound's Bane (Level 2): Change your scent to something that a tracking hound will not recognize as an animal's. You can also reduce it to almost nonexistent levels. The scent of your clothing and leftover odor on your skin and hair may give you away, though.

Automending (Level 2): Close wounds, reconstruct tissue, and fuse broken bones. This power can heal even lethal damage but cannot regenerate lost organs. It can only work with the flesh you still have, and can only heal wounds that you would have healed eventually by natural means.

Unbreakable Grip (Level 2): Immediately after grabbing someone, fuse your bones and lock your muscles into place. This adds dice to all attempts to maintain your grip. Shifters who do things like this usually add in Adaptation 2 to avoid crippling their hands.

Incorporate Bioware (Level 3): Subsuming bioapps into your flesh can give a small bonus (up to three dice) on rolls to use it. It can also increase your Tolerance by one, while the bioware remains assimilated. You will have to either invest Psi in this effect or renew the bonus with a new power whenever you use the bioware.

Tear Bioarmor (Level 3): If someone in biotech armor grabs you, you can try to momentarily incorporate it, subsuming a portion just long enough to shred it. Since the armor cannot soak this damage, each level of lethal damage you inflict reduces its armor rating by one.

Backward Grapple (Level 4): You can often surprise an enemy behind you by reversing your arm, leg, and neck joints and grappling with him. Use the normal rules for clinches — but if you succeed in both the Psi roll and the clinch roll, apply the Modifier Result as difficulty to your enemy's next action.

Escape (Level 4): Compress your hands to slip out of handcuffs. Dislocate your limbs to get out of bonds. Add Modifier Result successes to Athletics or Legerdemain rolls involving escape.

Flesh Mastery (Level 4): Remove wound penalties resulting from damage to the flesh. Since you no longer need working muscles to move your various body parts, it doesn't matter if someone has smashed your elbow or hamstrung you. You can combine this in a single effect with the Adaptation 3 technique Pain Resistance to remove wound penalties entirely.

Ooze (Level 4): You cannot change your general shape without Transmogrify, but you can add extra joints if you want to crawl through narrow spaces.

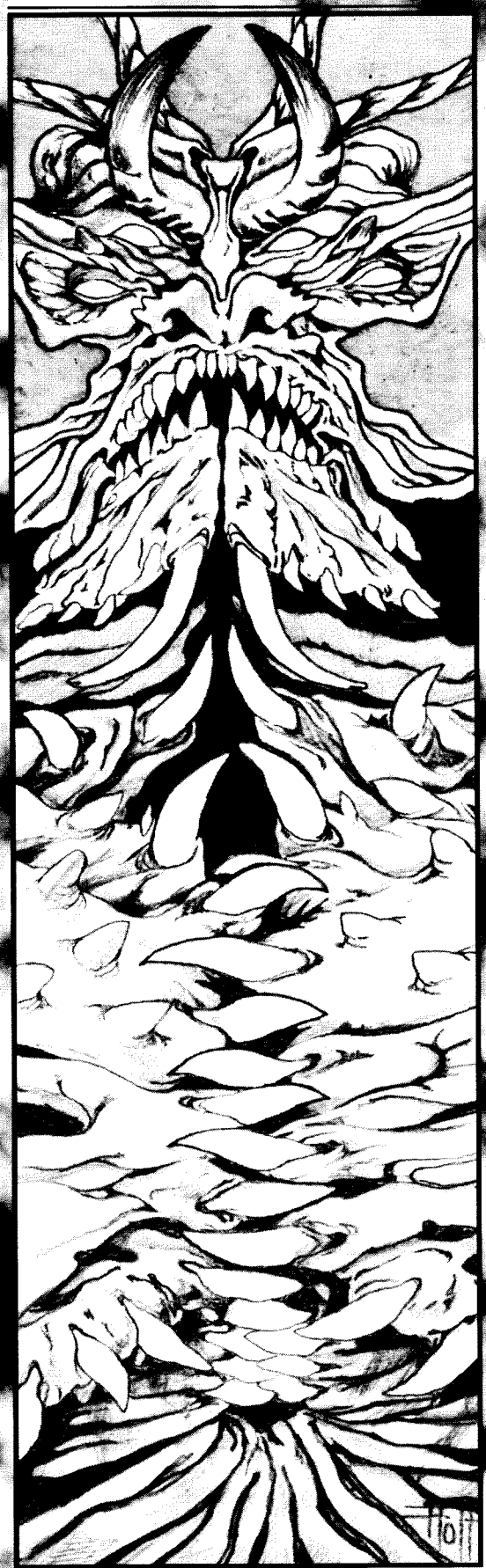
Waste (Level 5): With but a touch, this horrific attack turns a target's flesh to a dead and structureless biological paste.

Transmogrify

A biokinetic can make obvious, overt changes to his physical form. A psion using this Mode can sculpt himself into nearly any shape.

• **Gross Changes:** Such effects alter the psion's physical form in major, imprecise, and unsubtle ways. The psion can armor himself, grow tentacles, and sprout new eyes or claws. At this level, the psion should avoid reshaping his vital organs, as this might kill him, or removing his mundane limbs, since the new ones do not work very well.

• • **Preserve Functionality:** The psion can now maintain human abilities, like thinking, reaching for things, seeing, hearing and eating even when the



altered shape makes this difficult. For example, the psion might flatten himself to pancake width and replace limbs with pseudopodia without taking large dice pool penalties (or dying).

••• **Precise Changes:** The psion can now make precise and subtle changes to his shape. Changing the psion's appearance exemplifies this class of effects, as does weaving a limb through a web of laser beams.

•••• **Create Functionality:** The psion can now add entirely new capabilities to his physical form or make complex alterations to it. First, he makes the basic change — growing wings, developing poison sacs, or acquiring rudimentary sonar. The psion can invest in this change. Then, while the change persists, the psion can enhance these mundane capabilities with a psi power, allowing such implausible effects as flight (with wings) and exhaling vast clouds of poison gas (with venom sacs). The psion cannot invest in extra enhancements of this sort.

••••• **Behavioral Changes:** Transmogrify 5 effects imbue flesh with "a mind of its own." The psion can break off a piece of his flesh and give it a rudimentary intellect. He can train himself to draw and fire almost instantly on spotting a hunted target. Under torture, he can arrange to fall asleep whenever severely distressed or in significant pain. Many other effects can be constructed.

Sample Transmogrify Effects

Arms Race (Level 1): Shift excess mass to your hand and shape it into a weapon — a bone sword, a serrated knife or even a whip of sharkskin-like flesh. Since your weapon grows out of your hand, no one can disarm you; unfortunately, the weapon is at best barely as effective as its technological equivalent. You need not get many fine details correct, though you must use Melee to fight with it. A variant on this effect allows you to manifest a simple tool instead.

Such tools and weapons *look* like biokinetic alterations, not actual equipment. It takes Transmogrify 3 and a high Precision Result to make them look real. Buy the Precision Result and the Utility Result up from the default score separately, since they measure different things.

Bony Plates (Level 1): Armor yourself with visible, bony plates. This adds up to four dice to your soak (including lethal effects). If you also use Adaptation 1, you can armor yourself reflexively when someone attacks.

Eyestalks (Level 1): Sprout a cluster of eyestalks atop your head to give yourself 360-degree vision.

Closed Skull (Level 2): Shift away your eyes or cover them with bone — without losing the natural human ability to see! Use the Utility Result chart.

Glide (Level 2): Slow a fall using gliding wings or a parachute of flesh.

Pancake (Level 2): Flatten yourself until you can crawl between a door and its frame. Use the Utility Result chart.

Tentacle (Level 2): Create a tentacle out of the flesh of your stomach, an arm, or some other body part. The tentacle can lie flat in the cavity where it formed, making it difficult to spot. If you also use Psychomorphing 2, you can make this tentacle stronger and less dexterous, or vice versa, than the rest of your body.

Pick Locks (Level 3): Feel out the inside of a lock with an extruded finger bone, then shift your substance into the needed key shape.

Quick Change (Level 3): Assume another person's shape in a single turn. Take three dice of internal bashing damage, unless you also use Adaptation 3.

The parameter of this effect depends on how accurately you simulate the other person's shape. The Precision Result chart is perfect for such effects.

Acid Jet (Level 4): Set up a pipeline so you can spit stomach acids on people. Enhanced with a second use, you can then jet virulent acid at your enemies.

Chameleon Skin (Level 4): Chameleon skin helps you hide. A second application enables the camouflage to update instantly when you move, allowing near-invisibility.

Heat Generator (Level 4): Build a heat source into your hand that draws on the body's energy reserves. It can light cigarettes and act as a heat pack. Remember that you can pump Transmogrify 4 effects to "impossible" extremes using an additional, on the spot, psi power. Enhanced in this manner, your heat generator could ignite raging fires and leave nasty burns with a touch of your palm.

Wings (Level 4): Grow wings that can slow and guide a fall. Enhanced, this allows you to fly — even with a wingspan of three meters or less.

Combat Multitasking (Level 5): Train one of your arms so that if you have a weapon ready and you see an identifiable enemy, it will attack of its own accord. This frees your attention for more important things — assisting a wounded friend, finishing a report or firing consciously with your other hand. The first five dice of Modifier Result cancel relevant multiple action penalties; further dice enhance your accuracy (to a maximum of two extra dice).

Draw from Life (Level 5): Make a connection between your optic nerve and your hand so that you can draw lines precisely as you see them — and hold your gaze steady while you do so.

Homunculus (Level 5): Break off a piece of your body, shape it into your image in miniature, and give it a rudimentary copy of your mind. It gladly cooperates with you to accomplish whatever task you need a homunculus for. Buy up all of its dice pools from 0 with an appropriate Modifier Result. It will never roll more dice than you would in an equivalent situation, however. This qualifies as an impressive feat (see p. 166).

Perfect Kata (Level 5): This power can prepare you for a physical performance like nothing else can. Go over each step (every maneuver, each note on the piano, et cetera) until you get it precisely right. "Fix" that step so that your body remembers to do it just that way, then move on to the next. Afterward, assuming that you've invested Psi or have time left on the power's Duration, you can go through the entire performance flawlessly at your desire.

Sample Biokinesis Mode Combinations

Fins (Adaptation 2, Transmogrify 2 or 4): Improve your swimming ability. With a lower

Biokinesis: Sample Power Creation

Contort

Philip Nunez, a Norça agent (Psi 6, Adaptation 2, Psychomorphing 4), tracks the escaped criminal Manuel Carpa into the Brazilian jungle. Finally catching his quarry, Philip discovers that Manuel wears a spider harness. As four metal spines lash at him, Philip instinctively twists his head, stomach, and two parts of his ribcage in different directions. Further, Philip's player wants to create the effect as an automatic action, so that the shifter can dodge without suffering a multiple action penalty.

This requires Psychomorphing 4 to change shape and Adaptation 4 (equal to the effect level) to make it an "instinctive" action. Since Philip only has Adaptation 2, he rolls Psi at +5 difficulty — needing six successes to achieve the desired effect.

His player rolls three successes and spends two Psi, which gives him one extra success after all is said and done. All effect parameters start at two dots (as noted under "Initial Ratings"), with Modifier being the best Result chart. Philip also has one point left over which he uses to buy a Duration parameter of three. For half an hour, Philip is as flexible as putty, adding two dice to relevant pools — such as his dodge.

Transmogrify rating, this power may manifest as small fins and flipper-feet. A higher rating can streamline your body, reconstruct your musculature and reshape your legs into a powerful tail.

Bestow Wings (Psychomorphing 5, Transmogrify 4): Give someone *else* a functional pair of leathery wings. The wings will melt away slowly after the effect ends. Unfortunately, you must alter the victim's bones, muscles and nerves to give him *control* over the wings. When the wings slough off, some of that flesh may well die.

Wall-crawl (Psychomorphing 2, Transmogrify 2): Form dozens of tiny, muscular filaments on your fingertips and toes. These provide you with the strength and leverage needed to skitter along a wall or even across a ceiling.

Clairsentience

This Aptitude opens the psion's mind to layers of reality and patterns in events that no others can see. Even the sanest and most coldly rational of clairsentients lives in the world of oracles, seers, visionaries and interpreters of dreams. For the most part, simple events and connections in the implicate order have no straightforward words or concepts associated with them. Contrariwise, those things that a clear can describe easily to a non-clairsentient represent enormously complex relationships in the psi universe. Therefore, most of the information that clairsentients gather comes in the form of "visions" — an ordinary body of information difficult to express or analyze using ordinary modes of thought.

An enormous amount of data exists in the psi universe. Clears can only find data that they know to look for or that stands out and attracts their attention. This means that a clear's subjective picture of reality affects what she can and does perceive. So a psion musician can readily identify the patterns that represent musical performances. Further, her visions often have musical elements.

Benefits and Drawbacks

Interpretation: Although clairsentient visions can often be potent and revealing, they come with an inherent drawback. Simply, they require interpretation, for the player as well as the psion. Basic questions usually lead to more easily interpretable visions.

Similarly, clairsentients cannot directly access the thoughts or emotions of others. At best, a clear can use Rapport to supplement her Clairsentience when dealing with events far away in space or time. An intensely private individual can "mislead" a clairsentient probe into his motivations. This does not represent a failure in the power but rather a mistake in the clairsentient's subjective impressions.

Perception Range: How far a clairsentient can sense depends primarily on her familiarity with the target. As a result, a clear casting her perception across kilometers — or even light years — substitutes the Precision Result for the physical Range parameter to determine how clearly she sees the target.

Scanning a location that the psion can sense clearly (generally by using conventional senses) uses the Long Range column. When viewing remotely in this fashion, the clear sees not only the specific target but also things a little bit off to either side, much as normal peripheral vision would.

As noted under the Sensory Result chart, when a clairsentient casts her senses through time, use Duration *instead of* Range. Further, Psychometry powers multiply this range by 50.

Result Default: As noted above, you buy a Precision Result to measure a power's "reach." You then take a *separate* Result parameter to measure the actual success. Each is bought up separately from the default. If you're not sure which Result applies, use the Utility Result's Application column.

Focal Crystal: A psion leaving a message in a focal crystal (**Luna Rising**, p. 122) uses the Feedback power, described below. The unique structure of a focal crystal allows the psion to use this power for this purpose as a Psychometry 1 effect.

Basic Technique

The Sight: Clairsentience offers its users a refined version of their innate psi sensitivity. They can perceive the general flows of psi energy around them.

Clairsentients increase their Attunement by their primary Mode level for the purposes of determining its range. This allows a greater ability to sense taint, latent psi ability, use of nearby psi powers and similar circumstances.

Psychometry

Clairsentients use Psychometry to study points of interaction — the moments and circumstances where two things converge. These "things" can be living creatures, inanimate objects, conglomerations of energy and (most generally) patterns of being. The clear's "inner landscape," which a good psion learns to adjust, determines which of these interactions have psychometric significance. Looking at a telescope, a seer can learn what famous people have used it, what psion-Aberrant battles occurred nearby or who funded its creation — all depending on her deliberately selected interests.

Psychometry can answer some very ambitious questions, but you should remember that your character's perceptions require interpretation. The more detailed the answer, the greater the chance that the psion misunderstands it.

Normally, Psychometry has minimal range — the character must be very close to one participant in the interaction or the place where the interaction occurred. For a murder, participants include the victim, the gun, the room and the murderer. A clairsentient trance can increase this range dramatically.

Normally, Psychometry requires that the character must be very close to or familiar with one participant in the interaction or the place where the interaction occurred. For a murder, participants include the victim, the gun, the room and the murderer.

• **Verify Interaction:** Psychometry 1 allows a psion to sense whether two things interacted. For example, the psion could check whether a specific gun and a specific person were ever in close proximity to one another. When a psion first uses this power on an object, interactions very important to the psion or to the people involved might suggest themselves. For example, the psion might realize, in *addition* to the information she sought, "This gun was already in my bedroom on the night I was shot."

•• **Review:** Instead of checking for a specific point of interaction, the psion can look back over an object's history and sense and study the interactions that would interest her. Psychometry 2 also allows the psion to manipulate her own perception of events. So a psion can use this to edit her own memories (a dangerous task), tune someone out completely or listen to her favorite music any time she wants. These changes affect perceptions only; the psion does not gain a sharper memory or the ability to ignore physical pain.

••• **Evaluate:** The psion can sense the general potential of a thing in a given situation. Clears can use this power to detect good, bad and other influences. It can also answer questions about an object's response to stimuli, e.g. "What happens if I close this?" and "Which button launches the missiles?" The more deterministic an object's response to an action or situation, the better a picture the psion can receive. A clear can predict a computer's answer to a question with much greater certainty than he can predict the equivalent human answer. After all, humans and things under direct human influence change their behavior continuously in response to stimuli that the clear cannot control.

•••• **Feedback:** Psychometry detects points of interaction — but the psion also creates an interaction with every breath, every thought, and every use of her powers. With Psychometry 4, a seer can act precisely enough to leave the kind of psi signature she desires. For example, she can pass a message to anyone who looks at her environment and temporal location with psi. She can create a "feedback loop" that makes her noticeable to anyone within Attunement range.

Feedback powers that leave messages are instant effects. Clears can read the message later, but only by looking back through time. Interference effects are usually continuous. If the psion sets up a 10 minute long interference, future observers cannot see those 10 minutes of the target's history clearly.

••••• **Destiny:** The psion can look forward into an object's future and sense interactions of interest there.

Sample Psychometry Effects

Assess Influence (Level 1): Check whether a given faith, book, music style, academic fact, culture or personality has made a difference in someone's life recently.

Murder Weapon (Level 1): Check whether a given laser actually killed a particular corpse (or, at least, whether it had a major impact on his life).

Verify Authenticity (Level 1): Check whether a given artifact was *really* unearthed at an archaeological site in Egypt recently. At this level you can verify any recently unearthed object, but you're out of luck if someone dug it up years ago.

Psi Clock (Level 2): Estimate the elapsed time between two events. If you also use Telesthesia 2, you receive a more objective perspective on this duration. An answer without Telesthesia: "significantly less time than you thought." A possible answer with Telesthesia: "about the time it takes to cook a pot of fettuccine."

Recent History (Level 2): When a friend returns from vacation, why wait for the story? You can determine if he did anything that would interest you with a simple Psychometry use. Similarly, when your child gets back from a date, you can verify if he got into any trouble.

Reconstruct Event (Level 2): Moving around the scene of some battle or disaster and psychometrically studying the items therein, you can see what role each item played in the event as it unfolded.

Relive Experience (Level 2): Call up an event in your life, in as much detail as you remember, and experience it all over again. Although this does not improve your memory, it can certainly stimulate it. This uses the Modifier Result chart when rolling to remember a detail or the Utility Result chart if you use this power for its own sake.

Fair Warning (Level 3): You know when it's time to bow out of a game of Russian Roulette.

No Blind Dates (Level 3): Check whether a given individual is right for you romantically. Images of your spouse strangling you on your wedding night are probably a bad sign.

Pickup Line (Level 3): Figure out which statement, of a set of things you can think of to say, will produce the most positive reaction. This uses the Modifier Result, but is limited to up to two additional dice or successes. Use Charisma for charm, Manipulation for persuasion, Etiquette to avoid delicate subjects, Style to make a good first impression.

Vibes (Level 3): Check whether someone has good or bad vibes. That is, determine whether he will more likely help you out, add to your troubles, or both. The odds could change depending on how you interact with that individual, of course, but the power usually provides a good general indication.



Noetic Haze (Level 4): Instead of conveying a message, you express such amazing disinterest in an event you are witnessing that another clear will have a harder time picking up on it. Alternately, you can "echo" your impressions of the events going on, causing a kind of psionic distortion. Your pool of Result dice opposes a future viewer's Psi roll.

Psi Scream (Level 4): Establish a feedback loop, so that the psionic impression you leave exaggerates slightly on the impression of half an instant before. Your physical actions that leave this impression may become unsubtle but, more to the point, the final effect rings out like a bell to any psion who's Attunement range you're in. Effectively, you're shouting for attention noetically.

Writing on the Wall (Level 4): Attach a psychic note to the area you're in. Essentially, you convey your message so clearly in the subtle details of your thoughts and actions that someone using Psychometry later automatically picks it up as something of great interest. You only need Psychometry 1 to leave this kind of message in a focal crystal. The message can involve language or concepts and uses the Communication Result chart.

Danger Sense (Level 5): Detect incoming danger that your physical senses could not perceive.

Horoscope (Level 5): Pore over the strands of fate heading in your direction.

Impending Murder Weapon (Level 5): Determine whether a given laser is likely to kill a given prospective corpse within the next few days.

Psychonavigation

Clairsentients use Psychonavigation to locate objects, people and themselves. Like all Clairsentience Modes, this power draws on the psion's subjective picture of the universe. A clear using Psychonavigation can measure something's location (relative to her own) by any common human measure — distance and direction, necessary travel time, good routes between "here" and "there" and the obstacles thereon, whether some closer object could serve the psion's purposes better and so forth.

A psion can also use a more abstract concept of location. For example, a clear can use Psychonavigation to orient herself in time or to find the sequence of events that best leads toward a given outcome. Such powers can provide extra dice while the psion follows the plan or suggest a number of "useful" actions — one per dot of Utility Result.

• **Orientation:** At this level, the psion can make the most basic determination of location — distance, elevation and direction relating to the subject of the search.

•• **Time:** A psion can use Psychonavigation to estimate travel times, the current time, and in general locate things in subjective or objective time. A clear should use Psychometry to locate events more complicated than "this object is/was/will be in this place."

••• **Obscurity:** At this level, a psion can use her knowledge of Psychonavigation to shield herself (or the location/existence of something else) from direct psi detection. This relates to Psychometry 4, but focuses on virtually erasing the character's noetic influence on the surrounding environment rather than leaving an distinctive impression.

•••• **Course Plotting:** Psychonavigation 4 gives a psion detailed information on the route between two points.

••••• **Farsight:** Psychonavigation teaches psions about distance and location. A psion using Psychonavigation 5 provides increased clarity in sensing even unfamiliar distant places — as much as her Psi rating in Precision Accuracy.

Sample Psychonavigation Effects

Hunt (Level 1): Create a "mental compass" pointing toward your target. The sense of distance and direction is fuzzy, Psychonavigation being an abstract power but you will get insights such as "He's near that restaurant I like." or "He's in a bad part of town."

Mental Map (Level 1): Place yourself roughly on your mental map of the area.

Prized Possession (Level 1): If you invest a point of Psi in this power, you can mentally "tag" a prized possession. You always have a good sense of where it is and can find it in the dark or without looking. Clears who invest in their guns can draw them quickly (add your character's Psychonavigation rating to her Initiative score). This power uses the Sensory Results chart at a minimum of four points; your prized possession is very specific, after all.

Reaction Distance (Level 1): Monitor a target's distance for the optimum point of attack (close enough to fire but far enough to be shielded from immediate reaction, just beyond hand-to-hand range, etc.). If you also use Telesthesia 1, you can instead sense the moment just before a pos-

sible enemy decides to strike at *you* — adding the Modifier Result to your Initiative.

Avoidance (Level 2): Imagine noetic radar with you at the center. This technique draws upon subquantum fluctuations in both space and time to monitor when other people will move within contact range — giving you time to duck out of the way. For example, you might go down a hall and notice that a guard will enter the general area within a minute, giving you time to retreat to a place where no guard is due.

You could use the Modifier chart instead of Sensory Result to add dice to Stealth and Intrusion. Note that how long the power lasts (Duration) is different from the distance into the future you can scan (Temporal Range), even though they use the same chart.

Clue Dating (Level 2): Determine how old a clue in an investigation is, assuming that it falls within the power's range through time.

Hide (Level 3): Make it harder for another psychonavigator to track you.

Nothing To See (Level 3): Make it harder for other clears to sense events that happen in a given room. This uses the same mechanics as Obscurity, above.

Predict Arrival (Level 2): If you expect a visitor sometime in the next few hours, this power gives you a fair intuition as to when the individual will arrive.

Anticipation (Level 4): Predict the route an enemy will take to get where she is going. If you use this as an instant effect, the Storyteller describes a vision, probably complicated, hinting at the route to be taken. If you use it as a continuous power, you can spot the right directions to take automatically as they're presented. When following these shortcuts correctly, you receive a Modifier Result bonus to appropriate dice pools.

Moral Compass (Level 4): Everyone steps off the right and moral path now and again, whether from weakness or distraction. Psychonavigation cannot make you strong morally, but you can use it to get a sharp mental rap on the knuckles when you *accidentally* stray from the path you have chosen for your life.

So the technique won't help if you see a starving cat and consciously choose to ignore it. However, if you walk past blindly, immersed in your own thoughts, it will call attention to the situation. You can also use this power to keep from "wasting time," sleeping and playing around only the amount necessary to stay mentally healthy.

Puzzle Box (Level 4): Solve puzzles, interactive fiction games, mazes and even crosswords with exceptional speed. This power will not tell you what words to write in a crossword, but it will tell you which clue to tackle next. Add dice to relevant Intelligence, Wits and Perception (or automatic successes to an appropriate related Ability).

Tortoise's Race (Level 4): Develop an intuition for shortcuts to take the fastest possible route to a given location. This uses the same rules described for Anticipation, above.

Space Maneuvering (Level 5): A gas giant is miniscule in comparison to the vast ocean of space, making it difficult to sense even with the most precise of senses. With Psychonavigation 5, you can track down a planet type (boosting your Precision), guide a starship (effectively using a boosted Tortoise's Race), intercept another ship (using enhanced Anticipation) and predict when a spacecraft will enter Earth's system (using Psychonavigation 2).

Telesthesia

Telesthesia focuses on physical properties of objects, energy and patterns rather than their noetic properties. In general, Telesthesia powers discover information on the same level of profundity as human senses do. They can discern color, volume, weight and texture. They can detect electrical amperage and magnetic strength, but in the same fashion as a human sense can — neither in the wholly analytical manner of a machine nor the wholly subjective manner of a Psychometry power. Like the other Clairsentience Modes, Telesthesia requires interpretation, wisdom, and knowledge to use, but has a greater bias toward knowledge.

A psion can activate one Telesthesia power per turn without using an action.

• **Heighten Awareness:** The psion uses her normal senses with increased efficiency. In effect, the psion can monitor her sensory input for specific details that she might not always notice. She can also draw conclusions from this data quickly.

For example, by listening to echoes and analyzing them, the psion could reduce darkness penalties or even eliminate them. The psion can watch someone for the subtle muscle twitches and balance shifts that indicate that person's next move. Similarly, a psion can use this power to watch for the physical indications of dishonesty (shifty eyes, change in heartbeat, etc.).

•• **Alertness:** The psion can now watch for non-specific details "of interest." This usually

alerts the clear to danger and other important events, as long as some subtle sign of these events exists in the physical universe.

• • • **Sensory Projection:** The psion can expand her senses beyond the limits of her physical form. This allows her to pick a point in space and see, hear, taste, smell and touch as if she was right there.

• • • • **Analysis:** Telesthesia 4 offers a psion advanced analytic capabilities — she can determine the chemical composition of a poison or determine what caused a hull breach. In effect, the psion carries a lab with her wherever she goes. The psion's subjective universe and the extent of her technical skill affect the presentation of the results.

• • • • • **Radial Perception:** The psion can simultaneously observe every event taking place in a huge area. If the psion senses *everything*, multiply the Area she can target by 10. If the psion just looks for general details about events and conditions, multiply it by 10,000!

Sample Telesthesia Effects

Clear Perception (Level 1): Use small bits of sensation like air currents, vibrations touching your skin, local echoes and your awareness of gravity to supplement your normal senses. This partially or fully cancels penalties from darkness, loud noises, glare, and general disorientation.

Manage a Crowd (Level 1): When orating or making a presentation, tune your senses to the crowd's gestalt reaction. This power gives you greater awareness of the expressions, postures and comments of the crowd. This allows you to add up to your Rapport rating to your Perform pool.

Proximity Alert (Level 1): Use every sense to its fullest to monitor the locations of others near you. This gives a bonus to Awareness rolls to notice their activities and improves your Initiative if someone suddenly attacks.

Monitor (Level 2): You can detect the more complicated signs of "something interesting" happening near you. You can also get a good idea of what that interesting thing is. If a normal character could spot the necessary clues with an Awareness roll at +4 difficulty, you can detect those clues and assemble them instantly into a coherent whole.

Warning (Level 2): Tuning your senses, you become alert to the slightest hint of danger. Your ears can distinguish between an enemy's footsteps and a friend's by the cadence and weight.

Color Sense (Level 3): Distinguish precisely between colors. Scientifically minded clears find this power helpful for measuring Doppler shifts... while less scrupulous clairsentients have used it to forge artwork.

Extra Sense (Level 3): Enhance your sensory capability with one new expanded sense — IR vision, UV vision, telescopic vision, ultrasonic hearing, subsonic hearing, radio hearing, radiation awareness, enhanced touch, bloodhound-level olfactory abilities or an awareness of gravity precise enough to locate the outer planets from Earth.

Projection (Level 3): Shunt one or more of your sensory abilities to some other location (first

Clairsentience: Sample Power Creation

Local History

Philip Nunez, ultimately subdued by his enemy, sends out a distress call via a radio embedded in his flesh. Keiko Moore, a Triton-affiliated clear (Psi 5, Psychometry 2, Psychonavigation 2, Telesthesia 2), leads a team after him.

As Keiko approaches the site of the distress call, she tunes herself to psychometric impressions stored in the surrounding jungle. She wants to notice when she passes through an area where a physical struggle took place. This uses Psychometry 2 (to notice that such an event happened) and Telesthesia 2 (to watch for it constantly.)

Keiko's player rolls against a +1 difficulty and gets two successes, making the roll but without any extra successes (one success triggers the power and the other beats the difficulty). She wants a 10-minute duration (Duration 2) and a 100-meter diameter (Area 6), and needs a Result 2. She spends four Psi to get eight parameter points. After buying the parameters above, she spends her last parameter point on the Sensory Result chart to get extra details about the fight..

If Keiko passes close to the battle site during that 10 minutes, she will get a reasonable picture of the event, the image seeming about an hour old. Keiko might also pick up on some extra details of interest, like a vague impression of more spider-like shapes. In other words, Manuel has allies somewhere nearby.

accurately finding the locale, of course). You perceive events as if you're actually present, even though your physical form is some distance away.

Chemical Awareness (Level 4): Step outside of normal perception for a time. Instead of seeing "water," see a blend of oxygen and hydrogen and the simple chemical bond between them. Instead of seeing "air," see a mix of gasses. Your friends now appear as massively complex chemical artworks. You can tell whether a window is glass or mylex. You can tell whether a liquid has poison in it. You can spot whether a gem is real. You may need to practice to develop real analytical capabilities, of course.

Discern Weakness (Level 4): By carefully analyzing an object, gain insight into its weakness. Add one level of damage to each attack aimed at this weakness until the total extra damage done equals the Damage Result. You can instead add a Modifier Result to any roll to repair that object.

Structural Analysis (Level 4): This power gives you an intuitive understanding of how structural components of an item go together. Combining this with Telesthesia 3 to fill in the information you cannot see normally, you could analyze a combination lock. Given a set of blueprints, you can instantly tell if a hidden room was left out.

Omniscience (Level 5): Take in every detail of a spherical area hundreds of meters in diameter. Combine this with Monitor to spot interesting things, Horoscope to notice future events or Obscurity to block events in a small building.

Sample Clairsentience

Mode Combinations

Course Selection (Psychometry 3, Psychonavigation 1): When traveling, this power allows you to select the best direction in which to go. "Best" depends on your needs at the time — safest, most timely, most deserted, and so on dictate the result. Sometimes, of course, the best route is not much of an improvement over the worst — as when your pursuer can see which way you turn.

Electrokinesis

A psion with Electrokinesis can sense and control electromagnetic energy. This extremely versatile Aptitude offers psions enhanced senses; control over living things and machines; lethal attacks; potent defenses and a near infinite array of miscellaneous abilities. Electrical impulses, radiant power and even light serve as an electrokinetic's tools and his playground.

Benefits and Drawbacks

Concentration: By default, a continuous Electrokinesis power requires concentration, imposing a +1 difficulty on all non-Electrokinesis rolls for the duration of the effect. The Storyteller can rule that a specific effect is not subject to this limitation.

Range Variables: Technokinesis powers normally require the psion to touch a system connected to his target; the Range parameter is irrelevant. However, if the psion uses the Mode talent Transmit to connect with a remote system, his power has 1,000 times the range given on the Long Range chart. Similarly, if he uses the Mode ability Long-Range Transmission to connect with a remote system, powers affecting that system have effectively infinite range.

Shock: Teks work with a dangerous power. Whenever the psion uses his power on a living creature successfully, but rolls fewer extra successes than the effect level, the target suffers a painful shock. This translates to a +1 difficulty on the subject's next action.

Visible Effect: Onlookers can detect an operating Electrokinesis power with an Awareness roll. Dancing fingers of lightning, electrically charged air, and flickers of light accompany the Aptitude's use. If the psion wishes to conceal this effect, every two levels of Photokinesis employed to "hide" it increases the difficulty of the Awareness roll by +1.

Basic Techniques

Static Burst: All teks, whatever their specialty, can produce a small amount of electrical energy. This energy suffices to deliver a nasty shock, but surprises and distracts rather than inflicts significant harm.

Energy Awareness: Veterans of Orgotek's Prometheus chamber also gain a vague insight into the energy patterns around them. Among other things, they can distinguish machinery from stage props and "see" the path high-powered broadcasts take.

Electromanipulation

Psions use Electromanipulation to affect "bioelectricity" (or "orgone," as Alex Cassel jokingly refers to it) — the energy patterns associated with life. These include bioware energy sources, electrochemical impulses in synaptic and nervous systems, and observable energy output associated with psi. This Mode's expressions do not affect the inanimate. They can affect those alien creatures with nervous or synaptic systems similar to those of Earthly life (a psion can use photokinetic equivalents of such techniques against Chromatics).

• **Holistic Effects:** A psion at this level of skill can affect or study a living creature's nervous system or brain activity as a whole. He can use this to inflict or calm a momentary seizure, roughly measure someone's health, slow or speed someone's reactions slightly or to restart a stopped heart.

•• **Bioelectrical Awareness:** At this level, the psion has a keen insight into the nervous system and the electrical patterns in living brains. The psion can read the residual electrical traces of living creatures who have left the area, diagnose neurological disorders easily, "see" someone's next action before the signal reaches her muscles and identify emotional states relating to intense or subdued levels of brain activity. These include mania, depression and anxiety. The tek detects bioware integrated by a Norça with ease.

••• **Personal Enhancement:** A psion can use Electromanipulation 3 to manipulate his own bioelectricity with fair precision. Teks develop many interesting effects from this — some shield themselves from electrical and bioelectrical attacks; others set up fields that shock those who touch them; some even offload the work of their brain into other parts of their body. This last effect can help avoid unconsciousness or increase the tek's data processing ability.

•••• **Fine Work:** The psion can precisely control the nervous systems of others and can make coarse adjustments to the functioning of the brain. The psion can jerk others around like puppets, enhance someone's reflexes or strength, speed up her mind, induce mania and so forth.

The psion can only stimulate or reduce activity in large sections of the brain. Therefore, he cannot create memories, alter thoughts or induce subtle emotions. However, with some medical training, he can duplicate the effects of electroconvulsive therapy, fogging someone's memories and functioning temporarily. This uses the Control Result chart.

••••• **Esoterica:** The psion can now use Electromanipulation in unusual contexts with greater ease. The psion can affect the recently dead, if some life energy remains. He takes no extra difficulty when using Electrokinesis on alien or unusual life forms. He can even use Technokinesis and Electromanipulation to offload his mind into a suitably complex machine!



Sample Electromanipulation Effects

Awaken (Level 1): Snap someone out of sleep or a meditative state. This power has variable effects when reversed — some people go into instant slumber when their brain adopts the patterns of sleep; others become preternaturally calm.

Drag (Level 1): Slow someone's reactions. This imposes up to +2 difficulty on any action the victim takes quickly. The Storyteller decides what a "quick" action is. For example, if the victim delays her action until her effective Initiative total for that turn is 10 or less, this should negate the penalty.

Narc (Level 1): Determine if your target has recently taken some mind-altering drug.

Informed Reaction (Level 2): Watch someone's bioelectricity for the telltale signs of actions she's about to perform. This adds dice to your Dexterity (or extra successes to your Athletics or appropriate combat skill) to react to a single opponent.

Optimized Torture (Level 2): Sense directly which variety of torture distresses your victim the most. You will have to experiment a bit at first. This adds successes to Interrogation.

Patterns in the Air (Level 2): "See" the paths people took through the area around you, much as a wolf would smell for residual scents. Use the Sensory Result to describe how much you learn about the individuals who left those paths. Use the Duration chart both for duration — if the enhanced sense has an extended duration — and for Temporal Range.

Battery (Level 3): Store a charge of electrical energy inside your own body — possibly drained from a battery, possibly accumulated over time. You can then release this energy to power a device or to shock someone.

Processor (Level 3): Raise your Intelligence by up to three dice or a specific computation-based roll by up to three successes (as figured on the Modifier chart). In essence, you copy key parts of your brain into your bioelectric field as a whole and use the copy to supplement your natural brainpower.

Spark String (Level 3): Stretch a dancing stream of sparks between two fingers. This can add successes to relevant Intimidation, Perform or Style rolls.

Storage Unit (Level 3): Set up patterns of bioelectricity in your own body that represent data. For example, you could "carry" an encoded message with you that you would have trouble remembering otherwise.

ECT (Level 4): Subject someone to Electroconvulsive Therapy. Each ECT treatment removes one level of Severe Disability from the various forms of insanity (see Disability Result). As its major side effect, this imposes one level of the Minor Disability "fogged memory." At high levels, this adds +2 difficulty to memory rolls. Both effects fade with time as the natural patterns of the mind and brain reassert themselves.

Hype (Level 4): Send someone's mind and body into overdrive. A victim of this power gains extra dice to cancel multiple action penalties and overcome difficulties stemming from mental or physical exhaustion. She also takes a difficulty to Social rolls and actions requiring precise coordination.

Puppetry (Level 4): Control someone's actions by controlling her body. Note that this requires concentration, and your Storyteller may impose multiple action penalties when you move both yourself and someone else in a single turn.

Alien Electrokinesis (Level 5): Use any of the powers above on a suitable alien, just as if it was human.

Borrowed Flesh (Level 5): You can copy a bit of your *self* into someone you Puppet using an effect much like Processor (above). After retrieving this parcel of consciousness and reintegrating it, you can recall events from the subject's own perspective during time in which she was acting as a puppet. This is not true "possession," but instead passive recall accessed only after the effect ends.

Treat this as a Sensory Result, which must be raised from the default (three dots) separately from the associated Control Result.

Read Plants (Level 5): This unusual power studies the bioelectrical field of plants to discover such things as recent weather conditions, soil conditions and the plant's general "well-being."

Photokinesis

Photokinesis allows the psion to manipulate visible light. More generally, he controls the high end of the electromagnetic spectrum. Light serves as the major vehicle through which information about the surrounding environment reaches humanity. Control over light, in turn, equals control over the human perception of the environment — a potent power with offensive, persuasive and informative applications.

• **Illumination:** Photokinesis begins with control over the emission, reflection and absorption of light. The psion can cause an object to emit a

single frequency of light, creating a focused beam or a general radiation. The psion can adjust the hue of an object or a piece thereof, adding or subtracting a uniform color. If the psion drains all of the color from an object, it becomes dead black, *not* invisible. Finally, the psion can reduce the illumination in an area, dimming light of a certain frequency or set of frequencies.

A tek can only alter light of a frequency that he can perceive in some manner.

•• **Spectrum Sight:** The psion can extract data from many kinds of electromagnetic radiation, switching between various spectra at will. At the low end of the available spectra, the psion can see infrared light or enhance his perception of visible light. He can see distant or small things more clearly. With concentration, he can gather visual data from the other side of a barrier. At the high end of the available spectra, the psion can directly perceive cosmic radiation. The Science Ability helps to interpret data gathered from an unusual spectrum.

With three or more successes on the roll, a psion can use Spectrum Sight to measure details of an object's health, chemical composition and structure.

••• **Field:** A psion can use Photokinesis 3 to establish a "field" that modifies the EM radiation passing through it. Such a field can diffuse a focused blast (like a laser), switch two colors (visible or not visible) as they pass through it, or screen out background radiation. It can even move with the psion.

Unless enhanced by level four or five Photokinesis, these fields can perform only one simple function affecting a medium-sized portion of the spectrum. They can, for example, defend against lasers or microwave bursts, but not both at once.

•••• **Static Image:** The psion can make more complicated alterations to the reflection, emission, and absorption of light. In essence, the psion can "paint" an object or an area with whatever colors and luminescence he sees fit. However, the results do not change based on circumstances — he must use this power again to change these colors and radiances.

If a psion "repaints" the air, the color diffuses exactly as the relevant air molecules do. However, the psion can establish and fill a photokinetic field to create a motionless holographic image.

••••• **Dynamic Image:** The psion can now holistically alter images and the visual presentation of the surrounding environment. He can create moving holograms, "displace" the contents of a room three steps to the right (as seen through the windows and doors) or even dynamically recolor a transmitted image.

Sample Photokinesis Effects

Flashlight (Level 1): Emit a sustained beam of light from your palm or fingertips, sufficient to see your way around in a dark room. (This uses the Utility Results chart.)

Highlight (Level 1): Add sparkle to your eyes and hair, translating into successes to Style rolls or extra dice to Appearance-based rolls for the duration of the effect. If you botch, expect to go blind or look unfashionably bizarre for at least a few hours. Thanks to the subtly distracting flash and glitter this power creates, it also adds +1 difficulty to your visual Perception rolls.

Jaundice (Level 1): "Jaundice" is a catch-all term for a technique that alters a target's color to an unpleasant hue — from pastel to neon to brilliant blue. Normally, the tone applied mixes with the natural color of each bit of hair, skin, tooth, et cetera, shifting it to an unsightly shade. This applies an increased difficulty to the subject's Appearance-based rolls (possibly even all Social Traits, depending on the circumstances) for the effect's duration.

Laser Sight (Level 1): A laser beam at this degree of power doesn't inflict damage (though it could momentarily flash someone if it shines in her eyes). However, it can be very useful to point out a target for yourself or others.

Leech Color (Level 1): Drain the color from the target's body, adopting a uniform dead black hue. Add up to three successes to Stealth attempts as long as there are shadows in which the subject can conceal herself.

Repaint (Level 1): Using Leech Color and then Jaundice, you can recolor a target a *uniform* blue, yellow, green, red or what have you. Based on the description of Photokinesis 1, which lets you add *or* subtract a single color, you must use two separate effects to achieve this result.

Analysis (Level 2): By manipulating light and ambient radiation to create a microscopic effect, you can generate the equivalent of the Telesthesia powers Chemical Awareness, Structural Analysis and Structural Weakness. This effect can be applied to a single target at a time, and uses the Target Mass category.

Tuned Vision (Level 2): Enhance your sensory input with infrared vision, ultraviolet vision or a direct sense for X-ray, gamma or cosmic

waves. Enhance your vision to pick up on very small or very distant things.

You can switch between the various spectra (e.g. from IR to visible light to X-ray awareness) with a standard cross-matched [Photokinesis + Awareness] roll. Seeing two or more spectra simultaneously requires two additional successes, cumulative for each additional spectra.

Advanced Recoloring (Level 3): Swap out the blue in your eyes for green or brown. Alternately, swap out the red in your hair for gold. You can use another variation of this power as a highlighter of sorts, setting it to convert a given color into a glinting point of light. For example, when hunting a fugitive from a helicopter, you might establish a field just outside your eyes that converts a standard flesh tone to a sparkle, making it slightly easier to spot your quarry.

Directed Darkness (Level 3): Similar to Invisibility but by no means as advanced (and generally created with an offensive intent) this wraps a target in a spherical field that reflects away outside light. If the subject has no light source of her own, the field blinds her and hides her until she leaves its coverage. If she does have a light source inside, she cannot see *through* the field, just the things inside it.

Electromagnetic Shield (Level 3): Establish a protective field that diffuses the focused light of most lasers, screens away harmful background radiation or shifts bursts of intense microwave radiation into harmless washes of light. You could also establish such a field in a doorway or in front of a friend, although it will not move with someone else.

This effect uses the Modifier Result to add to soak against a specific energy wavelength; the Survival Result chart may apply instead to reduce regular damage from the environment. As with Tuned Vision, you may shift to a different energy with a roll, while defending against multiple spectra requires additional success expenditure. This qualifies as an impressive feat (see p. 166).

Laser (Level 3): A much more focused photokinetic effect, this enables you to generate a damaging laser beam. This uses the Damage Result chart, but only inflicts lethal damage.

Shadow Screen (Level 3): Establish a field around a room that absorbs departing visible light. You could search the room or hold a secret meeting therein with the lights on, yet the windows and any cracks in the doorway remain dark. This power adds up to +4 difficulty to Awareness rolls to visually see through the shadows.

Alternatively, you could erect black, geometric screens that, while lacking any physical substance, can effectively partition a room.

Emperor's Clothes (Level 4): By bending the light within a field surrounding you, you can "paint" colors and patterns to simulate clothing. While the "clothes" don't actually exist, you can create the appearance of wearing the latest styles over your own grungy skivvies — or over your naked flesh. This technique can help conceal objects, too. If you photokinetically add a few extra pounds to your frame, you can strap your gun within the hidden space between your real and fake gut.

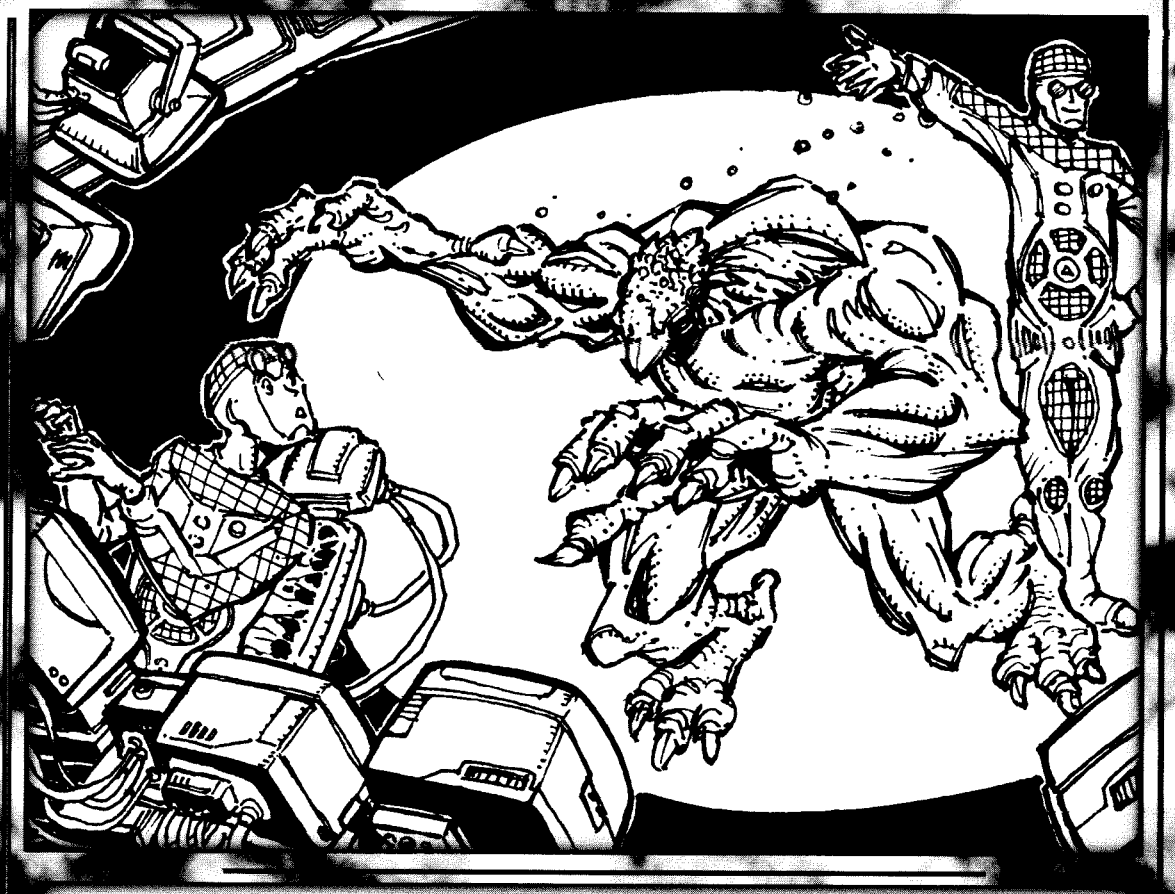
It takes a true artist to make this kind of thing look real, given that the false clothes (or flesh) is static in form (Photokinesis 5 does not have this limitation). Your Modifier Result imposes a difficulty on Awareness rolls to spot the image's flaws, up to the number of successes scored on a cross-matched [Photokinesis + Arts] roll.

Imaginary Door (Level 4): You can create a fake entryway, "move" an existing one or even blank out a real one. This is very useful for hiding from pursuers — although anyone who tries to actually manipulate the illusory door will quickly tumble to the fact that it's fake. Just looking, a person must roll Awareness to spot any flaws to the image; your Modifier Result imposes a difficulty on this roll.

Instant Monster (Level 4): Certainly you could create the static image of a regular person, but a nightmare vision — even one that doesn't move — has a number of useful applications. It can scare a pursuer or startle anyone breaking into your room. Again, your Modifier Result imposes a difficulty on Awareness rolls to visually spot the image's flaws (as always, physical contact proves the lie easily). Of course, the rational mind could quickly realize a horror isn't real (unless it's mistaken for an Aberrant...); even so, the momentary shock might be all you need to gain the upper hand.

Makeup (Level 4): Simulate mundane or exotic makeup, tattoos, piercings, skin pigments, hair colors, eye colors and sources of bioluminescence. Whiten your teeth, add sparkle to your eyes as per Highlight, obscure wrinkles, and so on. Your body becomes your canvas.

A "tattoo" meant to imitate an artwork faithfully or perfectly capture an image from life should use the Precision Result chart. If you just want to look better, add dice to your Appearance Trait and/or successes to Style using the Modifier Result.



Dazzle (Level 5): Create a dazzling pattern of light directly in front of an enemy's eyes, moving with her. Dazzling adds a difficulty to an enemy's sight-based rolls.

Guard Dog (Level 5): Generate a holographic guard dog with a very simple "program" or one that you control directly.

Invisibility (Level 5): You generate invisibility by wrapping light around a target. Humans find the effort challenging to say the least. With training or sufficient practice, however, you can at least approach true invisibility by blending photokinetically with the surroundings. The technique inflicts a difficulty to others' visual perception tallied from the Modifier Result. This qualifies as an impressive feat (see p. 166).

As an unfortunate side effect, Invisibility renders you blind to those frequencies of light your invisibility affects. Many teks find chameleon-style camouflage a viable alternative, though it imposes a smaller difficulty on their opponents (topping out at +3 difficulty to visual rolls).

Technokinesis

This Mode focuses on manipulating the low end of the electromagnetic spectrum and the flow of energy inside inorganic technology. A psion with Technokinesis can interface with a machine and manipulate its data and functionality without ever touching a control pad. The first three levels of this Mode's effects use the Short Range Result category, and the tek must be within detection range of *some* part of the machine or local network in question. Upon reaching Technokinesis 4, the psion can use the Long Range column.

Technokinesis effects usually modify a machine permanently — erased data does not reappear when the effect duration ends. If the psion wants an even stronger effect — say, where data is immediately erased as soon as it's added — he must invest Psi.

Unless otherwise indicated, the character uses a cross-matched [Psi + Computer] or [Psi + Engineering] dice pool (whichever is more appropriate), to manipulate electronic systems once the Technokinesis effect is at work. He starts with a base dice pool of zero, though, which can be raised using the Modifier Result up to the full amount of the cross-matched Traits. Although it does not strictly apply, use the Subjects column of the Target chart to determine how many machines or subsystems the psion can control simultaneously. A machine with a failsafe

rating uses it to resist a Technokinesis effect applied by any unauthorized psion.

• **Modify:** The psion can scramble a system's data or imprint new information from an outside source. This does not give the psion any inherent ability to read the system's data (so some imprinted data may not integrate well with the system's normal operation). To add a file to a computer system, the psion needs to know a great deal about the hardware and software and the location of every other file. Otherwise, he risks writing his data in an undesired place — say, in the holographic image of the software agent's nose, where it registers as random static. On the other hand, he can leave data in a prearranged location, set the system to its "starting configuration," disrupt data generally and even use any device as a medium for a Morse code distress call.

•• **Tap:** The psion can read the raw data stored in a complex device. More importantly, given the complexity of modern technology, he can holistically study the state of an entire system component. A psion can use this talent to monitor the flow of information through a line, check for the presence of familiar large programs and to read messages left using a level one effect. This power can also guide the lower Technokinesis level, allowing the psion to coarsely adjust a machine's operation. This combination allows a psion to open computer-locked doors, shut machines down safely or turn off security systems.

••• **Full Access:** The psion can adjust his view of the system down to the user level, interacting with it as an authorized operator would. He can also view multiple subsystems at once or work with the entire system as a whole — enabling him to copy one device's state to another's or to control a vehicle, its weapons and its sensory systems simultaneously. In a similar vein, the psion can also reinforce a system against hacking attempts. As an impressive feat (see p. 166), a tek can even completely reprogram a system to suit his needs.

•••• **Transmit:** A psion can use Technokinesis 4 to broadcast in the lower "half" of the electromagnetic spectrum, from radio to microwave to the infrared spectrum. At its most intense, this power offers a tek a lethal microwave attack. At its most precise, it allows the psion to interface with a system some distance away as long as he knows its location relative to his own within a 10 meter radius of accuracy.

••••• **Watchdog:** The tek is generally aware of all events taking place in the immediate network vicinity of a machine to which he's connected. For example, if someone sends a message from the system that the psion would not want delivered, the psion can instantly remove his consciousness from some other subsystem, take control of the network communications subsystem and intercept the message.

Sample Technokinesis Effects

Imprint Program (Level 1): If you're conversant with a program or data and a target system's software, you can plant that information in the system. For example, you could reset one machine in a closed OpNet node, then plant a virus on it which then infects the other machines in the node. Note that the data you're using must already be written and either recalled from memory or pulled from a secondary source. Psionically creating programs on the fly requires a greater degree of talent in this Mode.

Reset (Level 1): Return a system to its starting configuration, if you know it. If your goal is to destroy data, use the Modifier Result to impose a difficulty on any attempt to recover information. If you want to restore the administrative password on a system to the default setting, use the Utility Result. If resetting the system makes it easier to compromise but doesn't provide automatic access, use the Modifier Result to add successes to any hacking rolls.

Technokinetic Message (Level 1): Small amounts of data corruption in a few key places (like graphic images and electronic mailboxes) can often escape notice for days on end. You can use this to leave a message for a fellow tek (use the Communication Result chart). The most obvious application is making a record of experiences while engaged in espionage æ security can always read user-accessible files, but may not check a graphic image for hidden correspondence.

Control Polygraph (Level 2): Lie detectors made marked improvements from the late 20th century, but they're still fundamentally electronic systems using software programs. You can use Technokinesis to access and manipulate the system, effectively giving you extra successes to Subterfuge that you can then use to resist the polygraph's own rolls.

Defuse Chip-Run Bomb (Level 2): Defuse a bomb, given that a chip controls its detonation. You can do this with Technokinesis 1, but only if you

know a great deal about the particular chip design that the bomber used.

Printer Eavesdrop (Level 2): Using a computer elsewhere in the building as a conduit, read off the data someone prints to a networked hardcopy device.

Kill Agent (Level 2): Erase someone's software agent, leaving the rest of her system intact. Similarly, you can erase specific data.

Improve Failsafe (Level 3): Add to a device's failsafe rating. Like any other form of reprogramming, a reasonable improvement is permanent. An unreasonable result — +11 to the failsafe rating, say — requires invested Psi or expires when the Duration runs out. The Storyteller has final say on what constitutes "reasonable."

Reprogram (Level 3): Quite simply, reconfigure as much of an electronic device's functions as your cross-matched [Psi + Computer] dice pool (and the system's own hardware constraints) allow.

Vehicle Control (Level 3): Noetically control a sophisticated vehicle from the inside. This adds to your Drive, weapons targeting Traits and so forth, as tallied from the Modifier Result (up to a number equalling your Wits).

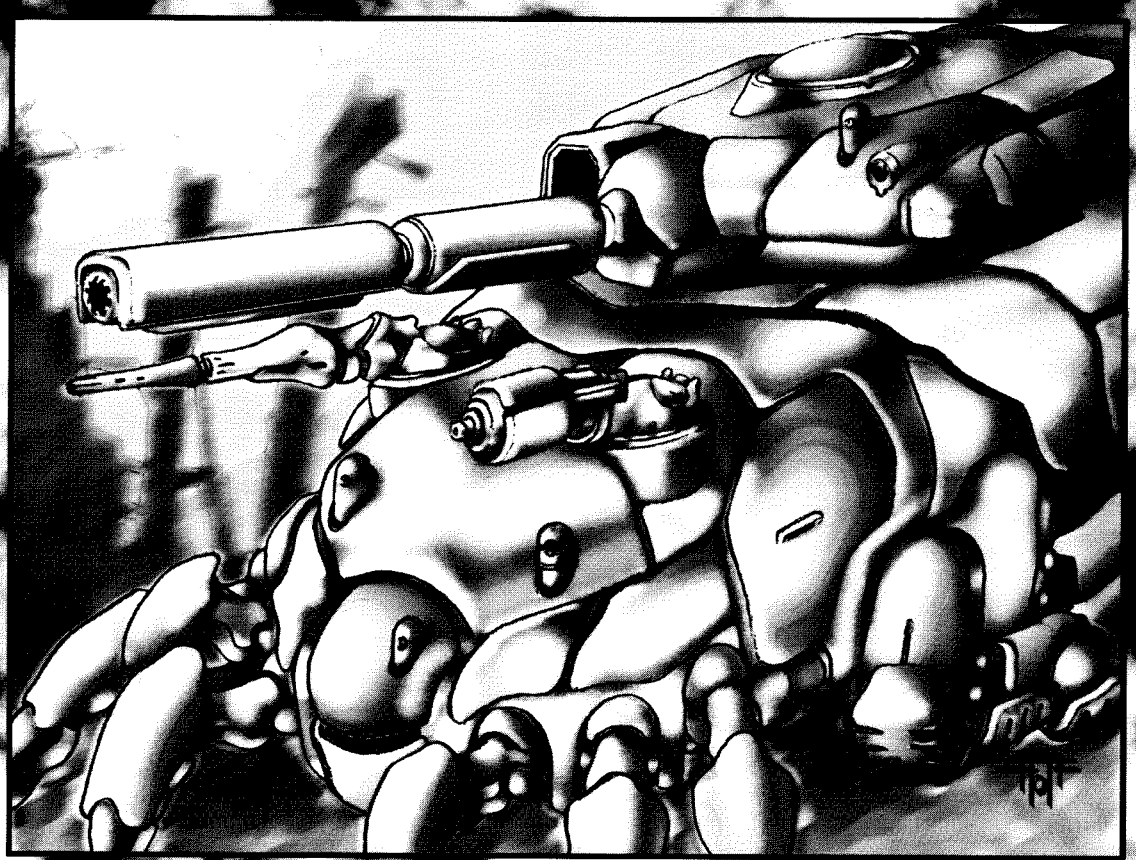
EMP (Level 4): Create an electromagnetic pulse to knock out scanners and other electronic devices. If you buy a Modifier Result that adds difficulty to subsequent uses of those devices, you must first overcome their failsafe ratings. If you just do damage to them, they soak instead of resisting the effect.

Microwave Attack (Level 4): Make a lethal attack at range. You must first hit the target with this power.

Ranged Reprogramming (Level 4): Use any other Technokinesis power on a machine whose location you know, within the Transmit-enhanced Range.

Signature Computer (Level 5): By investing Psi, you create a permanent connection to a given computer system. In this way, you can maintain contact with it via a subquantum version of Transmit. The connection remains even if someone physically moves the computer system and has no maximum range limit.

If you own the system or have access privileges thereto, you can use all of its features and programs wherever you are. You can also reprogram the system within the limits of your access.



Whether or not you have access privileges on the system, you can use the various Technokinesis powers on it at any time. Unauthorized use must still overcome its failsafe rating. Use the Utility Result to determine the degree of interface.

Sample Electrokinesis Mode Combinations

Reflect Microwaves (Photokinesis 3, Technokinesis 4): Using Technokinesis to tune into the microwave range, you can refine a photokinetic field that actually "bounces" an attack, possibly even right back at the attacker (with a successful cross-matched [Photokinesis + Firearm] roll).

Vertigo (Electromanipulation 2, Photokinesis 5): By creating dazzling light patterns that trigger sympathetic responses in a target's brain, you can actively nauseate someone, effectively adding difficulties to her Dexterity and effective Intelligence pools.

Psychokinesis

Psychokinesis governs kinetic energy and heat — the two forms of energy deriving from molecular motion. The Legionnaires, like the other orders' members, divide their Aptitude into three Modes. The first, Cryokinesis, drains kinetic energy and heat and "freezes" its subjects. The second, Pyrokinesis, excites molecules to action, speeding their motion and producing heat. The third, Telekinesis, gives the psion control over kinetic energy.

This Aptitude, while enormously useful in every context, is used primarily in combat. It's not surprising, then, that most of the applications which psychers develop relate in some way to combat or destruction.

Benefits and Drawbacks

Collateral Effect: Although the PK uses a fair degree of noetic energy to power her techniques, Psychokinesis draws upon ambient conditions as well. As a result, more significant powers often create notable (though not harmful) side effects. Throwing up an ice wall, for instance, sucks the moisture from the area, making the whole place instantly arid. Generating a plasma stream draws off much of the oxygen from immediately around the psycher, making it difficult to breathe for an instant.

Be creative, but not restrictive, with these side effects. They can easily make the intended result even more impressive, but shouldn't hinder the psion herself (except, perhaps, on a botch...).

Electrokinesis: Sample Power Creation

Visual Link

Lionel Daken, a tek and Orgotek employee, enters a training simulation designed to enhance his understanding of Electrokinesis. He normally has a single level of Technokinesis and Photokinesis. Inside the simulation, aided by feedback mechanisms and computer-generated special effects, he has five dots in each Mode. The simulation also grants an effective 9 Psi.

Lionel's "mission" takes him into the private office of the simulated Aberrant known only as Mr. Green. He must retrieve important documents detailing the Aberrant's plans regarding an Aerowing Enterprises hostile takeover. Unfortunately, just as Lionel finds the relevant file, he hears voices approaching down the hall. Quickly, he tries to create a tight-beam microwave transmission to send the visual data he's seeing with his optic nerves to the computer in his car 10 kilometers away. (Electromanipulation 5, Technokinesis 4).

This effect is +4 difficulty, and Lionel rolls four successes — one short, since he needs one last success to trigger the power. He spends one Psi, giving him the needed one success plus an extra one. This he spends to boost his Duration by one, giving him Range 3, Duration 4, and Utility Result 3. For one hour (within the simulator), Lionel can transmit visual images up to 90 kilometers, with the acuity of a modern holocamera.

Degree of Result: Many temperature effects use the Utility Result chart. Assigning more successes makes the effect flashier, with fewer making it weaker. Say a Legionnaire tries to turn steam into ice. With Result 1, she transforms the steam to cold water. Result 3 completes the transformation satisfactorily. Result 5 gives the whole process flair — the steam freezes instantly into an odd crystalline shape, or bursts into a brief cloud of snow. This can play into the Collateral Effect as well.

Extreme Success: As most of a PK's noetic power goes into the end result of her technique, a particularly strong effect can have an impressive outcome. Each 10 (a "0" on the die) rolled on a Psychokinesis attack translates into an extra level of damage (bashing or lethal as appropriate to the effect) that the psion applies to the victim.

Physical Resistance: Victims can use Might to oppose telekinetic efforts *of which they're aware*, as described under the Control Result.

Basic Techniques

Nudge: A psychokinetic can prod small objects telekinetically. This power moves small items (roughly a half-kilogram or less in mass) as much as 5 cm per turn.

Temperature Control: All psychers can adjust the temperature of the surrounding area to a minor degree, shifting it comfortably (or unpleasantly) up or down. This doesn't inflict any actual damage but can apply some modifiers to Trait rolls depending on the degree of change.

Cryokinesis

Psions use Cryokinesis to slow down molecules. At the microscopic level, this cools any substance. At the macroscopic level, it can slow down an avalanche. It's been described as "the science of entropy, death, and cold order; the language of winter."

• **Thermal Screen:** The PK can gather heat from the surrounding environment to stay warm (this can also be applied to others; refer to the Target Result). Exposure, cold damage and cryokinetic attacks have a greatly reduced impact on the subject. This talent has no practical application in conditions like a vacuum, where ambient heat does not exist.

•• **Freeze Gas:** The psion can instantly drain away the thermal and kinetic energy in a gas (e.g. air, water vapor or a toxic cloud of nerve poison). Legionnaires use this most often as an attack, chilling the air around their opponents in a sudden flash of agonizing cold. If not taken to the extreme, this level of ability can more simply cause discomfort, liquefy a poisonous gas, condense water from the air, slow the wind intensity locally (which can also apply to the wind rushing from an airlock...).

••• **Freeze Liquid:** Cryokinesis 3 effects can drain the thermal and kinetic energy from a liquid. Combining this with the previous level of mastery, a skilled psycher can turn steam into ice and air into dust.

•••• **Drain Energy:** This level of Cryokinesis slows and stiffens solid objects. The PK can slow an out-of-control vehicle, an enemy or a clock with equal ease. The individual molecules of the object move with less efficiency and therefore the whole moves more slowly. This power can also drain the energy from the excited molecules of a fire.

••••• **Freeze Solid:** Cryokinesis 5 effects can freeze solid objects into a supercold state. For the most part, Legionnaires use this power to do terrible amounts of damage to their enemies, but it also has scientific applications.

Sample Cryokinesis Effects

Warmth (Level 1): Drawing on ambient heat, grant yourself extra soak against Cryokinesis attacks and other cold damage. You can also buy a Survival Result to reduce damage from exposure.

Asphyxiate (Level 2): Make the air around a target heavy, hard to move through and hard to breathe. Use the Damage Result to emulate asphyxiation damage and the Modifier Result to apply difficulty to appropriate actions like the Electrokinesis power Drag — determine each Result separately, however. The Damage Result equals the harm inflicted over the *total* power duration, rather than affecting the victim each turn.

Containment (Level 2): Just after a gas grenade or other localized gas emission goes off, condense the gas into liquid. This reduces the area the gas covers and enhances everyone's defense — soak against poisonous emissions, increased Resistance against sleep gas, etc.

Cryonics (Level 3): With proper medical training, you can induce suspended animation (use the Utility Result for degree of effectiveness; a five or higher preserves the body as well as traditional coldsleep tanks do). This is often used to sustain someone at the point of death until advanced medical techniques (or a talented rex) can revive the subject. Cryonics is an impressive feat (see p. 166), due to the challenge of maintaining the subject at just the right state.

Anti-Oratory Measures (Level 3): Freeze someone's saliva, making speech more or less impossible for at least several minutes. Buy a difficulty on all his speech-related rolls.

Ice Wall (Level 3): Transform the leading edge of an oncoming rush of water into a wall of ice! This gives the ice wall an effective Might Trait, the strength of which is determined from the Modifier Result. The wall's coverage falls under the Target Area, though the shape is formed only roughly — a rectangular or circular plane, rather than a spherical form. The maximum diameter remains the same.

Snow (Level 3): Make it snow in a small area, even indoors. This uses the Utility Result chart.

Immobilize (Level 4): Applied as an instant effect, this "molecular flash freeze" kills the target's momentum immediately; the victim must roll Athletics (difficulty applied by the Modifier Result) or he cannot move that turn. If continuous, this power imposes up to +4 difficulty to all of the subject's Physical Traits, and is considered an impressive feat (see p. 166).

Power Brakes (Level 4): Similar to Immobilize, this slows a vehicle's velocity — easily preventing (or causing) an accident. Use the Movement Result to determine the velocity drained.

Cryofreeze (Level 5): Suck the heat violently from an enemy; this inflicts lethal damage.

Pyrokinesis

Psychers use Pyrokinesis to excite molecules and to control the paths that the molecules take. Such techniques ignite fire, melt metal, boil away glass and turn flame into the PK's plaything. Although most commonly used for destruction, Pyrokinesis is at root a creative force, drawing energy as it does from the implicate order. As some Pyrokinesis specialists are wont to say, "the universe began in fire."

• **Heat Distribution:** The psion can disperse heat into her surroundings to stay cool. This helps the psycher resist heat, fire and Pyrokinesis attacks.

•• **Heat Gas:** The PK can excite a gas into a superheated state. Legionnaires use this power much like Freeze Gas to attack their enemies, but it has a wide variety of nonviolent applications — cooking, creating pressure (as a gas expands), drying clothes. As long as the psycher has access to an atmosphere of some sort, she has a source of heat.

••• **Ignite:** The psion can start fires with a glance. Flammable objects stay lit until extinguished normally; anything else suffers a nasty burn. A psion can also boil visible liquids into gas with a Pyrokinesis 3 effect.

•••• **Liquefy:** As the name implies, this can be used to reduce solid objects to liquid. Such liquefaction requires effort and energy proportional to the complexity of the object's chemical structure, not to mention overcoming the target's inherent noetic aura. This makes it extremely difficult to liquefy most living things.



Liquefying living organisms should be considered an impressive feat and should also suffer a difficulty commensurate to the target's size, mass and biological sophistication. It's much easier to turn an orbital steel door's simple molecular lattice into slag than it is to liquefy a person's dynamic biological and psionic structure.

••••• **Plasmics:** Visually impressive and often devastating in effect, Pyrokinesis 5 allows the psion to manipulate fire. She can generate scorching heat and reshape flame into virtually any application imaginable.

Sample Pyrokinesis Effects

Stay Cool (Level 1): Dispersing heat into the surrounding atmosphere or liquid, grant yourself extra soak against pyrokinetic attacks and other fire or heat damage. You can also buy an appropriate Survival Result. With this power, you can hold your fingers in a fire without ever getting burned.

Glass Blowing (Level 2): Use heated air to mold or melt through glass or other relatively fragile substance (at level 4, Pyrokinesis can do the same to mylex or bioglass). Eating through a significant amount uses the Damage Result, while precise molding requires a Precision Result. You can do both with a single effect, buying the two Results up independently from the default level.

Heat Lash (Level 2): Do a modest amount of bashing or lethal damage with a blast of superheated air.

Teakettle (Level 2): Boil water by generating sustained heat under the container. This uses the Utility Result.

Bonfire (Level 3): Start a fire. The Damage Result represents the initial ignition's effect on the target fuel. The fire's overall severity depends on the Damage Result and the target's flammability — once the fire starts it is out of your hands (unless you have Pyrokinesis 5, of course). A lethal Damage Result of eight or more against an even vaguely flammable substance can create a raging inferno.

Explosion (Level 3): Ignite the air itself within a radial area, creating an effect much like a thrown grenade.

Umbrella (Level 3): Build a circular shield above your head that moves with you to boil raindrops away as they touch it. A similar application dries you off instantly after a swim.

Melt (Level 4): Melt walls, vault doors, floors, and your rival's sports trophies. This uses the Mass Target and Damage Result.

Puddle (Level 4): Melt the ground underneath someone as a sustained effect, buying a Damage Result and imposing a difficulty on relevant Traits (dodge, Athletics). This can't instantly turn orbital plating into a pit of molten slag, so your opponent can try to escape from the spreading puddle before he sinks into it.

Firestarter (Level 5): Boost a fire's intensity, adding extra dice to its damage effect and causing it to spread. You can also reduce its intensity, potentially snuffing it out.

Plasma Construct (Level 5): Change the pattern of a fire, sculpting it into bizarre shapes — or even creating an "animate" shape that follows a simple desired action. Use Precision Result to determine how closely you capture the look you desire, and Control Result (up to a three rating) for the degree of action possible.

Telekinesis

Telekinesis moves molecules *en masse*, manipulating objects large enough for the psion to see. Having a significant level of telekinetic power means never worrying about such obstacles as distance, sharpness, temperature and awkward location when the psycher feels like moving something around. The naked eye cannot directly perceive a typical Telekinesis power, but a psion using Attunement will notice an established effect.

To make a telekinetic effect, use the Modifier Result. The Trait bonus equals the rating for both telekinetic "Dexterity" and "Strength," with the following restrictions: The maximum telekinetic Dexterity possible equals the psycher's own Dexterity. The maximum telekinetic Strength possible depends on the psycher's level of Telekinesis — Strength 1 at one dot in TK, up to her own Strength at two dots in TK, and up to the total of her Strength + Psi at three dots and higher.

The psycher can cross-match her telekinetic Traits with Abilities where appropriate — using [telekinetic Dexterity + Firearm] to shoot a laser, or [telekinetic Strength + Might] to bash open an airlock. A living target uses Might to resist telekinetic grabs of which he's aware.

• **Tow:** At this basic level, the psion isn't skilled enough to use Telekinesis for fine detail — attempts to type or pick locks telekinetically must wait for the next level of power. Nor is it powerful enough to toss around large objects (people, hovercycles). The psycher can still roughly ma-

nipulate objects at range, though, using a roughly soccer-ball-sized orb of telekinetic force.

This makes it handy for grabbing small items (weapons, minicomps) or moving things around (closing doors, pushing key clusters, shoving others). For the duration of the effect, the PK can move the force ball around at will each turn. Raising this effect's Mass Target above level one is considered an impressive feat (see p. 166).

•• **Remote Hands:** With this level of power, the psychokinetic can create "phantom hands." She can tie cords in knots, type on a distant keypad, gently unbutton a garment, fire a taser — anything she could do with her physical hands. These noetic extremities are restricted in use to direct line-of-sight, and can bring no more than the psycher's own physical strength and mass to bear (or less, depending on the Result constraints).

Sensing touch with telekinetic hands requires a separate Psi use and is considered an impressive feat (see p. 166). It's no longer an impressive feat at Telekinesis 3 and higher.

••• **Telekinetic Construct:** The psion can create any relatively simple shape that she can visualize (wall, pillar, shield, club). This invisible construct moves with her at a standard distance from where it originally manifested, unless the psycher consciously makes it stationary or moves it to another position. A defensive construct uses the Modifier Result, an offensive one uses the Damage Result... which may add to the psion's own damage effect. A TK staff adds its telekinetic Strength to the user's physical Strength for damage; a TK punch launched beyond the psion's reach uses only the telekinetic Strength. Other constructs likely fall under the Utility Result.

As an impressive feat, the psycher can also create more complicated forms — like a duplicate of her own body, or that of someone she knows intimately. The key restriction is that she must be able to visualize every detail accurately. The surface area of these constructs cannot be significantly greater than the psion's own physical form, though larger barriers or multiple forms may be possible with a higher degree of skill.

•••• **Force Manipulation:** At this point, the psion has a great degree of control over telekinetic applications. She can manipulate the molecules in air to create (or dampen) sound, launch herself in a controlled TK push to emulate flight or create a telekinetic sheath around her that echoes and enhances her every movement.

••••• **Telekinetic Dynamics:** The psycher can now use Telekinesis in multiple applications at once (use the Subject Target column to determine the quantity). Whether to create noetic "pseudopods," fling numerous projectiles at high speeds, or map intricate telekinetic maneuvers for an object to follow, the psion is a true master of telekinetic manipulation. Obviously, this allows for a great deal of creativity, and may use any one of the Result charts.

The only fundamental limitation is that the various applications must share a common purpose. So a psycher could create eight phantom limbs to use in close combat or telekinetically throw eight grenades hundreds of meters away — she could not, however, create four noetic pseudopods *and* throw four grenades. She could use the psionic limbs to throw objects, but they wouldn't come close to traveling the same distance; see the examples below.

Sample Telekinesis Effects

Levitate (Level 1): Since the ball of telekinetic force is soft and yielding, you can learn to balance plates or other items atop it. The noetic force reshapes itself somewhat to partially cup the item, but a [telekinetic Dexterity + Athletics] roll may still be required to avoid dropping it if you do something hasty.

Shove (Level 1): Push a target — knocking his hands from the wheel, throwing off his aim or simply getting him to spill his drink. The victim resists your [telekinetic Strength + Might] roll with his own Might, though the Storyteller may apply difficulties to him due to surprise (or to you if the subject's expecting it...). More subtle applications ("tripping" on a carpet) don't allow the target to resist with Might.

Thunderclap (Level 1): By rapidly compressing and then releasing the air molecules in an area, you can create a deafening crash of noise. Use the Area Target; anyone within that radius must roll Endurance to resist being dazed by the sudden deafening noise. Hard ear coverings help the targets to resist.

Dangle (Level 2): Pick someone up with your imaginary hands and dangle him in the air (bear in mind that you're limited to the amount of mass you can lift physically, and the subject can resist such a blatant attack with Might). This is most useful to make a person an easy target for others to attack (or to lift someone from harm's way.) Since the target is not fully immobilized, though, he may fire a weapon, kick, throw things and so forth.

Four-Handed Typing (Level 2): Some Legionnaires, impatient with paperwork, have learned to type telekinetically while simultaneously working on other files. Until you gain expertise with this trick, you must succeed on physical and telekinetic [Dexterity + Legerdemain] rolls every couple thousand words to stay on track.

Plug Nozzle (Level 2): Stop up the nozzle of a projectile weapon with a wedge of telekinetic force.

Remote Control (Level 2): Turn any device in your apartment on and off without getting up. Use the Utility Result; alternately, roll [telekinetic Dexterity + Legerdemain].

Telekinetic Punch (Level 2): Shoot a focused TK field at an enemy. Though this abides by the Short Range chart and is limited to your physical Strength rating in bashing damage, it can still be quite a useful maneuver. Note that you can use the same maneuver at level 3 and higher using the Long Range chart and [Strength + Psi] for full bashing damage potential.

Mind over Body (Level 3): Clinch with someone at range, using your telekinetic Strength and Dexterity and a construct mirroring your own body. This abides by the standard grappling system (**Trinity**, p. 244), though any damage the target inflicts on your telekinetic form has no effect.

Pressure Bubble (Level 3): Shape an atmospheric pressure "bubble." You can push air molecules out of the way (lowering the interior to a near perfect vacuum and making it hard to breathe) or cram them into a smaller space (raising it far above the air pressure at sea level to stay safe in crushing gravity). This does require an atmosphere of some sort. You can't create a life-sustaining air bubble in the full vacuum of space — there simply aren't enough molecules in the immediate area to be useful.

Wall of Force (Level 3): Defend yourself with a barrier of telekinetic force. This adds to your soak (or someone else's) against attacks coming from the proper direction.

Fly (Level 4): Fly through the air or vacuum, riding in the gentle grasp of Telekinesis. This uses the Movement Result, including spending two extra successes initially.

Reinforcements (Level 4): With skilled manipulation of molecules in the air, create the auditory illusion that troops are approaching your position. This uses the Area Target to determine the sounds' coverage, and the Utility Result to see how convincing they are.

Psychokinesis: Sample Power Creation

Bridge

Tess Dresner (Psi 6, Cryokinesis 4, Telekinesis 3), Legionnaire, needs to get her skimmer license. She gets in her AirFoil with the test administrator and prepares for a nice, sedate ride.

As is wont to happen at inopportune moments, an Aberrant strikes the area. Tess immediately gives chase, rocketing the Shendai around a corner — just in time to see the Aberrant cave in a good half-block of the street. With no time to stop, Tess yanks the water flow from a broken hydrant to freeze into an icy bridge covering the gap. She uses a simple "tube" of telekinetic force to direct the water (Cryokinesis 2, Telekinesis 3). The effort is made at +2 difficulty.

Tess' player rolls two successes and spends two Psi. This gives the character three extra successes (and so three parameter points). Tess only needs Range 2 (30 meters) and the default Duration (it's an instant power), so she spends all three parameter points for a 5 Modifier Result. This gives the bridge an effective 7 Might. As it turns out, that's still not quite enough to keep the heavy AirFoil aloft for the few seconds she needs. The ice shatters, crashing Tess and her hapless instructor into the gap!

Extra Limbs (Level 5): Create multiple telekinetic limbs (use the Short Range chart to figure the limbs' full reach). Though you're limited by your surroundings in what you can do (being able to see opponents, having any surfaces you can climb, etc.), they react to your mental desires just like your physical limbs do.

Program (Level 5): You can map out a telekinetic maneuver ahead of time, and let it go without giving it any further thought. In this way, you can set up a heavy coilgun to hover a meter off the ground and fire repeatedly, automatically ejecting spent clips and inserting new ones as need be. Or you could trigger a combination of Fly and Slingshot for yourself to head back to a pre-determined point when you focus on the command — especially handy when you're getting cut down by enemy fire and need to retreat rapidly. The command is carried out as soon as you direct it and you needn't even be around for it to continue.

Slingshot (Level 5): Take random objects and propel them at tremendous velocity. If fired at targets — on a [telekinetic Dexterity + Firearm] or standard Artillery roll, depending on the object — use the lethal Damage Result; if simply sped up,

use the Movement Result. A miss automatically converts the result from Damage to Movement... an accidental hit does the reverse.

Acceleration being roughly commensurate with force, an object propelled in this fashion uses the psycher's base [Strength + Psi] as well as the Damage Result purchased to determine the final lethal damage effect. An object with a damage rating of its own (a knife, a club) adds its rating as appropriate.

Sample Psychokinesis Mode Combinations

Ceiling Curtain (Cryokinesis 3, Pyrokinesis 4): This power liquefies the ceiling and re-freezes it as it falls, forming a wall of stone (or concrete, or whatever the ceiling was made of). This wall can block your enemies or shield you partially from attacks. Making the wall consistently even requires additional successes, though even a patchy, lopsided wall has its uses.

Wind Tunnel (Pyrokinesis 2, Telekinesis 3): First make a box of telekinetic force with one end open, then superheat the air inside. As the gas inside the box expands rapidly, you create a powerful gust of wind that blasts over an area, pushing back and scalding anything in its path.

Telepathy

The Telepathy Aptitude allows a psion to look into the minds of others. A telepath can perceive hidden thoughts, feelings and intentions. Further, he can actively alter the minds and thoughts of others, reshaping them to suit his whims.

Benefits and Drawbacks

Empathy Area: Manipulating a crowd with Empathy 4 or 5 may affect a radius 10 times greater than the Area chart indicates.

Mental Resistance: Victims can use Willpower to oppose telepathic probes *of which they're aware*, as described under the Control Result.

Result Default: As noted below, you buy a Precision Result to measure a power's "reach." You then take a *separate* Result parameter to measure the actual success. Each is bought up separately from the default. If you're not sure which Result applies, use the Utility Result's Application column.

Targeting: When using his powers at great distances, a telepath is primarily limited by his familiarity with the target. As a result, a tel sensing for someone far away — say, on the other side of the globe — substitutes the Precision Result for the physical Range parameter to determine if he can locate the individual.

As long as a telepath can clearly see a target naturally, he doesn't need to use the Precision result. A target nearby but not in direct line-of-sight (on the other side of a wall, viewed through binoculars, someone familiar to the psion) must first be linked to via Mind Scan.

Basic Technique

Mind Scan: The psion can store a person's "psychic signature," calling it up at a later date. The telepath must see the target or use the Precision Result to lock on the first time. When the telepath calls up this stored imprint later, it effectively boosts his Precision Result by a number of dots equal to his highest Telepathy Mode rating. The psion can store a number of signatures equal to his Psi score at any one time; this may be increased further by investing current Psi.

Empathy

Empathy allows a psion to sense and influence the emotions of others. Manipulating such abstract and ephemeral things as moods and passions requires great skill. Empathy's defining effect, the weaving of a new and original emotion into the human heart, requires near-mastery of the Mode.

• **Sense Emotion:** The telepath can read others' emotions. This power can add to the psion's Rapport successes or pull information directly from the subject's mind.

•• **Exacerbate:** Empathy 2 effects strengthen an existing emotion. If several major emotions dominate the victim's mental state, the telepath chooses which one to enhance. Emotions exacerbated at this level do not completely overwhelm the victim, though; rolls to control the emotions cannot have above +2 difficulty. Combined with a sudden loud noise, startling movement or some application of Intimidation, the psion can induce panic. With comfortable surroundings, a plush couch and soft music, he can lull a target to sleep.

••• **Emotional Equilibrium:** The psion can deaden emotions, both his own and others'. The subject can resist most Empathy effects and many effects from the other Telepathy Modes. Some telepaths use this to prune away emotions and distractions that interfere with their work.

A psion can deaden a person's immediate emotions but not her innermost passions. A tel who knows a target's Nature can break the influence



Cold Heart has on her or otherwise bypass the power with other Telepathy effects.

•••• **Inflict Emotion:** The psion can directly impose emotions and other mental states on his victims. He can inspire boredom, hunger, love, hate, anger, melancholy — even inspiration itself! Emotions inspired with Empathy 4 do not totally overtake the subject, however. As with the level two talents, rolls to control the emotions cannot have above +2 difficulty.

At this level, the telepath can also influence the "mood" of a crowd. As long as the majority of the people in the crowd fall victim to the effect, the consensus on which the group acts is similarly affected. Thus, a tel could rouse a bunch of bystanders into a bloodthirsty mob despite the protests of a few individuals in the group who subconsciously resist the emotional tampering.

••••• **Projective Empathy:** The telepath can inflict terribly strong emotions. This works much as described above, though the subject's rolls to control her feelings may rise as high as +5 difficulty. The psion can also establish an emotional "time bomb" in a victim's head, priming the effect to start at any fixed time during the normal effect duration.

Sample Empathy Effects

Insight (Level 1): Peek at someone's emotional state to see what tack to take before making a Social roll. This can go up to level five on the Modifier Result, and applies most often to Subterfuge, Rapport or Command.

Interrogation (Level 1): Interrogate someone more efficiently by honing in on subjects that make her uncomfortable, nervous, or upset. Similarly, detect her lies as she says them. This can go up to level five on the Modifier Result.

Berserker (Level 2): Transform an already angry combatant into an out-of-control berserker. This could enhance her Strength and impose a difficulty to her Dexterity. Alternately, you can make this power a Control Result.

Twitch (Level 2): Suddenly tweak the sense of discomfort that a target has just before a sneeze or as she scratches an itch. The mental distraction remains even after the itch is scratched, imposing up to +2 difficulty to any relevant actions requiring concentration.

Cold Heart (Level 3): Snuff out an emotion that you think someone else is imposing on you.

You can do this before, after or during an empathic attack. Add the Modifier Result to your Meditation and Willpower when resisting mind control — or when simply fighting to control your emotions.

Bargaining (Level 4): Increase someone's greed for a possession you want to sell — or decrease her interest in something that you want to buy. Add the Modifier Result to your relevant social Traits or inflict a Control Result.

Disperse Rioters (Level 4): Settle down a crowd (gathered to protest social injustice, roaming wildly in a state of anarchy, drunk and looking for trouble, and the like). Pit your Control Result against an average member of the crowd; key characters may be influenced or unaffected depending on Storyteller and player whims. The rest become unaccountably bored with the whole thing and go home.

Sharp Wits (Level 4): Awaken the glorious fires of inspiration within a friend, using the Modifier Result to add successes to a single Ability use or dice to an Attribute for the effect's duration. You cannot invest in this effect.

Desperate Greed (Level 5): With this technique, you can make a target crawl to you on her belly for the chance at a penny's profit. Emotions this strong are best manipulated with great care. After all, the victim could become so mad with greed that she assaults you instead, takes your money and goods and leaves you bleeding to death on the ground.

Inspire Adoration (Level 5): Nothing can get you past a guard more quickly than having her fall instantly in love with you. Of course, if she somehow manages to control her raging emotions, she may well realize she's being manipulated.

Mindshare

Mindshare powers allow the psion to read and transmit thoughts. At its most polite, this Mode enables communication where none could otherwise exist. At its most invasive, Mindshare allows the telepath to extract information from the depths of the victim's mind. If a victim actively thinks about whether someone has a link to her mind, she can always detect a Mindshare effect.

• **Communication:** Mindshare 1 enhances the psion's ability to convey and understand the meaning of speech, gestures and body language. The psion can communicate effectively with the power's targets by any reasonable means. For example, when the psion dips his chin slightly, his comrades immediately understand that they should dive for cover. However, the psion cannot convey complex tactical information through the implication and inflection of reading an innocuous business report. The classic use of Communication is the Babel Effect, where the psion and any subjects can talk to each other without having to know the same language.

•• **Mindspeak:** At this level, the telepath creates a purely mental channel for communication — he no longer needs words, gestures or more arcane forms of speech. Mindspeak-based communication involves pure thoughts and ideas rather than words. A target who resists this effect is completely immune, but takes a +1 difficulty on other actions (representing the concentration required to keep her mind blocked to the contact).

••• **Espionage:** The telepath can sift through someone's mind for a desired datum. This usually takes some time for important or deeply-hidden memories.

•••• **Network:** The psion can link a number of subjects together so that they may communicate mentally with one another. Each individual must participate voluntarily or the network fails to include them. A person with the Telepathy Aptitude who's in the network can use telepathic effects directly on any other person in the link.

••••• **Access:** At this level, the telepath can tap into the sensory perceptions of those around him (willing or no). The psion doesn't literally see through his targets' eyes or hear through their ears; instead he accesses the sense data after it's already gathered into their minds. More importantly, the tel is skilled enough monitor multiple targets'input simultaneously. Combined with Mindshare 4, you can relay the sense data between linked individuals.

Sample Mindshare Effects

Body Language (Level 1): In a tense situation, signal your partners that it is almost time to attack (use the Communication Result). A single twitch of the open hand might mean five seconds before they should move. You do not need a prearranged signal; if your comrades would have even the smallest chance of guessing your meaning *without* the use of psi, applying this technique beforehand means they know *exactly* what you intend.

Speak Volumes (Level 1): Cough in that polite, faintly embarrassed way that explains to everyone else at the meeting that your boss is an idiot — and exactly why. Best of all, you can choose whether to include him in the message or leave him completely in the dark.

Conversion (Level 2): Share the intensity of your personal conviction with your target. This can help persuade her of the merits of your cause, adding to an appropriate Social Trait.

Dazzle (Level 2): Overwhelm a target with random and confusing concepts, thereby inflicting up to +3 difficulty to her actions for the duration. The only drawback here is that, since you're still mentally linked, you *also* suffer the effect. As an impressive feat (see p. 166), you can recover one turn before your opponent does.

Direction (Level 2): Use Mindspeak to guide another's actions remotely, to form a creative synergy with another individual or to speed someone's training.

Revelation (Level 2): Show someone a concept that you cannot quickly express in words — perhaps the flow of a mathematical proof or an undeveloped idea. If you also use Psychbending 1, you can show someone indisputably that his mind has been altered. (Assuming, of course, that it has been.)

Brain Train (Level 3): Perform effective aversion therapy on someone. The subject needs only *think* of her addiction or trauma and you can shock her out of it. This can help overcome appropriate mental disabilities but it is a slow and unpleasant process.

Password (Level 3): Lift a password from a guard's mind. Use a Sensory Result 3 to find this information.

Weakness (Level 3): Extract the memory of his greatest weak spot from an enemy's mind æ the kind of move his karate coach kept beating him with, the Aptitude he fears most because he has no defense against it and so forth. Use a Sensory Result 3 to dig up this information, or Result 2 to find *a* weakness of some sort.

Share Thoughts (Level 4): Link a group of targets so that they may communicate mentally with one another. They may range anywhere within the power's range without breaking contact. Participation is voluntary, and anyone save yourself can leave the network at any time. If you leave, the network turns off. To determine the roaming limit, use Target Subjects and Communication Result (and the Duration and Long Range charts, modified as noted under Benefits and Drawbacks, above). You can use a second effect to add someone to the network but a subject cannot re-enter on her own once she leaves.

Anticipate (Level 5): With this effect, you tap into subjects' surface thoughts rather than their senses. In this way, you can anticipate the actions of those around you for the next turn. This requires the default Sensory Result of 3; extra successes give more information about each target's current plan. The victims' players should explain their intentions for the next turn and adhere to them as closely as possible. This power remains available for the normal effect duration, although the psion must make a successful Psi roll each turn he uses it.

Mindtap (Level 5): Access the perceptions of others within Mind Scan range (or visual sight). Make a cross-matched [Mindshare + Subterfuge] roll against each target's Rapport. Unless the subject rolls more successes than you do, you link up without her knowledge and can observe what she senses without restriction. If she's aware of it, you must make an Awareness roll each turn to access what she senses (failure provides "mental static" for the turn). This requires a default 3 Sensory Result.

Psychbending

Psychbending is the delicate art of redesigning your victims' minds for them. This Mode allows a telepath to reshape a person's conscious and subconscious beliefs, desires and needs.

• **Willfinder:** Psychbending 1 gives the psion a more detailed understanding of the effects of Telepathy on the mind. In other words, the tel can sense if a target is currently being affected by Telepathy. A psion can also use Willfinder to reduce the effects of Telepathy botches — basically by using Willfinder to monitor the subject's mind as the technique goes into effect.

•• **Control:** At level 2, the telepath can compel a subject to obey a mentally transmitted command. The victim continues to obey until the effect duration expires.

••• **Mind Shield:** With this degree of skill, the tel can shield himself against Telepathy effects. The psion can extend this shield to other targets (use the Target Subjects column).

•••• **Mindwarp:** The telepath can now alter his victims' memories, "rewriting" a specific portion of the victim's history.

••••• **Division:** Psychbending 5 effects allow a telepath to store parts of his mind in other people for safekeeping. The tel maintains a passive mental link with the subject, no matter how far away they are from one another. The target retains her own mind, with the psion's psyche riding piggyback. By focusing entirely on the target, the tel can interact fully with her; however,

the subject can access only those thoughts and images that the telepath wants her to have.

Sample Psychbending Effects

Spot Conventional Brainwashing (Level 1): It's actually easier to detect noetic mental manipulation than that done through use of drugs, torture, hypnosis or other "mundane" brainwashing technique. However, by focusing on the target's mental activity, you can sense recent behavioral shifts, whether psionically or conventionally triggered (use Sensory Result). If you also use Empathy 1, you can determine which reactions seem most out of character and thus *what* the mental alteration was.

Demand (Level 2): Classic mesmerism. You tell someone what you want, and she does it. The subject must be able to understand you; however, if you also employ Mindshare 2, you can issue the directive telepathically (and bypass any language barrier). This uses the Control Result.

Stun (Level 2): Command obedience to an impossible command, using the Modifier Result. ("Obey my next sentence. Don't obey my previous sentence.") This imposes a substantial difficulty on the victim's next action as she "shakes off" the mental short-circuit.

Psi Ward (Level 3): Defend yourself and your friends against telepathic effects. Target Subjects determines how many people, counting yourself, you may protect. Your Modifier Result adds to all rolls to resist the effects of mind control, emotion control and memory manipulation.

Mindwipe (Level 4): This disturbing effect can completely erase a portion of a subject's memory or personality — or, if taken to extreme, delete who she is entirely! Considered an impressive feat (see p. 166), this requires your total concentration and likely multiple applications. In game terms, you reduce to zero any desired Traits (this does *not* apply to Strength, Dexterity, Stamina, Appearance, Willpower or Backgrounds). Use the Modifier Result to determine the levels you can subtract each time. The victim may resist each use with a Willpower roll (each success reducing your total Modifier Result accordingly). If you zero out all but the Traits mentioned previously, the target is left a hollow shell, her mind and personality utterly destroyed.

Old Acquaintance (Level 4): Cause someone to believe that you are an old and dear friend. It may puzzle her that she feels no affection for you, but she will probably dismiss this as an aberration and treat you well (of course, you can also kick in Empathy to generate an emotional response as well). This uses the Control Result. Beware, though — if you try to be too familiar, the subject's subconscious could begin to resist the artificial familiarity (the target can spend to resist the control, after all).

Donate Ability (Level 5): You can give the part of your mind corresponding to a non-physical Ability to a friend. This uses the Modifier Results, and usually involves invested Psi. This new Ability is not cumulative with your friend's skill — she must choose whether to use your Ability or her own in any given action. You cannot use the Ability yourself without first terminating the effect.

Offload (Level 5): Transfer yourself into someone else's mind. You won't run that person's body (unless they let you, but then only for as long as they allow). However, you can at least psychbend your empty body into, say, going out and getting killed in your place. This power uses the Utility Result chart; any parts of your psyche that don't carry over remain in your own body. This is considered an impressive feat.

Possess (Level 5): A variation on Offload, this enables you to completely take over another person's body. You must first perform Mindwipe to eradicate her mind; you then transfer your mind into

Telepathy: Sample Power Creation

Family

Dominicus Piota (Psi 5, Empathy 3, Mindshare 1) works for the CEO of a China-based multinational — and is also an agent of the Ministry.

Dominicus' son is dear to him, although frequent perspective conflicts mar their relationship. When an argument pushes him to the edge, he withdraws as only a telepath can — using Cold Heart (Empathy 3) to drain his passion and Communication (Mindshare 1) to make it clear to his son just how much he really doesn't care.

Dominicus' player rolls one success. He spends one Psi on the power, succeeding exactly. He has Duration 2 and Modifier 2. For five minutes, he adds two dice to any Social actions for the purpose of seeming distant and composed against his son's increasingly emotional tirade.

the target's body. In game terms, your new form has the subject's Strength, Dexterity, Stamina and Appearance ratings; all the other Traits are your own (depending on the success of your Utility Result, you may not transfer everything completely...). At the Storyteller's discretion, you may retain some of the subject's Backgrounds as well as your own.

Sample Telepathy Mode Combinations

Insidious Alteration (Mindshare 3, Psychbending 4): Revise someone's history from kilometers away, using a psi print to home in on her mind. Her only hope is to get out of range before you have rewritten her memory. Since you are using Mindshare, she can perceive the directed mental influence (and possibly who's behind it...).

Mass Brainwashing (Mindshare 4, Psychbending 4): Impose the same data (an experience, a thought, a disposition) on a number of people at once.

Telepathic Sex (Empathy 1, Mindshare 2): An intensely emotional experience that requires no physical contact, you can mentally connect with a willing subject and share your most intimate passions.

Teleportation

This rare Aptitude gives the psion mastery over space. An Upeo can move herself and others from one place to another — even from one *world* to another — in an instant. And that's just the beginning; a teleporter can adjust an object's size or warp its shape; a truly powerful jumper can even exist in two places simultaneously!

Benefits and Drawbacks

Jump Ranges: "Short jumps" take the psion (or the power's target) to a location the psion can sense clearly (either through conventional senses or with Spatial Sense). Except when obstacles or poor visibility conditions interfere, the psion can short-jump 10 times the listed distance in the Long Range column.

"Long jumps" take the psion (or the power's target) to a place the psion knows well. As a result, long jumps substitute the Precision Result for the physical Range parameter to determine whether the psion can make the jump.

Result Default: As noted above, you buy a Precision Result to measure a power's "reach" and a *separate* Result parameter to measure the actual success. Each is bought up separately from the default. If you're not sure which Result applies, use the Utility Result's Application column. Teleportation requires a minimum level 2 (and such a result level indicates a particularly sloppy accomplishment). If you can only buy a level 1 Utility Result, the effect doesn't manifest (and you still lose the Psi).

Safe Landing: A teleporter instinctively uses her psionic talents to nullify her arrival inertia relative to the destination (everything in the universe is in constant motion, after all). In other words, the psion and other teleported things appear safely stationary in relation to the immediate area — whether on the surface of a planet or inside a speeding skimmer.

Target Resistance: By default, a living creature automatically uses Psi, Willpower or Taint (whichever is highest) to resist any Transmassion or Warping power that directly affects him. He may only cooperate (and so not resist) if his subconscious really *wants* him to be somewhere else. So a willing subject who trusts the Upeo to jump him to Dehli doesn't make a resistance roll. However, a target the teleporter threatens with death unless he's jumped may still resist — subconsciously, he may believe he's about to be teleported to his death anyway! A person may similarly resist teleportation on an object that he has within his personal noetic aura (clothing, weapon, bioapp, hostage).

The Upeo herself is, of course, an exception, and need not oppose her own effects.

Travel Time: Teleportation is rare in that its Duration parameter often works in *reverse*. The base time it takes to complete most Translocation and Transmassion effects is an entire scene (normally a Duration 5 parameter). Similarly, you can reduce this by one level for each parameter point spent, to a minimum of one turn (level zero, effectively).

Note that the teleporter is in subquantum space (also referred to as "sub-space") during this period. The psion phases out of (and re-appears in) physical reality in an instant; the intervening time is spent translating herself through the noetic medium.

Visible Effect: A shimmer of light and a loud bang (the byproduct of psion particle movement and sudden mass displacement) accompany each Teleportation departure and arrival. An effect level 3 or more can dampen the noise to a faint cough, but not the light.

Basic Technique

Spatial Sense: This allows a psion to sense the shapes and locations of objects around her (using Short Range). Teleporters can also use this to re-

flexively detect incoming jumpers and warping Aberrants and can search for traces of recent Teleportation activity in an area.

Translocation

Translocation effects allow the psion to move herself around, whether across the street or across the galaxy. Distance is no object; instead, as long as the jumper is familiar with a point of arrival, she can jump there. No one moves faster than a jumper who develops this Mode.

• **Spatial Integrity:** The psion first learns to reinforce the structure of space and location — defending space against the sudden intrusion typical of Teleportation and Aberrant warping. With more effort, she can increase the inertia of objects in a space. A jumper cannot "lock" objects in place, but she can make them effectively sluggish and unwilling to respond.

•• **Jump:** Translocation 2 allows the psion to make short jumps, moving instantly to places she can sense clearly. She can take along objects with mass equaling her own (or less), but all must bear her psi print.

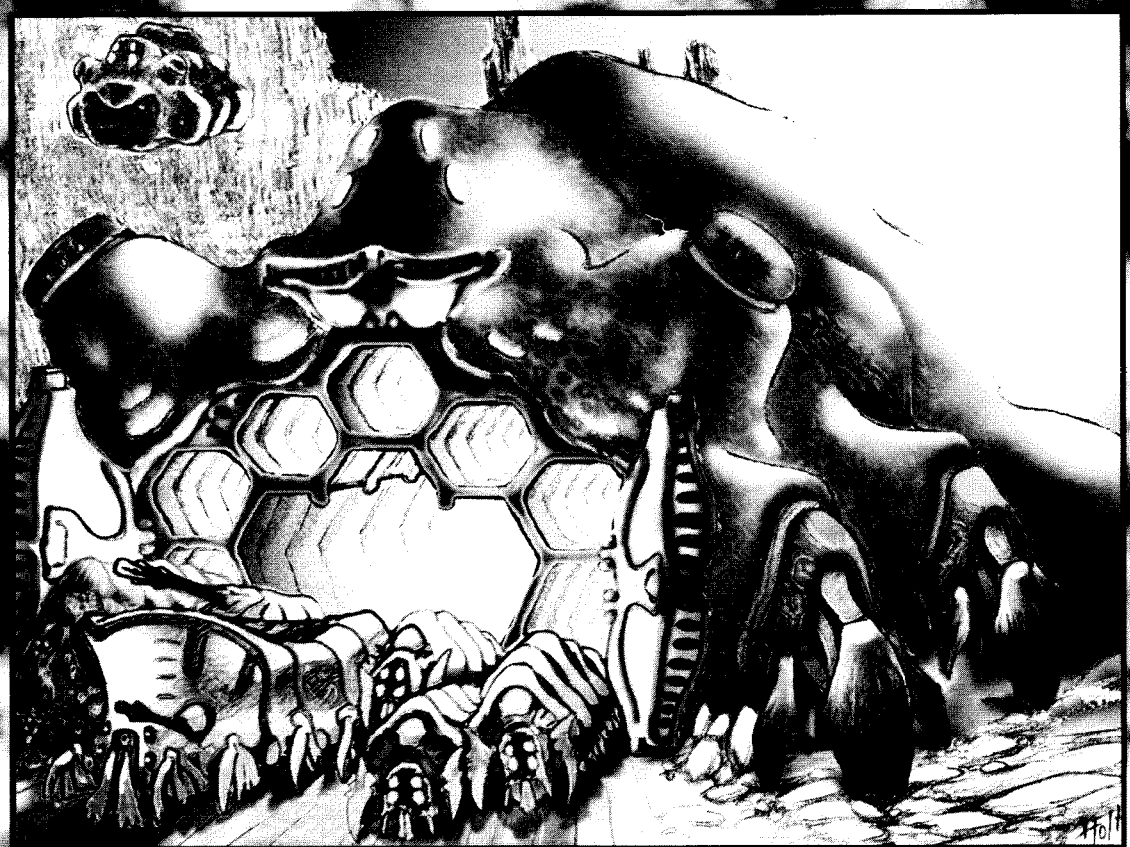
••• **Flicker:** At this level of talent, the Upeo can jump almost continuously in a certain area. A psion can use this to "hover" in place, jumping every fraction of a second to the same spot aboveground. Similarly, at a small price (in terms of disorientation), she can flip front-to-back every few instants, superimposing the visual field behind her over the field in front of her. Additionally, flickering erratically around the area makes the Upeo a difficult target.

•••• **Long Jump:** Translocation 4 allows the psion to make far-ranging jumps, moving instantly to any place that she can visualize clearly — no matter what it's physical location is compared to her own. The teleporter can carry along mass equal to or less than her own that has her psi print.

••••• **Location:** The psion absolutely commands her position in space. At this level, she can actively control her momentum, inertia and acceleration, rather than simply canceling them out. She can shift to tremendous speed from a dead standstill, compensate for gravity, even manifest in two places simultaneously.

Sample Translocation Effects

Avoid Gatecrashers (Level 1): Once all your Upeo friends have gathered for a party, reinforce the area's spatial fabric to keep uninvited guests out.



Build a dice pool that opposes any attempts to translocate into the room. This uses Target Area, an appropriate Duration and the Modifier Result.

Security Precaution (Level 1): Help protect a priceless artifact from thieves by "anchoring" it noetically in its current location. The object seems oddly — and surprisingly — heavy to anyone who tries to pick it up. Similarly, the artifact becomes exponentially more difficult to move the further it's taken away from its anchor point. This is purely a matter of space and inertia — coincidence does not conspire to get the object back to its place if a thief lugs it a few blocks and then gives up.

This acts as a continuous, invested, Movement Result no higher than 1. The Result is based on the teleporter's Psi and the number subtracts from the overall distance the target moves each turn (or hour, depending on the scale used).

Escape (Level 2): Handcuffs rarely work on a banger — you simply jump without them. Since the handcuffs don't have your psi print, they don't accompany you. Use the Utility Result; at level 1 you lose some skin, while with level 5 you teleport so smoothly and minutely that it appears you simply twitched your arms and the 'cuffs clattered to the ground.

Lover's Leap (Level 2): Peering up past the wall-hugging trellis and through your true love's window, bang in to visit... gallantry is not what it used to be. Use the Short Range and Utility Result charts (you might need to boost Mass as well if you're carrying gifts).

Perfect Landing (Level 2): Interrupt a fall, as soon as you can see (or Spatial Sense) the ground clearly, by teleporting down to it. Not only does this cancel your velocity, it can reorient you to put your feet on the ground. On a low Utility Result, roll Athletics to keep from stumbling on the landing.

Defensive Maneuvers (Level 3): Teleport randomly around an area. This adds a difficulty to attacks made against you.

Noisemaker (Level 3): Use Flicker to make an awful lot of flash and noise — each teleport emits a burst of light and a bang, after all, and doing it many times in a short span creates a tremendous racket. It's not enough to blind or deafen anyone, but it can certainly attract attention. Use the Utility Result to simply attract attention, or the Modifier Result to distract (adding difficulty to others' rolls).

Stutter Jump (Level 3): Make continuous short jumps to the space "just in front of" you, blurring across the landscape like a telekinetic in flight. This effect can have a Duration, and uses the Movement Result chart.

Home (Level 4): Go home in an instant from anywhere. This substitutes the Precision Result for Range, with the Utility Result; use Mass as well if you're carrying an appreciable amount of stuff.

Reputation (Level 4): Using a high Familiarity rating from the Precision Result, teleport to a place you know of only by reputation — a kick-ass bar in Marrakech, or the lair of a vile Aberrant! Depending on the result (and the Storyteller's mood), you may not end up in the bar (or lair) you expected to.

Bilocality (Level 5): You can manifest in two places simultaneously! However, you must divide each Attribute (except Appearance) between the two "selves." Each manifestation need not have any dots in an Attribute (though she can't perform any actions related to that Trait if that's the case), and the exact division can change from turn to turn. The two forms draw from the same Psi and Willpower pools (although each can use the permanent Trait ratings at full); similarly, they share a single health chart. Each manifestation does enjoy your full Ability ratings.

Ramming Speed (Level 5): It can be very hard to dodge a Upeo who strikes you at 20 km/h from several centimeters away. Use this power to physically tackle, ram or simply throw yourself at your enemy. Apply difficulties to the target's defense, as garnered from the Modifier Result, to simulate the sudden surprise charge. You could also separately buy up additional damage dice to equate the force of your hit. The Storyteller may apply modifiers to knocking the target back (or to how far you skid, should you miss).

Wall Walking (Level 5): Redirect the gravitational acceleration pulling you down to a point perpendicular to whatever wall, ceiling or other surface you want to walk along. Gravitational pull exists everywhere, after all; it's just a matter of frames of reference. This uses the Movement Result, spending one additional success to "cling" to the surface.

Transmassion

This Mode focuses on Teleportation's application on objects other than the psion. Put another way, the teleporter uses these powers to move things from place to place. Transmassion considers psi-printed items a target carries to be a part of him. Transmassion cannot move the psion herself; that's Translocation's focus.

These powers require a kind of cultivated solipsism, an image of the universe in which the psion stays still and everything moves around her — which, with a sufficient expenditure of power, it does.

Note that the banger must buy Range or Precision for the starting point and the endpoint of the jump separately. Obviously, if one of them is in the teleporter's immediate area, she needn't buy for that point.

• **Relay Object:** The psion can teleport an inanimate object from one place to another. This power uses short jump range, and the psion must sense the involved locations and the object clearly. At this level, the character can only move things to or from her person; higher ratings in this Mode allow for more dynamic applications.

•• **Relay Person:** At this level, the teleporter can transmass people. This functions just like Transmassion 1, just that the Upeo can now apply it to living beings.

••• **Transmit Object:** The psion can use the long jump range to teleport an object — anything that she can visualize clearly in its current context. The teleporter should know the object's location to within about one meter.

•••• **Transmit Person:** Again, this functions much like Transmassion 3, but that the Upeo can now affect living targets. Additionally, she must touch the target in question — either initially to send him away, or and the end if the psion brings him to her.

••••• **Selective Transmassion:** The psion can use Transmassion to separate an object into multiple parts. A living victim opposes the power as usual (thanks to his psi aura, biological template, noetic register — whatever you like to call it), reducing the damage the psion can inflict. Even so, almost any successful attack cripples its target in some particular. Bear in mind that the psion must see or otherwise accurately sense the target; a subject's heart isn't appreciably different from the rest of his internal organs as far as Spatial Sense is concerned.

It's worth noting that this has many useful applications to inanimate objects as well; it's not purely a destructive technique.

Sample Transmassion Effects

Cover (Level 1): Teleport your coat off your body and over someone's head. This imposes a difficulty no higher than +1 to his next action but can be rather distracting to the target and others.

Hide Evidence (Level 1): After detecting a hollow in the wall with Spatial Sense, teleport a murder weapon into it. This uses the Range, Mass and Utility Result charts.

Larceny (Level 1): Snatch someone's weapon right from his hand (the enemy may resist). If you also use Translocation 2, you can appear behind him at the same time — the weapon meets you there.

Death Drop (Level 2): Teleport someone upward to the limit of where you can see clearly, allowing him to plummet to the ground. Unfortunately, grabbing someone and teleporting him requires two separate actions both of which suffer +1 difficulty since you must keep an eye on the sky.

Quick Catch (Level 2): Rescue someone whom a callous Upeo has teleported skyward. The target appears safely at your side with his momentum cancelled. This uses the Range and Utility Result charts and may require a roll or Initiative check for you trigger it before the subject hits the ground.

Catering (Level 3): As a well-organized Upeo, take advantage of the neatly lined up snacks and beverages in your cupboards at home to provide healthy and enjoyable refreshments for your team. This can make trekking through the Brazilian jungle or coordinating a tense but uneventful intrusion much more tolerable.

Grenade Launcher (Level 3): With an Accuracy 10 Precision Result, or the prior investment of a week of constant contact, a jumper can teleport a bomb or grenade into an office or home from anywhere else. A lower Precision Result may work on relatively unique homes and offices.

Remote Refueling (Level 3): Ship your skimmer battery off to a home recharging station and pop it back when it is full again. This comes in handy when no recharging station is near.

Fast Return (Level 4): This power comes in handy when a journey is complete and the rest of your team just want to get home — or when the mission goes to hell and there's no way out. Simply cast them (one by one or *en masse*) through subquantum space back to your gathering place.

Sealed Locale (Level 4): Consider the advantages in a home or other site that has no doors or windows. Tired of unwanted visitors? Pop inside and enjoy the solitude (this requires that you have Translocation 2, of course). Having trouble subduing an antagonist? Teleport him into a sealed cell. If you have a desperate need for such perks as sunlight, put in holo displays. This power uses the Precision and Utility Result charts.

Implant (Level 5): As long as you have an appropriate scanning device to see inside, you can

replace faulty chips in a machine (this automatically incorporates Relay Object) or plant a tracking device in an object or person.

Open Sesame (Level 5): Divide a locked hatch into several pieces and walk through. Then teleport the pieces back together, molecule against molecule, until the gap seals again. This produces a decent if imperfect seal, depending on how well you repair the damage. Apply the Damage Result, both for breaking and then "healing" the door.

Weaken Stairs (Level 5): Pare away most of a stairway's mass, dumping the material elsewhere. This uses the Damage Results chart to weaken the stairs down to one structural level. Any appreciable amount of mass placed on the stairs at that point will trigger a collapse.

Warping

Warping effects change the structure of space and location, topologically twisting the environment. A skilled psion can use Warping to tie an elephant harmlessly into a bow, or to subjectively stretch the distance between two people. Most Warping effects use the Utility Result.

Each turn that a living creature occupies a warped space, reduce the power's Duration by one dot — the individual's own noetic aura works naturally to return things to their normal condition. When the Duration runs out, things do just that and any invested Psi can be recovered normally.

• **Distort:** At this level, Warping allows the Upeo to "scramble" the space in a given area. Such distortion is random with a basic degree of skill; at higher Warping levels, the psion can focus on particular objects. The targeted objects (or the general area) connect and separate unpredictably, making a region difficult and somewhat hazardous to navigate. The degree of mastery over this Mode dictates the scale of such distortion as well; the Area Target can only be raised to one level higher than the psion's current Warping score.

•• **Flux:** The Upeo can stretch or crinkle nearby space — increasing or decreasing the distance between two locations. In combat, a jumper uses this power to throw off an opponent's reactions in one way or another. Out of combat, it enhances her reach and lets her get into otherwise cramped spaces with relative ease. Continuous application of this power enables the psion to get places faster or to slow down an enemy. The Upeo cannot stretch space in more than one dimension at this level. The amount by which the space expands or contracts is small (use the standard Long Range column), and the space stretches evenly.

••• **Fading:** At this level, the Upeo can channel most of her own mass into subquantum energy. Considered an impressive feat (see p. 166), this leaves her only partially corporeal but capable of walking through walls and over mine-strewn fields with relative safety. Moving through solid objects hurts, though, and can cause her serious injury.

•••• **Extrusive Crumpling:** The Upeo can now stretch or crinkle space in more than one direction simultaneously. She could, for example, grab someone's foot and loop his leg around his body twice. This would not adversely affect the victim's internal physiology — from the body's perspective, even the bones of the leg remain straight and normal in size. Externally, though, the target would be rather neatly tied up. Similarly, the Upeo can bridge a 20-meter wide chasm with a stout one meter long board by "stretching" the length of wood the needed distance.

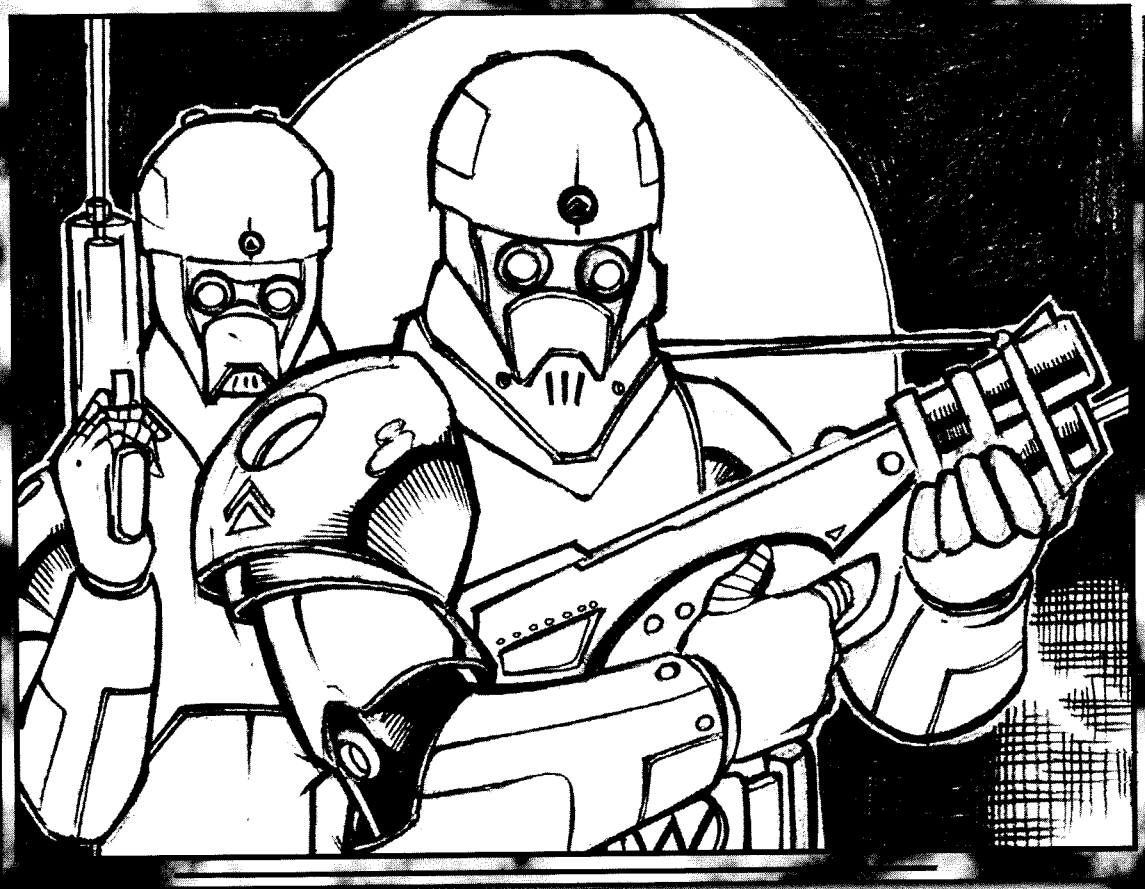
••••• **Transportal:** The Upeo can teleport everything within a designated area to somewhere else. This power requires a minute or so to "warm up" — translating such a large amount of physical mass into noetic particles takes time and concentration. Appropriate bioware can increase the transportal size so that the Upeo can even 'port entire ships from one system to another.

Sample Warping Effects

Distortion Art (Level 1): Fill a tank with varicolored, discrete chemicals, seal the tank and lightly scramble the space inside. This creates dynamic, constantly-shifting currents of drifting chemicals, following strange and convoluted patterns that the human mind can almost track. This uses the Utility Result.

Security System (Level 1): Scramble space by the entrances and exits of a given room, making it much more difficult to enter. Use the Modifier Result to apply a difficulty to those trying to physically force their way in, or to sensually maintain focus while navigating the spatial maze. If you also use Translocation 1, you can stabilize parts of the room first and scramble everything else — the stabilized parts resist the change. This gives much finer control over the area affected.

Accelerate (Level 2): Increase a vehicle's relative velocity by compressing space in front of it. This uses the Movement Result — maximum level 2 on land or water, maximum level 4 in the air, no maximum in space.



Shadow Boxing (Level 2): Make a series of attacks from what looks to be too far away. Add up to two successes to your Brawl, Melee or Martial Arts attack.

Step Ladder (Level 2): Easily reach items high up on a shelf. This is a simple Utility Result, occasionally with a bit of Range.

Defensive Posture (Level 3): Normally when you fade, your entire form reduces evenly, making you look like a walking anatomy display. With an appropriate Utility Result, you can focus on maintaining your outer surface (skin, clothes) to appear normal, while your insides go virtually noncorporeal. You can't walk through walls this way, but you're light as a feather. Buy up a separate Modifier Result to add dice to Stealth maneuvers and to increase your soak against attacks (they still pierce your flesh, but most of your insides are safely shunted to the subquantum universe).

Ghostwalk (Level 3): Reduce just enough of your mass so that you can walk across water or across treetops. Use the Utility Result.

Long Blade (Level 4): Stretch the first centimeter of your knife blade — one meter, several meters or even dozens of meters — burying it in an enemy's chest, then instantly retract the extra length. Attack normally, using a dice pool built from the Modifier Result; this pool cannot be larger than your normal Melee score. This power uses the Long Range column.

Rapid Climb (Level 4): With a few applications, compress a towering cliff into a small climbable rock face. Each application compresses an amount defined on the Area Target chart; this also uses the Utility Result and Duration.

Restrict (Level 4): Pinch the spherical or cubical area around a car into a single point. Anyone inside is trapped, but unharmed. There's nothing to stop them from blasting away at the vehicle's interior, but they must still move through the warped space to get free. This uses Area Target, Utility Result and Duration, and it may also involve Range.

Seal Wall (Level 4): Pinch the top of a wall down to the ground, making it impossible to pass through any openings in that wall.

Tie Knot (Level 4): Impose an arbitrary difficulty on your enemy's actions, with a successful Brawl or Martial Arts roll, by tying him into a knot. This requires spending four extra successes in addition to the amount desired on the Modifier Result.

Teleportation: Sample Power Creation

Feint

Martha Davies (Psi 6, Translocation 3, Warping 5) and three shipmates face a quartet of space pirates who've taken a defensive position in the holding bay of Martha's ship. Martha plans to 'port herself inside the bay, a good couple meters behind the intruders. When the flash and bang of her arrival (hopefully) distracts the pirates, Martha then wants to compress the corridor length so the rest of her crew can charge upon the pirates in an instant.

Her player gets two successes on her Psi roll to teleport (Translocation 2), and spends a Psi for two more successes. The bay is a "known" location (as referenced from the Precision Result), and Martha's not trying to be quiet, so the jump succeeds easily. Her player spends the remaining four successes to buy down the Duration from level 5 to 1. This means the jump takes three turns (which Martha spends in sub-space).

Martha's shipmates throw open the hatch after the Upeo flashes away. This captures the pirates' attention, making Martha's arrival behind them all the more surprising. The Storyteller decides the pirates don't attack the turn of Martha's appearance, due to the sudden confusion. Her shipmates use the flash as their cue, and start running.

The very next turn, Martha crumples the corridor distance between her shipmates and the pirates (Warping 2). She gets only one success on the Psi roll, and spends two Psi for four more. This gives Martha three extra successes that she dumps into the Range. She can effectively shorten the corridor length up to 60 meters — considering it's only 40 meters long, her shipmates are upon the pirates before the interlopers even know what hit them.

Delayed Teleport (Level 5): Since a transportal takes a bit to warm up, it can be prudent to prepare the translation ahead of time. Focus on the point at which you want to create the transportal, expending Psi as appropriate. Invest Psi to keep the 'portal at "ready" status, maintaining the investiture until you want to trigger the final effect. Anyone in the transportal area is jumped to the new locale at that time.

Selective Transportal (Level 5): Normally, a transportal takes everything within a designated area. With proper focus (buying up a Utility Result and spending three extra successes), you can designate which targets you want to 'port.

Sample Teleportation Mode Combination

Multiple Strike (Translocation 3, Warping 4): Pop in to strike from beyond arm's reach and vanishing again before the victim can attack back — only to pop up in a new spot and do the same thing again, and again, and again....

Vitakinesis

Vitakinesis powers deal with health — physiological and psychological. This Aptitude manipulates wounds, disease, illness, infirmity and even mental instability. Normally, a rex alleviates these conditions... sometimes, he inflames them.

Benefits and Drawbacks

Increased Psi Cost: By its very nature, Vitakinesis encourages harmony. A psion need not have any medical training to safely knit bones or heal emotional scars — to return the subject to her original "biological template," if you will — using this Aptitude. Using Vitakinesis in a negative fashion — inflicting physical trauma, controlling another's synaptic impulses — is at odds with the powers' intent. Such uses cost one additional Psi, which cannot be used to increase any parameters. The psion is effectively burning more noetic energy to force his talents to perform an act for which they're not normally inclined.

Killing Blow: Any attempt to outright kill a living being with Vitakinesis is considered an impressive feat (see p. 166). The psion may only plan on "cutting the guy," but if the Storyteller sees the damage inflicted would cause death, she can demand the attacking doc spend the extra Psi needed. If the vitakinetic doesn't have the requisite Psi on tap, the noetic energy lashes back — inflicting it on the attacking psion rather than the victim! This damage may be soaked as appropriate.

Physical Recovery Time: Vitakinesis is rare in that its Duration parameter often works in *reverse*. Healing bashing damage up to Wounded is considered a base Duration 3 parameter; bashing up to Incapacitated is effectively Duration 5. Healing lethal damage up to Wounded is considered Duration 4; lethal up to Incapacitated is effectively Duration 6 (two full scenes).

This time can be reduced (further accelerating the healing rate) by one level for each parameter point spent. The bashing rate can be lowered to a minimum of one turn (level zero, effectively). The lethal rate can be dropped to a minimum of three turns (a level 1 Duration).

Even though such repairs take time, the patient is considered stabilized once the psionic healing begins (unless she's attacked while "under the knife"). The psion is focused on healing for this period also, although he may invest Psi (see p. 164) to have the repairs continue without his immediate presence.

Psychological Recovery Time: Operating on the human brain is exceedingly tricky, even for psi. As a result, any Mentatis healing efforts also follow the reverse Duration parameter, starting at Duration 5 no matter what the condition's severity. This duration may be bought down to a minimum of 10 minutes (level 2).

Basic Technique

Kirlian Eye: By studying a patient's noetic aura/biological template/life field/etc., the rex can gain insight into her health and mental state. This information has a decidedly medical bias — a psion with a high Aptitude level can diagnose impending conditions, the source of an emotional trauma and even (for recent corpses) the cause of death. However, he cannot determine what music a patient enjoys listening to, where that person has been or even what she ate for lunch.

Use the Short Range chart for Kirlian Eye.

Iatrosis

Iatrosis is the defining Mode of the Æsculpians. The power to enhance physical health and reinforce life, this area of focus does not deal with the mind. However, any injury the body suffers, up to and almost including death, can be repaired using Iatrosis.

These powers use the Short Range chart and, often, the Damage or Disability Result (to measure damage healed).

• **Mending:** Powers based on Mending can remove pain, reduce inflammation, induce necessary bleeding or vomiting, cure nausea, erase hangovers, and alleviate the unpleasant side effects caused by periods, pregnancy, and birth. (Psions using Mending in the field expand this list every day.) Mending can also reduce wound penalties for damage that it can not address directly.

A sufficiently accomplished psion can use Mending to heal even lethal damage. However, Mending can only work with the resources the body has available — though at a tremendously accelerated rate. It heals only what the body could heal on its own, given sufficient care, luck, and time.

•• **Antitoxin:** Iatrosis 2 allows a psion to reduce the effects of toxin and disease on his patient. The psion can manipulate the immune system in other positive ways as well, e.g. reinforcing it against poison in advance or reducing the effects of allergies.

••• **Catalysis:** The psion can make a normal physical process hyperactive, if this proves helpful to the patient. Rexs commonly help their more aggressive partners invoke hysterical strength and hair-trigger reflexes, for example. When the power wears off, the victim becomes exhausted and sick for an interval at least as long as the power's original duration — usually a small price to pay if enhanced reflexes spells the difference between life and death.

•••• **Biological Template:** The psion can access a patient's "biological template" and reconfigure her natural form to achieve its optimum potential. To be clear, this does not mean the rex can make every individual an Adonis (or a Venus). If the patient is not genetically predisposed to developing tremendous strength, the vitakinetic can't make it happen at this level.

This *can* give the psion enough insight to psionically cure conditions that the body could not overcome on its own — cancer, nerve death and so forth. Only two things stand beyond the psion's healing reach: death and the literal physical loss of an unregenerable organ or limb.

••••• **Miracle:** This level of power enables the rex to overcome death and the loss of unregenerable organs or limbs. A large number of caveats apply in both cases, however! Essential portions of living creature's biological template (a term of convenience that sidesteps issues of "soul" or "consciousness" for now) disperse into the subquantum stratum soon after death; the body starts to decay immediately as well. Once that template degrades far enough, death has claimed the individual permanently. Reviving the dead normally applies an additional difficulty equal to the number of minutes the target has been dead. Cryogenic sleep and similar efforts can slow the body's degredation; under optimal conditions (e.g. a very good hospital, cryogenic freeze), this is adjusted to +1 difficulty per hour of death. The patient must still recover up from Incapacitated.

Regeneration takes more time and sustained effort — life is natural for a human, regrowing an arm is not. The exact time this takes is up to the Storyteller, but is uniformly long — an eye might take a day, an arm a month — and may not be bought down. Further, the doc must invest Psi in the attempt until the anatomy has regenerated completely. On the positive side, old injuries are no harder to treat than new ones are. Note that a person born without a limb or other organ cannot have it regenerated, since it was never a part of her biological template to begin with.

Iatrosis may allow other forms of medical miracle, at the Storyteller's option. For example, an Iatrosis 5 Modifier Result might add significantly to research-oriented Medicine rolls when the psion tries to develop a new drug quickly.

Sample Iatrosis Effects

Heal (Level 1): Mend bashing or lethal damage (refer to the Damage Result). As mentioned above, powers at this level can only fix damage that your patient's body could heal on its own with enough luck and time. On some occasions (at the Storyteller's discretion), you may be unable to cure a subject who's suffered severe damage (Crippled or worse).

Pain Block (Level 1): Sooth the pain reactions that usually accompany serious bodily damage. Use the Modifier Result to lower the dice penalty associated with reduced health levels. (Apply Subjects Target, Short Range and Duration as well).

Remove Acne (Level 1): Wash acne away from skin, leaving it pure, clean and healthy. Acne is a level 1 Minor Disability.

Sea Legs (Level 1): Speed up a patient's acclimatization to new environmental conditions — sea travel, space travel, high altitudes. Your patient may become a little wobbly once she returns to her former environment, but this passes in time. Further, once the subject has been in the new situation once, she adapts to it much more quickly in the future. This uses the Modifier Result to cancel penalties (**Luna Rising** has details on acclimatizing to gravity conditions off-Earth).

Extra Energy (Level 2): Wash away the poisons the body manufactures as a result of stress or fatigue. As an instant effect, this uses the Disability Result, since fatigue is a level 1 Minor Disability. As a continuous effect, this adds to all Endurance rolls and in general slows the *accumulation* of fatigue.

Sober Up (Level 2): Cleanse the mind and body of the effects of liquor.

Age Child (Level 3): Age a child rapidly. This could help a youth survive a harsh environment by granting her the greater strength and endurance of an adult. It could also help a victim of an Aberrant power who'd somehow been regressed physiologically! Consider each year aged to be the equivalent of two Severe Disability levels, and the aging occurs over the course of several days per extra year. This will not age someone past the point of peak health and physical maturity. Also, the child's mind remains just as it was — indeed, she will likely face psychological repercussions from suddenly gaining adulthood.

Hysterical Strength (Level 3): Inspire brief, tremendously augmented strength. This effectively increases an Attribute, so use the Modifier Result to supply the subject with extra dice for the duration. It's limited to Duration 2, however, since the subject's body can't maintain the stress this puts on her body for too long. When the effect wears off, the patient becomes exhausted and sick for the same length of time. If you also use Algesis 1, the patient won't notice that she's tired afterward, and can push on even if the strain causes her severe injury.

Regrow Hair (Level 3): Help those who've lost their hair, either naturally or through fire or other accident. This effect stimulates the natural process of hair growth, allowing the patient to grow a healthy head of hair in days and a legendary mane in weeks.

Restore Template (Level 4): Restore your patient's body to top physical health, sweeping away deviations from her natural biological template. This may take a number of treatments and cannot actually restore lost organs. Otherwise, though, this power can take the most crippled and broken humans and reshape them into paragons of vitality. This power uses the Disability Result.

Infectious Cure (Level 5): With Storyteller permission, develop a cure (for some disease or condition) that is contagious in itself. Not only does the cure restore the patient to health, it can be passed on those who come into contact with her (and so on), curing as it spreads. This requires at least a five Utility Result.

Vitakinetics do not use this power often, since any contagious cure that spreads into the general population is virtually guaranteed to provoke an occasional life-threatening allergy. It may also mutate into a more virulent version of the original disease.

Regenerate (Level 5): As Restore Template, but restore lost organs, missing extremities and even entire limbs.

Mentatis

Mentatis effects heal the mind as it relates to brain function. It differs from Telepathy in that Mentatis does not deal with the subject's thoughts and "higher consciousness." A Mentatis effect can require a good deal of time to run its course, as described above. Each suffers +2 difficulty unless the psion touches the target.

• **Savant:** The psion first learns a basic understanding of brain functions. Among other things, this allows for directed concentration, focused powers of recall and (at need) optimized thought patterns for a given task. This might use the Modifier Result, applying a bonus to the task at hand for the duration — however, the individual suffers a difficulty to all other actions equal to the modifier result. This represents the fact that the brain is essentially re-routing its functions to the primary task, sacrificing ability elsewhere.

•• **Compulsion:** Mentatis 2 allows the vitakinetic to channel a subject's mental resources — forcing him to abide by a specific condition or to avoid a given state of mind. Thus, the rex can impose the irrational need for cheese on a target — or, more responsibly, calm a raving sociopath.

••• **Balance:** This power, equivalent to Iatrosis' "Mending," allows the psion to soothe the various forms of mental trauma and distortion imposed by design and circumstance. Balance can also be used to sedate individuals or induce euphoria — anything non-harmful involving holistic adjustments to the mind.

Although Balance operates via the brain, the vitakinetic can only perceive and adjust the psyche — it treats the brain holistically and not specifically. Therefore, the rex cannot treat neurological conditions or remove drugs from the patient's system... which in themselves can throw the patient back into trauma mere hours later! Used in combination with conventional treatments, however (drugs, therapy), this power can still be quite effective in such circumstances.

•••• **Chemical Block:** At this level, the vitakinetic can actually adjust a subject's chemical functioning. Within the limits of his medical and scientific understanding, the doc can cure illnesses like addiction, learning disabilities and neurological disorders. To a limited extent, he can also induce these things as long as it creates a more balanced state.

Diseases and illnesses fundamental to the mind's structure (schizophrenia, serious psychosis, physical brain damage) require Psyche Redesign, as below.

••••• **Psyche Redesign:** Mentatis 5 allows a psion to rework a person's mind "from the ground up." A subject capable of consent must give it voluntarily, or the change is not permanent.

Sample Mentatis Effects

Persona (Level 1): Build a vivid and consistent persona in your mind, based on your imagination or your memories of a friend or mentor. This does not add anything to your knowledge or processing power but it does give you focused and objective answers to "what would *he* do?" and "what would *she* say?" These answers may not be correct, but they draw on the totality of your knowledge of that person. This adds to social rolls (particularly Performance) that involve acting, or to Rapport rolls that try to glean motivation and purpose from a subject.

Tangible Vision (Level 1): Construct a mental vision in a subject (including yourself) vivid enough to experience with all five senses. Quite aside from the escapism potential, you can use this to reconstruct memories precisely, adding dice to appropriate Intelligence rolls. An unwilling target can resist this as normal.

Calm (Level 2): Force an overly insolent companion to stop arguing with the boss, taunting an enraged Aberrant or screaming profanity at a ranking Legionnaire (use the Control Result). While it never becomes permanent, many vitakinetics consider such a use unethical.

Healthy Habit (Level 2): Instill a healthy habit in your patient. An anorexic gains the strength or desire to eat regularly and properly. A manic-depressive takes her medication at the appropriate time. A friend who wants to exercise does so. This effect can become permanent, as the individual may form the habit during the course of the effect's compulsion, continuing on after the power itself wears off.

Some vitakinetics consider this kind of thing as unethical as Calm, even objecting when the patient consents. Most, however, classify it with involuntary hospitalization for mental patients and force feeding — distasteful, yes, but sometimes necessary.

Anesthesia (Level 3): Sedate a target. Treat this as painless bashing damage that cannot kill. The patient soaks normally.

Euphoria (Level 3): Impose euphoria on a subject. This uses the Control Result as emotional manipulation.

Heal the Heart (Level 3): Help a patient come to terms with overwhelming grief. This uses the Disability Result.

Cure Dyslexia (Level 4): Fix your patient's dyslexia (or some other learning disorder). You must have sufficient medical knowledge to understand how the disability works (the equivalent of Medicine 2).

New Birth (Level 5): Create a new personality and self for a "vegetable." This requires healing seven levels of Severe Disability. You must invest Psi in all involved effects. The new personality starts with Willpower 2; the Storyteller determines its Mental and Social Traits. If you wish to improve these values, add one point to a Trait by healing two additional levels of Severe Disability. You can only raise Traits in this manner with the initial effect. After that, the individual's own developmental processes take over. Further meddling of this sort becomes impossible, and all invested Psi returns.

Rewrite Self (Level 5): Redesign yourself to your own specifications, as described above. Your old personality remains spottily active and able to invest Psi in new effects until the new personality "sets." This is considered an impressive feat (see p. 166).

The Storyteller should not allow any vitakinetic to emerge from this process with more total dots in Mental and Social Traits than he had before.

Algesis

Algesis holds a dark mirror to Iatrosis and Mentatis — this Mode uses a rex's knowledge of the body to do terrible damage to the living (or to a fresh corpse; the noetic universe will not object). Algesis effects include some of the nastiest powers known to humanity. The most powerful Algesis effects leave victims crippled for life (and, in many cases, wishing they hadn't been so lucky as to have survived).

• **Collatoral Injury:** In the beginning, the psion cannot directly inflict damage, but he can convince the target's body to do just the wrong things. The victim might reflexively put weight on a broken limb, rush blood to an open wound, keep blood away from damaged joints, turn off pain signals in a dangerous situation and so forth. This uses the Damage Result, with the psion specifying the general class of effect he wants to achieve.

•• **Assault:** The rex can inflict damage or temporary disability on his victim. The target remains disabled until the Duration expires or when the inflicted disability would fade naturally, whichever comes first. The vitakinetic cannot invest in these effects at this level of ability.

••• **Algesic Shield:** The psion can a target (most often himself) against psionic powers that directly affect the body or brain — mind control, teleporting away a portion of anatomy, being anesthesized, etc. Psi powers that affect the body via some other medium, like a biokinetic's claws or an electrokinetic's laser, cannot be blocked by this power.

•••• **Condition:** The doc can inflict a serious disability on his victim — something on the order of AIDS, rampant arthritis, an aneurysm or blindness. The vitakinetic must maintain these effect with invested Psi or the target gradually recovers, although secondary effects remain. Thus, an illness caught while the victim had a depressed immune system will outlive the condition itself.

••••• **Atrocity:** The vitakinetic can inflict massive damage on the victim. The Damage Result controls the levels of bashing and lethal damage, but the victim *also* suffers some sort of lasting penalty — such as a small reduction in a certain Trait. A skilled practitioner of Iatrosis (or Mentatis, if appropriate) may be able to undo this effect.

Sample Algesis Effects

Deaden (Level 1): Turn off someone's ability to feel pain — assuming that this will ultimately cause him harm. This reduces wound penalties and adds a difficulty to any Awareness roll to notice that he has suffered damage.

Dull Reflexes (Level 1): In a dangerous situation, turn off someone's reflexive responses to incoming attacks. This adds no higher than +1 difficulty to your victim's defensive maneuvers.

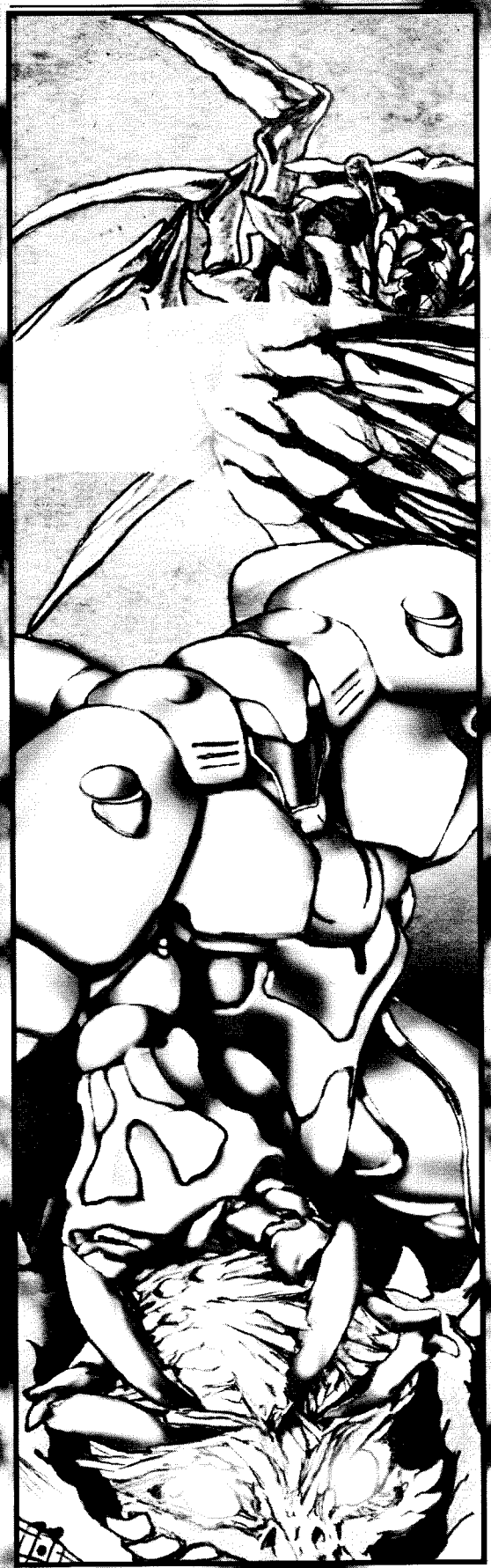
Inflame (Level 1): Cause your victim's body to take action (on the microscopic or macroscopic level) that makes her current condition worse. This inflicts bashing damage, but can no more than double the damage levels the victim already suffers.

Migraine (Level 2): Inflict a blinding headache on an enemy. This adds no higher than +2 difficulty to all Willpower rolls and no higher than +3 difficulty to rolls requiring sustained concentration. There may be collatoral effects, though, including nausea, impaired vision and weakness.

Paralyze (Level 2): Momentarily paralyze your victim by inflicting four levels of Minor Disability (limited to Duration 2). She may still use psi effects freely.

Protection (Level 3): Shield yourself against direct psionic attacks. The Modifier Result adds to your roll to resist or soak appropriate direct psi powers.

Madness (Level 4): Inflict a cruel, lasting mania on someone. This is really a form of emotion control, so it uses the Control Result.



Pain (Level 4): Inflict incessant, horrible pain on your victim. This adds no higher than +2 difficulty to almost all of your victim's rolls. The victim can make a Willpower roll to overcome these effects for a turn.

Explode Bones (Level 5): Create tremendous gas production *inside* your victim's bones, causing them to explode into sharp shards that rip through muscle and organ tissue. This inflicts lethal damage that only an Algesic Shield or a level four Adaptation/Psychomorphing effect can soak.

This effect also causes collatoral damage. If you explode the bones in your victim's right leg, she will probably move at half speed for life (unless she is a biokinetic or goes through long-term latrosis 4 treatment). If you explode several ribs, it will decrease her Stamina — the lungs and heart and other organs can be saved by a competent doctor but not completely restored to health.

Sample Vitakinesis Mode Combinations

Defensive Posture (latrosis 1, Algesis 3): Set up an automatic defense system in your body. The shield protects against direct psi attacks for the duration (or with invested Psi), while Mending is on cue to immediately heal any other damage you suffer (simply buy up the levels healed and hold them in reserve with invested Psi).

Overhaul (latrosis 4, Mentatis 3): Completely cleanse a patient's physical and mental processes. This removes virtually all impurities, putting the individual in prime health.

Quantakinesis

The most rare of all Aptitudes, Quantakinesis has long been a mystery. Only its practitioners had a clear idea of its full potential, but they have been slain or have gone into hiding. At best, noetic science understands that the Aptitude interacts with the quantum universe — psionic manipulation of gravity, radioactivity, and the like.

The implications are staggering, not the least of which is that Aberrants also manipulate similar forces (which they term "quanta" — though it's popularly become known as "taint" in the 22nd century). Quantakinesis allows for nowhere near the same degree of power that Aberrants can attain. The key distinction is that Aberrants channel quantum energy directly,

Vitakinesis: Sample Power Creation

Concentration

Wu Chen (Psi 8, Iatrosis 3, Mentatis 4) is an Æon-affiliated vitakinetic. During a pitched battle between psions and Aberrants, Chen notices a few civilians trapped in a burning building. Hauling them out, he optimizes his mind for the healing task ahead of him.

Using Savant (Mentatis 1), Chen's player rolls five successes and spends a single Psi point since he's forcing his brain to function in an abnormal fashion (see Increased Psi Cost, above). This gives him four extra successes (which become parameter points); Chen buys Duration 4 and a Modifier Result 2. For the next hour, he has two extra dice for all medically-related rolls — and all his non-medical actions, including Awareness and dodge, suffer +2 difficulty. It's the Storyteller's call if the extra dice also apply to Chen's actual psi powers (which isn't out of line, so approval is likely).

while quantakinetics do so through the secondary medium of Psi. Since the two forces normally oppose each other, the Chitra Bhanu lost a tremendous amount of energy in buffering against the conflict. There's no way around this opposition but even without being able to "mainline" quantum energy, much is still possible with Quantakinesis.

Since true Chitra Bhanu are best left as Storyteller characters, only the basic levels of Quantakinesis are described here for use as auxiliary Modes. The psion who manifests one is exceedingly rare indeed. Most Gifted never use the ability for fear of being branded a "dark psion" and getting snatched up for study (or becoming a target of assassination). Others use the power secretly, and wonder what may become of them.

Benefits and Drawbacks

Buffer Effect: Due to the intrinsic opposition that exists between Psi and Taint (or Quanta, depending on whom you speak with), all Quantakinesis effects are considered impressive feats (see p. 166). The psion must expend a great deal of energy to force psi to manipulate and control quantum energy — no easy task.

Taint Register: Quantakinesis does not hinder the normal operation of psi energy in an area the way that taint does (see **Chapter Five: Psi**, p. 142). However, it does register similarly to Attunement. A psion using Attunement may sense Quantakinesis use as a weak taint effect.

Basic Techniques

Quantum Sensitivity: This ability is a part of a quantakinetic's connection to the quantum flow. Using this ability, the psion can use the Long Range column to sense taint, quantum energy and most forms of radioactivity. Extra successes allow the psion to determine the exact nature of this energy and how it is being used.

Taint Resistance: A quantakinetic reflexively protects herself against taint in the same way that she applies Psi to control it for her power use. On a successful Psi roll, the psion can add a rating equal to her highest Quantakinesis Mode as soak against any taint-based effect.

Enhancement

At is most rudimentary level, Enhancement involves infusing the psion's own body with quantum energy. She may use Enhancement to boost her own body's physical and mental capacities.

• **Basic Enhancement:** A psion uses this power to raise any of her Physical, Mental, or even Social Attributes. At this level of ability, only one Trait can be enhanced at a time, and it may only be increased by a single dot. The psion may invest Psi to boost the Trait for great periods of time, however.

Sample Enhancement Effects

Boost Charisma (Level 1): By raising her Charisma by one dot, the psion becomes more charming, cool, and elegant.

Boost Wits (Level 1): With an increased Wits, the psion thinks more rapidly and with greater clarity. This enhancement also alters her Initiative score for the duration.

Energetics

This Mode allows the psion to produce, sense and direct all known forms of energy.

• **Energy Production:** At this power level, the psion can convert noetic energy into any other form of energy desired — light, heat, sound, or even kinetic energy. This energy must emanate from the psion, but it can be directed through any portion of her body. Energy Production cannot produce complex forms of energy like radio broadcasts or laser beams, only random bursts of energy.

This energy can be released (at Short Range) in damaging bursts to burn, blind, or deafen a target, or it can be used at a lower level to merely illuminate or warm an area. The energy will not damage the psion.

Sample Energetics Effects

Deafen (Level 1): Project an intense beam of sound at any target within Short Range. Roll a cross-matched [Psi + Firearm] to hit; the subject may make a resisted Endurance roll against the attack, but if you succeed the target is deafened for a number of turns as purchased on the Duration. The victim suffers a difficulty to communication and other actions relating to sound (perhaps even his equilibrium) equal to the level purchased on the Modifier Result.

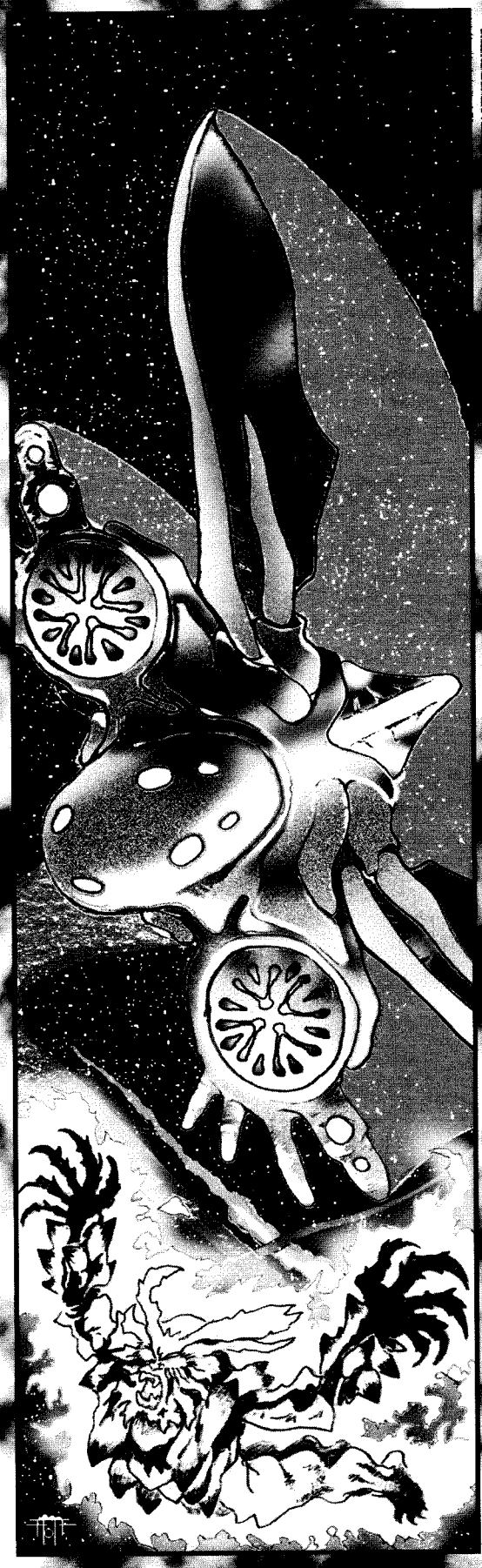
Heat Fist (Level 1): Your hands radiate burning heat. The damage from this heat (purchased as lethal damage on the Damage Result) is added to any Brawling or Martial Arts attacks — not to mention incidental touches — you make for the duration. You won't be harmed by the heat, though you might damage your clothes if you're not careful.

Palm of Light (Level 1): Illuminate a small area by producing light from your palm. Use the Modifier Result to negate visibility penalties and the Area Target for the amount of space illuminated.

Transmutation

With this Mode, the psion can sense and ultimately alter a target's molecular structure.

- **Molecular Scanning:** At this level of talent, a psion can implement molecular scans of objects, people and creatures. The quantakinetic must focus on the scan, but is not literally looking at the target's molecular structure; instead, it's an intuitive sense of the physical, electrochemical and energetic makeup. Using this effect, the psion can find physical weaknesses in a living being or an object (wall, armor, tire), as well as gaining knowledge of the details of the target's molecular structure.



Sample Transmutation Effects

Find Weakness (Level 1): Detect weak points in any form of natural or artificial armor. The armor's soak decreases by an amount equal to the Modifier Result purchased, up to level three. This only applies only to attacks targeted specifically at the weak point (so a called shot is required).

Diagnosis (Level 1): While not as precisely as with Kirlian Eye, you can detect cellular abnormalities or similar problems with a patient. For illnesses involving radiation damage, cancer, or poisoning, the Modifier Result adds up to level three to Medicine attempts to diagnose or treat the problem.

Elementary Watson (Level 1): When carefully scrutinizing foot prints, scraps of cloth, or similar clues you can detect minute traces of skin, fibers, or other foreign materials. The Modifier Result, up to level three, adds to the relevant Investigation attempt.

Quantakinesis: Sample Power Creation

Troubleshooting

Lana Kinkaid (Psi 6, [Psychokinesis] Cryokinesis 1, Telekinesis 3, [Quantakinesis] Transmutation 1) finds that her skimmer isn't providing her with the same lift and acceleration she's used to. She checks the primary turbine; though worn, it doesn't appear to be in bad shape.

Lana focuses Quantakinesis to look at the assembly more closely. Her player gets three successes on the roll and spends a Psi point for two more. This nets four extra successes, which must be spent on a two-for-one basis since Quantakinesis effects are all impressive feats.

Still, this translates to two automatic successes on Lana's Investigation attempt to scan the turbine. With another three successes on the Investigation roll itself, she easily senses the hairline web of cracks running through the turbine blades. Though it looks sturdy enough, it's clear to Lana that the turbine could crack at any time — which could've ended in a messy accident if she hadn't caught it.

Aptitude Quick-Reference Table

This is a basic listing of the Aptitudes, their Modes and a designation of each ability level within each. Refer to the appropriate sections for details.

Biokinesis

Basic Technique: Biosense

Adaptation	Psychomorphing	Transmogrify
• Resistance	• Biokinetic Awareness	• Gross Changes
•• Acclimatization	•• Internal Adjustments	•• Preserve Functionality
••• Manual Override	••• Incorporation	••• Precise Changes
•••• Preparation	•••• Metamanipulation	•••• Create Functionality
••••• Survival	••••• Manipulate Others	••••• Behavioral Changes

Clairsentience

Basic Technique: The Sight

Psychometry	Psychonavigation	Telesthesia
• Verify Interaction	• Orientation	• Heighten Awareness
•• Review	•• Time	•• Alertness
••• Evaluate	••• Obscurity	••• Sensory Projection
•••• Feedback	•••• Course Plotting	•••• Analysis
••••• Destiny	••••• Farsight	••••• Radial Perception

Electrokinesis

Basic Techniques: Static Burst, Energy Awareness

Electromanipulation
- • Holistic Effects
- •• Bioelectrical Awareness
- ••• Personal Enhancement
- •••• Fine Work
- ••••• Esoterica

Photokinesis
- • Illumination
- •• Spectrum Sight
- ••• Field
- •••• Static Image
- ••••• Dynamic Image

Technokinesis
- • Modify
- •• Tap
- ••• Full Access
- •••• Transmit
- ••••• Watchdog

Psychokinesis

Basic Techniques: Nudge, Temperature Control

Cryokinesis
- • Thermal Screen
- •• Freeze Gas
- ••• Freeze Liquid
- •••• Drain Energy
- ••••• Freeze Solid

Pyrokinesis
- • Heat Distribution
- •• Heat Gas
- ••• Ignite
- •••• Liquefy
- ••••• Plasmics

Telekinesis
- • Tow
- •• Remote Hands
- ••• Telekinetic Construct
- •••• Force Manipulation
- ••••• Telekinetic Dynamics

Telepathy

Basic Technique: Mind Scan

Empathy
- • Sense Emotion
- •• Exacerbate
- ••• Emotional Equilibrium
- •••• Inflict Emotion
- ••••• Projective Empathy

Mindshare
- • Communication
- •• Mindspeak
- ••• Espionage
- •••• Network
- ••••• Access

Psychbending
- • Willfinder
- •• Control
- ••• Mind Shield
- •••• Mindwarp
- ••••• Division

Teleportation

Basic Technique: Spatial Sense

Translocation
- • Spatial Integrity
- •• Jump
- ••• Flicker
- •••• Long Jump
- ••••• Location

Transmassion
- • Relay Object
- •• Relay Person
- ••• Transmit Object
- •••• Transmit Person
- ••••• Selective Transmassion

Warping
- • Distort
- •• Flux
- ••• Fading
- •••• Extrusive Crumpling
- ••••• Transportal

Vitakinesis

Basic Technique: Kirlian Eye

Iatrosis
- • Mending
- •• Antitoxin
- ••• Catalysis
- •••• Biological Template
- ••••• Miracle

Mentatis
- • Savant
- •• Compulsion
- ••• Balance
- •••• Chemical Block
- ••••• Psyche Redesign

Algesis
- • Collatoral Injury
- •• Assault
- ••• Algesic Shield
- •••• Condition
- ••••• Atrocity

Quantakinesis

Basic Techniques: Quantum Sensitivity, Taint Resistance

Enhancement
- • Basic Enhancement

Energetics
- • Energy Production

Transmutation
- • Molecular Scanning


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