

# THE TRADITIONS GATHERED

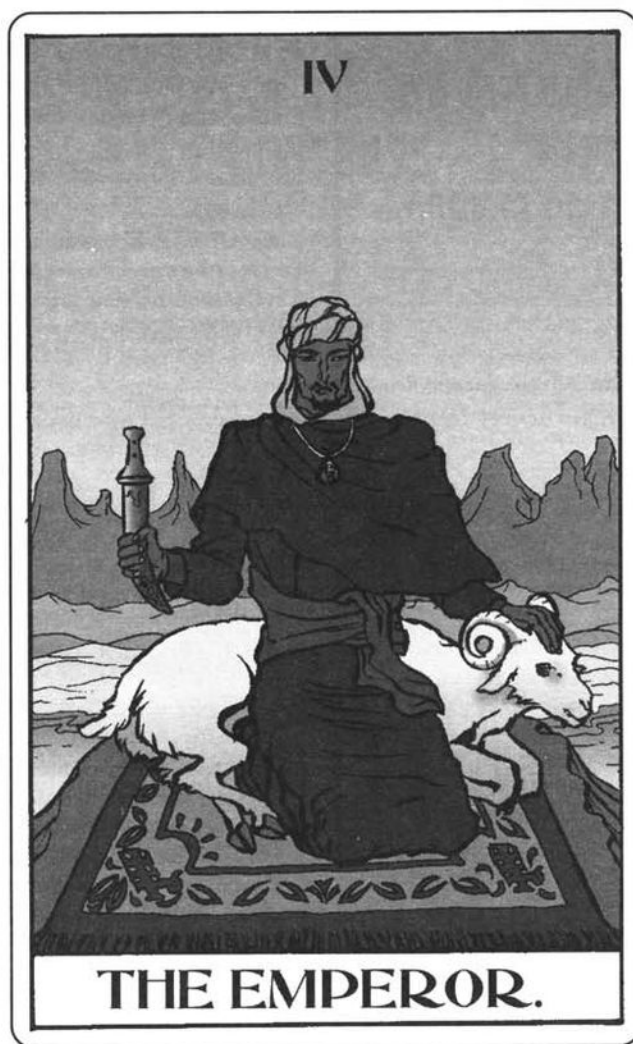
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# ORDER OF HERMES™

*I Am Become The Word*



By THE PYMANDIC HEXAGRAM

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 ...and **Oh Soon Shropshire**, who's gone through such hell that I can't bring myself to attempt a joke about it. God, I wish you a better year this time around.

Take care, folks.

SCANNED BY:  
 SG <B-

## CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

The authors thank Stephen Edred Flowers and Don Webb for permission to quote from their works.

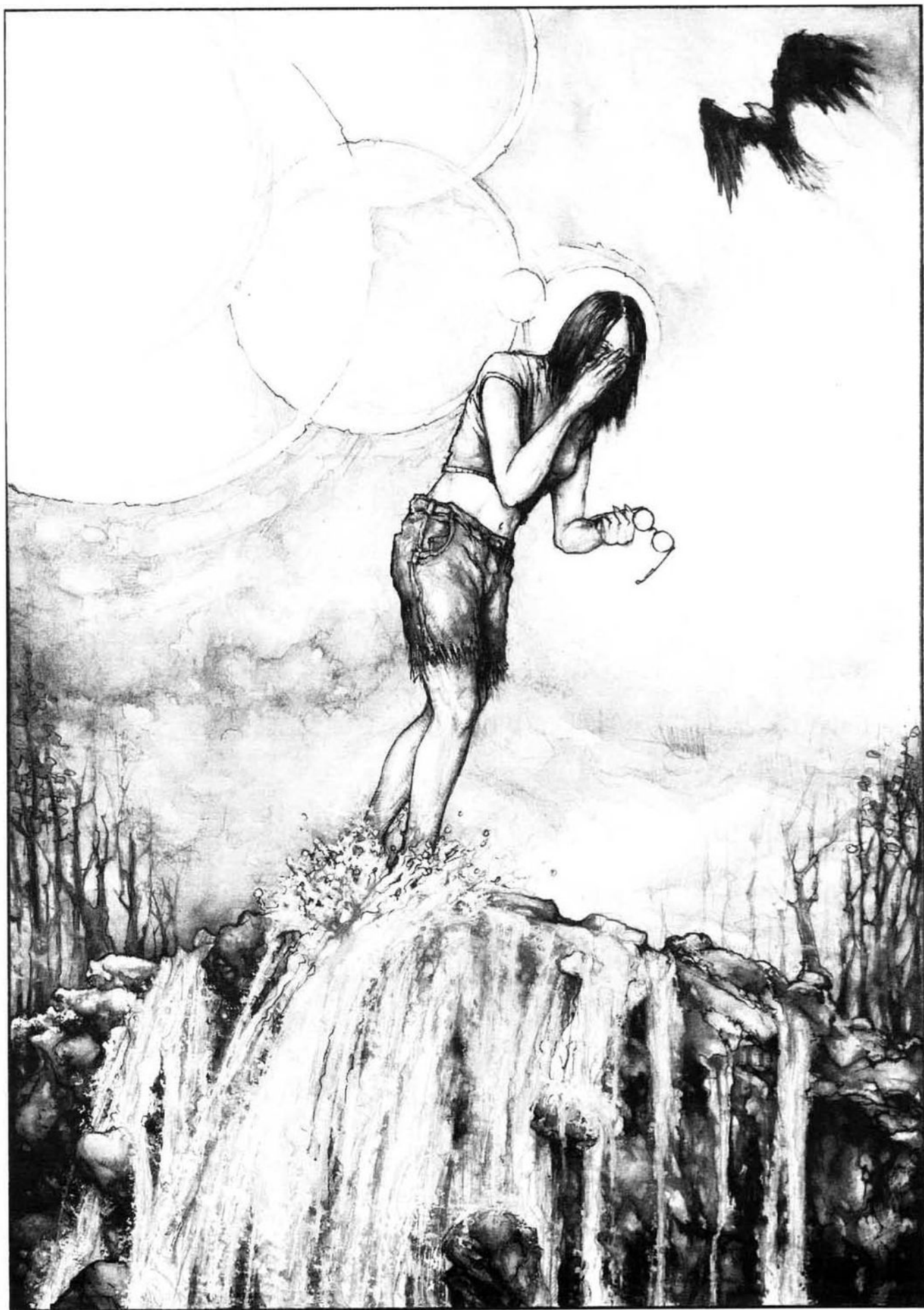
Many of the concepts in this book (including the Houses of Hermes themselves) originated in the game *Ars Magica*, now available through Atlas Games, or in Chapter One of *The Book of Chantries*, by Steven Brown, Phil Brucato and Robert Hatch. The original *Ars Magica* background was created by Jonathan Tweet, with contributions from Shannon Appel, Ken Cliffe, Geoff Grabowski, Nicole Landroos Frein, Peter Hentges, Marc Phillips, Mark Rein•Hagen, Naomi Rivkis and Lisa Stevens. Houses *Fortunae*, *Janissary*, *Shaea* and *Thig* were created by Steven Brown, Phil Brucato, Beth Fisch and Allen Varney. The modern state and membership of the Order comes from the work of the latter authors.

# ORDER OF HERMES™



## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
FOOTNOTE 1: CHRONOLOGICAL PRECIS (HISTORY)	8
FOOTNOTE 2: CONJUNCTIONES DOMESTICAE (INTERNAL RELATIONS)	18
FOOTNOTE 3: HERMETIC HOUSES	30
FOOTNOTE 4: CONJUNCTIONES EXTERNAE (EXTERNAL RELATIONS)	50
APPENDIX: ARS MAGICA ET MISCELLANEA	54



# INTRODUCTION

Another damned, thick, square book! Always scribble, scribble, scribble! Eh, Mr. Gibbon?

— William Henry, Duke of Gloucester, upon receiving Volume II of Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1781



6/27/1997 07:20 GMT

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To: Master Auris Galina Gritsenko, Horizon Chantry

From: Mahmet Kemal, Disciple, Chantry Oxford

Re: Apprentice Hornbook 37/e

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## SECURITY: NONE

Honored Master (and Editor) Gritsenko,

Thank you for forwarding to me the prepublication draft of the next Hornbook. I have read it until my eyeballs bled, and I have many comments.

• **Size and Scope:** The exponential growth of the Hornbook disturbs me, and no doubt this new edition will terrify new apprentices. I confess that after page 2,500, I began skimming. Of course a new Hermetic must master voluminous lore, but the

lore is neither an end in itself, nor is much of this particular lore pertinent.

For example, need an apprentice in his first year of study really learn that between 1006 and 1047, Himinis the Mad of House Verditius crafted Talismans with hidden traps? These devices are now gone, to say nothing of House Verditius, and yet Section One offers a full discussion (pages 565-84) presented with the urgency of today's news.

The practice of retaining *all* material from *all* previous editions — all the commentaries, and the commentaries on the commentaries — has made the Handbook a welter, a stew. It is a burden. An apprentice suffers burdens enough already, as I well remember from my recent stays in Doissetep and Horizon.

• **Approach:** Aside from its length, I think the text's nature also works against our best purposes. From the venerable *Paraenesis Primus* (page 24):

Proud is the Order of Hermes, long its lineage, formidable its knowledge. Of resource, no other Tradition commands so much: the greatest number of Magi and Chantries; the greatest number of Masters and Archmagi; the grandest libraries; the deepest under-

standing of the Art. Of influence, no other Tradition wields so much: strong ties to commerce and academe; binding compacts of service from countless Umbrood; the premier Chantry of Doissetep. Of history, no other Tradition may claim so much: the descent of millennia; the codification of magickal study; the 10,000 achievements of the High Mythic Age; the formulation of the Spheres; indeed, the formation of the Traditions themselves.

What mage in any rival Tradition, of whatever skill, can boast the comprehensive knowledge of our least Adept? What other mage can offer any shred of theory to support his magick? The aboriginal shaman with his drums and rattle gives over his body to a spirit he knows not. The cleric with his song begs like a child for the favor of deities. The Ecstatic with his vice burns like a meteor and vanishes, and the witch with her blood rites aspires only to procreate. Even the Akashic with his meditation and exercise seeks passive contentment in false belief. Meanwhile the Hermetic with firm will commands, 'Do!' And it is done.

Mostly true, and elegantly expressed in the high old manner. I do not criticize the late Master ter Hoorst's euphuistic style. In a less politically charged environment he might have added a reference to my pater, Master Porthos, who even in ter Hoorst's time was incontestably supreme among magi. But this passage's confrontational attitude, characteristic of the author's Tytalus training, now also characterizes much of the Order — possibly because every new apprentice has encountered it straight away in this Hornbook for the last six editions.

I share the belief of many: The Order has gravely harmed its cause by alienating our allied — not, I hope, "rival" — Traditions. During my studies in the Horizon archives, I met many Tradition mages. You, Master Gritsenko, won't be surprised to learn that almost without exception, they distrusted me and indeed all other mages of the Order, though we had done them no injury. Dame Rumour had poisoned their respect. This cannot help us against our common enemies, Technocratic, Chaotic and Fallen.

Horizon itself has shown us the calamitous consequences of our past arrogance. Had we maintained sound lines of communication with the rest of the Council of Nine, I believe Master Porthos would not have deemed it necessary to challenge First Master sao Cristavao, nor would the other Council mages have countenanced this as they did. I take the ensuing intra-Order political chaos as instructive. (Of course I support my pater's action; I disapprove only of the conditions that forced it.)

If common civility holds no sway in the Order, mere pragmatism suggests that this new Hornbook edition take a new, more temperate approach. It should help apprentices (and, perhaps, a few Masters) to recognize that all Traditions partake, in their ways, of the sense of wonder that unites us; to respect and support their members; to share our knowledge without patronizing them. Secure in our power, can we afford no charity of spirit?

• **Obscurantism:** Consider this passage from the *Prolegomenon* (page 44):

*The novice shall learn this whole text complete to the fullest, disciplining bewilderment and compelling concentration, before he may aspire to the second degree, whereunto much confusion shall be driven off as the sun dispels the night. For this only is the way to*

*Truth, which the Seekers travelled in; and by which making their journey in darkness, they at length attained to the light and knew it better for the lack. It is a venerable way, but hard and difficult for the soul to go in that is in the body.*

My apprenticeship ended three years ago, and my head has only just stopped hurting. I had to learn Latin, Greek and Enochian all at once; having also to memorize the whole Hornbook cold, all its cryptic formulae and clandestine formulae, would have crushed me. Fortunately, Master Porthos has no patience with writers who arbitrarily hold important issues secret — who write, in his pet phrase, "willful cant." Contemptuous of apprentice "degrees," those antique security clearances, he meticulously explained each secret to me as I encountered it. The Hornbook writers wanted rote memorization, but by my master's aid I achieved understanding. Our next generation of apprentices deserves as much.

Of course, all magickal knowledge is mysterious; it is gnosis, a discovery within the self. Few mortals can make, understand and act on such a discovery. But that profound mystery, an aspect of reality, is different from false secrecy, a mere concealment of known information. It is the difference between the workings of a blast pistol — a technical blueprint which Iteration X would kill to protect — and the nature of transcendental numbers, which only trained mathematicians can apprehend in moments of extreme lucidity.

Like transcendental numbers, Hermetic principles are genuinely mysterious. But I believe too much of our work has become mired in routine secrecy. True, we keep irresponsible people from gaining more power than they can handle, yet we also lose seven out of 10 candidate apprentices in their first year. How many real talents have we lost by erecting a security smokescreen? Which is the greater danger here?

During my training, Master Porthos gave me his translation of four animal fables by Livius (1352). Those delightful stories taught me more than any hundred pages of the Hornbook's intentionally dense discussions. If you're interested in seeing them, I'd be honored to pass them along.

• **Suggestions:** Only late out of apprenticeship, I understand the dangers of presumption. Most Masters think a mere Disciple should be seen and not heard. But in our many conversations at Horizon, you always solicited and respected my views, Master Gritsenko. This gives me hope that you will consider my bold proposal — and that you won't regret having given me the chance to talk!

I attach suggested draft redactions of several Hornbook chapters. Should you and the Editorial Committee find this material worthy of inclusion, I would take your approval as a singular honor. I'm sure it would be impolitic to replace whole chapters, so you might include these versions as footnotes. A prefatory note could advise the new apprentice that study of the footnotes offers a more practical path into this most practical of Traditions.

You may reach me either at Oxford Chantry headquarters or through Geoffrey Twidmarch, one of the last of the Merinita. His office is marvelous, piled high with books. It's a wondrous little place, like a tiny Horizon Realm.

Yours,

Mahmet

**Attachments:** Hornbook Footnotes 1-4

6/29/1997 14:09 GMT

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To: Ed. Committee mailing list

From: Master Auris Galina Gritsenko, Horizon Chantry

Re: Mahmet's Hornbook 37/e revisions

Past Refs: omitted

SECURITY: ULTRA

Well. This plucky little Disciple seemed harmless enough whenever I met him in the library. Polite, soft-spoken — I was just glad to see that one of Porthos' apprentices had finally survived his term. I sent him the new edition on the chance that he might suggest a few corrections. And now here he is, inciting revolution.

Understand, everyone: Mahmet sent me these alarmingly plain-spoken files over an unsecured line, without encryption. This, after I'd mentioned past security problems: I'm sure he knew exactly what he was doing. That's all we need, bootleg Hornbook appendices circulating among the apprentices....

I must admit, I'm tempted to add these chapters as footnotes. They would light bombs under a lot of mages who need

it. But Mustai's Janissaries and a hundred others will queue up to aggravate us all, starting with the assassination of our Mr. Mahmet. I imagine we're all willing to fend for ourselves, but even though Mahmet can walk around with Porthos's big stick in his pocket, he won't last long. Opinions?

Master Dinesen, what do you say? Of us all, you're most familiar with security threats and the machinations within Doissetep.

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From: Master Leif Dinesen, Horizon Chantry

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I say publish, and be damned! — LD

## GLOSSARIUM HERMETICUM



Hermetic terminology would fill a dictionary. Most of it comes from Latin or ancient Egyptian; a great deal derives from Arabic scholarship of the early Renaissance; and modern Hermetics have borrowed words promiscuously from many magickal systems. The following terms, however, are used commonly throughout the Order.

**Anima:** Life Sphere; Spirit Sphere (broader, less favored, interpretation of "spirit"; see **Manes**); also **Ars Animae**, "the Art of Life."

**Art (or Ars):** Magick; Sphere (pl. *Artes*).

**Bani:** "Of the House of." Used in Hermetic titles within the Order; also a formal honorific for members of other Traditions ("Winterbreeze, bani Verbena").

**Circulus Abstrusus:** The Inner Circle of Hermetic Masters.

**City of Pymander:** A Hermetic utopian ideal, where all humanity seeks Ascension guided by the Masters.

**Concordia:** Unity, the theoretical 10th Sphere; also **Ars Concordiae**, "the Art of Unity."

**Conjunctio:** Correspondence Sphere; also **Ars Conjunctionis**, "the Art of Correspondence."

**Covenant:** Chantry.

**Domus Magnus:** A House's ancestral Chantry.

**Enochian:** Secret language of the Hermetics, derived from the mystick language of Umbrood spirits.

**Essentia:** Forces Sphere (preferred term, for it emphasizes the idea of "essential" magickal force within the mage; see also **Vis**); also **Ars Essentiae**, "the Art of Forces."

**Fatum:** Entropy Sphere; also **Ars Fati**, "the Art of Entropy."

**Heka:** Magick (from Egyptian; now used only by House Shaea).

**Instruments:** Ritual tools (i.e., foci).

**Manes:** Spirit Sphere (preferred term, because traditional Hermeticism associates "spirit" with "soul of the dead"; see also **Anima**); also **Ars Manium**, "the Art of Spirit."

**Massasa:** Vampire(s).

**Mater:** Mentor (female).

**Materia:** Matter Sphere; also **Ars Materiae**, "the Art of Matter."

**Mens:** Mind Sphere; also **Ars Mentis**, "the Art of Mind."

**Mi'ahs:** Jocular term for politics (Arabic, "quicksand"). When apprentices become mages, they "enter the mi'ahs."

**Parma Magica:** (Latin, "magic shield.") A specialty of the Order of Hermes — a form of counter-magick that aided in the formation of the Order.

**Pater:** Mentor (male).

**Praxis:** Any system of magickal practice.

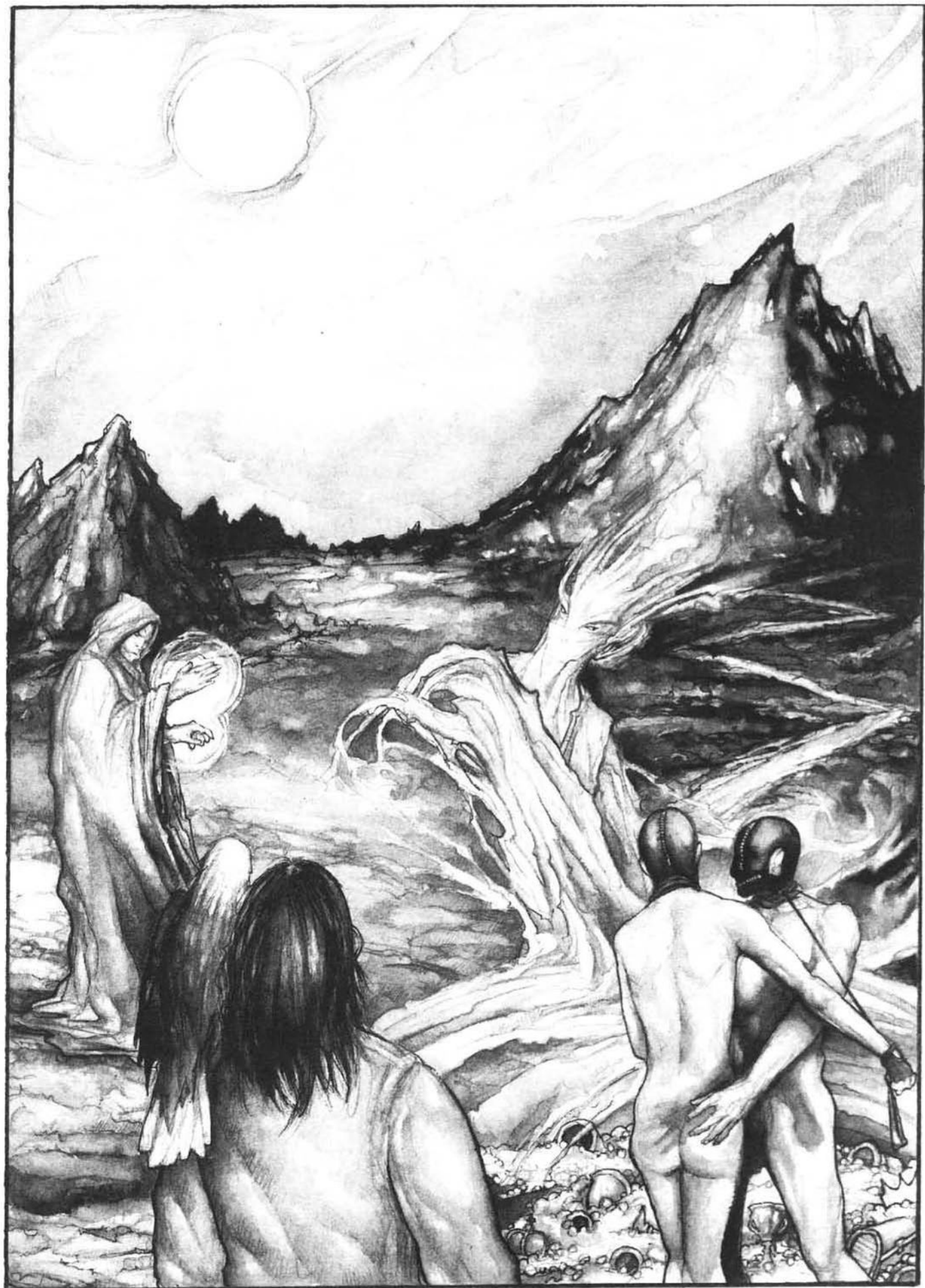
**Sa:** Political favor (literally, a magical fluid from Egyptian theology).

**Sancta:** A private Sanctum, used for retreats, experiments and study.

**Tempus:** Time Sphere; also **Ars Temporis**, "the Art of Time."

**Twilight:** Quiet.

**Vis:** (weece) Prime Sphere; sometimes refers also to the Forces Sphere (favored by House Flambeau because it emphasizes strength or physical force; see also **Essentia**); also **Ars Vis**, "the Art of Prime."



# FOOTNOTE 1: CHRONOLOGICAL PRECIS

9. How is that, quoth I? Thus, replied he, understand it: That which in thee seeth and heareth, the Word of the Lord, and the Mind the Father, God, differ not one from the other; and the union of these is Life.

— The Divine Pymander of Hermes, II.9

## INVOCATION

Hail, O seven Fates of Heaven! To thee I make this offering, that thou wilt open thy ears to me and hear these words.

O noble and good virgins, O sacred ones and companions of INIMIRROPHOR, O most holy guardians of the four pillars! Hail

to the first, HREPSENTHAES! to the second, MENESCHEES! to the third, MECHRAN! to the fourth, ARAMACHES! to the fifth, ECHOMMIE! to the sixth, TICHNONDAES! to the seventh, EROU ROMBRIES! Stay! Dwell in my soul! Do not abandon me, for I command you! Send me a divine spirit, that it may fulfill all that is in my heart and mind. Helios moi, kyrie!

## PREAMBLE



Oldest of the nine allied Traditions, the Order of Hermes has influenced the whole human experience of magick. The organization's history is vast. In my recent apprenticeship at two of the most powerful Chantries in the Traditions, Doissetep and Horizon, I found their hallowed halls drenched, if I may so put it, with history. Some of it helped my struggle — the struggle shared by all apprentices — to enlarge my perspective.

Yes, some of it helped, but certainly not all. Beyond doubt, the erudition of the admirable Hornbook historian Master

Alonius has enriched our Order beyond description. But his scholarly discipline, though a great virtue, may nonetheless overwhelm a beginner. The new apprentice, already set the seemingly indomitable task of understanding the inner self, need not apprehend the whole range of our Hermetic heritage on the instant.

Hermetic practice is, above all, pragmatic. We do what we do because it works. In that spirit of pragmatism, I offer the beleaguered student this annotated synoptic timeline. The conscientious apprentice will, of course, pursue study of Master Alonius's comprehensive treatise at the appropriate time.

## ANCIENT BEGINNINGS: 2500 BCE — 150 CE

Human magick is at least as old as spoken language, but an identifiable Hermetic heritage begins with written language and its study. Therefore, it begins in ancient Sumer and Assyria and Babylon — and especially in *Khemet*, ancient Egypt, the kingdom of the Nile founded some 5,000 years ago.

As with all the writing systems of antiquity, only an elect elite, the Pharaonic priests, knew the secrets of Egyptian hieroglyphics. Each priest spent 10 years of childhood learning these hieroglyphics. How magickal that understanding! The peasant saw his priest stare at pictures and thereby learn the gods' will. Can our literate age imagine how that seemed... *supernatural*? By the same token, were that priest of Thebes cast forward to today, to see a Sleeper stare at a bar graph and divine the world's economy — would he not share the peasant's amazement?

Sleepers see in this a false lesson, that all "occult" practices may be reduced, through understanding, to the mundane. Magicians take precisely the opposite view and see the truth: that the Art transforms and expands human consciousness. That in skillful hands a magickal working, a Word, can shine through humanity's darkness and guide them forever on the Path. And the first great working, the wellspring of our Tradition, was writing.

## BCE (BEFORE THE COMMON ERA)

• Circa 2500: Djhowtey and his wife Sesheta active in Phoenicia and Egypt. The New World Order has diligently removed all historical records of these archmagi, who invented the alphabet. They present Djhowtey as a mere deity, an icon no more real than Santa Claus, and erase his partner altogether. But for a thousand years, since the pioneering retrocognitive work (875 CE) of Fenicil, Primus bani Quaesitor, the Order of Hermes has known the truth: Behind the Egyptian mask of Thoth — god of learning, wisdom and magic, known to the Greeks as Thrice-Great Hermes — stand two human magi.

The natures of their lives and magick are unclear in many respects. Soon after Awakening, Djhowtey evidently realized that future Hermetics from Fenicil onward were chronopathically viewing his every move. He learned to blur their perceptions, and details about him remain mysterious. We know Djhowtey was Phoenician, born in Tyre, and that he married Seshati and developed the first alphabet in the city of Byblos. Traveling to Egypt (where they must have changed their appearance to pass among the notoriously xenophobic natives) they became shadowy advisors to pharaohs for five centuries.

The couple's role, if any, in the construction of the pyramids remains controversial; we do know, however, that they propounded their alphabet among Egyptian scribes, helped Awaken several followers, and allied with the elusive cat-folk called the *Bubasti* (ref: *Bastet*). Their secret personality cult, with its mysterious initiation rites, exercised hidden influence



for centuries and became the model and inspiration for many orders that followed. Whether these archmagi died or Ascended, no one knows; they vanish from the record after 1970 BCE, upon the death of 12th-Dynasty Pharaoh Amenemhet I. (Some sketchy references indicate Djhowtey's later presence in Babylonia.) After their disappearance, Egyptians deified Djhowteyas, the ibis-headed god Thoth.

- **Circa 2000:** Egyptian Thothian cult at its height.
- **Circa 950:** Career of archmagus Solomon, king of Israel, first great master of spirit conjuration and control. Wrote three magickal books, of which two (the *Greater and Lesser Keys*) survive in several watered-down editions. During the High Mythic Age, the "unabridged" versions become the primary manuals for the Houses of Hermes, as they bind the many spirits that still serve our Order today.
- **660:** Lydian king Gyges sends Greek mercenaries to Egypt to aid Pharaoh Psammethicus I; these Hellenic troops settle in Egypt. First major Hellenizing influence on Thothian practice of the Art.
- **560:** Pythagoras of Samos, an Awakened magus and mathematician, travels to Egypt and becomes an initiate in the Thothian cult, by that time in decline.
- **545:** Returning to Greece, Pythagoras journeys to Athens, Thebes and elsewhere, spreading his ideas among the mystery cults common in all city-states. He receives the strongest response from cults devoted to Hermes, god of communication and eloquence, protector of travelers, escort to the afterlife, crosser of boundaries, bringer of gain and good fortune.
- **525:** Pythagoras carries Thothian ideas back to Croton (southern Italy) and begins his own secret personality cult along Egyptian lines, devoted to ascetic mysticism, number theory, music and astronomy.
- **Circa 500:** Pythagoras dies in his 90s. Greek cult of Hermes at its height in Athens; Socrates and most other educated Athenians are familiar with its ideas, and Plato is probably an initiate. Though he apparently never Awakens, Plato's writings exert tremendous influence on Greek magickal *praxis* (practice). The Hermetic cult spreads to Rome in later centuries, where Hermes is called Mercury or Casmilus.
- **Circa 400:** A century after Pythagoras dies, the Pythagoreans split into two factions: the *Acousmatics*, devoted to rites and the sayings of their Master; and the *Mathematic faction*, devoted to number theory and music. Most of the Mathematics eventually migrate to Plato's Academy; Acousmatics die out.
- **332:** Alexander of Macedonia conquers Egypt. Called "the Great" because he imposes his will on more people than anyone else to that time (a lesson to all Hermetic students), the Sleeper Alexander initiates a fusion of Greek and Egyptian cultures. This fusion, along with tributary streams from Persian, Gnostic and Qabbalistic beliefs, leads to the classical Hermetic Tradition.
- **Circa 150:** Roman cult of Mercury at its height. Magi cast spells (codified by magus Plentarch) in large groups using many expensive rites. Cult generally operates *sub rosa*.

## CE (Common Era)

- **c. 28-30:** Career of Jesus the Magician.
  - **First century:** Career of Simon Magus, Samaritan, last important initiate of Egyptian Thothian cult (Dositheus sect). Messianic wonder-worker in Syria, Egypt and the Levant; founder of post-Christian Gnosticism, influential in Hermetic beliefs. His heretical doctrines incur the enmity of Christian mysticks Peter and Paul; when Simon attempts flight from high tower in Roman Forum to impress Nero (56 CE), their countermagick makes him fall to his death.
  - **96:** Death (age 98) of Apollonius of Tyana, Greek magus and healer. A Neo-Pythagorean ascetic, he studies at Tarsus and in India, defeats a plague at Ephesus, resurrects a young Roman girl, and founds a personality cult that influences later praxis.
  - **124-170:** Life of Lucius Apuleius, Carthaginian magus (Isis cult) and author of the autobiographical narrative *Metamorphoses* (*The Golden Ass*).
  - **204-270:** Life of Plotinus, Roman magus of Egyptian birth. Plotinus propounds Neo-Platonism, which becomes a tremendous influence on Hermetic thinking. The Western tradition in magick, as later embodied by the Houses of Hermes and our Order, derives from Pythagoras and Plato via Plotinus.
  - **c. 200-400:** In Rome, Alexandria, Israel, and elsewhere around the Mediterranean, the *Corpus Hermeticum*, 17 papyri that form the basis for our Tradition, are composed. These Platonic dialogues, written by diverse hands, are attributed to Hermes Trismegistus (Thrice-Great Hermes). Drawing on Egyptian, Greek, Gnostic, Zoroastrian and Hebraic philosophy, the scrolls expound on astrology, theology, the hidden sympathies between nature and spirit, the lore of numbers and the beginnings of alchemy.
  - **412:** Cult of Mercury disbands, victim of Rome's decay — fewer magi available to cast group spells, fewer sources of funds. By now, however, Mercuric (Hermetic) magi have spread across Europe. In Gothic and Vandal barbarian territories, forest mages develop solitary Arts using inexpensive ritual instruments.
- Though opposed to Christianity during the first centuries of the Empire, many Hermetic magi eventually convert and blend their magickal viewpoint with Christian doctrine. Those who do not often suffer for it; see next entry.
- **415:** Death and martyrdom of Hypatia, eloquent Neoplatonist magus and brilliant mathematician of Alexandria; killed with clamshell blades by fanatical mob led by Cyril, the Christian patriarch. Afterward, mob burns her residence and library; Hypatia's Hermetic followers rescue some scrolls, now in Horizon's library. Her death marks the decline of Alexandria's intellectual life.
  - **Sixth century:** Career of Merlinius, Celtic archmagus trained by continental Hermetic magicians. His legendary doings embody the Hermetic magickal idea: He establishes himself as advisor to a great ruler, revitalizes local customs and strengthens the local magickal paradigm.

# PAX HERMETICA



After the invention of writing, the second key step in magickal history was the development of a united continental community of magi. In the East, this task fell to the Akashic Brotherhood, Wu-Keng, Wu Lung and some lesser schools of thought. In the West, credit for organizing willworkers falls entirely to the Order of Hermes, the first official Tradition and shaper of all the rest.

## FOUNDING OF THE HOUSES: 731 – 836 CE

- **731:** The “precipice experience” of Trianoma, Mercuric/Gnostic mage of Westphalia. Standing atop Brienzer Rothorn in the Bernese Alps, Trianoma foresees collapse of the Hermetic way. To forestall this fate, she wanders Europe seeking other mages and eventually meets Bonisagus. He is talented at magickal theory, she at politics. Aided by Bonisagus’s *parma magica* shield, the two spend decades enlisting powerful European magi and reconciling their differing praxes within a single doctrine.

- **767, Midwinter Night:** Twelve founding magi adopt Code of Hermes at the small Frankish settlement of Durenmar (now Duren, in the German state North Rhine-Westphalia). During the Mythic Age, these founders were called *Primi*, “the first.” In modern usage, “Primi” describes the successor magi who would found the Traditions in the 1400s; for clarity, the original Hermetic founders of our own Houses are now simply called “the Founders.”

- **772:** Responding to several ambushes and murder attempts among the 12 fractious Houses, Tremere and Bonisagus invent the magical dueling ritual of certámen. Great Tribunal (810) officially adopts certámen to resolve disputes.

- **814-816:** Pralix of House Tytalus forms “the Order of Miscellany,” admitted to the Houses in 817 as House Ex Miscellanea.

- **848:** Tremere, youngest and weakest of the Hermetic founders, attempts a takeover of the Houses, but is prevented by a collection of mysterious, independent magi. A warning to the other Houses goes unheeded.

- **876:** Houses occupy Doissetep Covenant. Founded in prehistoric times by sorcerer-king Kwa Hu in Lan Na Thai, the Million Thai Ricefields (now northern Thailand), Doissetep fell to unknown Nephandus necromancer (781 CE), who transported it whole to Nemrut Dagi, an extinct volcano in eastern Turkey. Hermetic Houses Bonisagus, Flambeau, Quaesitor and Tytalus destroy Nephandus and occupy Doissetep; later (891), they relocate entire complex to Spanish Pyrenees north of Gerona.

In the next four centuries, Doissetep rises to supremacy as exemplar of all Hermetic virtues: erudition, discipline, wisdom, influence, composure and the urge toward spiritual perfection. Under its leadership, the Houses of Hermes create a feudal

social system that brings genuine, lasting order to all Europe. Apprentices should always keep this ideal “Springtime” Doissetep in mind, and reflect on its glories. Doissetep’s current role in magickal society offers further lessons, which are left as an exercise to the pupil.

## THE LATE MYTHIC AGE

- **1003-1012:** The Schism War, ideological conflict among Houses. Widespread violence culminates when Houses Tremere and Flambeau, with the sanction of Quaesitor, destroy druidic magi of House Diedne. Diedne leaders escape, possibly with fae help, but are not seen again. (Speculations still abound regarding House Diedne’s influence on the later Verbena Tradition.) In the late 1990s, rumored sightings of some Diedne leaders occur in Great Britain; these have not been confirmed.

- **1022:** Tremere kills and experiments on an ancient Tzimisce vampire; develops potion that turns himself and seven followers into undead monsters. Losing their Art, they develop “Thaumaturgy,” a bastard form of hedge magic, and successfully conceal their cursed nature for over 150 years (see year 1199). Soon they begin preying on peasants, fellow vampires and House magi alike. (ref: *Tzimisce, Tremere, Camarilla*.)

- **1067:** Mistrudge Covenant founded.

- **1095-1192:** The Crusades. A fervor sweeps Europe to wrest Christian Holy Lands from Muslim influence. Caught up in the furor, some Hermetic magi secretly accompany Crusader regiments to Middle East. Magi bring back many Arabic treatises on alchemy, mathematics, and other arcane subjects; these are translations and amplifications of lost Greco-Roman scrolls. This new lore strengthens and invigorates the Houses.

- **1188:** Hermetic magus Lorenzo Golo, prince of Florence, discovers lost Arabic manuscript *Kitab al Alacir*. Enthralled by it, Golo and a Templar, Simon de Laurent, form a magickal society, the Natural Philosophers’ Guild; this in turn eventually forms the core of the Electrodyne Engineers Convention of the Technocracy, which still later becomes the Sons of Ether Tradition. Many of the Nine Traditions owe much to similar work by Hermetic scholars.

- **Late 1100s on:** Sleeper scholars band together to form *studia generalia*, the precursors of universities. Over the next centuries, Hermetic magi support many universities and find them to be convenient sources of apprentices. Growth of academic culture within the Houses, particularly Bonisagus. 1190: House Bonisagus establishes Fors Collegis Mercuris, a secret magickal college, outside Genoa.

## THE MASSASA WAR AND THE POGROM

- **1199:** A Hermetic Tribunal in Transylvania uncovers evidence of Tremere’s vampirism. The news spreads slowly, but upon formal acknowledgment at Doissetep (1201), the other Houses try Tremere and his house in *absentia* and pronounce the punishments of Censure, Interdiction and Requit. However, warned by sympathizers within the Order, Tremere and his

followers vanish from their Covenants before justice can be served. Thus begins a war which lasts openly for over a century and still continues in a muted form today: the vengeance of the Order against the renegade House Tremere.

Today, descendants of House Tremere form what may be the principal group of vampires (see Footnote 4); whether Tremere himself still exists is unknown. The Order of Hermes views all vampires as menaces to be expunged, but it reserves particular odium for the Tremere, whose banal power lust caused them to turn against humanity and the quest for Ascension.

*Note:* Hermetic apprentices must resist any temptation toward vampiric "immortality," for the curse is known to shred a mage's Avatar beyond recovery, rendering True Magick impossible.

- **1210, Winter:** The Craftmasons, a small band of "rationalist" renegades from House Ex Miscellanea, lead a peasant mob and mercenaries with cannons (early technomagickal Talismans) in siege and assault on Mistridge. Betrayed from within, the Covenant falls and is destroyed.

- **Late 1200s:** Christian Inquisition in Italy and southern France, having persecuted and destroyed Cathari and Waldenses heretics, now expands its scope to "wizards, witches and all consorts of Satan and his demons." Over the next four centuries, many minor Hermetic magi fall to the Inquisition's Christian mysticks, raising tension between the two camps that continues today.

- **1325, March 25:** Convention of the White Tower in Normandy. Craftmasons and several other disgruntled cabals, mostly former Hermetics, formally unite with Chinese, Greek and Arabian allies to create the Order of Reason. Their convocation site adds insult to injury: the tower of Hermetic magus Yoasmy, bani Ex Miscellanea, is seized and "sanitized." Presumably, they kill Yoasmy, though some magi later claim she "survives" as the Umbrood Preceptor Aelida, Lady of Feathers.

- **1330:** Nascent Order of Reason, in its first major working, begins to take covert control of European universities. March 21: Purging and "accidental" death of Hermetic mage Andreas Litolff, bani Bonisagus, instructor at University of Paris. Reason magi try to stop Andreas's lecture "Inquiries Into the Distinctness of Natural Philosophy and Divine Wisdom"; Andreas attempts protective magick before an audience of students, but his spell fails and he enters Twilight, then dies a week later. Persecutions, revolts, plagues and outright battles follow with increasing frequency throughout the next 100 years.

- **1348-50:** Black Plague, a bubonic plague epidemic of unknown origin, kills a third of Europe's population. Many Hermetic magi survive, but the calamity devastates the Houses' support structure and sours Sleeper attitudes toward magi.

- **1393:** Birth of Baldrick LaSalle, somewhere in France. Although his early career is unimpressive, LaSalle eventually attains Mastery. His achievements earn him fame (and infamy) in later years.

- **1403:** Porthos Fitz-Empress born in Breslau, Germany (birth name unrecorded); later Deacon Primus of Doissetep and supreme Tradition mage.





- **1429:** Disciple Gilles de Rais, Hermes bani Ex Miscellanea, happens upon a newly Awakened Orphan country girl in Domremy, Lorraine (kingdom of France). Without authorization from his Covenant, Gilles becomes her patron and promoter; the girl, Joan of Arc, leads French armies to victory before the Church burns her as a witch in 1431. Gilles, despairing, turns Nephandus and embarks upon a revolting career of atrocities; his former Hermetic companions arrange his arrest and execution (1440).

- **1440:** First Mistridge Tribunal. It convenes in the ruins of Mistridge Covenant, after several earlier unsuccessful attempts by non-rationalist magi to call a conference about the reality crisis. Hermetic Master Baldric LaSalle meets with two non-Hermetic magi (Lady Nightshade, founder of the Verbena, and Christian mystick Valoran) together with acolytes. With Trianoma's example in mind, Master Baldric proposes a quest across the world to gather the Awakened of every land and unite against the common enemy.

- **1440-57:** The mages travel the world, finding and recruiting willworkers of all disciplines and practices. Interestingly, many previously unregarded Hermetics (notably Master Louis DuMonte, bani Quaesitor) rise to prominence now and, though first suspected of instability or even Twilight, assume leadership positions in the later Convocation.

- **1448:** While Doissetep's leaders are locked in internal power struggles, the Order of Reason destroys Covenant's Earthly aspect. This marks one of their first major victories. Relocated to the Shade Realm of Forces, Doissetep Hermetics pledge attendance at a new Tribunal.

- **1449:** Second Mistridge Tribunal. Mages from across the world agree in principle to unite against the rationalist paradigm. Craftmasons attack the Tribunal, but in vain; the contest only strengthens the magi's resolve to discuss union. They agree to seek a stronghold beyond the Horizon.

- **1450:** Fors Collegis Mercuris relocated to Horizon Realm of Mus, hidden moon of Mercury.

- **1453-6:** Doissetep, wary of security risks, refuses to host conference of magi. Construction of Horizon, ecumenical sister Chantry to Doissetep, in preparation for Grand Convocation. Generous Hermetic donations of needed Quintessence far exceed those of any other magical faction.

## THE GRAND CONVOCATION AND FIRST CABAL: 1457-70 CE

(I follow the custom of many Order historians by using the terms "magus" and "magi" for periods before the Grand Convocation, and "mage" and "mages" during and after the Convocation, in recognition of its watershed importance.)

- **1457-66:** Convocation requires nine years, primarily due to extreme difficulty of developing a magical paradigm that unites hundreds of disparate praxes. Some 29 separate models and innumerable variants are proposed; one, quickly rejected, postulates 324 Spheres! The eventual model, the nine Spheres of current use, is a workable compromise created by a large team of Hermetic theorists led by Master Baldric, with contributions from the newly recognized Master Porthos (1464).

The Masters assume that the Spheres will provide the other Traditions with paths of study toward the ultimate goal of initiation as Houses in the Order of Hermes. To their astonishment, other Traditions reject the Order's authority; most Traditions develop similar plans to assimilate the others. Master Louis DuMonte proposes (1465) that each Tradition appoint champions in contests for authority over each Sphere, but this provokes bitter argument. Eventually (1466) Master Baldrick offers another compromise, whereby each Tradition lays claim to authority within one Sphere. Unfortunately, this leaves only one Sphere, Forces, to be shared by the Houses of Hermes; for administrative purposes they agree to formal consolidation as a single Order. **1466, Summer Solstice:** *Resolutions & Protocols* passed; appointment of First Cabal.

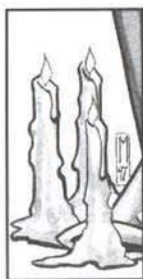
- **1466-70:** First Cabal travels across Europe, Asia, Africa and elsewhere, fighting the Order of Reason and winning the

hearts of Sleepers. However, the Cabal suffers from growing internal dissension.

- **1470:** Heyl Teomim, bani Solificati (alchemists), hoping to create a crisis that will unite the Traditions, betrays the First Cabal to the Order of Reason. Heyl completely mistakes the enemy's methods; in the ambush, four Tradition mages are killed, including Master DuMonte; three others imprisoned; one escapes, brings Horizon mages to free them. Heyl captured, christened *Thoabath* (Abomination) and destroyed in body and Avatar; last testament, pleading for unity, goes unheeded. For details, refer to Master Porthos's compilation *The Fragile Path* (1995).

- **1471:** Solificati disband; many find shelter with the Order of Hermes. Throughout history, our Order has consistently protected mages of all beliefs from death or corruption, studied their belief systems and incorporated their strengths into our eclectic and ever-growing praxis.

## THE DWINDLING



The so-called Renaissance and Enlightenment represent a continuous fossilization of reality. The rationalist paradigm became entrenched with the rise of a doctrinaire scientific establishment, and with the deistic notion of an impersonal "divine watchmaker" — a presumed Creator who promulgated the universe and then left it to run unsupervised.

In this era, the Order of Hermes made many valiant attempts to resurrect the age of wonder; sadly, the enemy foiled many of them. These troubled centuries, however, have brought wisdom: the clear understanding that the Technocracy, and no other, is our supreme adversary.

- **1482:** Council Master Paracelsus strengthens extant universities and founds new ones across Europe, hoping to combat Order of Reason. However, from the 1500s on, the enemy subverts them all. Doissetep blames Horizon for this. There follows a long cooling of relations between Doissetep and the other Traditions.

- **1509-35:** Career of Johannes Faust, wonder-worker and minor mage. After graduating (barely) as a Disciple of House Tytalus, Faust travels widely, boasts of great power and impresses many local rulers who seek the Philosopher's Stone that will turn lead to gold. Faust never achieves much skill and eventually resorts to diabolism, at which he fails calamitously and perishes. The Order promptly censures Faust and appoints a committee to search the Deep Umbra, retrieve and restore his tainted Avatar. (As yet, no results have been reported.) The enemy turns lurid accounts of Faust's downfall to its own purposes, poisoning Sleeper attitudes still further.

- **1527-1608:** Life of Hermetic Master John Dee, bani Bonisagus, advisor to Elizabeth I. Starts England's spy service, foretells British Empire (and invents the term), revives English interest in mathematics, sets time and space anchor points at Greenwich and establishes his friend Mercator's map projection as the world standard. Dealing with powerful Umbrood Lords, Dee codifies the secret Enochian language (discovered

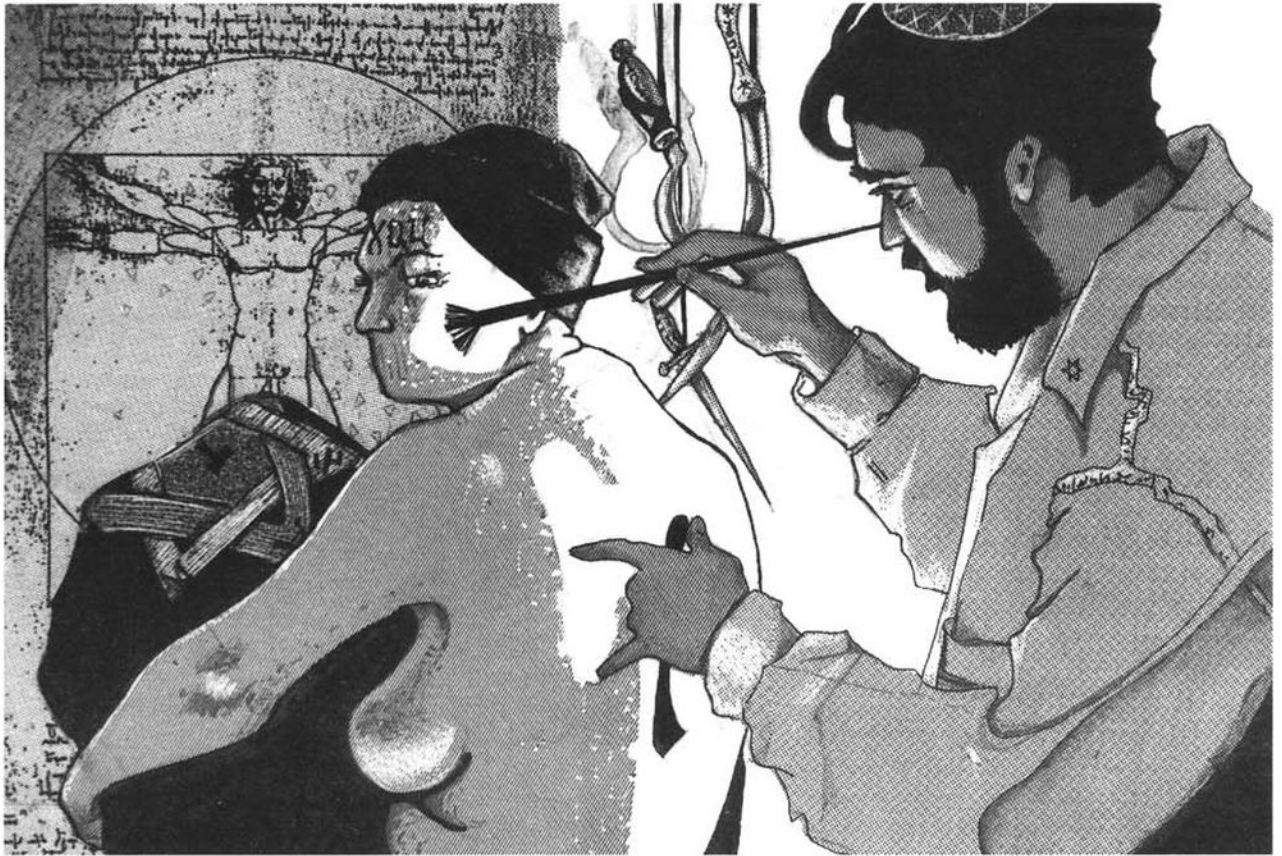
by Hypatia of Alexandria) with assistance of consort Edward Kelley, known for his oracular "shewstones." Dee tries valiantly to adapt the Order of Reason's ideas to Tradition purposes, but ultimately only strengthens the enemy.

- **1645, June 14:** "The Fall." Battle of Naseby, England; victory for Oliver Cromwell's Puritan "Ironsides" (Order of Reason puppets) over Cavalier forces of Charles I. Charles, desperate, secretly hires many Hermetic Adepts and a few Masters to support his forces. Due to poor communication and bad planning, mages find no time to prepare for battle, are caught in the open, and resort to what we now call vulgar magick before hordes of Ironside witnesses. The mages' Effects fail disastrously, and Paradox consumes them all. Two Hermetic Houses destroyed; remnants subsumed into Ex Miscellanea. From this time on, Paradox becomes a permanent feature of magickal life.

- **1645-1800s:** While Doissetep is preoccupied with internal intrigues, most Hermetic mages retreat to sanctuaries in this world or beyond. They search for underlying principles of mass Sleeper psychology, Paradox and the paradigm shift to rationalism.

- **Circa 1750-84:** Career of impostor adventurer "Count Saint-Germain" in many European courts. Painter, musician, polyglot and charmer; he claims to possess great age, an ability to correct flawed jewels, and a secret dyeing and tanning processes. This fraudulent Sleeper, with his conjurer's tricks, plays no role in the history of True Magick, but demonstrates the depth to which magickal practice has degenerated.

- **1770-89:** Career of Alessandro Cagliostro (Giuseppe Balsamo), Sicilian adventurer. Awakens 1770; recruited into the Hermetic Covenant at Palermo; sole survivor after Covenant's destruction by Order of Reason (1771). Travels Europe selling fake elixirs; spends nine months in Bastille prison (1785-6) after implication in Affair of the Diamond Necklace. Banished, Cagliostro writes *Open Letter to the French People*, an account of Bastille conditions instrumental in provoking French Revolution. Starts Egyptian Rite school of



Freemasonry; opens many lodges in his extensive travels. Taken by Catholic Inquisition and imprisoned for life. Though not entirely successful in promoting magickal ideas, Cagliostro becomes a posthumous hero of the French people and an interesting case study for apprentices.

## MODERN REVIVAL

In the last two centuries, the Order of Hermes has tried a new tack: introducing minor secrets of the Art to the masses through Sleeper societies such as the Freemasons and the Golden Dawn. For older Masters, the success of this tactic has produced an odd sense of paradox. For instance, owners of the forbidden *Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* (1458) were once burned as heretics; now it is a Dover paperback.

- **1810-75:** Life of Eliphas Levi, French Sleeper occultist. Introduces Qabbalistic practices to non-Jews; popularizes occult study of Tarot cards; makes occultism (seances, table-tapping, spiritualism, mediums) fashionable among upper classes.

- **1870s:** Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor: Max Theon (English, 1847-1927), Grand Master of the Exterior Circle, starts mail-order business in magickal teachings ("practical occultism"). His partner Paschal Beverly Randolph (American mulatto, 1825-1875), friend of Abraham Lincoln, starts a secret society, The Brotherhood of Eulis. Both inspire tremendous interest in magick following American Civil War.

- **1866, 1877:** Respective foundings (by Sleepers) of Rosicrucians and Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, two

mortal societies influential in the revival and propagation of magickal thinking.

- **1875-1947:** Life of Aleister Crowley, talented but misguided mage. Out of rebellion against his strict Christian upbringing, Crowley chooses the Word of Excess; pursues a long career mingling Hermetic Arts with Ecstatic ways, influencing Sleepers and Awakened along the way. Between 1904 and 1921, Crowley Falls to Nephandic Path. Rumors insist he was killed in 1947 by NWO agents, but nothing is proven.

- **1890s:** Order of Reason becomes Technocratic Union, or Technocracy.

- **1922:** Ahl-i-Batin desert the Council of Nine, protesting Traditions' apathy to European realpolitik in Arabian homelands. Order of Hermes rescues and shelters the lost Tradition's Adepts and Disciples; assimilates some into Ex Miscellanea. Ahl-i-Batin Masters vanish.

- **1933:** Debate among Hermetic scholars on arithmosophy and probability magick leads to creation and acceptance of the Order's newest House, Fortuna.

- **1939-45:** Rise of Nephandic influence in World War II. Technocracy initiates temporary alliance with Order of Hermes and other Traditions. Huge joint ritual outside Berlin, led by Masters Callistro, bani Tytalus and Creon the Sane, bani Bonisagus, banishes or destroys Nephandi archmages (1944). Alliance ceases at war's end.

- **1950s on:** Sleeper culture creates or popularizes many alternative religions, pseudo-magickal cults and secret societies. These movements (triggered by the Order's subtle influence)

have produced few authentic Awakenings and many Sleeper charlatans, but they highlight the spiritual emptiness of Technocratic society. Many Sleepers begin to reconsider the pervasive dogma of unsustainable "Progress."

## PRESENT AND FUTURE

The outlook for our Tradition remains challenging. Politics sometimes leads the Order to present its less attractive aspects to our fellow willworkers, and we are only now resolving (painfully) internal conflicts of long standing. The recent Technocratic assault on the College on Mus (followed by the Chantry's unexpected loss to the Nephandi) emphasizes the growing threat from outside.

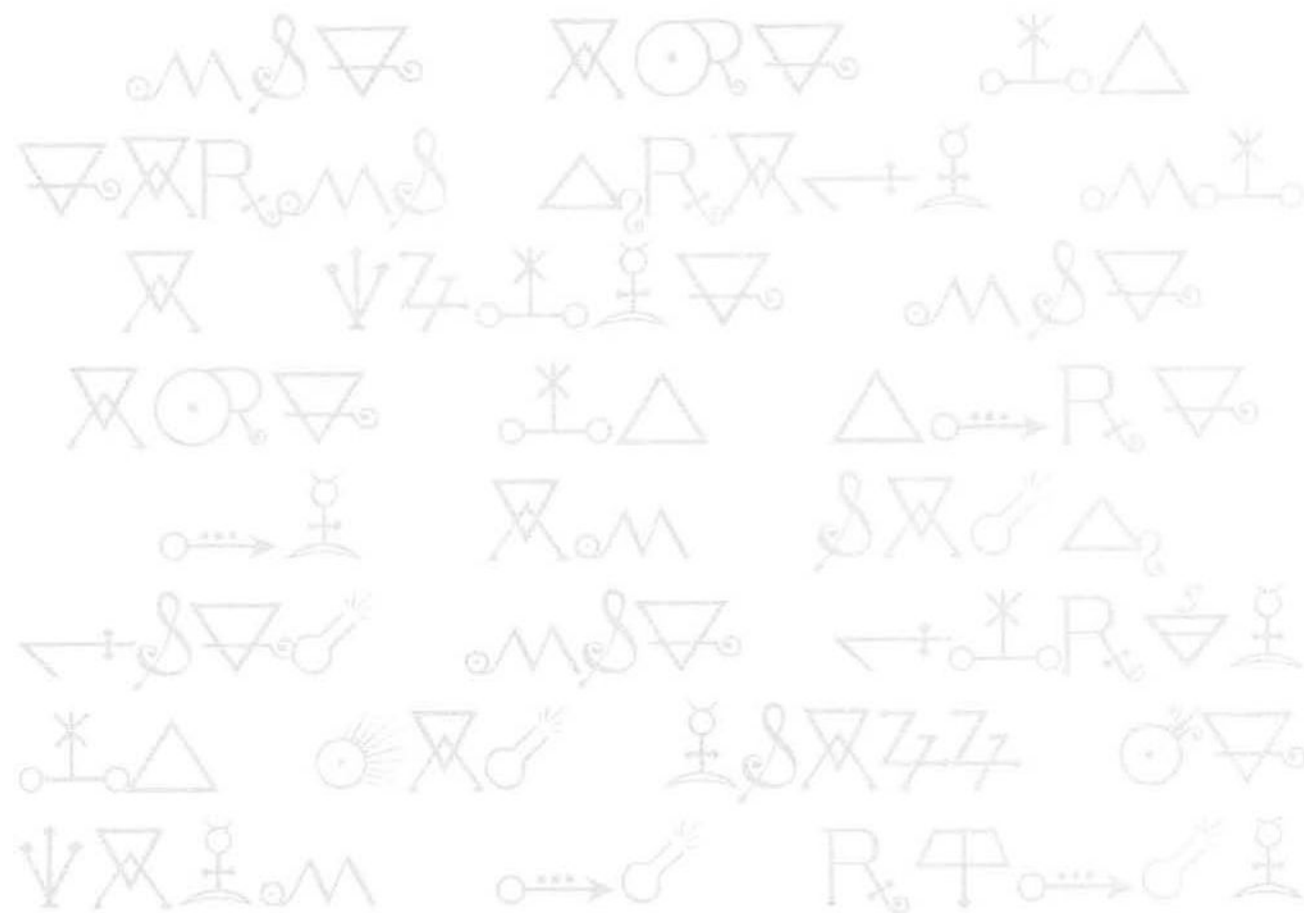
In the world at large, educational systems have declined, reducing the number of good apprentices. Most Sleepers in industrial nations share the magician's overwhelming urge toward power, but lack the idea of Ascension to Divinity — the idea that we must cultivate ourselves, not only temporally and financially, but in all ways. Still, the Order has resolved to retake Mus by any means necessary, to fight beside our fellow Traditions and, early in the new millennium, to carry the battle to our enemy.

For the god of this age is Hermes. "Fast as death," the messenger of the gods, he is the ideal symbol of the Internet. As

the prototype of angels (Greek *angelos*, "messenger"), Hermes is doing very well as the American cult of angels grows. Go to any flea-market in America and see the lucky candles for sale. Sleepers light them in hopes of winning the lottery. In mythic terms, this makes perfect sense: The Greek term for "windfall" is *hermaion*, from the offerings left at Hermes' shrines by the crossroad.

Wanting divine messages and wanting lottery windfalls are, at heart, the same want. This desire can only increase as the Technocracy continues its stratification of society. People fear the gap between rich and poor as much as they instinctively fear the gap between god and mortal.

Brave spirits always seek to cross these gaps. For them, Hermes is a guide, a *pompos*. In the *Iliad*, Hermes made the aged Priam invisible, then guided him through the Greek camp to sue for the body of his son, Hector. In the same way, Awakened and Sleepers alike wish to move unseen in the hostile territories of our age. We take to the Internet so as to bypass bureaucracy, secretaries and receptionists, sending our notes directly to the chief; we all have ways of moving unseen. To use them, we require a *pompos* with wisdom, learning, eloquence and communication. The Order of Hermes offers the guidance that our world vitally needs. Therefore, remember: Seek the mysteries!





# FOOTNOTE 2: CONJUNCTIONES DOMESTICAE

*What is below is like that which is above and what is above is like that which is below. They work to accomplish the wonders of the One Thing.*

— Second Precept of Hermes Tresmegistus



If you have come to this footnote from the beginning of Master Divraniya's excellent discourse on the Order's inner workings, I envy the great pleasure awaiting you. The Flambeau Master's thoroughness and meticulous documentation stand as shining examples for every apprentice. Yet I remember (from my own recent apprenticeship) how I reacted to this section, before I found sufficient free time to appreciate Master Divraniya's approach: *All*

*those committees! All those bylaws! Help!*

Newcomers who share that reaction may wish to peruse this highly condensed summary. I must stress that these notes

discuss only those praxes and customs pertaining to the Order as a whole. Master Divraniya excellently describes the variations in teaching methods, initiations and other such matters that prevail among the Houses.

Outside observers sometimes consider the Order of Hermes oblique, competitive, and at times, even petty in its dealings. Yet we focus on a threefold good: that of the Order as a whole, that of the Traditions and that of humanity. Our survival against overwhelming Technocratic opposition comes from the essential good will we bear toward one another and to the Sleepers under our care. I hope these notes may further promote the growth of this generosity among our new generation of apprentices.



# THE LIFE OF THE APPRENTICE



*Initiation essentially aims to go beyond the possibilities of the individual human state, to make possible the transition to higher states and finally to lead the individual beyond any limitations whatsoever.*

— Rene Guenon, *Aperçus sur l'Initiation* (Glimpses of Initiation)

Our Order vigorously seeks and recruits apprentices, just as it recruited you. Your training will prepare you to become, not a mere footsoldier in the Ascension War, but a potential general leading an army of Sleepers.

Our Tradition's control of the *Ars Essentiae*, raw power at its most dangerous levels, requires us to reach deeply into the very wellsprings of Quintessential energy. Shaping and controlling the Sphere of Forces demands both a subtle mind and exacting knowledge; both come from years — even decades — of diligent scholarship. Thus we take great care in choosing and training students, lest we create a scholar with no will to go beyond theoretical study — or worse, an uncontrolled, careless child who wields cataclysmic power.

## AWAKENING

Very few mortals, perhaps one in five million, have the potential to become mages. Those with a magickal affinity for our Order typically Awaken gradually. Often, these chosen evince some ability that sets them apart — a gift for mathematics or languages, perhaps, or a general love of learning. Most of these magickally latent individuals feel isolated and “different” from their peers. At some time, usually between puberty and the late 20s, they reach a crisis that catalyzes their Awakening into a larger world.

Awakening is never as simple as the mere opening of an inner eye. Some who Awaken without guidance fall to madness, unable to grasp a firm point within their ever-shifting realities. Others become dangers to themselves or others, and may immolate themselves in the first glorious moment of epiphany. Therefore, our Order tries to recognize latent magickal potential, and our mentors carefully husband the novice's Awakening.

## RECRUITMENT

Not surprisingly, most Hermetic candidates come from scholastic backgrounds. Given our supremacy in areas of academia — as professors, curators, acquisitions specialists and librarians — this is not surprising. Our Order (particularly mages of House Fortunae and members of the Personnel committee) secretly monitors potential recruits, sometimes for a decade, looking for demonstrations of mental acuity, inquisitive nature, respect for knowledge, strength of will and innate discretion.

During this time, the subject undergoes surreptitious tests. The recruiter may expose her to radical ideas on the nature of reality, give her the chance to cheat in her studies, or even invite her to join a harmless occult society. Some tests assess the

student's ability to absorb new concepts, but the most important ones examine her character and trustworthiness.

The screening usually proceeds methodically; unstable or untrustworthy apprentices present a grave danger to the Order. However, some recruits Awaken spontaneously or attract the attention of the enemy; in such exceptional cases, the recruiter may bring his student to a neutral "safe house" (never a Covenant!) until she calms. If the Awakened student is obviously unsuited to the Order, the recruiter may deliver her to representatives of a more appropriate Tradition. If the student presents real danger to herself or to the Order, the recruiter may instead take extreme and permanent action. If the recruit is suitable for apprenticeship — well, you yourself know the rest.

## FIRST APPRENTICE DEGREE (NEOPHYTE)

New students customarily spend one to three arduous years at a College Covenant. For many centuries, the Order's primary College was the *Fors Collegis Mercuris* on Mercury's hidden moon, Mus. Since the fall of Mus in 1996, most Neophytes have gone to temporary Colleges in three Earthly locations; for security reasons, these locations remain secret. Proposals to develop a permanent College at Horizon remain controversial at best.

At the College, Neophytes learn self-awareness, rudimentary mental disciplines, philosophy and several languages — usually Ancient Greek, Latin, Arabic, English, French and German. They receive limited exposure to our Tradition's magickal language, Enochian; further instruction continues after their formal initiation into the Order. Actual magickal instruction is limited to *goetia*, minor rites that use precise rituals and many ritual instruments.

After graduation, a student is ready to apprentice with a *pater*, a Master or Adept. ("Pater" is actually an informal term. I use it to avoid confusion between the technical term "master" and the formal magickal rank of Master. An apprentice's master, with a lower-case "m," need not be a recognized, capitalized Master.)

Some Neophytes never attend a College Covenant, but become apprentices straight away. Such an apprentice toils for her *pater* during one to four years of private study in his sanctum. The *pater* decides how best to educate his apprentice in the Art, but the instruction always makes extremely high demands of the student. Many apprentices despair of learning all those languages, symbols and esoteric arts — let alone the magick that requires them.

Inundated with drudgework, the apprentices labors in her master's labs, assists with experiments and copies endless tomes. The master usually appears unreasonable, terrifying, even cruel to his apprentices, but a candidate who cannot bear insults or handle surprises has no future as a mage. Rooted out at this early stage, such insecure pupils usually become consors to their *pater* or hirelings in a Covenant.

Many Neophytes chafe under all the restrictions and wonder why they have so little voice in their training. They desire a more egalitarian "friendship" between student and teacher. I sympathize — my own instruction was none too easy! — yet feel compelled to quote Master Divraniya's famous rejoinder:

*Should the servant command his master, who surely knows his business better than one he has newly hired? Shall the apprentice teach his mentor, though such a scholar be revered by the wise or schooled through hundreds of years of experience? Then let us place the harness upon the farmer, and hand the reins to the horse!*

In short, leave the driving to adults. Your own turn will come soon enough!

## SECOND APPRENTICE DEGREE (ZELATOR)

At some point, each successful Neophyte comprehends that the goetic formulae she studies — all the ancient, numbingly complex minutiae in a dozen languages — are, in themselves, useless. These elements are not magickal themselves, but form a framework that guides the student's own magickal will. The manifestation of that will (which is unique to each student) marks the achievement of the Second Apprentice Degree.

Taken to her master's Covenant, the Zelator continues her physical labor and extended study. Now, though, she begins to apply the theories she has learned. If the Covenant exists in a Horizon Realm, so much the better; the risk of accidental Paradox is much less than it would be on Earth. This "safety net" has its own problems, however. Without it, the Neophyte must learn to work carefully and subtlety. For this reason, some mentors refuse to bring an apprentice into such a Realm until her first year is finished.

Now the apprentice learns the political side of Hermetic life. Though she holds no political power of her own, older mages may seek to recruit her to their own cabals. Being courted by elders is a heady experience. Though some students openly express distaste for politics, the astute apprentice takes this opportunity to advance herself. Friends in high places can mean better instruction, access to rare tomes, and even an easier initiation. Naturally, those who extend patronage to the apprentice expect loyalty in return. It's an easy and tempting trap for those without a head for intrigue.

Instruction now proceeds from *goetia* to *theurgia*, the symbolic union with the Divine. Under close supervision, the Zelator explores the Penumbra and binds minor Umbrood. On escorted trips in the astral Realms, the apprentice learns to conceptualize powerful ideas concretely, within her personal praxis. She starts to understand how to pass beyond magickal rites and literally become magick — to "become the Word."

The Zelator degree presents great peril and great possibility. Though the mentor may warn his student against overconfidence, he expects her to progress beyond her teachings and develop new insights. However, these insights bring with them dangerous power. Most apprentices come through their magickal experimentation with little more than scars and wisdom. Others, regrettably, destroy themselves.

## ANTINOMIAN PRAXIS

The magician's Path requires self-awareness, which includes a sharp understanding of how culture shapes one's thoughts. Many, though by no means all, Zelators find it useful to probe their cultural conditioning by consciously violating it. This form of praxis is called *antinomian*, from the Greek, meaning "against the law." The antinomian practitioner holds that enlightened understanding supersedes moral law.

The new apprentice must understand at once that Hermetic study, in itself, does not require criminality. Concerning Sleeper laws, the Order takes no position. Antinomian techniques are not goals, merely tools for understanding, which the apprentice uses and then discards when they have fulfilled her purpose.

The student chooses her own antinomian idea. Common choices in recent history include flirtations with so-called Satan worship (as distinct from diabolism, which the Order strictly forbids); work among followers of Nazism, racism or other odious ideologies; or any other lesser deeds which the apprentice finds reprehensible.

For example, knowing my love of reading, my pater suggested that I take one of my favorite books and burn it. Of course, Master Porthos loves books as much as I; he despises book-burning as I do — which was precisely the point of his suggestion. Antinomian praxis should inspire revulsion in the practitioner. Then, having committed the act, the student should examine her revulsion and liberate herself from it. Such feelings represent strictures upon the will, and a true mage tolerates no such strictures.

A final warning: Never let antinomian praxis adversely affect bystanders. For example, an American apprentice who believes strongly in racial equality might attend a Ku Klux Klan meeting in a distant city, and even make a pro-Klan speech to the insipid dullards in attendance; the student should not participate in a cross-burning, however. That would make the antinomian no better than those she plans to fight. The examples of Gilles de Rais and Aleister Crowley mark the Path of one who takes her antinomian praxis too seriously.

## MISSIONS

Mentors sometimes require Zelators to undertake missions: simple tasks, such as taking a message to another Covenant, or dangerous tasks that benefit the Order, such as infiltrating a Technocratic classroom. Simple errands are rarely straightforward. A routine courier mission that runs afoul of the enemy may conceal a loyalty test; those "Technocratic agents" interrogating the captured apprentice may actually be disguised Hermetic mages. Dangerous missions teach the young mage to think for herself, learn discretion and prove her bravery and resourcefulness.

## THIRD APPRENTICE DEGREE (PRACTICUS)

The student achieves the final apprentice degree through personal metamorphosis. All magick is transformative; the secret of magick is to transform the magician. Changing from an ignorant, ineffectual drone into a mage who alters the world to match her personal vision — this is absolutely no less magical than changing from human to wolf. The first involves no supernatural violation of scientific law, but that is irrelevant. The mage decides how to alter reality, then changes inwardly to gain the power to make the alteration.

In the Order of Hermes, the instrument of change (both internal and external) is usually a Word. The student's praxis leads her to an epiphany, a realization of a suitable life goal or transformative process. Generally (though not always), this goal lacks proper focus until the mage can articulate it as a single Word, which carries with it manifold meanings and implica-

tions. The mage's will carries her Word outward, where it works upon the world independent of her guidance.

All praxis — even non-Hermetic ones — have Words which define their inner spark. All mysticks discover that Word in time, whether they realize it or not. For instance, the Word of Jesus was *Agape*, divine love. That of Francis Bacon, a member of the Order of Reason, was *Progress*, which has had profound (and profoundly mixed) effects on the world. The 1960s magician Anton La Vey developed the Word *Indulgence*, an unhappy choice with deleterious (though inarguably large) effect on modern society.

The manifestation of a powerful Word is the usual hallmark of the student's graduation to Third Degree. Thereafter the Practicus devotes her energies to transformation, using techniques that her pater provides. At this stage the student acquires skill in the Arts appropriate to the eventual progress of her Word. When she advances beyond the First Rank in each of these Arts, she is ready to become a true magician — to practice the third and highest form of magick: *magia*.

## INITIATION

How does an Order apprentice become a Disciple, the first rank of the True Mage? Through initiation. Master Divraniya remarks, "Initiation constitutes the first of many trials we undergo in our never-ending pursuit of perfection." Actually, an apprentice's initiation is more like her 2,025th such trial, but none deny that initiation is arduous, totally personal, and everlasting in the Disciple's memory.

The initiation trial takes many forms, depending on the apprentice's House, the decisions of her master and the needs of the Order. Each test differs; usually the student is unaware she is being tested. The trial challenges the apprentice's fitness to become a mage. She must demonstrate the ability to work magick, influence Sleepers, protect herself and avoid Paradox. Without quick and creative thinking, an aspiring mage is doomed.

The Order strives for perfection — of self, of will and of the world. Challenge is our crucible, our bread and drink. Our greatest members possess power on the scale of tactical nuclear weapons. Command of such power requires coolness and exquisite self-control. For this reason, initiation often involves danger, even life-threatening danger. Those who fail and survive may try again in another year. Some die. This is a harsh penalty, but consider the alternative: allowing an immature, careless or foolish mage to control the primary forces of creation. A gauntlet is a small price to pay for the stability our Order provides — or for the power of gods.

## THE TRIBUNAL OF INITIATION

Initiation ceremonies take place at Tribunals, so that all who attend may witness the "becoming" of a new mage. Because Tribunals occur only every two years and apprentices are an impatient lot, each House often convenes special gatherings known as *Tribunals of Initiation* between regular meetings. The chosen dates have astrological or numerical significance; many believe that such matters influence the future of the "graduating class."

The initiate's pater, one Quaesitor and at least one other member of the initiate's House attend the proceedings. The ceremony has five parts:

• **Declaration:** The pater declares that the apprentice has accomplished the studies set before her and has passed her initiation trial. He may offer praise for the student's behavior, scholarship and accomplishments — usually for the first time in their relationship!

• **Oath:** The Quaesitor requires the apprentice to recite the Code of Hermes, then to swear she will uphold that Code.

• **Naming:** The new mage receives a new Hermetic name chosen by her pater. (In modern times, the mentor usually asks the apprentice which name she would like.) In time, this so-called *Shadow Name* acquires new honorifics, which grow with experience and age (see Appendix). The Quaesitor welcomes the new mage using this Hermetic name, by which she will henceforth be known. Secretly, the mentor prepares a scroll with a second secret name — a *True Name*; he shows it to the initiate, then destroys it. Only the initiate and the mentor know all the Names she possesses.

• **Sigil:** The initiate's former mentor presents the new mage with a sigil that symbolizes her membership in the Order, usually a wand. The sigil bears arcane symbols that identify the mage's House and specialties, if any. In essence, the sigil becomes a symbol of the mage herself, representing her vote in council. In centuries past, mages would lend their sigils as proxy

votes, but that practice was subject to abuse and has fallen into disfavor.

• **Declaration of Vector:** First added to the initiation rite in the 1860s, this optional stage requires the new Disciple to declare the guise she will assume in the Sleeping world — including her job, lifestyle, residence and Word. Although her Vector may change over time as her interests broaden or narrow, this declaration sets the mage a goal of her own choosing — a gesture of independence after spending so long at the feet of another.

Once initiated, the *premie* (an ancient term for the new Disciple) becomes a full member of the Order, free to join a cabal or a Covenant and make her own way toward the higher Degrees.

Apprentices, even those who were never close to their mentors, always owe their teachers an irrepayable debt. While many render gratitude through alliance and favor, it is the student's reputation and deeds that form the real payment for the mentor's instruction. Through the pupil's deeds, the mentor enhances — or besmirches — his own reputation. Apprentices reading this are advised to remember that their acts shine or shadow their teachers' own. And believe me, few mischiefs are worth an angry mentor.

## THE LIFE OF THE MASTER



*A desire of knowledge is the natural feeling of mankind; and every human being whose mind is not debauched will be willing to give all that he has to get knowledge.*

— Samuel Johnson

Though apprenticeship shapes the mage's early life, her career path is entirely her own. Master Divraniya's writings on mages enumerate their duties admirably; a summary follows.

### ENTERING THE MI'AS

Mi'as (Arabic, "quicksand") is a tongue-in-cheek term for politics. As soon as a new mage completes her initiation, she usually finds herself embroiled in the political maneuverings endemic to the Order. Once in, she must sink or swim.

Hermetics continually accept new challenges, measuring their progress toward perfection through the acquisition of power — mastering the Arts, commanding spirits, exercising our will within the mundane world and, ultimately, ruling ourselves. Other Tradition mages sometimes fail to comprehend this central point of our Order's beliefs. We understand the one true Path to Ascension; therefore, we have a duty to lead others to that Path. To prepare for that position, we must perfect ourselves. That process includes gaining political power, both to measure our personal advancement and to learn how to wield power wisely.

If one must wade through "political quicksand," it helps to have a lifeline. The Order provides this aid through the exchange of *sa*. In Egyptian religion, *sa* was a magical fluid, the

lifeblood of the gods. When their *sa* ran low, the priests would ask others' gods to lay hands on them and restore it. In Hermetic tradition, *sa* represents "political blood," favors bestowed on others. These "charities" may include taking sides in a discussion; voting for or against a particular issue; helping another mage establish a reputation; or getting him elected to office. The more *sa* a mage "gives" to others, the more favor she potentially controls: It is considered a grave breach of honor to fail to repay a favor.

### GAINING KNOWLEDGE

The Hermetic is a scholar in the library of Humanity. Mages who spend their lives battling in the political arena — or in combat, for that matter — sacrifice their access to the higher magickal realms. Knowledge, understanding and awareness are the keys to personal evolution. Each mage must decide for herself which area of study will let her Ascend. At the same time, she must balance the practical necessities of politicking against these — for without *sa*, her scholarly options are curtailed.

Many new initiates, having cleared the hurdles and won initiation, assume they have won victory. Quite the contrary: After apprenticeship, the mage must study harder than ever! Within the basic texts, she now discerns hidden meanings, numerological significance or unsuspected symbology. These discoveries compel her to reach beyond what she once suspected and attain what she never before envisioned. And beyond this portal lie still more complex mysteries....

## TAKING APPRENTICES

Hermetics recognize the duty to teach. Personal improvement is impossible without training new apprentices. As we uncover deeper truths, we feel obligated to pass on our discoveries.

Other factors, beyond mere duty, influence the decision to teach. Many Hermetics have no other family beyond their fellow mages; taking an apprentice creates a bond like that between a parent and her child. Then, too, it is a genuine pleasure to instill in the newly-Awakened mind a thirst for knowledge and a desire to seek the mysteries.

A teacher may have more practical motives also. A pupil provides an extra pair of hands in the laboratory, performs tedious chores, and, not least, provides the mage with companionship. Until she takes an apprentice, a mage may never realize how lonely the Seeker's life can be.

The new mentor rules her pupil in all ways, but the teacher also learns valuable lessons: politics in miniature (through wielding power over another); teaching methods; fresh perspectives on old subjects, which may spark new lines of inquiry; and renewed interest in the mortal world, which so many masters forsake for Awakened company.

## FINDING FAMILIARS

The Order does not forbid apprentices to have familiars, but students rarely have the knowledge to summon one, let alone keep it. These spirit companions require upkeep and favors in return for their services. Most new Disciples, however,

try to enlist a familiar at the earliest opportunity; such creatures may offer power, otherworldly knowledge or access to more powerful Umbrood.

Most familiars attracted to Hermetic mages demonstrate extreme intelligence, inquiring natures and esoteric knowledge (if not always wisdom). These Umbral denizens take forms that various cultures associate with intelligence: toads or frogs, falcons, owls, snakes and cats. Sometimes they inhabit clay golems or homunculi that appear to Sleeping eyes as dolls. Familiars destined to reside in Horizon Realms, where Paradox does not intrude, may appear as Mythic Remnants — sphinxes, lammasu, tiny dragons — or (rarely) as random geometric forms. (ref: *familiars*.)

## SANCTA

Hermetic law considers the Hermetic Sanctum inviolable. Here, a mage establishes her own individual paradigm and does her most important work. Some willworkers make do with a small Sanctum — little more than a study area — but most include their laboratories, libraries and living quarters in the "package."

A Sanctum's size and situation often indicate the owner's status within the Covenant. Older, established mages have the best sites and most spacious accommodations. In crowded Covenants, Disciples may share living quarters, but each still claims her own tiny Sanctum. A Chantry member can secure a better Sanctum by performing a great service to her Covenant or House, or through political maneuvering. Failing that, she can just get rich and build it herself.





Note that the Sanctum must be clearly marked as described in the *Peripheral Corrigenda to the Code of Hermes* (XVI/254/DD/iii/a). Uninvited entry into another's Sanctum is a crime punishable by Interdiction, and the owner may lawfully kill the intruder in self-defense. (One notable exception: Apprentices may enter their mentor's Sanctum without invitation, and vice versa.) In the Houses' turbulent past, a scheming mage would invite a rival into his Sanctum, slay him, then escape punishment by claiming self-defense. Even today, entering another's Sanctum indicates great trust — or great foolishness.

The laws prohibit certain risky types of experimentation within the Covenant, even within one's Sanctum. In particular, the Order regards major elemental effects, greater Forces magick, all summonings and, of course, diabolism as dangerous. The mage should implement these in a pocket Realm. Extreme cases even require a sealed laboratory within the Realm, so that the mage can blow herself up without taking the whole pocket universe with her.

## CERTÁMEN

Inevitably, every master gets drawn into a magical duel, usually by a political rival or by a glory-seeking student. For this reason, the Houses developed the rules of certámen, the ritualized duel arcane.

Certámen within our Order is highly ritualized, with observers, judges and a clearly defined arena. Duelists engage in a set form of challenge, response, the stating of limits on allow-

able magick, use of Quintessence, stakes of the match, and other constraints. Surprise attacks are dishonorable (but occur anyway).

Because we control the most dangerous forces in the universe, our Order strictly enforces the agreed-upon limits in a contest. Brutal opponents are often censured or re-challenged by a stronger compatriot. The most admirable duelists best their opponents through creative and subtle "soft" magicks, or defeat rivals through guile and knowledge of their opponents' weaknesses. Crass displays of power, while effective barriers to repeat business, indicate a lack of grace and imagination.

## TWILIGHT

We refer to Quiet as "the Twilight" because it evokes a sense of changing balance. Twilight comprises darkness and light; one surrenders to the other. Although other Traditions conceive of the night as insanity, we consider it a time of reevaluation and transition.

A Hermetic mage in Twilight loses control of her rational thought processes and enters a reality of her own making. In this state, she opens herself to repressed ideas and crazy notions. These visions may lead to new insights into her Word, new abilities and affinities, or even (rarely) a new familiar. Conversely, Twilight may confuse the victim beyond recovery. She may acquire a physical deformity brought on by uncontrolled magick, or lose her affinity of an Art, perhaps beyond recovery. She becomes a different, smaller spirit — one occasionally beset by nightmarish hobgoblins from her subconscious.



Any Hermetic mage must prepare her to experience Twilight. It *will* happen someday, and may happen often. Indeed, the Order's greatest figures have gained unique insights in Twilight. My own pater, Master Porthos, has entered at least 12 by his own count. Some among the Order enter this visionground voluntarily, searching for wisdom, though others fear its horrors and lock themselves away for fear of harm.

## AWARDS

Those who diligently pursue the Order's virtues and choose their friends wisely reap great rewards. All Hermetics must learn something of political infighting, and those who learn well may become movers and shakers within Covenants, Houses or even the entire Order. Respected mages may represent their peers at the Grand Tribunal, where they help determine policy for the Tradition as a whole.

Despite our Tradition's reputation, many Hermetics manage to avoid politics (mostly) and pursue knowledge instead. High scholarship, too, brings rewards. Theoreticians and scholars enjoy greater respect in the Order than in any other Tradition; their opinions are sought, their learning revered. They may receive superior laboratory equipment, space and research materials, as well as bright apprentices and consors. The finest thinkers are immortalized on the Order's White Roster of Celebrants. Typically theorists also achieve, if not immortality, then extreme physical longevity.

Other more active members earn prestige through service to the Order: rescue missions, diplomatic successes, Umbral discoveries, telling strikes against the enemy.... Some rewards

are intangible: the respect of peers, fame within the Order and gratitude from other members. Some are more concrete but no less valuable. Material rewards include good quarters in the Covenant, promising apprentices and appointments to office. Historically, high-Degree members of House Quaesitor have the best chances to reap rewards of this type, but the Quaesitors are too few to monopolize the spoils.

Each of these paths holds one ultimate prize: access to esoteric knowledge. Every Hermetic mage, however trapped by the *mi'as*, shares the supreme desire to understand. By understanding the Tellurian, we see how to work our will; by understanding our will, we progress toward the ultimate goal of spiritual perfection.

## THE SECOND INITIATION

As a hierarchical society, the Order has a pyramidal structure. Disciples provide the broad base, upon which rests a smaller number of Adepts and, at the summit, a few revered Masters and Archmages. As a mage advances in Degree and formulates new praxes to realize her Word, powerful members of our Tradition evaluate her performance. If she proves her excellence, loyalty and ability, they grant her a "second initiation."

This secret and arcane ceremony is known only to those of Eighth and Ninth Degrees (i.e., Masters and Archmages). The initiate enters the *Circulus Abstrusus*, the Hermetic "movers and shakers" found mostly in Doissetep and Horizon. Members of this inner circle establish a Tradition-wide reputation. Others both fear and revere them. Rumor speaks of a third initiation and a fourth beyond that, but the details of such ranks remain mysterious at best.

# HERMETIC LAW



*The laws place the safety of all before the safety of individuals.*

— Cicero, *De Finibus*

Any group is only as strong as the laws that bind it. Hermetics adhere strictly to a code that lets us live and work together — not always in harmony, perhaps, but at least in common understanding. Without the Code of Hermes and its *Peripheral Corrigenda*, we could never meld so many differing magickal praxes into one Tradition.

## THE CODE OF HERMES

Bonisagus propounded the Code of Hermes in 787 CE. Disciples must know the Code and swear to uphold it. In the past, breaking the Code incurred one punishment: *Requital*, or death. In modern times, the Order employs many punishments. The Code, at its most basic, is as follows:

- I swear everlasting loyalty to the Order and its members. The Order's friends and enemies are my friends and enemies, and I shall not spurn a friend nor succor an enemy.
- I shall not through action or inaction endanger the Order, nor consort with devils or undead, nor anger the fae.
- I shall not deprive any Order mage of magickal power, nor through action or inaction attempt bring harm to an Order mage, except in justly declared and open certámen.
- I shall not spy by any means or manner upon another Order mage's private works, nor read an Order mage's mind, nor invade or observe an Order mage's Sanctum, save to guard against a clear, direct, forceful and imminent threat to the safety of the Order.

*Note: The Code does not forbid spying upon or scrying those outside the Order; indeed, we often observe Technocracy strongholds, and occasionally (for their own safety) the Chantries of other Traditions.*

- If called before a Tribunal, I shall abide by its verdicts. If called to sit upon a Tribunal, I shall vote wisely, respect the votes of others, and support the Tribunal's verdicts.
- Upon reaching Fifth Degree or higher, I shall train apprentices and instruct them in this Code. I bear the entire responsibility for my apprentice, and shall duly admonish, restrain, discipline or arrest an apprentice who endangers the Order, and shall yield same apprentice to the Order's lawfully appointed agent or Tribunal.
- I solemnly swear to uphold this sacred Code of Hermes, and venture any risk or sacrifice to protect it. Should I breach it, may all the mages of the Order rise as one united and hunt me down and destroy me forevermore.

## PERIPHERAL CORRIGENDA

The Code's brevity has necessitated numerous rulings and interpretations. Rulings agreed in the triennial Grand Tribunals are entered into the *Peripheral Corrigenda*, a voluminous

and precedent-setting document. Some noteworthy interpretations:

- Tribunals consist of six Order mages from House Quaesitor, or from at least two other Houses. Tribunals convened to hear capital crimes consist of 12 Hermetic mages from no less than four Houses. A Quaesitor presides over capital Tribunals.
- A mentor must instruct and train an apprentice for at least three months each year. Otherwise, any other mage of Fifth Degree or higher may (with the apprentice's consent) take over the apprentice's training.

- Certámen shall settle disputes between individuals, cabals or Covenants. Challenged and challenger must agree on the limitations and boundaries of the duel. The use of deadly force must be stated and agreed upon by all parties before the contest. No mage may challenge a Tribune judging his fate, a Primus in charge of a House or a Quaesitor protecting the Order. No mage may challenge another mage more than once, unless and until the second mage has challenged the challenger in return.

Any challenged party may refuse certámen without prejudice or dishonor; however, the party seeking satisfaction may then consign the dispute to a Quaesitor for disposition. A mage may not accept a challenge that breaks the Code of Hermes or its *Peripheral Corrigenda*.

Having accepted certámen, a mage must abide by its results or incur punishment by the Quaesitors.

## VIOLATIONS

The Order of Hermes recognizes both *high* and *low* crimes.

### HIGH CRIMES

These comprise explicit violations of the Code of Hermes: Destroying a mage's magickal abilities, slaying a fellow member outside lawful certámen, endangering the Order, dealing with demons or exercising gross malice, sadism and/or murder against Sleepers, allies or other mages. High crimes are heard by the Order's Security Council, a formal body of nine judges; each judge is appointed by the Primus of his House. By majority vote, the Security Council may punish high crimes with either **Censure** (public condemnation), **Interdiction** (shunning), **Requital** (death) or **Gilgul** (annihilation).

- A **Censured** mage's crime is circulated among all Covenants; the criminal may also incur fines or other penalties, such as a prohibition against returning to his Sanctum or Covenant for two years. Though (in theory) publication and associated penalties comprise the entire punishment, Censure has the practical side effect of destroying the criminal's political ambitions.

- No Hermetic mage may aid or communicate in any way with an **Interdicted** magician. Independent vigilantes of the Order often hunt and slay Interdicted mages, claiming that such desperadoes know too much to be allowed to live.



- **Requital** verdicts are extremely rare. If the sentenced criminal is in custody, he may appeal at once to the Primus (leader) of his House for mercy. A willing Primus may convene all available Primi to review the sentence. They may commute the Requital to Interdiction by accumulating five votes in favor. If the verdict stands, three Quaesitor executioners (called the Black Tribunal) carry out the Requital sentence at dawn on the day following sentencing.

A fugitive from justice may earn both Interdiction and Requital, meaning that any Order mage must flee or exterminate the criminal on sight.

- Note that Requital in all cases refers only to the termination of the criminal's physical life. Only a unanimous panel of all House Primi can pronounce the still graver sentence of **Gilgul**, or Avatar-murder. The Order of Hermes has historically issued only one or two Gilgul sentences each century, usually for flagrant diabolism.

## LOW CRIMES

These offenses against the Peripheral Corrigenda include harming or stealing another mage's familiar, laboratory or property, or committing gross acts of theft or violence against Sleepers, allies or fellow Tradition mages. Such crimes merit either **Talion** (retaliation in kind by the injured party or his agents) or **Reparation**. Low crimes are judged by a Tribunal, a temporary jury of rank-and-file mages (see "Lawmakers," below).

- The ancient law of **Talion** suits punishment to the crime. If you destroy my library, then a Talion verdict lets me destroy yours. However, Talion within the Order is more flexible than the verdicts of ancient societies. Tribunals recognize that if you kill my familiar, there is no justice in my killing yours, inasmuch as your familiar may have been uninvolved in your crime. In these circumstances, Talion permits alternate solutions. In this example, the Tribunal might sever the bond between you and your familiar, returning the creature to its Umbral home.

- **Reparation**, by far the most common punishment, means the criminal must make restitution, in kind where possible, in cash or favors when not. Tribunals are fond of "sevenfold Reparation." For instance, if the offender took a valuable tome from the victim's library, the offender must give the victim seven other books of equal value.

## LAWMAKERS

Here follow the positions of power that you will most often hear about as an apprentice:

- **Tribune:** *Tribunals Ordinary* are temporary *ad hoc* juries of six or 12 Tribune mages. A Tribune is a temporary office, like that of a juror. Such Tribunals convene whenever necessary, weighing important matters or deciding criminal trials. For matters that affect a single House, the Tribunes come from that House; for matters between Houses or affecting the entire Order, Tribunes are drawn from several Houses. Tribunal justice is swift, though its fairness is sometimes inextricably bound to political expediency.

The Corrigenda detail precise routines and procedures for convening a Tribunal Ordinary in every imaginable situation. Typically, but not always, a member of House Quaesitor calls and convenes the Tribunal. The Quaesitor may call any Order mage (except apprentices) to serve as a Tribune; the chosen one must serve unless prevented by injury or illness. However, members of high Degree often develop "Tribune fever" (as they jocularly call it) to avoid this dull service. Therefore, a new initiate can expect early, if not frequent, calls to hear cases. Given this opportunity, do not succumb to fever! Tribunals offer the new mage insights into the Order's inner workings, as well as valuable contacts with other Covenants and potential allies.

*Grand Tribunals* meet every three years, or more often in times of emergency. The 27 delegates (usually the Primus and two other members of high Degree from each House) convene to enact laws and discuss issues affecting the whole of the Order. In Grand Tribunal, the Primus of House Bonisagus (as leader of the oldest House) acts as Tribune Chancellor. Each attending mage may propose topics for discussion.

- **Quaesitor:** Members of House Quaesitor have a unique position within the Order, for their authority extends beyond their own House. Building on the harsh ancient laws of Ma'at, Egyptian goddess of law, Quaesitors oversee the enactment and enforcement of laws within the Order. A Quaesitor presides over the Security Council and (usually) Tribunals, ruling on questions of precedent and law.

- **Primus:** The Primi lead the Houses and guide their members. Whether Masters or Archmages, Primi always wield major political power, appointing officials within the House organization, settling disputes and planning strategies.

Each Primus may expel any member of her House, in effect making the unfortunate an Orphan within the Order. An "unhoused" mage is not exactly a criminal or an exile, but has no voting rights and, practically speaking, absolutely no political power. Unhoused magicians are rare; most either find refuge in another House or, without support, perish at the enemy's hands.

All Primi serve for life. In Houses Ex Miscellanea, Janissary, Tylalus and Shaea, the Primus chooses his or her successor, who takes over upon the elder's death or retirement. Thig has no Primus. In the other Houses, members of Sixth Degree and higher elect their Primus from among the House's Masters and Archmages.

## COMMITTEES

Weighty issues of law and guilt may fascinate the apprentice, but dry administrative matters weigh more heavily upon her life. Such minutiae are the purview of the Order's many committees, divisions and detachments. These organizations and their functions date from the consolidation of our diverse Houses as a single Tradition; in many ways, they hold our fragile fraternity together.

As a new apprentice, you've already encountered the Order's Personnel Division. Take heart: They treat Archmages the same way they treated you! You'll encounter their obtuse bureaucracy whenever you rise in degree, become an initiate, relocate, take an apprentice, win an award or commit a major felony. Yes, many of them are "just consors," but *don't* threaten to fry them. They have power: When a mage locates a likely apprentice but cannot, for some reason, teach her himself, the consors in Personnel locate a likely mentor for her. Therefore, Personnel controls the quality of apprentices a House receives. Thus, mages treat Personnel kindly. A quality recruit means a quality apprentice.

The same situation prevails in most other committees. Supervised by mages but staffed by Sleeper associates, the committees represent a power unto themselves. They serve, but are not members of, the various Houses. Vital Order functions fall to one or another House: research (Bonisagus), defense (Flambeau), recruitment (Fortunae), internal security (Janissary), justice (Quaesitor), history (Shaea), reconnaissance (Thig) and strategy (Tylalus). But the Houses prefer not to burden themselves with mundane duties, and so these tasks fall to seemingly their innumerable consors, aides and (yes) bureaucrats.

Master Divraniya offers a full list of committees and excellent summaries of their domains. This early in your studies, you need only care about a few: the **Logistics Division**, which provides supplies to the Covenants; the **Procurement Committee**, which locates and acquires ancient texts for Order libraries; and various *ad hoc* detachments formed to investigate magickal phenomena across the world. These committees concern you because they frequently require minor magicians to carry out tasks considered "beneath" an initiate. So don't be surprised if a Procurement secretary calls you at 4 AM and tells you to get to Istanbul and pick up a 12th-Century Dervish scroll. In our Order, it's all part of the new mage's life.



# FOOTNOTE 3: HERMETIC HOUSES

*Suffer not yourselves to be carried with the Great Stream, but stem the tide, you that can lay hold of the Haven of Safety, and make your full course toward it. Seek one that may lead you by the hand, and conduct you to the door of Truth and Knowledge, where the clear Light is that is pure from Darkness, where there is not one drunken, but all are sober, and in their heart look up to him, whose pleasure it is to be seen.*

— *The Sacred Pyramider of Hermes Trismegistus, VIII.4-5*



Like the Father's house in the Biblical proverb (John 14:2), the Order of Hermes has many mansions. Within our organization, each House (an older term, "Collegium," fell from favor in the 1700s) is a plenary magickal society unto itself, often many centuries old. Each House alone matches our fellow Traditions, if not in numbers, then in history and independence of viewpoint. Even their praxes display remarkable diversity. Still, all nine Houses share the Hermetic emphases on meticulous discipline, exacting ritual, pragmatic adoption of workable ideas and, above all, language.

New apprentices often wonder why the Houses remain separate within the Order. For five centuries, the discussion has dominated many a Covenant tea room: Why not integrate the

Houses, or else calve them as separate Traditions? Of many competing theories, I favor the so-called pragmatic argument. The path to power requires both a voice on the Council of Nine Mystick Traditions and influence at our Tradition's Grand Tribunals. A House that breaks from the Order loses the first; a House that integrates forfeits the second. So the status quo endures, resented but tolerated.

In this Hornbook's section on the Houses, Master Aram Marangoudakis, bani Tytalus, does not address the current situation. In fact, for all their exhaustive and in some respects exhausting length, his nine treatises omit any references to current politics. With his work, Master Marangoudakis has done every new apprentice an undeniable service — as far as it goes — but a novice entering the quicksand of Hermetic life may find the following notes both accessible and enlightening.

# HOUSE BONISAGUS

**Names:** Bonisagi, Researchers, the Scattered, Ivory Towers, Pointy Hats (demeaning)

In the 8th century, a reclusive Mercuric Archmage in the Black Forest, Bonisagus, propounded the Word *parma* (Latin, "shield"). A brilliant and patient researcher, he first enacted his Word by developing the *parma magica*, an anti-magickal shield that let magicians parley with rivals without fear of ambush.

When the Master Trianoma encountered Bonisagus on her search for fellow magi (731 CE), she studied with him, learned the *parma magica*, and recognized it as a key to propagating her own Word: *Unity*. She helped Bonisagus recognize a larger dimension implied in his Word, a societal goal that would shield magi everywhere. Aided by Trianoma's political genius, Bonisagus recruited a small cabal of followers, the nucleus of the later House Bonisagus. Teaching the *parma magica* to magi across Europe, the Bonisagi built the foundations of the Order of Hermes, and hence of all the Traditions.

During the High Mythic Age, House Bonisagus exerted enormous influence as the Order's leading researchers. What vision! Almost every year the group seemed to impart some new and imaginative way to work magick; its pioneering research about vampires, werewolves, wraiths and the fae fascinated the magickal community. But at the end of the Age, the House's Quintessence stockpiles dwindled, its resources shrank, and its membership succumbed to bitter infighting.

Today, young mages in other Houses consider the Bonisagi superannuated and obsolete. They have a point: Only one cabal, the Fraternal Society of Bonisagus in Doissetep, remains politically powerful. Its four Masters involve themselves, not with research or Ascension, but with strikes against a Technocratic base. However, critics of the House overlook "the Scattered": an unknown number of independent researchers scattered around the Tellurian, each pottering about in an ancient laboratory, each cleaving to Bonisagan ideals. Every one of them is a first-class theorist. Even now, from time to time, one of these eremites comes forth to announce some innovative rote or newly discovered realm. This sense of possibility keeps Bonisagus vital in Hermetic life.

**Philosophy:** Orthodox Bonisagan theorists usually adopt Words connoting boundaries or frontiers. By transgressing boundaries through antinomian praxis, or extending frontiers through inquiry, the Bonisagan transforms her spirit into something new, unexplored. Per Hermetic doctrine ("As above, so below"), this opens the researcher to a new Truth, a new aspect of the realm of noesis. The mage then carries this new understanding back to the material world. Any Scattered theorist can describe the process at great length in completely incomprehensible terms.



As for the House's last surviving cabal, the Fraternal Society of Bonisagus, it is hard to adduce its doctrines. What should one make of a magazine photographer with a night-Ecstatic praxis? Or a one-time mayor of a Swiss canton who spends his days learning languages (total at this writing: 74) and collecting electric trains? The Society's theoretical underpinnings, whatever they are, are certainly eclectic.

**Style:** Bonisagan researchers specialize in jargon so arcane it puzzles even their fellow Hermetics — and, I suspect, sometimes themselves. Observers joke that the Scattered can talk themselves into Twilight. Never absent-minded — for rudimentary skill in *Ars Mentis* corrects this trivial flaw — the Researchers nonetheless focus obsessively on abstruse ideas; their distracted air gives their nickname double meaning. No other mage, however, can better handle the countless details of an elaborate ritual working or intricate Umbrood conversation.

In the Fraternal Society in Doissetep, by contrast, members emulate the example of Master Trianoma, never a strong theorist but a brilliant politician. These relentless willworkers share a vitriolic hatred for the Technocracy and constantly plot against known Reason mages. Visiting many Covenants around the world, Fraternals use their considerable personal skills to gain aid or resources for their cause.

One elder Flambeau tells of his dealings with the Fraternals: "They always remember your name and your birthday, and they give catnip toys to your familiar," he says. "They wine you and dine you, they engage you in the most delightful conversation, and then when the evening is over you realize that you've promised them an F-14 strike aircraft by Tuesday."

**Goals:** Among the Scattered, current research includes exploration of the 10th Sphere, *Ars Concordiae* and Paradox avoidance. In practice, it's never easy to determine which topics command these theorists' attention. They work in isolation, usually in Horizon Realms, making occasional forays to Earth to procure some esoteric document or vital ingredient. The Order rarely hears about a Bonisagi's interests until he suddenly shows up at a Grand Tribunal, carrying an armful of scribbled scrolls that show, in precise detail, how to turn a distant enemy into glass.

Some decades ago, the Technocratic stronghold Metropolis2 seized one of Doissetep's most important ley lines. The

Fraternal Society has spent many years making retaliatory strikes against Metropolis2, with little effect thus far. They have, however, succeeded in convincing other cabals to "loan" them the necessary resources....

**Organization:** The Fraternal Society has four members who meet regularly in Doissetep, frequently in the Chantry's Barcelona aspect on Earth. The Scattered do not meet and are not known to communicate with one another, save in emergencies.

**Initiation:** Each Adept or Master recruits and teaches his own apprentices. Doissetep's cabal often recruits them from secretive government agencies like the CIA. In recent centuries, their membership has sharply declined; the Scattered are

too isolated to meet likely recruits, and the Followers lose rather too many to unusual accidents. How curious that the indomitable walls of Doissetep cannot protect its residents from fatal "accidents...."

## NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Philippus Aureolus Paracelsus (1493-1541):** Swiss alchemist and physician. An emblem of the Hermetic Tradition, he wrote extensively on it and made many major breakthroughs. Helped discover effect of Sleeper beliefs on magick. Said to have died in 1541, but some believe he became an Oracle.

- **Phoebe Tetramagestus (1214-1488):** Reclusive French scholar (birth name Isabelle Hénault) in

Chantry Sangreal, Marseilles. Mar-

velously prolific researcher credited with over 80 original rites, countless variants, and three Prix d'Honneur. She lived a cloistered existence and finally succumbed to a decades-long Twilight.

- **John Visballi (born 1833):** Italian-born Hungarian mage, master of *Ars Essentiae*, *Conjunctionis* and *Animae*. Current leader of the Fraternal Society of Bonisagus in Doissetep.

- **Livia Margold (birthdate unknown):** Scattered Researcher, the most recent to emerge from seclusion. Developed improved method for summoning Umbrood snippings. Close questioning revealed that she had secured this knowledge from an Umbrood Lord in exchange for a human zygote. A Tribunal Censured Livia; thus Censured, she entered the Deep Umbra. Her current whereabouts are unknown.



# HOUSE EX MISCELLANEA

**Names (in addition to individual House names):** *Order of Miscellany*, "misk" mages, *Hodgepodge*, *House Salad* (joking), *Rabble* (demeaning)

A highly diverse assemblage of unrelated mages, House Ex Miscellanea gathers the last surviving members of defunct Houses together with outsiders who joined the Order for protection. Unlike the other Houses, which specialize in recruitment, defense, research and so forth, the Miscellany serves no formal function in the Order. Even so, individual "misk mages" often command powers otherwise unknown in our Tradition.

For all its motley variety, the House's historic origin is localized and dramatic. In 816, maga Pralix, bani Tytalus, gathered several English independent wizards to destroy the vengeful necromancer Dav'nalleous. In the wake of their success, Pralix declared them the Order of Miscellany. At first, they planned a campaign against the Order of Hermes, but Master Trianoma convinced them to become a House instead. So they did.

The Hodgepodge's composition has changed a bit over the centuries. In the early days of the Traditions, the Hodgepodge suffered quick turnovers. Some of the original Houses of Hermes with weak political positions (Criamon, Jerbiton and Merinita) were consigned during the Grand Convocation to Ex Miscellanea, where they remain to this day. Other mages left the Miscellany to join other groups. The Bjornaer, a House of Germanic shape-changing wizards (now defunct), spent barely a year in Ex Miscellanea before leaving to join the Verbena.

In the centuries since then, Ex Miscellanea has changed less radically. During the Dwindling, it subsumed the remnants of other Houses; in this century it harbors a few refugees from the Lost Tradition, the Ahl-i-Batin.

Hermetics in other Houses sometimes denigrate Ex Miscellanea; on the whole, however, the Order considers the House a valuable asset. By providing a Hermetic counterpart to the other Traditions, it shows the triumph of the Order's Path. The House's diverse membership employs nearly every praxis imaginable, always with a uniquely Hermetic spin. True, this disorganized House lacks political power, but its great size, vigor

and vitally new ideas make the Miscellany a secret weapon in the war for Sleeping minds.

Most "miskers" are the remnants of four former Houses:

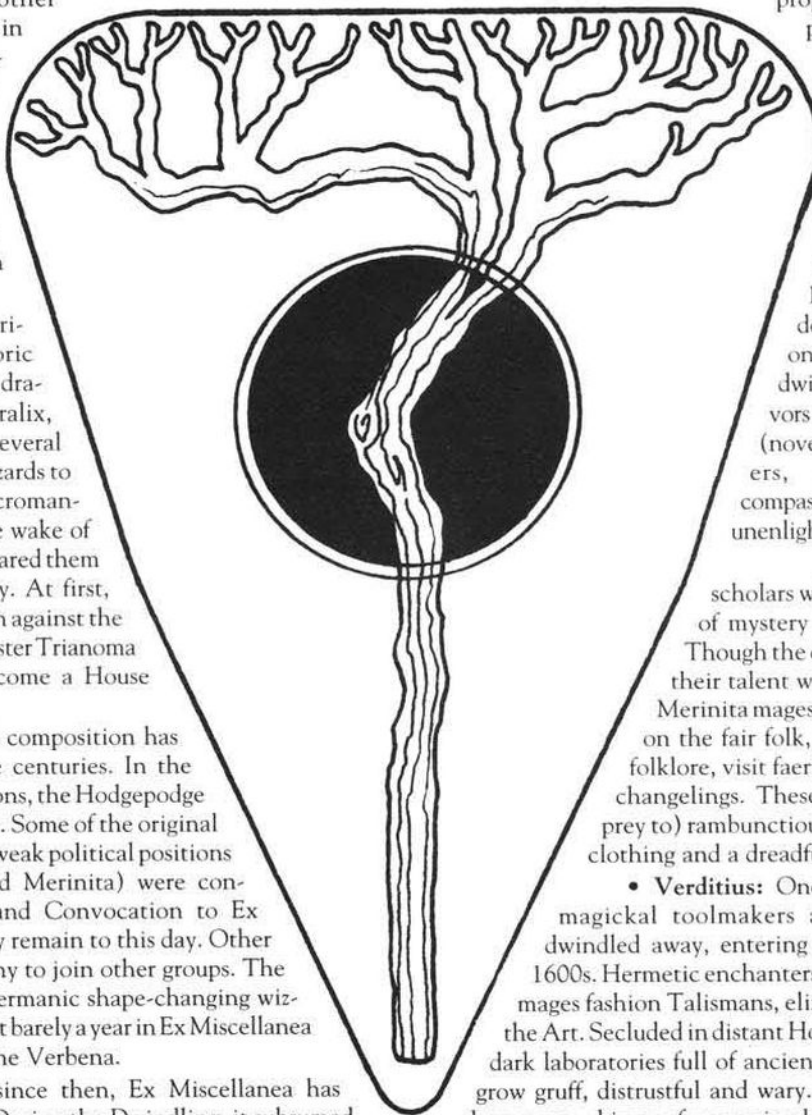
- **Criamon:** Prophets, seers, "swimmers on the sea of Time," these tattooed visionaries specialize in *Ars Temporis*, *Mentis* and *Manium*. Other Hermetics seek the Criamon wizard's prophecies, but he seldom perceives the future in detail. Instead, he hints at obscurities and speaks in riddles.

- **Jerbiton:** These philosophers, arbitrators and poets of the Mythic Age joined Ex Miscellanea in the late 1400s. Hit badly by Paradox and Sleeper distrust, once-haughty Jerbiton has dwindled to a few hardy survivors — humble artist-scholars (novelists, artists, social workers, psychologists) with compassion for the poor and the unenlightened.

- **Merinita:** Romantic scholars who believe the resolution of mystery lies in the faerie world. Though the centuries have decimated their talent with eccentric fae magick, Merinita mages still keep copious records on the fair folk, pore through fables and folklore, visit faerie sites and conspire with changelings. These mages develop (or fall prey to) rambunctious humors, a taste for loud clothing and a dreadful impulse to pun.

- **Verditius:** Once a prominent guild of magickal toolmakers and crafters, Verditius dwindled away, entering the Hodgepodge in the 1600s. Hermetic enchanters without equal, Verditius mages fashion Talismans, elixirs and similar objects of the Art. Secluded in distant Horizon Realms, huddled in dark laboratories full of ancient tomes, these magicians grow gruff, distrustful and wary. Despite their ill moods, they create objects of surpassing beauty and power.

**Philosophy:** Individual "miskers" adapt pagan, shamanic, artistic and even fae magick to a Hermetic framework — that is, they painstakingly memorize rituals and develop elaborate incantations, rather than "winging it" as mages do in some other Traditions. The House's eclectic theories do not always mesh with accepted Hermetic thought, though, and disputes are common indeed. A Criamon magician, for instance, might repeat short incantations incessantly, sometimes in conjunction with drugs or dancing, to achieve a prophetic trance. By transcending his body and the conditioned world, he achieves



unified awareness of the past and future. This ecstatic approach does not conform (to put it mildly) to Hermetic doctrines of controlled power. Still, the other Houses look on without interference; with luck, they might notice something the Criamon does that could aid their own praxis research.

**Style:** Magical styles within Ex Miscellanea vary almost as much as the different Tradition styles do. An Indian Criamon utters the names of the seven Torments while tattooing a mystic symbol on her fingertips. An Israeli Jerbiton prepares a high feast fixed with only white foods served in bowls of white marble as part of an artistic peace ceremony. An English Merinita inscribes the rune of Spiritual Water around a tree to draw out a dryad. And a German Verditius chants the 10 Orders of the Blessed and the 10 Spheres of the World to infuse a ring with purifying powers. Ex Miscellanea has almost as many styles as it has members.

**Goals:** Miscellaneous, of course. This House harbors young radical scholars, fervent Rosicrucians and leftist philosophers who fight their battles with pen and ink. The only goals they all hold in common are following their own praxes and preserving Ex Miscellanea's rights within the Order.

**Organization:** The Miscellany has no formal governing body and does not meet regularly. Like-minded groups within the House form Covenants or cabals, each with its own rules and regulations. Leaders of these groups can, with difficulty, gather the entire House to defend its rights within the Order.

Miskers communicate efficiently through an informal but very serious "grapevine," using telepathy, spirit messengers, and mundane means such as phones and Internet mailing lists. Other Hermetics may contact any or all "misk mages" through the Personnel Division... if they've got to time to wait.

**Initiation:** Haphazard. Individual miskers sometimes recruit their own apprentices, but most simply take students assigned to them by Personnel.

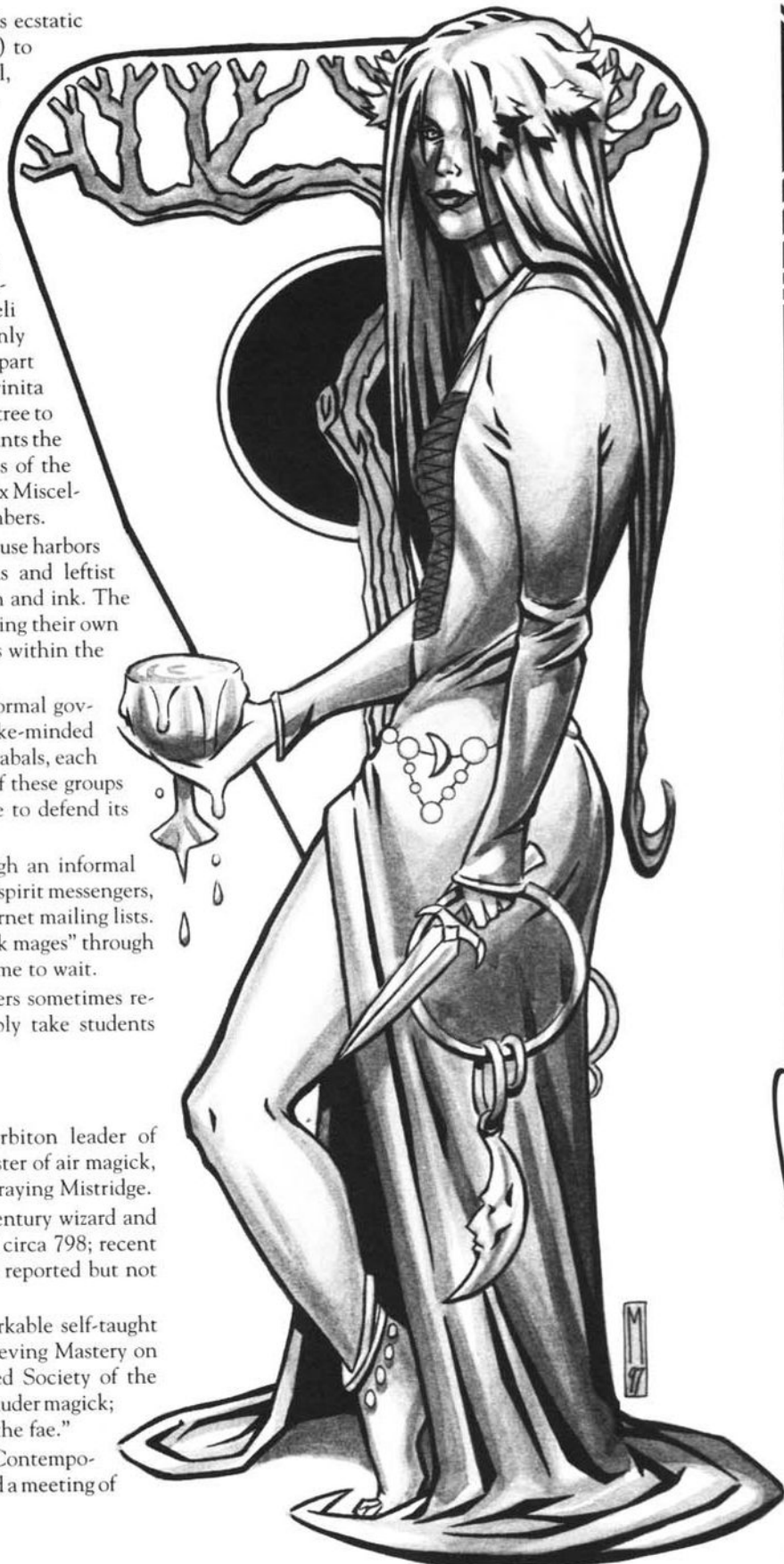
## NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Grimgroth (??-1210):** Notable Jerbiton leader of Mistridge Covenant in the Mythic Age. Master of air magick, especially nautical air knots. Killed after betraying Mistridge.

- **Merinita (752-798?):** Mighty 8th-century wizard and founder of her eponymous House. Vanished circa 798; recent sightings of Merinita in England have been reported but not confirmed.

- **Virgil Endrina (born 1410):** Remarkable self-taught mage who joined House Merinita after achieving Mastery on his own. Now leads the small but respected Society of the Esoteric Answer in Doissetep. Expert on Marauder magick; sometimes called "unofficial ambassador to the fae."

- **Geoffrey Twidmarch (born 1922):** Contemporary Merinita historian who recently attended a meeting of mages and changelings in Great Britain.



# HOUSE FLAMBEAU

**Names:** *House Ignis, Flame mages, Apromorians, Nukes* (joking)

If the Traditions could be said to have a nuclear weapons stockpile, it would be House Flambeau. Born from Crusader flames in medieval Europe, Ignis retains its warlike passions to this day. Modern Flame mages bow stiffly to the threat of Paradox by practicing a subtler style of magick than their predecessors, but they still threaten the Technocracy with "Vis" (Essentia) and Materia magick and, just as importantly, with unexcelled tactical cunning. Sent to trouble spots by Tylalus strategists or Quaesitor judges, Flambeau mages form the Order's strike team, its thin red line of defense.

Flambeau himself was a mysterious figure even in his own short, brilliant life (760?-843). He probably belonged to the Christian nobility on the Iberian peninsula. Together with his teacher (whom Flambeau never named, a bizarre and inexplicable omission), Flambeau waged war against Moorish magi. When he lost his master and family to the Moors, Flambeau turned his fire magick against other wizards, incinerating almost 50 fellow magicians before Maga Trianoma convinced him to join the Order of Hermes. He formed his own House, dedicated to the study of fire and destruction, and recruited many followers before immolating himself in an apparent accident.

Originally, Flambeau mages fell into two types: the volatile and the vengeful. This division originated with the founder's first two apprentices, Lucinda and Apromor. After the 17th century, volatile "Lucindan" fire mages who ignored Paradox tended to blow themselves (and their allies) to bits. Today, the more careful, persevering "Apromorian" mages, who practice tactics and plot delayed revenge, dominate House Flambeau.

**Philosophy:** Flambeau preserves one of the lesser tributary streams of Hermetic thought, Persian Zoroastrianism. (In the Sleeping world, this philosophy survives among the Parsees of northern India, but Flambeau espouses an older, Westernized set of ideas, and Parsee influence on the House is negligible.) In the sharply dualistic Zoroastrian outlook, forces of good (light/fire/inspiration) struggle constantly against evil (darkness/cold/reason).

The Flambeau mage customarily adopts as his Word the name of a Persian god who embodies the mage's chosen goals: Ahuramazda, the Lord of Wisdom; the Amesha Spentas, or Immortal Holy Ones; or Atar, the genius of fire.

Through his praxis, the mage aspires to incarnate the chosen god within himself. This union with divinity represents the Flambeau's Ascension.



**Style:** Flambeau mages harness elemental spirits and the flames of Ignis (the House term for Ars Essentiae, or Forces). In their Sancta, they perform elaborate ceremonies of binding, shackling elementals in carnelian-studded rods and pendants hung with fat heliotropes. In the field, they release these forces with an eye toward coincidental effect. Exploding gas mains, malfunctioning microwave ovens and passing dynamite trucks — the best Flame mages move quickly beyond these elementary stratagems. By employing nearby objects — water heaters, paint fumes and even aerosol cans — these one-time shock troops have become devious arsonists.

Widely traveled, Flambeau members pick up elements from many magickal styles. The more exotic, the better. One Canadian Flambeau found herself plagued by a troublesome hobgoblin, a steam imp. To get rid of it, she daubed red paint on her earlobes and performed a Punjabi fire dance. She had to apply cold compresses to her steam burns for weeks afterward, but she vanquished the hobgoblin.

**Goals:** Flambeau's goals magnify the rest of the Order's: They want revenge on the Technocracy, and they want it now! During the so-called Age of Reason, Technocratic forebears hit House Flambeau first and hardest. Flambeau, whose style had until then relied on vulgar pyrotechnic displays, and whose character couldn't easily admit defeat, literally went up in flames. In 1585, Flambeau mages of Covenant Vapeur hurled themselves against the walls of The Mitternacht Construct, incinerating themselves as magickal oil spilled from ramparts and clung to their skin. Peasants mistook the burning mages for demons howling with unholy glee, and that night assaulted the remaining Flambeau in their Sancta.

The few Flambeau who survived vowed revenge on all Reason mages. Today, the House requires a solemn oath from each initiate to assist wholeheartedly in the Ascension War. Most would love to destroy the current paradigm so they can go back to using fireballs; as we know, they remain unsuccessful at present. Perhaps this is fortunate.

**Organization:** House Flambeau harbors many of the Order's most competitive mages, second only to Tytalus. To advance within one of their six major cabals, House initiates rely on frequent certamen challenges and a chauvinistic "old boy's network." Female mages have a hard time breaking the glass

ceiling on advancement — though one, Master Ananiya Divraniya, has risen to leadership of the House. She rides herd on five other recalcitrant councilors, the cabal leaders, and her fellow Primi by force of personality, wit and destructive power.

Most councilors gain office not through leadership skill, but through political pull and devastating explosions. Their headlong strategies, however, make Flambeau easy to manipulate. Since most Apromorians follow a loyal "do or die" code, other, more Machiavellian fellows find them useful weapons; hence, the nickname "Tactical Nukes." Rough and aggressive by Hermetic standards, many Flambeau mages follow their founder's example. By preference, they meet in Horizon Realms, where they can blow up houses or incinerate trees as the fancy strikes them.

**Initiation:** Personnel forwards nearly a third of all candidate apprentices to Flambeau, because the House runs through them at an appalling rate. Likely candidates are firefighters (job security!), demolition experts, soldiers and physicists.

In the initiation trial (always an individual mission), the apprentice must subvert or demolish a minor Technocratic operation. Success is measured less in annihilation than in courage, creativity and discretion. Once initiated, Flame mages tend to have brief, though spectacular, careers.



## NOTABLE FIGURES

- **William Castille (1427-1449):** Headstrong but talented Adept; he immolated himself in the Craftsmasons' ammunition store during second battle of Mistridge, causing major Reasoner casualties. Held up as an example of Flambeau dedication (among other things...).

- **Porthos Fitz-Empress (born 1410):** Archmage, leader of Drua'shi (Seekers of Truth) cabal and of Chantry Doissetep; by common consent, the most powerful Tradition mage active today.

- **Ananiya Divraniya (born 1945):** Master, leader of the House and of the Order of Sanguine Souls in Horizon, a militaristic cabal dedicated to the Technocracy's destruction. Rumored to have been a top operative in the Soviet government. Holds doctoral degrees in nuclear physics and applied mathematics. Speaks 10 languages.

- **Mack Freeman (born 1960):** Adept, young and impassioned leader of the Society of the Case-Hardened Soul cabal in Doissetep.

# HOUSE FORTUNAE

**Names:** *Fati, Fortune mages, House of Luck, Numismancers, Arithmosophists, Numerologists*

Masters of fortune in all its senses, members of House Fortuna analyze the magick of probability, luck and money. Because they travel in Sleeper society far more than most other Hermetics do, Fortune mages have become the chief recruiters of new pupils for the entire Order.

Qabbalists of Ex Miscellanea founded a Fortuna group in 1910; in the '20s, they propagated a new Pythagorean movement among Sleeper mathematicians; this project flourished for a decade, and well-respected scientists publicized the group's ideas in a series of debates. Because of this success, the Grand Tribunal of 1936 formally admitted Fortuna as a full-fledged House. Since then, the group's original Qabbalistic philosophy has broadened to encompass the esoteric aspects of advanced mathematics.

Fortuna mages don't rely on luck; they manipulate it. Probability is their business and they employ a profound understanding of quantum theory, mathematics, gematria, numismancy, arithmosophy and numerology. Though most Hermetics consider respect for Technocrats to be bad form, Fati often quote a medieval Master of Reason, Roger Bacon: "Divine mathematics can purge the intellect and fit the student for the acquisition of all knowledge."

Every Fortune mage knows that the concept of money, which reduces much of existence to crass and banal avarice, nonetheless is itself magickal. After all, money profoundly shapes every Sleeper's life, yet it does not actually exist. People accept paper (valueless in itself) for their goods and services, because they know other people will accept it too. A phantom idea transforms reality: magick! Fortuna understands the true power of money better than anyone in the Traditions — than anyone in the world, for that matter, save their bitter enemy, the Syndicate. On a practical level, it's always good to have a Fortuna friend. She'll have a wonderful talent for closing that elevator door just as a Technomancer enters the lobby, or for finding the grenade pin you just dropped in the trash can.

**Philosophy:** Qabbalists believe God has given humanity a fixed place within His celestial hierarchy, along with stewardship over a small portion of the universe: numbers. Interpreting

Talmudic and Biblical passages by word and number, these devoted scholars discern double and even triple meanings. By manipulating these findings, Qabbalists uncover still deeper meanings and peel back the mysteries of the universe, layer by layer. Ancillary mystick sciences, such as numerology and gematria (the study of divine revelation through numerical cryptographs), are their bread and butter, but new mathematics and chaos theory provide endless opportunities for study.

Many modern Fati ignore the Qabbalistic ideas that inspired the House. They find guidance in the profundities of modern mathematics: transfinite and transcendental numbers, fractals, cellular automata, high-entropy Prigoginic structures and game theory. Guided by their Avatars, math-minded Fati introspect intensely on these "hard problems," seeking proofs within the mind's reality rather than through objective testing. They learn how to make the one more precise as the other grows inaccurate; by manipulating this irreducible uncertainty, they engineer "lucky" results. When the Virtual Adepts entered the Council, this House embraced their more academic members, citing common ground, and began an open trade of respect and ideas that continues today.

**Style:** Fortune mages work with the language of numbers, and with Enochian in its numerological aspects. Carrying instruments that help them interpret symbols and calculate formulae, they move smoothly in university mixers, stock exchanges, casinos — in fact, nearly everywhere. Their good luck helps them spot likely candidates for apprenticeship; their social skills, so different from the archetypal Hermetic arrogance, help lure candidates into the Order.

**Goals:** In strategic terms, House Fortuna seeks control of public education, hoping to correct the Sleeping public's shocking innumeracy. One can hardly say they're near this goal, but they have infiltrated some research institutions. Within the Order, Fortuna plans a more aggressive recruitment of apprentices; they may soon begin liberating young students from Technocratic Constructs.

One Fortune mage (who will remain anonymous) claims his House aspires to break with the Order, form its own Tradi-



tion and take control of the Council Seat of Entropy. Fortunaes (says this mage) views the Euthanatos Tradition as an aberrant band of Nephandi-in-training who represent no authentic historical tradition (with a lower-case "t") of magick. "What are they?" he asks. "Thuggee cultists? Hashishim? Oh, please!" Despite this sentiment, some Fati befriend certain Euthanatos who seem more concerned with Fate than with body counts.

**Organization:** Fortunaes formerly practiced a rigid seniority system, a legacy of Qabbalistic practice. But a new generation of Fati Adepts, though paying lip service to the elder Masters, has introduced a *de facto* meritocracy. Those who publish the most brilliant mathematical proofs attain high status within the House. As a consequence, they acquire prestigious quarters within the House's Covenants, which almost all stand near major universities worldwide. Highly regarded Fortune mages also receive invitations to lecture at other Covenants. Celebrity among this microscopic elect does not, in itself, make one rich, but the House's mastery of fortune often does.

The older generation maintains its lines of communication through the Personnel Division and, in emergencies, through elaborate Correspondence rites. Young Fati talk over the Internet, encoding their conversations and e-mail with advanced cryptographic algorithms that baffle anyone short of a Virtual Adept.

**Initiation:** In their ceaseless search for recruits — or, rather, in their constant fortunate discovery of likely candidates — Fortunaes earmark mathematicians and physicists for their own House. As in other Houses, candidates must pass many rigorous tests of intellect and philosophy; Fortunaes is unusual in that candidates may progress at their own pace. At the end of her training, an apprentice must decipher a cryptogram that ordinarily requires years to solve. The candidate must manipulate the probability that she will guess its meaning correctly.

## NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Proclus (circa 410-485 BCE):** Proto-Fortunaes magus, born in Constantinople, educated in Alexandria and Athens; became head of Plato's Academy, 385 BCE. Controlled elementals using arithmosophy (number magick). Influenced many schools of arithmosophical thought in the centuries after his death.

- **Hassam al-Jadidi ibnu Faridi (1885-1983?):** Saudi mathematician, mage of Ex Miscellanea; founder and first Primus of Fortunaes; responsible for the rise of Neo-Pythagoreanism and the 1937 debates. Retired 1944; given to long absences at intervals thereafter; not seen since 1983, but not believed dead.

- **Stephen Landon Masters (born 1944):** Cambridge mathematician, current Fortunaes Primus.

- **Marianne Walking Cloud (born 1963):** Navajo cryptographer; combined a love of mathematics with her native language to create security codes that protect Sleeper and Hermetic institutions. Also considered an honorary Virtual Adept.



# HOUSE JANISSARY

**Names:** *Ianissari, Janissaries, Jassassins* (don't use this around them...)

The Traditions are surrounded by enemies; the Order of Hermes is, in the opinion of some, surrounded by hostile Traditions; each House tries to avoid being politically out-manuevered by rival Houses; each Covenant within a House competes for resources and for the favor of its Primus; as for the cabals within a Covenant, their relations are left as an exercise to the reader. In this atmosphere of pervasive suspicion, Hermetics place high priority on internal security. House Janissary fulfills this role with vigor, competence and more than a little paranoia.

In Sleeper histories, the original janissaries (uncapitalized) were elite guards of the Ottoman Turkish sultans. The Turks recruited most janissaries by force, seizing male children from their Christian enemies, then raising them as loyal Islamic warriors. Feared for their valor and unshakable loyalty, the janissaries eventually assumed political power within the sultans' palaces.

One of these influential guards was Dincer Albayrak; Awakening as an Orphan in his early 20s, Dincer escaped with several fellow guards and fled to his homeland. His companions became his consors, and in the following decade they traveled central Eurasia in search of other mages. Dincer found several, primarily Hermetics and Batini — the sole survivors of cabals destroyed by the Order of Reason. In 1733, these mages formally united under Dincer's leadership as the Janissaries (capitalized), a secret cabal opposed to Technocratic dominion. The group rescued others within the sultans' domains, Dincer's one-time companions, and employed them as teachers of battle tactics and military skills. The group's successes against the Order of Reason drew attention from the Traditions. After Dincer's followers defeated the Uludag Construct in Turkey (1716), the Order of Hermes extended them a formal offer of membership in Ex Miscellanea. Dincer accepted gladly, thrilled to belong to the august Tradition.

Though cunning and powerful, Dincer remained unfamiliar with Hermetic philosophy. Still, he modeled his group's organization on the Houses, and encouraged his followers to practice Hermetic ideals. To this end, he located a promising Bedouin boy, Caeron Mustai, and trained him as an apprentice. Student soon surpassed teacher. A first-class Hermetic who attained Mastery in barely a decade, Mustai became the group's leader in all but name. He masterminded several

dramatic successes against the enemy and showed political will that matched his military skill. In 1764, he succeeded in promoting his mentor's small group into the full-fledged House Janissary.

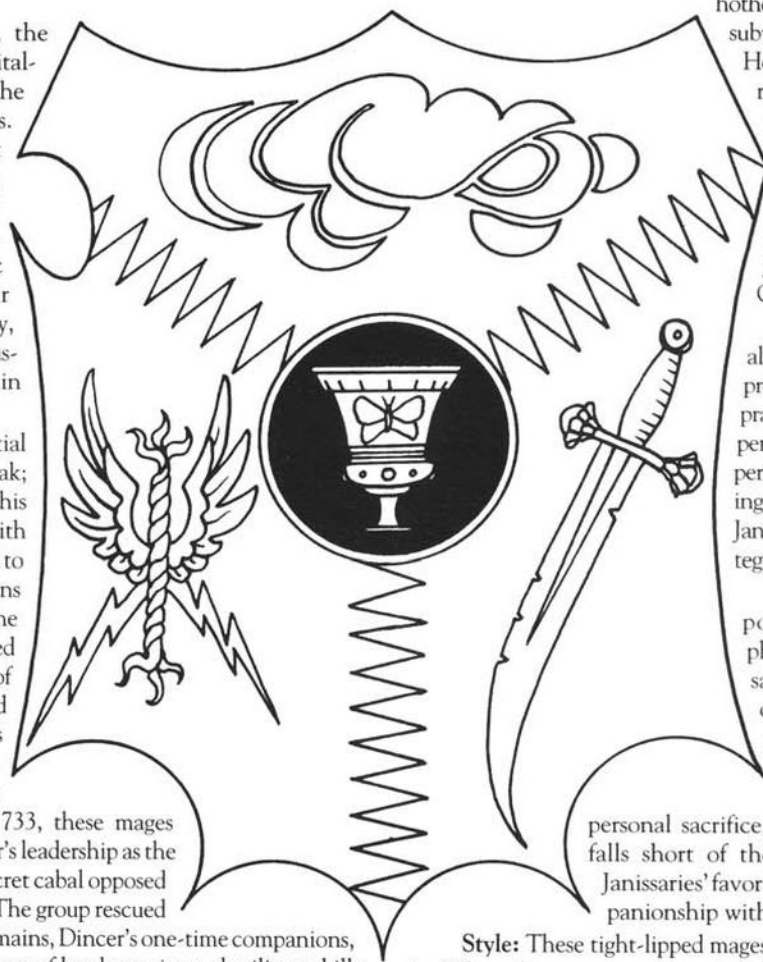
Dincer loved life as a Primus. Though he showed no interest in enlarging the House's size beyond his tiny cabal, he carried out his duties loyally and skillfully until his unexpected disappearance in 1822. Mustai took on the House's leadership unchallenged, and soon he began to change its role in the Order, cultivating friends in House Quaesitor as diligently as he tends the orchids in his Doissetep hothouses. Claiming he'd discovered subversion within the Order of Hermes, he set his followers to rooting out infiltrators. They found several, and their success was Mustai's success. Though they have never been given formal responsibilities — at least not publicly — the Janissaries have become the Order's *de facto* secret police.

**Philosophy:** Secretive in all things, the Janissaries openly profess only the necessity of safe praxis. A Hermetic who seeks to perfect herself, they say, requires a perfected environment. By rooting out spies and dissidents, the Janissaries work to protect the integrity and perfection of the Order.

Individual Janissaries espouse various personal philosophies, similar to (and, say their detractors, derivative of) Quaesitor doctrine. This outlook requires the mage to uphold the highest possible standards of discipline and personal sacrifice, and to avoid anyone who falls short of these standards. One of the Janissaries' favorite sayings: "There is no companionship with a fool."

**Style:** These tight-lipped mages prefer to conceal their abilities. What others attempt with magick, Janissaries accomplish through allies, dupes, smooth talk and their formidable reputation. When forced into open display of magickal skill, they perform it quickly and without ceremony, like an aikido master throwing an opponent. On these rare occasions, they show consummate skill with Mind, Forces and Spirit magick. It's said that Mustai himself has bound Umbrood allies to his service; the truth behind those rumors is unclear.

**Goals:** With official approval from the Quaesitors, members of House Janissary visit each Covenant in the Order. There, they follow irregular schedules, observe their quarries from a distance, then drop in for surprise revelations of "disloyalty." A Quaesitor soon arrives to hear the case and punish the offender. This... diligence... in pursuit of their duty makes Janissaries unpopular within the Order; still, their power does compel respect.



Apart from policing their peers, the Janissaries' expressed goals include toppling several NWO Regional Headquarters. In the meantime, they settle for weakening the Convention's outposts. Detractors insinuate that the Janissaries coerce Orphans and non-Hermetic Tradition mages into service as their expendable soldiers and spies. If this accusation is true, the practice (forbidden in Doissetep) would draw stern punishment from the Covenant's Deacons, and possibly even from a Tribunal.

**Organization:** In theory, the House comprises only a small cabal in Doissetep and a few anonymous free agents. Rumor, however, insists that several mages or consors in every House pledge secret fealty to this one.

Caeron Mustai leads and the rest follow: The Janissaries (at least the Doissetep cabal) are essentially a dictatorship. Outside the supreme Chantry, individual agents apparently pursue their own agendas, with advice and approval from Mustai's underlings.

**Initiation:** The Janissaries accept apprentices from secret political organizations in the Sleeping world; the length and details of the initiation process are unknown outside the House.

## NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Dincer Albayrak (1682-1822?):** Formed the Janissaries in the early 1700s. Though he never mastered the full range of Hermetic scholarship, Albayrak had tremendous magickal gifts and a potent Avatar. His command of the Art grew until the early 1800s, when he mysteriously disappeared while taking his student, Caeron Mustai, on a visit to the Regnum Essentiae.

- **Caeron Mustai (born 1785?):** Current Primus of the Janissaries. Elegant, self-aware and eternally ambitious, Mustai is a rising power within Doissetep. He occasionally expresses his disappointment at the Covenant's "lack of aggressive thinking" and wants to carry the Ascension War directly to the Technocracy.

- **Robin Herod (born 1939):** A former Verbena, Robin joined the Order two years ago. Since then, he has established himself as a consummate diplomat, especially with other Traditions.

- **Geneva Bye (born 1960):** The only other Master in the House. Her beauty, skill and ruthlessness make her useful in Mustai's many plans. Just as often, however, she seems to have plans of her own.



# HOUSE QUAESITOR

**Names:** *Quaesitors, Judges, Praetor(e)s, Magistrati, House of Judges, Ma'at* (archaic), *Bulldogs* (slang)

The Quaesitors do not actually run the Order of Hermes, but they decide who does. They cannot enact their own desires unopposed, but can prevent others from doing so. In a Tradition concerned above all with power, House Quaesitor commands one of the greatest powers: that of judgment. Magistrati are the Order's lawyers and judges, masters of the arcane codes and regulations of this most arcane Tradition. And they take that legacy seriously.

Every Hermetic Covenant falls under a Quaesitor's jurisdiction; she oversees its Tribunals, judges internal disputes and interprets the Code of Hermes. The Quaesitor does not usually reside on site, but lives within a day's journey. In emergencies, she can reach the Covenant at once using *Ars Conjunctionis*. If needed, she's both judge and executioner: Many Quaesitors command powerful destructive magicks. The dreaded *Gilgul Rite*, which shreds the victim's Avatar, is a Quaesitor invention and remains its province to dispense.

House Quaesitor's official name (never used in practice) is *Guernicus*, after the sardonic magus who founded it. When Magus Trianoma organized the Houses, *Guernicus* claimed the whole thing would soon collapse from infighting. Eventually, Trianoma convinced *Guernicus* to establish a House to enforce the Order's laws. For centuries, the House was well-respected by most, feared by others (who sometimes whispered the word "Inquisition"), but it did its job — with occasional missteps.

When House Tremere maneuvered to destroy House Dédne during the Schism War (1003-12 CE), Quaesitor rallied to the questionable side. Other accusations include the "Duresca scrolls" affair. These documents, purportedly by *Guernicus*, outlined a plan to dominate the Order and then the world. In

940, the Quaesitors (to no one's surprise) ruled that the scrolls were fraudulent and burned them. Ashamed to this day by these scandals, modern Quaesitors strive for vigilance and fairness.

**Philosophy:** Quaesitors regard the Tellurian's physical laws, Hermetic ritual and the Code of Hermes alike as manifestations of divine order. The universe is fundamentally just. The law represents an ideal attunement to the cosmos, to which imperfect mortals cleave in varying degrees. If the law changes, it reflects a change in the cosmos or a mistake by the mortals interpreting it.

**Style:** Quaesitors use *Ars Conjunctionis* to catch suspects (although they often employ Flambeau mages to do the actual dirty work) and *Ars Mentis* to read their motivations. Their instruments include blindfolds, scales (of justice), gavels, handcuffs and iron bars.

The House advises its members to avoid "entanglements" such as marriage or children; such relationships leave a mage open to blackmail or worse. Few Quaesitors keep so much as a familiar. It's a lonely lot.

To offset that loneliness, perhaps, the Judges specialize in group magick. The fearsome *Gilgul Rite*, performed by six Masters together, is their trademark. Another spell, the Oath of Truth, is a Hermetic version of the ancient *geas*. The victim must take or avoid a

stated action, on pain of death. In

1593, a Quaesitor Tribunal compelled Duke Cornelius de Houtmann to take this Oath, in punishment for destroying a Talisman belonging to the visiting Sultan of Kashan. De Houtmann was sentenced to locate the fabled Jeweled Moon of Pejeng and bring it to the Judges, who would give it to the Sultan in a public ceremony. Sailing to the Moluccas, de Houtmann found the Moon but refused to deliver it to the Quaesitors; thus, he died in agony. No one knows why he kept the Jeweled Moon, nor what became of it.

**Goals:** House Quaesitor maintains order in the Order, and roots out corruption in the Tradition — and, increasingly,



beyond it. In their vigorous search for Technocratic spies, Quaesitors often reach across the boundaries between our Order and other Traditions. Sometimes their vision blurs.

In one recent case, an unnamed initiate of House Thig, while reconnoitering an Iteration X Construct, claimed evidence of treason among the Virtual Adepts. As per protocol, the mage reported this to House Quaesitor. That same protocol required the Judges to pass along the evidence to their contact among the Adepts. Ensuing events vary according to the source, but all agree that a Praetor of House Quaesitor and a strike team of Flambeau mages were present when the studio apartment belonging to Virtual Adept Bowzer Wowzer burned down. Wowzer (who was later cleared of all charges) challenged the Quaesitor to a flame war in the Digital Web; the Judge issued a certámen challenge in response. The entire issue of cross-Tradition justice promises to make the next Grand Tribunal... interesting.

**Organization:** The House recognizes three grades of seniority. Initiates hold the position of *Quaesitor*; each administers one or more Covenants. Members of Adept degree are formally known as *Praetors*; they usually oversee three or four Quaesitors. Seven *Magistrati* serve as the House's Supreme Tribunal and court of last appeal for all Quaesitor verdicts. When a Seat on this Tribunal opens, the Praetors elect a new Magistratus from their number.

The principal Quaesitor Covenant is a courthouse in Stuttgart, Germany. There the Magistrati meet monthly to resolve House business, swear in initiates, and execute capital sentences.

**Initiation:** The House recruits apprentices from the mundane legal system. The ideal candidate shows profound insight, studious habits and a talent for well-founded decisions.

Apprentices usually train and study Hermetic law for seven years. For the centuries-old test of initiation, "The Gavel," the student is locked in an airtight room for three days with law books but without food or water. There, she must answer 100 essay questions describing hypothetical situations of ambiguous morality. A Praetor judges all essays. Students who miss even one question must train for another year. Students who answer all questions adequately become initiates and begin learning the House's famed (and feared) group rituals.

### NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Guernicus (730-1066):** Founder of the Quaesitors and discoverer of Gilgul.

- **Parethis of Ephesus (?-1736):** 18th-century Quaesitor martyr who provided crucial information to the Council of Nine in 1736, leading to the unseating of the Janissaries in Horizon. Unpopular with the Janissaries upon their return, Parethis died mysteriously a few months later.

- **Louis DuMonte (1400-1470):** Representative to the First Cabal; though he opposed uniting all Houses into a single Order, Master DuMonte provided an even hand for his companions. Killed while fighting at Narbonne.

- **Anna "Annie Sisyphus" Hardwyck (born 1963):** Crusader leading the movement to update Hermetic codes into a more modern format and interpretation.

# HOUSE SHAEA

**Names:** Shaea, Serket, Sesmu, Seshati, House of Seshat, House of the Crescent Moon

Both the youngest and oldest House, Shaea embraces many opposites. Its history stretches back to the ancient Thothian cult. In the Order, the cult's founder, Djhowtey, gets all the attention, but an equally interesting offshoot was long ignored: the Cult of Seshat, wife of Djhowtey and goddess of writing. Two thousand years before the Common Era, Kemit literature venerated her as "She who is Foremost in the House of Books." Today her House, composed mainly of women, continues her mission.

The Seshati fulfill a neglected but vital (and subtly powerful) function: They are the Order's historians, the guardians of writing as magick, Logos, creation, civilization and knowledge. Fluent in all major languages, living and dead, in all dialects, in all scripts, they keep records, make books, bind scrolls. Most important, the Seshati master our Order's secret language: Enochian.

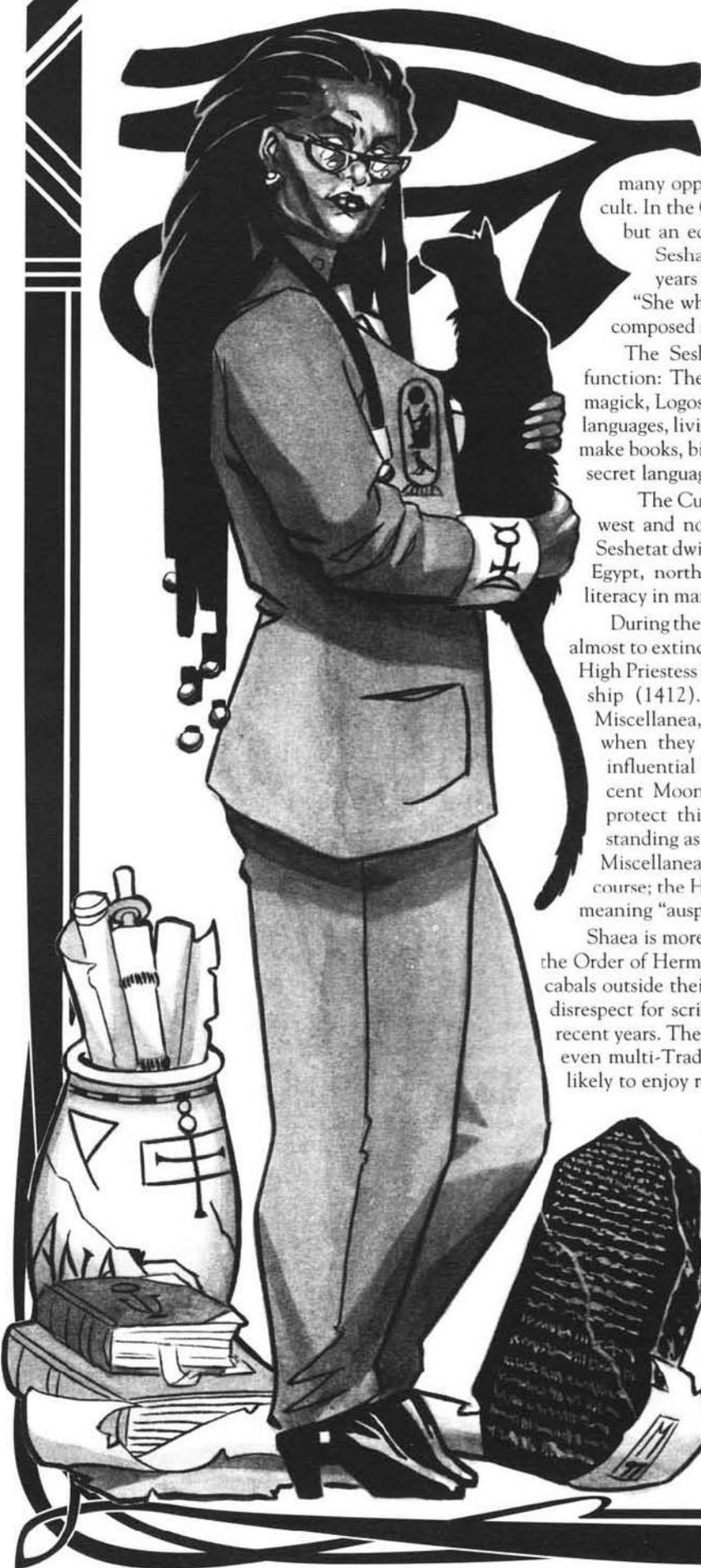
The Cult of Seshat grew into a religion called *Seshetat* that spread west and northwest from ancient Egypt. After Christianity arrived, *Seshetat* dwindled into an arcane mystical order, the Seshati, based in Egypt, northern Africa and Turkey. In later centuries, they taught literacy in many different cultures and wrote influential occult histories.

During the Crusades and later witch trials, the Seshati were persecuted almost to extinction by Christians and Muslims alike. Seeking protection, High Priestess Fatima Baijani of Sesmu petitioned the Order for membership (1412). The Council granted the Seshati protection in Ex Miscellanea, but the relationship was notably standoffish until 1982, when they finally decided to break away from the Order. Many influential Hermetics, however, had grown dependent on the Crescent Moon for its linguistic expertise and historical research. To protect this resource, the Order formally offered the Seshati full standing as a House, a move which angered many other Houses in Ex Miscellanea and remains a sore point today. The Seshati accepted, of course; the House name, Shaea, derives from an ancient Egyptian term meaning "auspice."

Shaea is more mystical and secretive than many other Houses, and in the Order of Hermes that says a lot. Historically, Seshati have rarely joined cabals outside their own tight-knit group. This insularity, fueled by outside disrespect for scribes in general and women in particular, has subsided in recent years. These days, adventurous Shaea initiates join multi-House and even multi-Tradition cabals, supposedly to gather information, but more likely to enjoy respite from study.

**Philosophy:** The Shaea value many polarities: intuition and reason, impermanence and permanence, the passive and the powerfully aggressive. To a Seshati, the only way to understand the Tellurian's polarities is to understand herself as part of them, as a link that she can follow up the chain of power to the gods. Thus, a Seshati's Name is a derivative of one of God's many names; only the Ascended, as they say, know *all* of God's true Names.

**Style:** With its ancient Egyptian flavor, the magick of House Seshat emphasizes naming and incantations, usually spoken in Pharaonic Egyptian or Enochian. A language mage's Word describes herself, the essence of her Avatar. It becomes her Name, or one of them; with experience, she discovers other Names, from which



she derives magickal power. As the god Khepera relates in the *Papyrus of Nesi-Amsu*, "I uttered my own Name... and thus I evolved myself out of the primeval matter."

Shaea occasionally bind evil (which they may name Tutu, Apep, Hau-hra, Hemhemti, Qetu, Amam, Saatetta, or Sekhem-hra) to have it serve good. Sometimes they inscribe the air with glowing hieroglyphics, or scribble a name on a small piece of vellum and swallow it, making the name a part of them. Young Seshati also rely heavily on amulets inscribed with protective honorifics in many languages. They're well-known for their affinity with cats, and keep old pacts with the Bubasti Bastet. On auspicious occasions, when the moon and stars are correctly aligned, the Seshati perform magickal ceremonies led by their High Priestess. These ceremonies may involve protection, aggression, initiation or even fertility. Some rites summon the Avatar of Seshat herself, which supposedly appears a black panther with glowing eyes, or as a huge falcon.

**Goals:** For centuries, the Shaea have hated the Technocracy, which they refer to as *Apep*, after the Egyptian monster. In the Seshati view, Technocrats have failed to pass on the wonders of education, substituting laziness for learning. To counter Apep, these mages encourage school reform or teach Sleepers themselves, opening their eyes to the magick — and the power — of learning. Along the way, they've undermined Technocratic efforts in the National Educational Bureau in Washington and London's Bureau of Educational Reform by exposing scandals — real and invented — among the NWO "reeducators" stationed there.

**Organization:** The High Priestess — currently Archmage Maraksha Kashaf — guards the inner Sanctum of the House of Books (called the Hall of Khese-f-hra-khemiu), offers counsel and leads major ceremonies. The Keepers, a rotating group of elders, test the High Priestess every week for signs of corruption; it's vital that she remain loyal to Shaea, for she protects the

sacred genealogies. In turn, the House meets once a month to test the Elder Council.

Within this small House, attitudes toward more inexperienced mages are very open — a point that other Houses might do well to note. Elder mages listen to younger mages attentively and carry their concerns to council meetings with the High Priestess.

**Initiation:** Shaea are usually female scholars of language, the written arts and Egyptian lore. Apprenticeship lasts years, as would-be mages learn Enochian and at least seven other languages (usually Arabic, Egyptian, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Sanskrit and Farsi). Recruits

learn about Seshat, Egypt, bookbinding, preservation and so forth, and mark initiation by composing a personal Book of Names, lists of Names useful in controlling people and things. To outsiders, these mages seem sedate and worthless; as any Hermetic knows, however, one dares never underestimate the holder of a Name....

## NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Isis Samshen (birth and death unknown):** Legendary mystick, founder of the Shaea circa 3500 BCE; her name means "Isis of Eternal Unity."

- **Donatia of Alexandria (368-389):** Sleeper martyr venerated in House histories, consort to the Seshati in Alexandria; burnt alive while heroically rescuing scrolls from the burning Library.

- **Maraksha Kashaf (born 1820?):** Founder of the modern Shaea. Over 170 years old, Kashaf knows 26 languages, has 14 daughters (some on the Elder Council) and has twice prevented "Apep" from destroying the House of Books.

- **Lucian Dark (born 1952?):** Noted scholar; his works on the Verbena, Dreamspeakers and Otherworlds have become standard reference within the Order.



# HOUSE THIG

**Names:** *Thigs, Crucible of Thig, The Children, Hitler Youth* (derogatory)

A young House of techno-Hermetics who channel their Art through modern technology, Thig has rather unexpectedly become the Order's intelligence agency. Though these Ruby Children (so named for their principal cabal) lack raw strength, they have an uncanny ability to divine the Technocracy's goals and movements which makes them invaluable spies... and, unfortunately, objects of suspicion within the Order.

Based in Manchester, England, Thig originated in 1762, founded by Joseph Ryelander, an Adept-level Orphan. After 42 years leading a Sleeper mystery sect based on Hermetic theory, Ryelander applied for membership in the Order under the name "The Ruby Children." At this point, his group comprised only a tiny cabal of occult-oriented Orphans petitioning for protection. The Council stuffed them into Ex Miscellanea and immediately forgot about them.

Over the next century, Ryelander founded two similar cabals, one (Emerald Children) in Providence, Rhode Island, the other (Diamond Children) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The "Children" motif refers to Ryelander's belief that all magicians are children tinkering with the works of God. During the occult revival in late 19th-Century America, both cabals spawned Sleeper chapters that crept gradually across the country.

Meanwhile, the Ruby Children risked themselves on reconnaissance and sabotage missions for their allies the Janissaries — and waded into deep political waters. In 1846, after the Children had uncovered or damaged a dozen covert Technocratic operations, Master Caeron Mustai, bani Janissary, spoke eloquently in their favor at the Grand Tribunal. Thanks to his weighty political support, the Council granted Ryelander's three cabals full recognition as House Thig, an Enochian name that means both "children" and "vengeance." The move sparked outrage among other Ex Miscellanea mages, as House Shaea's promotion would a century later; Thig laid low and waited for their critics to forget.

By the time Ryelander split with his own House in 1877, Thig had lost both American cabals to enemy attacks. The original Ruby Children retreated to Doissetep under the Janissaries' protective wing and became the Order's spies and underground messengers, a role that continues to this day. While reestablishing their lost mystery sects across the United States, the inquisitive Children befriended the early Sons of Ether and Virtual Adepts. When both groups eventually defected, Thig swept Janissary (and later Fortuna) behind the

new Traditions. This move guaranteed House Thig a new lease on life — and the endless gratitude of the Etherites and Adepts. With it, the Children cemented their place as the Hermetic masters of technomagick... a place that grows more valuable each day.

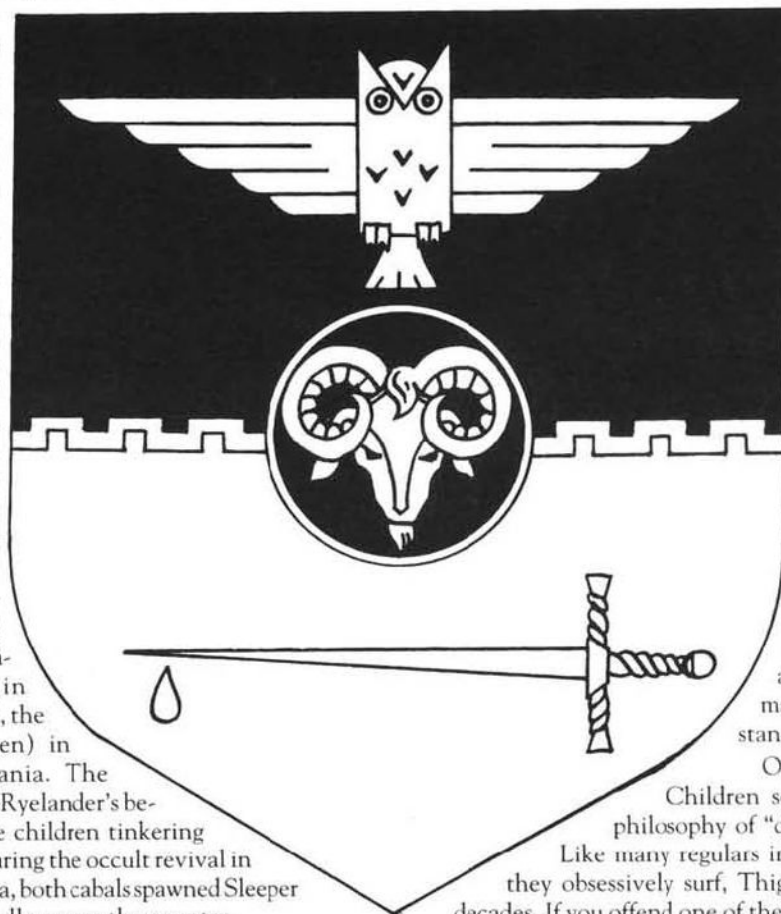
**Philosophy:** Thigs channel their Arts through modern technology; however, as befits Hermetic doctrine, the Children are less interested in the scientific principles behind these devices than in technology's symbolic role in human society — a significance few Virtual mages or Etherites understand.

On a mundane level, the Children seem to practice a social philosophy of "don't get mad, get even."

Like many regulars in the Usenet newsgroups they obsessively surf, Thigs can carry a grudge for decades. If you offend one of them, be sure that somehow, sooner or later, he'll get you.

**Style:** Thig magick uses low-level Hermetic formulae, the sort to which the Order of the Golden Dawn aspired. The Children, however, recast these routine workings in modern garb, revealing their deep understanding (and subversion) of Technocratic society. Older Houses still cast magick of Earth, Air, Water and Fire; Thigs prefer the world's modern elements: Cars, Concepts, Plastic and Television.

This understanding isn't merely academic; Thigs understand modern elemental spirits in ways few shamans comprehend. The pacts they've forged with Glass, Steel and Net spirits enable them to keep ties on troublesome rivals —



including, it is said, Hermetic ones. Combining ageless symbols with modern machines, the Children study Artes Mentis and Essentiae like their Janissary counterparts but give old Arts bewildering new directions. Most Thigs find occultism (both real lore and the diluted Sleeper versions) fascinating; the House as a whole maintains a network of Sleeper sects with which it trades mystical secrets.

**Goals:** Thig's known goals include gaining a seat among the Deacons of Doissetep; the House's young leaders will have to grow peach fuzz first. Adamant enemies of the Technocracy, the Children focus their vengeful hatred on the Technocratic Construct ComNet International (based in Burlington, MA, with offices in London). The source of their grudge is unclear, but seems to involve Avatar experiments on unwilling victims.

**Organization:** United as they may seem united, Thigs do not operate unanimously. Strong political undercurrents — often generated by House Janissary, the Etherites or Virtual Adepts — tug various cliques this way, then that. These cliques form goals by default rather than by decision. A leader emerges — usually whoever's "coolest," knows the most Janissaries, can recite the most Paracelsus, and has the best complexion. (Unlike the Hollow Ones, Thigs don't fancy themselves tragically hip; rather, they're "nerdy," studious and maniacally focused on learning new magick.) The leader voices his opinion, and the rest of the cabal supports him by default. Note, though, that leadership sometimes changes almost month to month.

The current head of Doissetep's Ruby Children cabal is an uneasy youth named Altimeas Cowling. A recent split left Sharad Osei, formerly of the Ruby Children, leader of the revived Emerald Children in Providence, while Beulah Frith left the House to restart the Diamonds in Pennsylvania.

**Initiation:** Thig finds its initiates primarily among Janissary rejects and Technocracy shock patients who Awoke during treatment. All three cabals admit other Tradition mages, so long as the applicants renounce all previous affiliations.

Thig initiates study vigorously to keep up with their peers. It's considered "uncool" not to know the latest occult theories and predictions. After an unspecified time — highly dependent upon the candidate's sponsor — the candidate undertakes a mission to steal information from a well-guarded Technocratic site. Candidates become initiates if they complete the mission without compromising the secrecy of the Crucible.

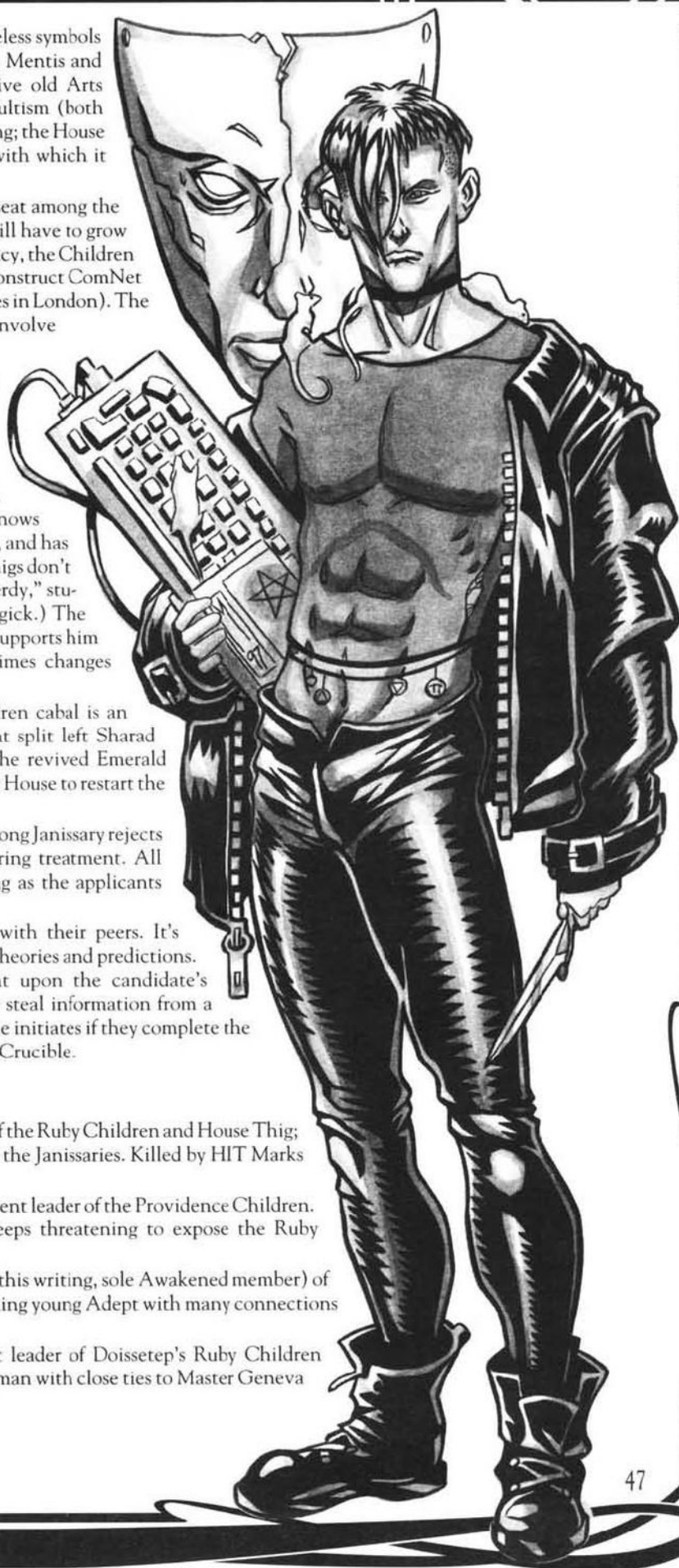
## NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Joseph Ryelander (1736-1954):** Founder of the Ruby Children and House Thig; later disavowed connections with Thig and joined the Janissaries. Killed by HIT Marks in October, 1954.

- **Sharad Osei (born 1965):** Charismatic current leader of the Providence Children. Some predict he'll soon be assassinated if he keeps threatening to expose the Ruby Children's activities in Doissetep.

- **Beulah Frith (born 1969):** Leader (and, at this writing, sole Awakened member) of Philadelphia's Diamond Children. Secretive, cunning young Adept with many connections among America's minority underclass.

- **Altimeas Cowling (born 1979):** Current leader of Doissetep's Ruby Children cabal. Tightly wound, notoriously vengeful young man with close ties to Master Geneva Bye, bani Janissary.



# HOUSE TYTALUS

**Names:** *Tytalans, Tytali, Followers of Tytalus, Generals, Majordomos, Caesars* (slang), *Red Breeches* (origin obscure)

The most aggressive magus in Mythic Europe, Master Tytalus issued certámen challenges against nearly every willworker he met. He believed in a form of magickal evolution whereby the mage adapts and grows by facing challenges. To an extent, Tytalus's evolutionary theory has influenced the entire Order, but it rules unchallenged (so to speak) in the House that bears his name. Through constant struggle, mages of House Tytalus grow tough and alert, honing their considerable gifts for strategic thinking. These qualities have made the Tytali the natural generals of the Order, the masterminds of our Tradition's war against the Technocracy.

This favor is a recent thing; in the past, Tytali were mainly trouble-makers. In the 10th century, the Order discovered that the Prima and two other leaders of House Tytalus (along with numerous followers) practiced diabolism. The leaders were burned at the stake, and the rest were officially Renounced. That stigma pains them even today; Hermetics don't speak of Tytalan diabolism unless they want a certámen challenge. Another scandal links Tytalus with the *massasa* (vampires) of Tremere. This House opposed Tremere's Interdiction, and opened itself to suspicion by doing so. Master Baldrick LaSalle, founder of the Council to which we belong, resisted this trend, but wound up despised as a "weakling" by many fellows of his House, who preferred more warlike ways.

This situation prevailed until Victorian times. Then Master Aram Marangoudakis, a young Tytalan leader — very nearly the last young leader the House has seen — persuaded his House to refocus. (Given the Tytalan culture, one may guess his method of "persuasion.") Marangoudakis, a Greek captain before his Awakening, reinterpreted Tytalan doctrine to emphasize challenges not against one's peers, but against the enemy. Given the rise of the Order of Reason, his fellow Tytali agreed. Since then, military strategy has provided them with a focus; their cunning victories saved the

House from dissolution. Today, Tytalus courage and stratagems have won the wary favor of the other Houses.

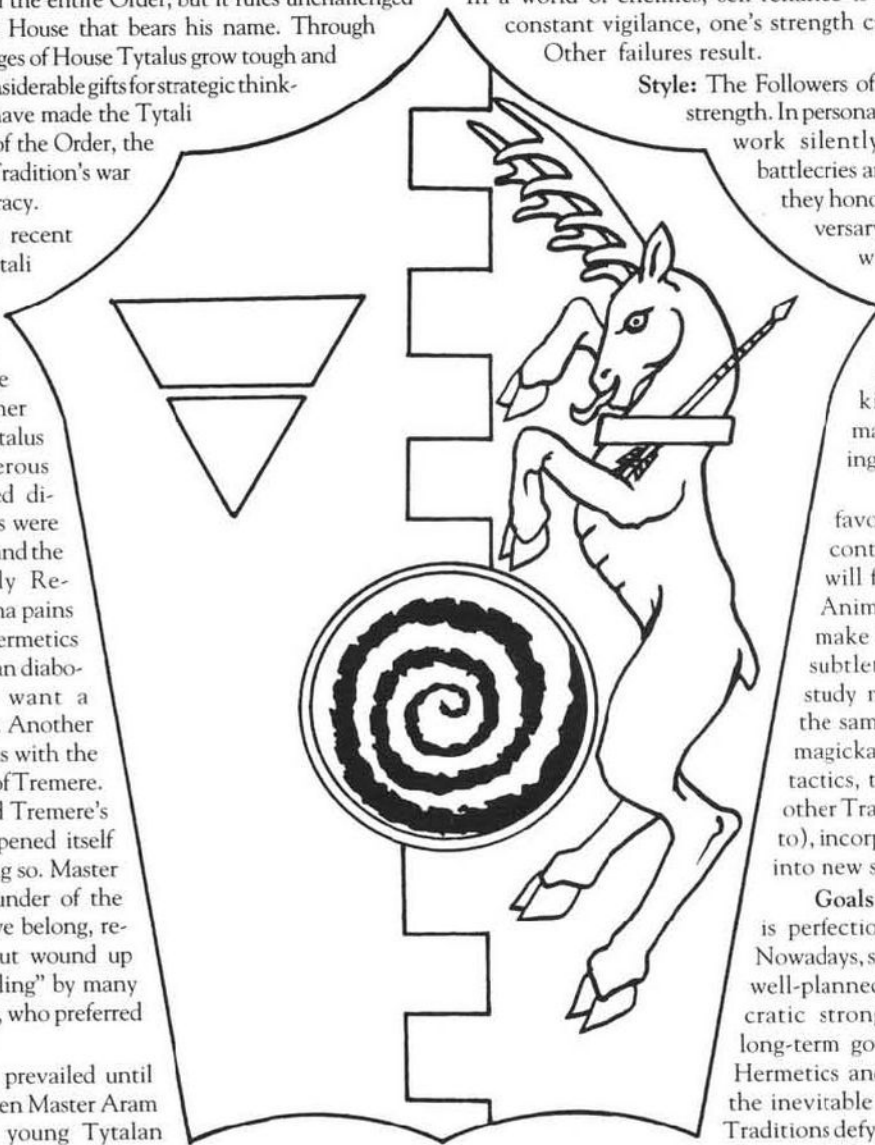
**Philosophy:** Tytalan doctrine has evolved toward that of the Sleeper philosopher-madman, Friedrich Nietzsche: "That which does not destroy me makes me stronger." Personal Ascension comes only through relentless effort and discipline. In a world of enemies, self-reliance is paramount. Without constant vigilance, one's strength can falter at any time. Other failures result.

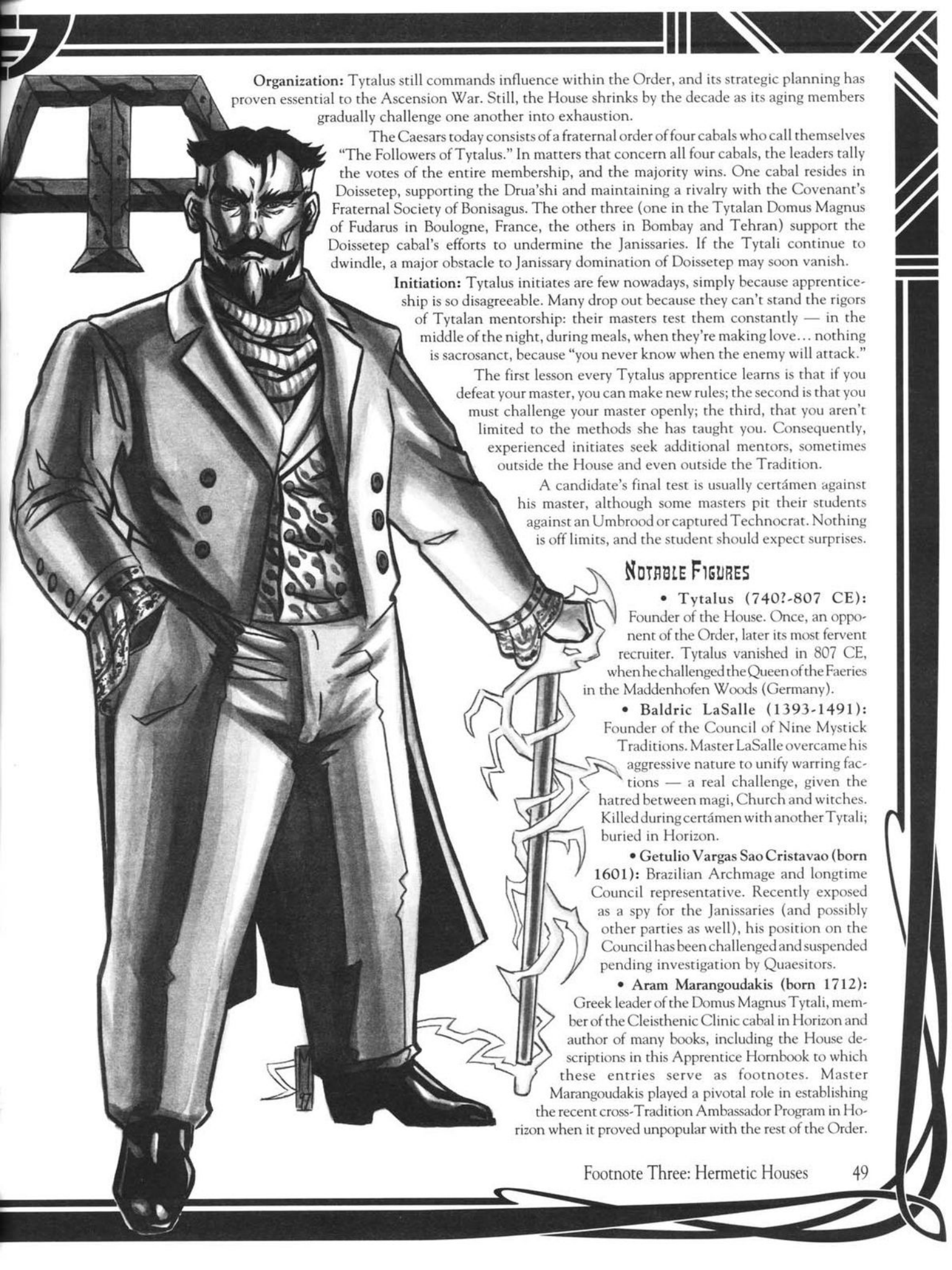
**Style:** The Followers of Tytalus rely on inner strength. In personal combat, they prefer to work silently. Loud chants and battlecries are not for them; rather, they honorably challenge an adversary, flood his thoughts with *Ars Mentis*, then move in physically, shapechanging to grow claws, wings and the like. Tytali favor all kinds of Hermetic magicks, but avoid dealing with spirits.

*Ars Mentis* is Tytalis' favored Art; if they can control the mind, all else will follow. Naturally, Vis, Anima and *Essentia* magicks make good backups when subtlety fails. Most Tytali study military doctrine with the same fervor they bring to magickal study. To learn new tactics, they mix freely among other Traditions (when allowed to), incorporating their methods into new strategies.

**Goals:** The main Tytali goal is perfection through challenge. Nowadays, such challenges involve well-planned assaults on Technocratic strongholds. The House's long-term goal is to prepare other Hermetics and Tradition mages for the inevitable Reckoning, when the Traditions defy the Technocracy (and other rivals) in open combat.

Perhaps this explains why Tytali still associate with *massasa*. Every Hermetic knows the powers of vampiric blood; to a Tytalan, an alliance with the *massasa* provides vital resources. Or perhaps the *massasa* just give them a good challenge. In any case, some Tytalans make open cases for renewed ties with House Tremere. At the moment, such speeches do the House more harm than good.





**Organization:** Tytalus still commands influence within the Order, and its strategic planning has proven essential to the Ascension War. Still, the House shrinks by the decade as its aging members gradually challenge one another into exhaustion.

The Caesars today consists of a fraternal order of four cabals who call themselves "The Followers of Tytalus." In matters that concern all four cabals, the leaders tally the votes of the entire membership, and the majority wins. One cabal resides in Doissetep, supporting the Drua'shi and maintaining a rivalry with the Covenant's Fraternal Society of Bonisagus. The other three (one in the Tytalan Domus Magnus of Fudarus in Boulogne, France, the others in Bombay and Tehran) support the Doissetep cabal's efforts to undermine the Janissaries. If the Tytali continue to dwindle, a major obstacle to Janissary domination of Doissetep may soon vanish.

**Initiation:** Tytalus initiates are few nowadays, simply because apprenticeship is so disagreeable. Many drop out because they can't stand the rigors of Tytalan mentorship: their masters test them constantly — in the middle of the night, during meals, when they're making love... nothing is sacrosanct, because "you never know when the enemy will attack."

The first lesson every Tytalus apprentice learns is that if you defeat your master, you can make new rules; the second is that you must challenge your master openly; the third, that you aren't limited to the methods she has taught you. Consequently, experienced initiates seek additional mentors, sometimes outside the House and even outside the Tradition.

A candidate's final test is usually certámen against his master, although some masters pit their students against an Umbrood or captured Technocrat. Nothing is off limits, and the student should expect surprises.

### NOTABLE FIGURES

- **Tytalus (740?-807 CE):** Founder of the House. Once, an opponent of the Order, later its most fervent recruiter. Tytalus vanished in 807 CE, when he challenged the Queen of the Faeries in the Madsenhofen Woods (Germany).

- **Baldric LaSalle (1393-1491):** Founder of the Council of Nine Mystick Traditions. Master LaSalle overcame his aggressive nature to unify warring factions — a real challenge, given the hatred between magi, Church and witches. Killed during certámen with another Tytali; buried in Horizon.

- **Getulio Vargas Sao Cristavao (born 1601):** Brazilian Archmage and longtime Council representative. Recently exposed as a spy for the Janissaries (and possibly other parties as well), his position on the Council has been challenged and suspended pending investigation by Quaesitors.

- **Aram Marangoudakis (born 1712):** Greek leader of the Domus Magnus Tytali, member of the Cleisthenic Clinic cabal in Horizon and author of many books, including the House descriptions in this Apprentice Hornbook to which these entries serve as footnotes. Master Marangoudakis played a pivotal role in establishing the recent cross-Tradition Ambassador Program in Horizon when it proved unpopular with the rest of the Order.



# FOOTNOTE 4: CONJUNCTIONES EXTERNAE

*Use your mind to its full extent and rise from the Earth to Heaven, and then again descend to Earth and combine the powers of what is above and what is below. Thus you will win glory in the whole world, and obscurity will leave you at once.*

— Eighth Precept of Hermes Tresmegistus



Is the *Apprentice Hornbook* an ideal opportunity to present a comprehensive survey of notable mages of other Traditions and the Technocracy, along with extensive descriptions of all currently active Marauders and known Nephandi? You may decide that for yourself after investigating the 1,564 dossiers in Section 4.

Some will rightly admire the Personnel Division's thorough work, yet consider it better suited for occasional reference than for close study. For those students, I offer this brief conspectus on our connections within and outside the magickal community.

## THE COUNCIL OF NINE MYSTICK TRADITIONS

To say that our Order coexists in relative amity with our allied willworkers unfortunately strains the truth. We joined with the other eight Traditions to fight our common enemy; yet, on the whole, we have never gone beyond mere expediency to create genuine unity. This task falls to you, the new generation.

Historically, our Order has preferred to approach outsiders — both potential allies and sworn enemies — from a position of strength. This practice is obviously wise, but note that “strength” should not imply “disdain.” Too many Hermetics think it does, and have thereby soured our relations with valuable compatriots.

In part, we have good reason to be proud: We remember the Celestial Chorus' treacherous complicity with the Inquisition. Likewise, the Verbena censure us, while we disdain their bloodthirsty ways. As for the Cultists of Ecstasy, we remember the example of Crowley. Though not without enlightenment or skill, such mages lack control of the magicks they unleash.

That said, we have no reason to flaunt our differences with other Council mages — no reason save vanity. Only vanity can justify the loud pronouncements our College instructors make about (for instance) the Dreamspeakers: “Playing in the dirt with spirits does not make a mage!” When their students parrot this opinion to some unoffending shaman... well, we can recall Master Sao Cristavao's 1756 insult and its consequences for an apt example (ref: *Horizon, Dreamspeakers*). Need we alienate

one who may lack scholarship, but who could introduce our members to a dozen Umbrood Preceptors? I think not.

Likewise, any mention around the Covenant of the Virtual Adepts or the Sons of Ether soon leads to that pervasive phrase, "the stink of the Technocracy." This hostile attitude has the stink of short-sighted arrogance. The Order supported the admission of these techno-sorcerers to the Council, and both parties have proven themselves well against our enemies. The Adepts are certainly insolent and the Etherites eccentric, but in this age, we cannot afford to show distaste for fellow warriors.

Nor can doctrinal differences justify rudeness. Our closest compatriots, the Akashic Brothers, though profound scholars of Mens, deny the mage's duty to impose his will upon the world and enact change. Nevertheless, we admire their discipline and focus, and we lose nothing by indicating this.

In the years to come, we must seek more common ground with other Traditions. We have the responsibility to rebuild the universe. With the task so large, spurning friendship with those who share our goals would be folly.

## UMBROOD

The entities we often call "gods," "demons," "angels" or "spirits" belong to the vast family of ephemeral Umbrood, the source of the mystical Enochian language. Those of us with religious leanings see these spirits as servants of God, expressions of the Great Architect's will. We comprehend such entities well and, with the magick called *theurgia*, we command them. We know the secret names of the gods, and we are not afraid to use them if need be.

Our Order propounded the Umbrood titles — Lord, Minion, Preceptor, and so forth. Of all our kind, we are the ones most qualified to command these potent "forces" of the Tellurian. Note, though, that in so doing, we expose ourselves to unadulterated power. Therefore, exercise caution in all your workings with the Umbrood: *Ars Manium* specifies precise manners of summoning, addressing and commanding the spirits, and preserves exacting rituals for binding or banishing them when necessary.

Communion with the Umbrood Lords is a necessity of our craft. Because they represent the spiritual manifestation of the so-called Sphere of Forces, these beings constitute a vital phase in the mastery of *Ars Essentiae*. In touching them, we touch the essence of reality. Those we can command, we do. Those who require recompense, we offer conduits into the material world and vessels to inhabit as familiars. Such dealings carry ever-present danger, yet offer rewards beyond riches. It is a legacy of our natures to impose our wills upon the "gods."

## NEPHANDI AND MARAUDERS

Sooner or later, apprentices learn of former Hermetics who indulged in necromancy and thereupon joined the ranks of the Nephandi. Foul perverters of our sacred rituals, these *barabbi* created the Black Masses, demonic orgies and human sacrifices that led to persecution of all magicians. The Fallen work best within foul Sleeper cults; the un-Awakened cannot distinguish between warped Nephandic practices and our own respectful workings. Turncoats of our Order seek to substitute their own infernal design in place of our Great Work, and leave more

responsible mages to die in their place. Shun their company if you would prosper.

Less foul but by no means fair, the irreconcilably insane mages known as *Marauders* pose a constant (though unpredictable) threat. These undisciplined adolescents give the Technocracy an excuse to exist, and for that, if nothing else, the *Marauders* deserve contempt and extermination.

## THE UNDEAD AND UNDSING

Our Order treats but peripherally those whose existence hovers on the border between life and death. I refer to *massasa* (vampires), their ghoulish servants and other undead such as ghosts. In general, the Order has higher priorities than delving into the affairs of the undead, near-dead and recurring dead. Though Hermetic necromancy has largely died out (so to speak), the *Corrigenda* still restrict the summoning of undead into a Covenant; more than one Tribunal has equated such activities with diabolism. Leave such pastimes to the Thanatoic Ones.

Although some among our number (see Footnote 3) make lapdogs of the so-called Kindred, I cannot see the wisdom in such sport. While some vampires (ref: *Sabbat*) are more unpredictable than others (ref: *Camarilla*), all of them are predators. The best simply seek to reconcile themselves with that fact and pick their targets well. Those apprentices drawn to the undeniable glamour of the undead should remind themselves of House Tremere. In seeking a shortcut to perfection, these mages found perdition. Some few in House Tylalus suggest reinstating these vipers into our Order, but the screams of Tremere's shredded Avatar still resound through our community. Walk ye careful in the night.

## CHANGING BREEDS AND FAIR FOLK

These remnants of the Mythic Age have proved astonishingly durable despite the current scientific paradigm. While the Bubasti catfolk make eager allies, their eyes are ever open to new, exciting toys. As for the lupine folk (ref: *Garou*), they're best avoided — Curiosities, certainly, allies, never. In times past, some unwary Tradition mages have alienated packs of were-creatures by plundering their powerful reserves of Quintessence (ref: *caerns*). After summary investigations and negotiations, our Order officially frowns on the practice.

Similarly, contact with the fair folk — highly magickal but fickle creatures — is best left to the Merinita researchers of House Ex Miscellanea. For many of us, the Fragile Ones are best studied from a distance. The olde faeries of classical lore have been replaced by banalities of science and concealment; their new shells crumble under close scrutiny, and there's little enough magick as it is. Some Merinita romantics exchange Hermetic secrets for faerie lore, but this trade is a dubious and possibly hazardous practice. Even Fragile Ones have hidden strengths. Curiosity is the flame that blazes the path to perfection, but the wise mage deals carefully, or not at all, with the fae.

## THE TECHNOCRATIC UNION

The descendants of the Order of Reason directly oppose magick in general and Hermetics in particular. These paradigmatic monopolists have assaulted our Order and its allies for

nearly a millennium. Although their hold appears to be slipping, they may, like a mad tyrant, strangle us all before they're through.

When the Order of Hermes isolated and identified the idea of consensual reality during the High Mythic Age, we consciously adopted archetypal imagery, thereby giving form and power to our vision of Ascension. The dictators who now style themselves the "Technocracy" (implying rule by technology), learned our lesson too well, and popularized a scientific paradigm so directly opposed to the Order's that no reconciliation is possible.

For us, the practice of magick perfects the being, thus leading the way to Ascension — the Great Work that lies at the core of our Order. Just as the alchemist must first perfect himself before he may transmute base lead into gold, so must the individual mage ennoble himself before trying to lead Sleeping humanity out of its ignorance. By redefining physical and spiritual reality — and thereby murdering magick — the Technocracy prevents us from taking the crucial initial steps to this goal. Under its thumb, humanity will never Ascend. Their Great Work remains forever flawed.

## OTHER GROUPS

Our Tradition maintains a tenuous connection to a society of Sleeper occultists known collectively as the *Arcanum*. With our covert aid, this small organization pursues what it calls the "rediscovery of magic (sic) and the pursuit of knowledge of the supernatural world." In so doing, it serves as our watchdog, for these unwitting researchers attract Technocratic attention, offering us ample warning of enemy movements. This *Arcanum* also serves as a touchstone for the Sleepers' attitudes toward magickal ideas. Occasionally, our Order offers their researchers a crumb of true knowledge (part of an entire loaf of misinformation), then track its reception in mundane society. In this way, we gauge our efforts to regain lost ground.

On the other hand, we can ill afford to toy with the self-styled inheritors of the medieval Inquisition: the "Society of Leopold" and its various offshoots. Although several of us have attempted reconciliation with these narrow-minded zealots, our efforts have met with outright refusal — or worse. The Order advises extreme caution toward and discreet avoidance of these dangerous, misguided individuals. Their faith, as we have found, provides protection against mystick Arts — even our own.

## SLEEPERS

In our preoccupation with the greater task of self-perfection (not to mention survival), we sometimes neglect our duties toward the masses of un-Awakened humanity. Yet the Great Work encompasses all creation. Unless all of us Ascend, no one truly achieves perfection of spirit; yet only by our doing so can we build the City of Pymander, our vision of a free and united world.

Humanity relies on our direction and leadership, especially in these times of enforced spiritual sterility. Each of us once Slept; have we no compassion toward those who still fear a world beyond their comprehension? It falls to us, then, to nurture and protect Sleepers when we can. In due time they, too, can Awaken.





# APPENDIX: ARS MAGICA ET MISCELLANEA

*This is why I am called "Thrice Greatest Hermes," for I possess  
the three parts of cosmic philosophy.*

— Twelfth Precept of Hermes Trismegistus



In *Mage*, the Houses of Hermes epitomize the learned magician. Their complex theories, arcane secrets and elaborate pacts plumb the human experience, looking for meaning in each drop of dew. Hermetics are the classical wizards: the John Dees, Solomons, Merlins, Morgannas and Faustus. They're dangerous, majestic and very, very wise.

Hermetic mages have class; they are, to a fault, meticulous, well-educated, haughty and

verbose. They've got tremendous powers at their fingertips, and have a real attitude about it, too. To outsiders, the Hermetics seem arrogant. The Hermetics themselves agree — after all, they've earned the right to be exclusive!

In the Order, challenge is a mark of distinction; survival depends on quick wits, a sharp mind, good fortune and connections. Each mage in this Tradition has endured hellish exams, brutal Apprenticeships, labyrinthine politicking and endless lessons to master the *Ars Arcana*. "When you have done what I have done," one might say, "then I will treat you as an equal."

## ARS HERMETICI



Though they're not the flamboyant fireball machines of modern fantasy, Hermetics command vast elemental powers. Pacts with spirits, bound demons, summoned storms and mighty wards are common toys in their bag of tricks. But the point they constantly make is that such power comes only with a strong intellectual framework. Magick does not lie in throwing a fireball; magick is insight into *how* to throw a

fireball, precisely *why* you should, and *what* you must become to do so.

Thus, this discussion of Hermetic magick begins with philosophy.

### THE PYRAMID OF THOUGHT

The Hermetic worldview draws heavily upon Plato's pyramid of thought. Its broad base constitutes the realm of *Faith* and



*Emotions*. Here, reality is a construct, created by a ruling paradigm and maintained by humanity's diversion from the basic questions: Who are we? Why are we here? Because mundane senses and obedience to authority both rule here, there's no magick in this realm. Sleepers spend their lives here, their vision of reality sequestered by the blue glow of the television set, their faith controlled by technocracies both mundane and otherwise.

The second realm, less broad, is the realm of *Reason*. In ancient times, Aristotle articulated Reason's strengths, its logic and symbolic thinking, in a healthy context of holistic empiricism. At the beginning of the Modern Age, philosopher-scientists replaced this empiricism with the myth of Progress: that Reason alone can perfect humanity, and that science can perfect all things.

Hermetics know that the power of Reason is great; alone it can accomplish noble works. They also know it severs one's connection to the essence that lies within things (Aristotle) or beyond them (Plato). Reason is the method inherent in Technocratic forerunner Francis Bacon's Word, "Progress." Until very recently, this Word has controlled the Sleeping world, and has seriously degraded the physical and spiritual worlds.

The realm beyond Reason is the realm of direct apprehension of Truth — of noesis — called *Above* in the Thrice-Great Hermes' maxims. This is the slender top of the pyramid, the domain of the philosopher-king, for which all true Hermetics strive out of love for themselves and for humanity. This inspired wisdom cannot be reached from the realm of faith, but only through a school of initiation. Here alone, in a realm of pure thought and pure memory, can the mage perceive great truths. Once the Hermetic student grasps this fundamental reality, it is her long, hard job to transform herself in light of its principles.

## VIEW OF THE COSMOS

The Order of Hermes views the world of matter as good. They realize that the psyche can only become aware of itself and begin to develop its powers amid matter, that in every myth, the creator god forms a world from Chaos. All myths are pathways of magick preserved by Sleepers, who function as a resting place for powerful ideas and for the sleeping souls of those who will be Awakened. As the experiment with "Progress" shows, it's unwise to try to awaken them too quickly. Only by extending Order gradually in the world do human beings learn to act in the divine realm. The title "Order of Hermes" has several meanings.

A Hermetic magician views power and pleasure as good. If you don't acquire power in this realm, of both magickal and mundane types, you have no true yardstick to measure your personal evolution. If you can't make the universe offer up a series of pleasurable challenges, you're not a mage — no matter what special effects you can whip up in a pinch. True pleasure — as opposed to base stimulation — stimulates mind, soul and body.

Earnest students are never turned away from the Order's door; seeking knowledge is the first step to initiation into the mysteries. The only thing a Hermetic really fears is complacency. Woe to those who think they are perfected! As all gods wait within the breast of man, so too do all dangers.

Force is something the Hermetics understand and respect. You can measure force, and measure what you do with it. You

can determine how far along the Path you are by the forces you control. And because Force is what produces change, both in the world below and the world above, it is the pinnacle Art from which the lesser Arts, or Spheres, descend. It is the doorway to the Tenth Sphere, the *Nous*, or Mind of Noetic Insight. Some refer to the Tenth Sphere as the place of Forms (*Eidos*) or Concordia. Others simply call it the "One Thing," the beginning, end and unity.

## THE GREAT TRADITION

The Order's primary political and cultural goal is the reestablishment of the Great Tradition. These magicians seek a New Age, with unparalleled tolerance of all beliefs, but with Hermetic ideals as the pivotal paradigm through which all others communicate. Their first attempt began in late antiquity in Alexandria, where all the civilized world's cultures met. The intellectual paradigm that ruled them then embodied itself in the Library of Alexandria. Hermetic precursors flourished not only as public mages, but also as expert translators. The city acquired knowledge and synthesized the Greek and Egyptian thoughts that led to the Hermetic tradition. When that Library was burned by religious zealots, the flames singed relations between the Hermetics and the faithful forever after.

The Order of Hermes wants to recreate the spirit of Alexandria across the entire world. The mages reveal this goal, known as "the City of Pyramider Project," to newly initiated Disciples. The twin roads to this City are scholarship and instruction. Consequently, most Hermetics work in or near academia, researching linguistics, folklore, mathematics, philosophy and anything else related to their ideals. Typically, they have conservative day jobs — say, as researchers in Old Norse, though some make their livings as book reviewers, New Age press authors or game designers. At night, however, the Hermetic might learn to rearrange the runes to duplicate ancient magickal feats, or pioneer a new style of game that transforms the player's consciousness. In any case, the mage's ultimate job is teaching his knowledge, both to the Order and to the Sleeping world, to advance the City of Pyramider.

The Order's best intellectual weapon is the decline of Modernism — the belief that the world can be saved by science alone. Science once replaced faith as the obvious source of humankind's perfection; Postmodern thinking, which judges belief systems on the basis of their function and practical results, is the Order's cultural wedge. All nine Traditions help spread some form of postmodern thinking, or develop its instruments. The Virtual Adepts, for example, helped create World Wide Web pages for most of the world's libraries and museums. What was long hidden in rare texts will soon be available to all. At the forefront, however, the Order stands with its allied Traditions, planning to shape the emerging postmodern City. Under sage Hermetic guidance, that world offers unparalleled chances for freedom and power.

## PRAXIS

Hermetic thought postulates three types of magick: goetia, theurgia and magia. Each art corresponds to a section of the pyramid of thought, and to one or more Degrees of Hermetic advancement. The mage must master each type of magick in

turn, for each transforms its practitioner. The first two are apprentice magicks; praxis of the third marks the apprentice's readiness for initiation.

- **Goetia** (Greek *goes*, "charm") is the magick of substance, what the Sleeping world recognizes as magic (no "k"): precise spells, performed at precise times with precise substances. A focus-heavy art, this "charm" employs chalices, bells, knives and books in the Enochian tongue. Everything relies on memorization and exact performance. In game terms, this step begins a study of Hedge Magic (see *Ascension's Right Hand* and *World of Darkness: Sorcerers*), a static art without Sphere Effects.

With goetia, a Hermetic apprentice (First Degree, Neophyte) builds up her faith in the world of matter and learns of the subtle, hidden realm beyond ordinary senses. A Neophyte owns a ton of paraphernalia, closely tracks the phase of the moon, and knows which talismans to consecrate in the Hour of Saturn.

- **Theurgia** is the path of union with godforms. At the Second Degree, Zelator, the apprentice seeks to become one with a traditional archetype. Through a system of invocation, she merges with the idea of a particular god, angel or spirit to perform a magical operation. She wears the colors of the god, eats the god's favored food, burns the god's favored incense and immerses herself in research about the god-idea in its cultural matrix. This symbolic art corresponds to the realm of Reason.

Ultimately, the mage compels the god to manifest through her, thereby achieving the third Apprentice Degree (Practicus). The key word here is "compel" — the god can be forced to perform actions, as can the god's servitors and demons. The Hermetic does not look upon the Celestines that rule the spheres as friends, but as Archons, rulers to be overcome. Hermetics are profoundly interested in Force — the way, the only way — and despise the "Thy will be done" or "Our will be done" attitudes of others. It must be "My Will be done!" or you are not a mage.

When a Practicus performs theurgia rituals, she touches her Avatar. Goetia requires a literal belief in gods, but theurgy shows the seeker that the gods are within us, part of our psychology; each god reflects the Avatar, just as each art reflects The One Art, Concordia. With this lesson learned, the Hermetic begins her true quest — for knowledge of the Avatar. Then she is ready for...

- **Magia**: By reaching Awakening, the apprentice achieves True Magick, earns Rank One in at least one Sphere, and is duly admitted into the Order as a mage of the Fourth Degree, an Initiate (that is, a beginning Mage character). Now she begins Ascension, the quest of lifetimes where the true nature of magick becomes apparent.

Magia is the Art of causing change in the outer world (below) by hanging archetypal patterns in the inner world (above). At this stage, the mage simply speaks changes into being. Although the instruments of her apprenticeship still focus her intentions, her principal focus becomes the language, written or spoken, that she uses to cast her Word. As she progresses through higher degrees and gains Arete, she dispenses with all other foci. Ultimately, an extremely accomplished Hermetic can even transcend the need for language.

## HEDGE MAGIC TO TRUE MAGICK

The greatest peril (at least from a game system standpoint) of this step in the Hermetic Path is that the apprentice may never become a mage! Instead of gradually working up to an Awakening, she might lose her way in Hedge Magic's static ways. Unable to make the leap between "I can do magic" and "I can be magick," the apprentice remains a "lesser magician" — a hedge wizard. At some point in her progress, the apprentice must surrender her preconceived notions to embrace her greater potential.

In game terms, she abandons her Hedge Magic dots and starts from scratch. The points she'd spent in Hedge Magic become "freebie points," but do not automatically become Spheres and Arete. These she must earn through roleplaying and game-time passage. After a while, she can buy her Spheres and Arete with those points (see **Mage: The Ascension Second Edition**, page 139), or use them to purchase additional Abilities and Merits that she acquires during her training (see page 61).

If you want to begin a character as a Hermetic consor or apprentice, start her off with normal mage creation points; save the Arete and free Sphere dots, or convert them to Hedge Magick dots. At an appropriate time, toss or trade the Hedge Magick. Thus, a hedge wizard might become a True Mage if she's properly trained... and if she's willing to surrender what she has in favor of what she could gain.

Naturally, a self-Awakened mage might join the Hermetic Order after her Awakening, in which case she bypasses the Hedge Magic stage. Of course, a mage without the proper training will have a hard time being taken seriously in the Order....

The magicks must be mastered in this order. To the Hermetic viewpoint (which, by the way, is incorrect), most other Traditions practice mere goetia, and so they have only a secondary role in the Great Work. The Hollow Ones seem especially mired in goetia; the other Traditions, who do not understand the pyramid of thought, cannot see that these larvae still need a few centuries to develop. Some Traditions practice a rather limited form of theurgia, particularly the Celestial Chorus. The Akashic Brotherhood is the sad example of what happens when one approaches magia directly; it brings too much tranquillity, and the great urge to change the world is lost.

## HERMETIC DEGREES

Here we see the nine Degrees of advancement within the Order, along with the tasks or requirements involved in each:

### APPRENTICE

Although time of apprenticeship varies by House and mentor, most apprenticeships last two to six years.

- **First Degree, Neophyte:** Instruction in mundane languages and basic facts about the Ascension War; development of discipline and faith in the teachings.

- **Second Degree, Zelator:** History of the Order; early study of Enochian; mastery of goetia (minor Hedge Magic spells).

- **Third Degree, Practicus:** Advanced study of Enochian; analysis of Quintessence and Paradox; mastery of theurgia (advanced Hedge Magic); basic instruction in one or more Spheres. At this Degree, an apprentice conceives her Word, which marks out her Path to understanding.

### DISCIPLE

- **Fourth Degree, Initiate:** Rank One in Ars Essentiae. The leader of the mage's Covenant judges her Rank within narrow guidelines formally established by the Personnel Division. (Note that the Order of Hermes established the Sphere Ranks that all Traditions use.)

- **Fifth Degree, Initiate Exemptus:** Rank Two in any Sphere. An Initiate can usually reach this Degree within a year, sometimes much less.

### ADEPT

- **Sixth Degree, Adept:** Rank Three in any Sphere and at least Rank One in another. Achievement of this Degree ordinarily takes one to three years, sometimes longer.

- **Seventh Degree, Adept Major:** Rank Four in any Sphere, Rank Two in another and Rank One in a third. Many Adepts never reach this rank, which requires not only discipline but uncommon talent. Most Adepts Major have reached this Degree after three to 10 years of diligent effort.

### MASTER

- **Eighth Degree, Magister Scholae:** Rank Five in any Sphere and Rank Three in at least two others. Mastery is rare and requires exceptional gifts; given these, a mage can achieve Mastery within an ordinary lifetime, even a couple of decades. The Order of Hermes has more recognized living Masters than any other Tradition.

- **Ninth Degree, Magister Mundi/Archmage:** Rank Six in any Sphere. This involves centuries of study, unbroken discipline, challenge and even madness. As a practical matter, one cannot reach Rank Six without first becoming Master of several Spheres and Adept in most of the rest. There are fewer than a dozen living Archmages in the Order of Hermes, all quite old and only marginally sane.

- **Tenth Degree, Oracle:** No mage is definitely known to have reached this Degree, which implies Ascension. Hermetic scholars dispute whether Ascension is a matter of Degree. Some believe that any Awakened person can achieve Ascension, independent of magickal skill.

# BENEFITS OF THE ORDER



*Seest thou a man that is diligent in his work?  
Before kings may he place himself; let him not place  
himself before obscure men.*

— King Solomon the Wise, Proverbs 22:29

Membership among the mystick kings has a great cost, but pays grand dividends. By striving through the Order's ranks, each Hermetic mage earns certain perquisites which open doors across this world... and others.

## CRAFT NAMES, SHADOW NAMES AND TRUE NAMES

Like a Verbena, Dreamspeaker or other magus, a Hermetic takes a new "craft name" when he finishes his apprenticeship. As he advances through the mysteries, the Hermetic also gains a list of complications, a *Shadow Name*, which reflects the different ways others see him. Deep down, he maintains a third name, the *True Name*, which contains his birth title, craft name, all honorifics and a secret appellation that only his most trusted companions understand. No matter how mundane he may seem, no Hermetic magus goes by the name he was given at birth. To do so is not only gauche, it is dangerous.

A craft name serves a twofold purpose. On the mundane level, the name signifies a break with the mage's mortal life and the beginning of his magickal quest; on the mystic level, it "rebirths" him, giving him a new form and hiding the old one from outsiders. Although he'll keep a favored name public, the average Hermetic maintains a number of "shadow names" — alternate identities, honorifics or nicknames which add layers of protection to the birth name itself. Taken together, these names become one — the *Shadow Name*, a title of high honor and understanding. The longer it is, the more powerful (or pretentious) the mage.

The *True Name*, which often runs a dozen words or more, is like a key to the mage's deepest self. In addition to the complex *Shadow Name*, each *True Name* includes a secret component which the mage guards with magickal protections. As Hermetics (but few others) know, the secret is a sequence of 10 syllables chosen by the mage, preceded by the term *In Caligine Abditus*, or, "In Darkness Hidden." To recite a mage's *Shadow Name* in sequence is impressive; to recite his *True Name* is a threat. It shows you know his deepest secrets and can turn them back with ease.

**Birth Name:** Steven Carson

**Craft Name:** Amadeus Chanti DuMarque, bani Flambeau (or simply Amadeus)

**Shadow Name:** Amadeus Steven Carson Chanti DuMarque, bani Flambeau, Windborne Seer of the 5th House, Drowner of Mad Cats, Jewel of the Beloved One and Ranger of the White Frost

**True Name:** Amadeus Steven Carson Chanti DuMarque, bani Flambeau, Windborne Seer of the 5th House, Drowner of Mad Cats, Jewel of the Beloved One and Ranger of the White Frost; *In Caligine Abditus*, Mhai Akil Koth Rignorum Omnas

In game terms, consider it a Mind 3 Effect to discern another mage's name. The number of successes necessary depends on the power of the subject; a young mage would require two or three, while an accomplished magus might demand six or more. A Master or Archmage guards her extensive name so intensely that an "intruder" would need to pass countermagick and achieve 10 successes or more to even hope to pull the *Shadow Name* from hiding. Finding her *True Name* would be even harder, and might require solving riddles or bypassing magickal mind traps.

Discovering such a Name, however, gives you a great psychological advantage, and may reduce future magick difficulties by -2 against that magus, or add two dice to your countermagick against her spells. Mysticks with Correspondence may consider a target whose *True Name* is known to be "very familiar" for the purposes of magickal connection (see the "Correspondence Ranges" chart in *Mage*).

What's the advantage of a *True Name*? Distance. Under most circumstances, a Hermetic magus should be considered "no connection" on the "Correspondence Ranges" chart when it applies to offensive magicks, and subtracts three successes from an opponent's attempt to Ban him or penetrate his Ward spells. Only by discovering the mage's *True Name* can a rival bypass his protection. That may not sound like much until you realize that to harm a Hermetic mage, you more or less have to face him in person. That entails its own risks — ones an angry Master would be happy to demonstrate.

Hermetics aren't the only mages to keep *True Names*, but they're the only Tradition who does so as a rule. Some other magickal societies include such titles among their lore, but the importance of such names differs from culture to culture. The Storyteller may decide that a non-Hermetic sorcerer has a *True Name* with the abilities mentioned above, but that's his prerogative and should not be considered a given.

## ENOCHIAN

Enochian, whose characters resemble the Coptic alphabet, resembles Afro-Asiatic languages such as Akkadian, Egyptian and Hebrew, but is entirely inhuman in origin. According to occult lore, Enochian is a spiritual tongue spoken by High Umbrood and most elementals.

The last librarian of Alexandria, Hypatia, discovered Enochian; John Dee codified its syntax in Elizabethan times. Each sentence can be read two or more ways. The primary meaning, clear to Apprentices of Third Degree, is a goetic spell. Those in the Disciple Degrees can understand the second, profoundly philosophical level of meaning, which is sometimes based on numerological values of the letters. Additional levels of understanding come with higher Degrees, although the levels of meaning encoded in Enochian depend heavily upon the writer's degree of awareness. Sometimes the Avatar speaks through Enochian writings.

In game terms, Enochian is bought as a Knowledge Ability, unique and unrelated to the Linguistics Knowledge. Only



Hermetic characters can purchase Enochian, unless the Storyteller decides otherwise. It's purchased like any other Knowledge, except that the character cannot have more dots in Enochian than in her current Arete rating.

A strict Storyteller might require Enochian as a mundane Knowledge necessary to any Hermetic magickal Effect (Mage, page 162); an extremely strict Storyteller may require Enochian at a level equal to the Effect's highest Sphere Rank. More easygoing Storytellers can permit Hermetics to roll Intelligence + Enochian (difficulty 7) as a complimentary roll when casting any defined rote or performing an established ritual; improvised magick may not receive this roll. Each success on the Enochian roll reduces the magick roll's difficulty by -1, up to a maximum of -3. This reduction is not cumulative with those given by other ability rolls.

## UMBROOD PROTOCOLS

*The Earth being inhabited, as I have before said unto thee, by a great number of Celestial Beings and Spirits... know, O my Son, that from the time that thou shalt have the good fortune to be familiar with such kinds of Spirits, and that thou shalt be able to by means of what I have taught thee to make them submit unto thine orders, they will be happy to give thee... that which they uselessly possess....*

— (greatly abbreviated) from *The Greater Key of Solomon*, Chapter XIV

Everything's easier when you speak the language. Ages ago, the founders of the Order (and the magi who went before them) established pacts with various Umbrood Lords, Precep-

tors and other notables. Since then, the wizards of the Order have, shall we say, reminded the spirits about those pacts—and about the duties which bind both sides. Most mages have no way to command service from the Umbrood. Hermetic mages do.

It is the way of the Order to demand. Even so, demanding things from gods or their representatives is a risky thing at best. The elaborate protocols which all Hermetics learn as part of their instruction pave the way for a active and profitable traffic between the magicians and the astral hosts; the keystones of that road remain integral parts of magickal lore. With these pacts and protocols, a mage creates a bond of respect (not necessarily goodwill) between a spirit being and himself; while that bond is fragile, it gives the summoner a place to begin.

Summoning a spirit, elemental or agent of Divine or Infernal powers is never done lightly or carelessly. The perils for doing so can be eternal. All protocols begin with a fast, prayers and meditation. Certain pentacles are inscribed (each one having a different purpose), a circle is prepared and other rituals are observed. Since the pentacles create both a boundary and a spirit nexus (see *The Holy Pentacles*, below), compromising these preparations at any point risks disaster. When everything is ready, the magician calls forth an ornate invocation, listing the name of the spirit(s) he wants, his own Shadow Name and titles, and the holy (or unholy) Names by which he compels the Umbrood to arrive. In keeping with the ceremony, the spirit often appears in the most dramatic form it can muster and usually runs through its own list of demands and/or threats. Thus the bargaining begins.

Through a formal exchange of titles, invocations, greetings, promises and compulsions, the magician and the spirit make their desires known. Theatrics — which usually include pyrotechnics and threats on both sides — are all part of the process. Even when both parties agree on something, both make a show of force, testing the will of the other. Dust swirls, still air whips into winds, water freezes, that sort of thing. The more aggressive the spirit (or the wizard), the more violent the phenomena. Obviously, a spirit manifestation (especially a really powerful one) should be played up for all it's worth.

In game terms, the Storyteller can reflect this contest through resisted Willpower rolls combined with dramatic roleplaying (see **Mage**, page 80). Each party must accumulate as many successes as the opponent has (permanent) Willpower points. Defeating a minor spirit is easy; a greater Umbrood, well...

- If the wizard wins, the spirit will obey his commands — for an agreed-upon price.
- If the spirit wins, it departs without incident (and makes a mental note about the weak-willed magician).
- If the Umbrood botches a roll, it agrees to the mage's demands without further argument.
- If the wizard botches, all hell breaks loose; the spirit takes its revenge through any number of gruesome Charms or Storyteller inventions. Use your imagination....

The difficulty of the Willpower contest depends on the tasks the Hermetic requests; a successful Charisma or Manipulation + Spirit Lore roll might lower the difficulty by -1 or -2 if the roleplaying justifies the reduction.

Demand	Difficulty
Trivial Task (identifying an item)	5
Minor Task (the item's location)	6
Fair Request (retrieving the item)	7
Favor (creating a new item)	8
Major Task (fighting an enemy)	9
Extended Service	10

Assuming the Hermetic triumphs, each side has a promise to keep. The spirit performs one or two tasks, and the mage rewards it with something valuable. Enticements include: mortal bodies to possess; sacrifices in the Umbrood's name; charitable (or blasphemous) acts for the spirit's patron causes; Names of other spirits or mages; personal items, etc.. The payment will, of course, depend on the nature of the spirit. Most mages know better than to offer up their own Names or personal tokens, but most Umbrood will ask for them anyway.

Note that this service is a *favor*, not a magickal compulsion. Without some potent Spirit Arts to back it up, it does not bind the Umbrood in any lasting way. A wizard who pushes his luck will discover the limits soon enough. No mage short of an Archmaster can summon or bind an Aeon, Incarna or Celestine, although a friendly spirit might send a totem avatar (not capitalized) to treat with a respectful magician.

If the mage goes onto the Umbrood's homeland (during a trip to the Umbral Courts, for instance), the element of

command is lost. Even so, a thorough knowledge of the correct etiquette works wonders (see **The Book of Madness**, pages 117-118). Most intelligent spirits grant a Hermetic mage (like an experienced shaman) more respect than they would offer the average mage. This deference usually comes across in roleplaying, but could, if the Storyteller desires, reduce the difficulty of the magician's Social rolls by -1 or -2 while in Umbrood territory.

Spirits like to be respected; a mage who does so will go farther than one who blatantly commands obedience. Still, while most mysticks depend on an Umbrood's goodwill, the Hermetic Masters can demand a service or two — and get it. No matter where you are, membership in the Order is a good thing to have.

## CONNECTIONS, FAVORS AND KNOWLEDGE

In the halls of Hermes, these three things go together. No Apprentice graduates into the Order without picking up a few useful skills. All of the Traits listed below come with the territory. While only a Master would possess every one, any Hermetic character should purchase a handful of them during character creation. (Note that these Traits must be bought at the regular cost.)

- **Abilities:** Alchemy, Astrology, Chantry Politics, Cosmology, Crafts (House Verditius), Cryptography, Diplomacy, Enigmas, Etiquette, High Ritual, History, Intrigue, Linguistics (Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic), Lore (especially Kindred, Spirit and Tradition), Occult, Research and Secret Code Language (most Houses have their own)

- **Backgrounds:** Allies, Chantry, Influence, Library, Mentor, Resources

- **Merits:** Concentration, Faerie Affinity (House Merinita), Fast Learner, Higher Purpose, Lightning Calculator (House Fortuna), Natural Linguist, Past Life, any kind of Ties

- **Flaws:** Curiosity, Dark Secret, Overconfident, Vengeance, Echoes, Magickal Prohibition or Imperative, Dark Fate, any of the Ties Flaws

## SEEKERS OF THE TWILIGHT

The Order attracts all different kinds to its fold. The profiles below describe broad Hermetic types, not lone individuals. Use these concepts (changing details to suit the chronicle) as examples or inspiration when creating your own characters. They're not limits, of course, but merely suggestions.

- **Alchemist:** A correspondent with the Children of Knowledge (see **The Book of Crafts**) and the Sons of Ether, she seeks the Stone that is the Medicine of Metals, Perfect Truth and Pure Happiness. Her day job: lecturer on the history of experimental science. She reads Greek, Arabic, Latin and Sanskrit. An expert on the properties of Tass, she has discovered potions that extend life and powders that turn copper to gold. Her greatest discovery is that the Philosopher's Stone — which transforms lead into gold, both inert substances — has a much greater effect on human flesh, a semi-divine substance. Word: "Purify."

- **Astrologer:** Her Art goes as far beyond the newspaper horoscope as post-graduate number theory goes beyond counting on your fingers. Her "day job" is a teaching observatory in



Southern California. She's a big figure in local science fiction fandom, helps run the Planetary Society and teaches orienteering to Girl Scouts. Her understanding of timing has earned her some welcome favors from other Hermetics. She lives with an Ecstatic and has given more thought to *Ars Temporis* than almost any Hermetic. Word: "Precision."

• **Eremit:** He disdains society, entertainment, romance and sleep, but ventures forth often from his *Horizon Realm* — more often than he'd like, blast it! — to help his House fight the latest damnfool scheme of the blasted Technocracy. And he's got to hustle all over Earth to get ingredients for his latest experiment, so... as long as he's in Venezuela or Irian Jaya or Nova Goddamn Scotia, he might as well look around, pick up the language, check the local magical praxes and investment opportunities.... Then he has to track his stock portfolio and maintain all that property he racked up in his *Sleeping career*.... It's amazing he ever gets any real work done! At this rate he'll never distill that immortality serum. Word: "Imminent."

• **General:** Count on him to render the situation rectified, pronto. If he can't do it himself, he's got a few regiments who can. Or he'll phone a Senator or a corporate vice-president, one of the guys he hobnobs with at the annual Bohemian Club retreats. He was always a joiner — Elks, Rosicrucians, Air Force, Cointelpro, Masons, PTA, Chamber of Commerce, Military Book Club — and in a secret society, he's in his element. That's because he learned two plain truths early on, as follows: (A) You can command anyone if you command yourself harder, and (B) People take orders a lot better when no one else is watching.

Ramrod straight, dapper in uniform or civilian togs, a hit with his wife and certain other ladies, he keeps his magical life a secret except during quarterly visits to his Covenant. He's rising pretty well in House Tytalus, though he hasn't had much patience for constant study since OCS. You can study to get ahead, but there's other ways. Who needs a fireball when you can call in a Longbow attack chopper? Word: "Honor."

• **Qabbalist:** He speaks and reads classical, medieval and modern Hebrew, Aramaic, Syrian and Egyptian. His first Ph.D. was on the use of astronomical symbols in the tiled floors of the synagogues of late Antiquity. An expert in Throne Mysticism, he has spoken at important Jewish seminars. He regularly creates golems, as did the learned Rabbi Loewe, and his focus is the Torah that once belonged to Moses ben Maimon.

A pillar of his community, with a wife, two kids and a nice house on Long Island, he can trace his ancestry through 30 generations of learned Jews, and hopes his son will aspire to the Art. He maintains good relations with many civil rights groups and with certain open-minded members of the Celestial Chorus. Word: "Qabbala," of course.

• **Risi (ree-see):** Born into the Brahmin caste, he discovered the secret interpretation of the Vedas when he was about 30. He runs an Indian restaurant in Manhattan, and seems like a normal businessman until you visit his house, which resembles a Hindu temple of many centuries ago. He plays the sitar very well, helps organize the local Indian community for cultural and political events, and is developing a secret North American alliance of Indian hedge mages to report to him about Nephandi invasions. Word: "Brahma."

• **Stage Conjuror:** Two shows a night and three on weekends at the Palace in Vegas. Her name in lights! Her specials on cable! Her lectures packed at campuses across the country! She debunks fraudulent Sleeper “psychics” — Uri Geller won’t stay in the same city with her — and designs each show as a subtly magickal ritual of wonder and catharsis. She’s working on starting her own line of mass-market conjuring tricks, but under another name, she contributes articles to anthropology journals, based on her studies of left-hand-path cults in Hinduism and Jainism. Word: “Performance.”

• **Tryllekunstner (trew-ler-konsd-no):** He works to reawaken the Great Tradition of the North and speaks 10 languages, from Old Norse to Frisian. Though he seems to dislike Viking neo-pagan groups, he helps them in secret, for the Great Tradition has natural (Sleeping) aspects in addition to its supernatural (Awakened) ones.

He teaches Scandinavian Studies at a large university, can carve stone or wood, and took voice lessons for years so that he might sing the runes (or, as he would say, “practice galdur”) with a voice that would make Odhinn weep. His covert relationship with a Verbena woman mirrors Odhinn’s secret affair with Freya. Word: “Runa.”

## THE ARTS



The Order of Hermes developed the current magickal convention of the nine Spheres, which they call Arts. However, the system is only a convenience, for magick is beyond rigid categorization. Some Masters stall by blindly accepting the increasingly rigid convention of the nine Arts; others push beyond, learning to push their minds and their Avatars to new levels of understanding.

The Order prefers to call the Arts by their Latin names. When discussing the Arts with outsiders, however, they use the conventional terms (Correspondence, Entropy, Forces, etc.).

### • Ars Animae (Life)

Known as The Refining Fire, Life refines and ennobles the spirit, making it more like gold, or burning away its dross as ash. One heals oneself to experience further initiation; one creates life to prove one’s prowess; one restores to life those who may teach the mysteries of the Cosmos. Life is separate from the four elements that make up the world, and serves as the astral bridge to this world.

### • Ars Conjunctionis (Correspondence)

Conjunctionis, or Similitude, sends magickal power down the secret paths between one thing and another. Any point in the world of four dimensions and five senses can be viewed as a direct gateway to any other, given sufficient time and energy.

### • Ars Essentiae (Forces)

Forces is The Gateway, and its mastery reveals one’s position on the Path to Ascension. Understanding it is the holy, life-affirming act of the Hermetic.



- **Ars Fati (Entropy)**

Known as Venom, this process causes all material things to pass away. It eats all flesh, all nations, all save Wisdom herself. Venom falls on all things as a fine mist; it can be made to fall faster on one's enemies, or it can be halted — for a season — on oneself.

- **Ars Manium (Spirit)**

Called The Pharaoh's Army, Spirit provides useful servants and confers knowledge of alien realms. Greater personal power brings authority to command the denizens of these realms. Trust them but little, for they wish to subvert or distract you from the Great Work.

- **Ars Materiae (Matter)**

Known as Clay, the Matter Sphere is worked in accordance with the will of the artist. A composite of the four classical elements, it is the medium of expression for the Awakened psyche.

- **Ars Mentis (Mind)**

The Mind Sphere is The Watcher. A mirror of the Avatar, it reflects that self's intent. By studying Mens, Hermetics study the Avatar's secret powers, and come to realize that the Watcher is essential to clear sight on the Path.

- **Ars Temporis (Time)**

Time is the Magick All Men Know. All men and women understand how to fill their lives with pleasurable challenge, to make them last — or how to waste their lives in gray ennui, so that those lives pass quickly. This truth of life can be expanded magickally, so learn its lesson well. Either bend time to your will, or be bent to its own.

- **Ars Vis (Prime)**

Prime is known as the South. Just as the Hermetic tradition came from Egypt, the South, so the hidden root of all things is the spiritual South: the pure waters of the Nile, which flood and enrich the fields; the sacred space of the gods; the mighty pyramids, symbols of the Awakened will.

## INSTRUMENTS OF THE ARTS

Given the precise nature of Hermetic magick, many Spheres have special "official" foci connected to their use. While the only focus a Master Hermetic needs is language, lesser willworkers typically use tools such as these:

- **General:** Books, charts (of gods, planets, colors, etc.), dice, elements (air, earth, fire, water), formulae, geometric shapes (circles, triangles, etc.), Enochian and other languages, gems, goblets, jewelry, music, pentacles, Names, numbers, pentacles, potions, Qabbalistic symbols, ritual circles (essential for High Ceremonial magick rites), runes, Seal of Solomon, sigils, star maps, stones, Tarot cards, treatments (cleansing the body), vellum, wands, weapons, words of power.

- **Anima:** Small burning pot (The Refining Fire, change), broken cocoon of a silk moth, seeds of a 1000-year old bristlecone pine, delta sign, incantation of the stages of a relevant vowel-shifted word, I (the active principle), † (higher ternary acting upon spiritual quaternary), water, ankh, the numbers 3, 11.

- **Conjunctio:** Shewstones, Enochian alphabet, lines drawn between graphical symbols, verbal ellisions, physically inserting one thing into another, the numbers 2, 7, 12.

- **Essentia:** Gilded iron keys (sometimes magnetized), elements, magnets, fire, ice, prisms, names of air, fire, etc. spirits, pentacles, the number 8.

- **Fatus:** Sand from a broken hourglass, acids (sometimes flung at target's magical representative), rusting nails, cobwebs, obsidian, mica, the numbers 0, 13. **Anti-Fatus:** diamonds or other incorruptible tokens.

- **Manes:** Hood or black eyeband (for viewing the spirit realm), small brazier of stinking herbs, pentacles of many different kinds, parchment inscribed with spirit names, darkness, smoke, the numbers 5 and 6.

- **Materia:** Ore, clay, half-carved gems, metal plates inscribed with Matter rune, the numbers 4 and 5.

- **Mens:** Circles, rings, sword bearing the mage's Name (for increasing intellect), the number 14.

- **Tempus:** Small pyramids, sundials, star charts, melting ice, the number 2.

- **Vis:** Chalice containing a rare and fragrant drink, gold, the number 1.

## ROTES

*I have bedimm'd*

*The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,  
And 'twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault  
Set roaring war; to the dread rattling thunder  
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak  
With his own bolt; the strong-bas'd promontory  
Have I made shake, and by the spurs pluck'd up  
The pine and cedar.*

— William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

**Dream Drama** (•• Forces, •• Mind, possibly with  
■■ Correspondence)

With this rote, developed in the 16th century by Venetian Hermetic Giuseppe Malatesta, the willworker taps the mind of a sleeping subject and displays light and sound illusions that enact the dream. Given the subconscious elements and personal symbolism of most dreams, this may not offer much practical information, but it's better than eavesdropping on someone who talks in his sleep.

To perform the rite, a modern Hermetic lights a roomful of candles and incense, then focuses her mind on that of the sleeping target. It often helps if the mage carries the target's pillowcase, nightshirt or similar possession. The smoke from the incense seems to form the substance of the dream's illusions, which the mage watches until they disperse.

[The number of successes rolled determines the duration and vividness of the illusion. The caster may position the illusion anywhere within her sight, or (with Correspondence 2) anywhere she can reach. This rote is vulgar.]

**Tower of Babel/Speak In Tongues** (•• Entropy, •• Forces, •• Mind)

During the 14th century, a Covenant in the Italian Alps housed an unusual offshoot of the Order, the theocratic

House Castrovinci. This small group (officially a part of House Ex Miscellanea) tried to prove the Bible's truth by duplicating its miracles with magick. Critics claimed that they were emulating the prophets of old in hopes of becoming gods themselves. The Inquisition eventually burned most Castrovincis as heretics, but a few apparently escaped into Africa and Arabia.

Regardless of House Castrovinci's motives, no one denies that they created some useful rites. The so-called **Tower of Babel** turns the sound produced by the human mouth into gibberish. A sufficiently skillful mage can reduce a whole crowd to incomprehensibility. To produce this Effect, the mage cuts up a written scroll or a page from a book, then tosses the confetti into the air while gibbering quietly. He continues babbling until all confetti has touched the ground.

A contrasting rite, aptly called **Speak In Tongues**, changes a target's speech into any language the mage knows; if the caster understands many languages, then different listeners can hear different languages. For example, spoken French could be changed into German for one listener and Spanish for another at the same time. The rite does not change the speech's meaning, only its language. The mage need not understand the language initially used by the speaker in order to change it. A useful tool during the Grand Convocation, this spell facilitated conversation between mysticks from across the world.

[Every success the mage achieves on an extended roll renders one speaker incomprehensible (**Tower of Babel**) or one language intelligible (**Speak in Tongues**). These effects last one scene, and work only in the caster's presence unless Correspondence 2 is added to the rite. This spell is always vulgar.]

#### **Compel the Unseen (••• Prime, •• Spirit)**

Medieval magi of House Bonisagus developed this simple but dangerous Effect. With it, the mage forces an incorporeal spirit to manifest in physical form, so long as the spirit has the Materialize Charm. The rite is risky — Umbrood deeply resent such coercion. Even weak spirits can sometimes bring their stronger cohorts to punish the insolent mage.

To perform the rite, the caster blows into a clear flask until it clouds up. She then commands the Umbrood to appear by speaking its true name and an Enochian chant of binding. If the flask overturns while the spirit is materialized, the Umbrood automatically escapes.

[The spirit receives a Willpower roll to resist the Effect; the difficulty depends on the mage's own Willpower, and the spirit's successes cancel the mage's successes on a one-for-one basis. The mage's remaining successes determine how long the unwilling spirit remains corporeal (one hour per success). The Effect usually cannot last beyond the next dawn or sunset, and is quite vulgar.]

#### **Ignis (••• Forces, •• Prime)**

The joy and specialty of all Flambeau Adepts, this ageless spell conjures flames from thin air and works them into patterns of the wizard's choosing. Flame curtains, blaz-

ing shields, fireballs and spontaneous combustion are just a few of the possibilities. The rites Hermetics use to conjure these fires differ from House to House and option to option. The spell itself is fairly basic, and it's a standard part of any Order mage's arsenal.

[Forces and Prime combine in a fairly basic conjuration Effect. This Effect might be vulgar or coincidental, depending on the circumstances and the mage. Throwing fireballs is obviously out of line, but an exploding water heater, grenade or gun-shot gas tank disguises the carnage well. The same Spheres, it should be noted, can summon ice, rain, lightning or other elemental strikes.]

#### **Lightning Gateway (••• Forces, •• Correspondence, •• Prime)**

To reach a well-protected foe, a magician can link Forces with Correspondence to see barriers and defenses, then project an attack past those barriers. Imagine, for example, a lightning bolt that can strike at someone inside a house — without ever touching the walls. The rite requires that the mage look through a spyglass while his companion ritually crushes a tiny model gate or wall with a golden hammer.

The Hermetic Albrecht, bani Flambeau, of Bavaria is credited with this Effect. A mercenary captain in the armies of many petty German warlords during the 14th and 15th centuries, he found it useful during siege warfare. Timing his energy strikes to match the attacks of catapults and other siege engines, he disguised his use of magick and kept the nascent forces of Paradox at bay — at least for a time.

[This rite inflicts damage as usual, but ignores barriers between caster and target. The circumstances of the casting determine whether the Effect is coincidental or vulgar.]

#### **Parma Magica (••• Prime)**

Bonisagus, the brilliant Archmage, ranked as his greatest creation the *parma magica* (Latin, "magick shield"). This countermagickal protection immunized medieval sorcerers against each other's magick, allowing for more peaceful communication. As a tool of diplomacy, the *parma magica* is extremely important in the history of magick: It permitted the founding of the Houses of Hermes and, indirectly, all the Traditions. The Order made details of the rite available to other Traditions during the Grand Convocation, 1457-66.

To prepare the *parma magica*, the Hermetic creates a hand-sized shield from a personal item that symbolizes her confidence (for instance, an award certificate cut into a shield shape, or a sapphire carved to resemble her mentor's face). The mage holds the item to her heart, then forehead and channels Quintessence into it. She then utters the "Incantation to Welcome Strangers" backwards and places the *parma magica* over her heart — often in a shirt pocket or pouch.

[The **Parma Magica** Effect lets a magician "bank" (store) Quintessence, usable only to aid defensive countermagick, anti-magick and unweaving (**Mage**, pages 172-175). For every success she scores on a "coincidental" Effect roll, the mage may bank 2 points of Quintessence, up to the limit on

her Quintessence/Paradox wheel. Banked Quintessence does not fade or lose potency, and may be replenished after use in the same way as a mage's own Quintessence reserve. This shield is coincidental magick. However, the defender needs time to erect the shield; it does not work automatically.

[The Storyteller may assume that any character who knows this spell begins each story with a full bank of parma magica Quintessence, unless circumstances dictate otherwise.]

**Phlogiston Manipulation (••• Forces, ••• Life, •• Prime, or ••• Forces, ••• Matter, •• Prime)**

According to Georg Ernst Stahl, Sleeper physician and chemist of Prussia (1660-1734), all combustible substances, living and nonliving, contain "phlogiston." Though the Cabal of Pure Thought "disproved" this idea in the 1700s, Hermetic mages still manipulate phlogiston in living beings (using the Life Sphere) or nonliving objects (using Matter), either to ignite them or to render them immune to fire damage. By reinfusing a burnt object with phlogiston, the mage can restore it to its previous condition, so long as it remains largely intact.

To ignite phlogiston, the Hermetic first prepares a special match from a mixture of sulfur, salamander skin and ashes from the victim of a fire elemental. She then strikes the match and touches it to the target.

To protect a target from ignition, or to restore a burned target, the mage must create a personal parma magica shield (see above), burn the shield with a phlogiston match, soak the ashes in water for 10 minutes, then smear the wet ashes over the target.

[Used for damage, the Effect ignites the target's phlogiston, causing damage per the "Damage and Duration" chart as the victim immediately bursts into flames. The burning inflicts this damage each turn for two turns, until the phlogiston is consumed. The victim becomes immune to further fire damage until his phlogiston regenerates (normal healing rate).

[When protecting a target from fire damage, each success on the magick roll counts as two successes for counter-magick or a soak roll against fire-based damage. When healing a person or repairing an object, each success restores one Health Level of fire-based damage. This Effect is highly vulgar and, in modern times, Paradox-prone.]

**Ward the Inner Sanctum (••• Life, •• Correspondence)**

This common yet powerful Effect prevents intruders from entering a defined area (often the mage's Sanctum or Covenant). No living thing may enter the proscribed area, whether by magickal or physical means, until the ward is broken.

This very complex rote takes a long time to cast — typically an hour or more. For most castings, the mage must use special enchanted chalks and pigments to draw or paint a circle of protection around the area to be warded. Runes, pentacles or Enochian names are then added to the circle, and specially made candles are lit and placed at the cardinal points of the circle. Finally, the mage must walk the circle, using a wand of silver and carnelian to trace more protective

runes in the air while uttering a suitable incantation. Different casters use different items or procedures that suit their training and taste.

[The number of successes indicates this Ward's strength. Anyone trying to penetrate the Ward must achieve more successes with offensive counter-magick (or other appropriate roll, as determined by the Storyteller) to break or bypass it. Depending on circumstances, a complementary roll of Wits + a relevant Skill (such as Escapology from *The Book of Shadows*) may reduce the difficulty of the counter-magick roll.

[Other Spheres may be substituted for Life, or simply added to the Effect, to create other Wards. Spirit 3 creates a **Spirit Ward**, Prime 3 **Wards Against Magick**, and so on. This rote is usually vulgar.]

**The Holy Pentacles (•••• Spirit)**

These designs, said to be provided by angels in the early days of magick, are taught to all Hermetic Apprentices during the second rank of their training. It will be a while, however, before they truly master the greatest power of the pentacle — that of summoning and binding the spirits.

Each pentacle conjures spirits to serve a different purpose; although the *Greater Key of Solomon* lists 44 designs, the Order keeps another 66 secret ones for their own use. Each pentacle may be inscribed in stone, metal or wood, or written on virgin parchment; each one must be prepared with inks or metals of appropriate colors and dedicated to the appropriate planets. The names of angels are written in Enochian, Hebrew or Latin at certain junctures of the designs, and the invocations used with each pentacle employ those names. When a magician prepares a ritual circle for her workings, she brings or inscribes the proper pentacles nearby to grant the spirits' cooperation.

A wise magician sets aside a separate circle (inscribed with a sword blade) to keep the Umbrood in. Once an Umbrood has been called, the pentacle keeps it from escaping its circle until the mage finishes her business with the spirit. Hermetic lore promises immediate obedience from astral beings summoned with the right pentacles; while that's an optimistic claim (see "Umbrood Protocols"), this rote, properly cast, does help immeasurably.

[This Hermetic mainstay, a necessity when dealing with summoned Umbrood, combines the **Breach the Gauntlet** and **Gauntlet Prison Effects**. Its boarders are the edges of the pentacle. A botch in the casting means the boarder was drawn imperfectly, allowing the spirit to escape if it so desires....]

**Time Lock (•••• Time, •• or ••• Forces, possibly with •• Prime)**

Through currents of force or elemental favors, a Hermetic magician may select an area or device, key it to a given time, determine how far in the future she wants to trigger the Effect, and choose a form of energy. At the appropriate moment, the defined energy is either projected into or leached away from the target object or area.

The possible uses are almost endless. She can turn on the lights and heat in her home half an hour before she

returns; she can set up a "time bomb" to scrap an enemy's computer by causing it to overload with electricity at exactly 5 PM EST. Some pompous Hermetic mages even use the **Lock** to create portentous sound effects when they enter a room.

This rote requires a watch (or some other timing device) placed in the area of effect. The mage then sets the watch to the time of effect and breaks it.

[Simple Effects with little impact on the story can simply work without a roll. More dramatic uses — such as frying an enemy's computer — require the normal successes (see the "Time Sphere" chart). More powerful Effects require higher levels of Forces; ones that appear out of thin air demand Prime 2.]

**Ball of Abysmal Flames** (••••• Forces, ••••• or ••••• Prime, ••••• Time ••• Matter)

The nuke. It took a while (and many dead mages) to unlock this powerful secret. Hermetic rolls give the credit to Belantine Glass, bani Flambeau, but Caron Mustai disputes her claim. The process is simple, but the magicks involved are not.

The spell begins with an invocation of the fire god Agni or the archangel Gabriel; the pentacle that contains his essence (typically a fourth pentacle of Saturn) is inscribed on the doomed object or location. As the spell begins, the air begins to haze and thicken; magickal sensitives feel a monumental force gathering and accelerating, until... well...

The **Abysmal Flames** pull Quintessence from the surrounding area, ignite it and compress everything within the pentacle. The surrounding air is sucked in and fed to the superheated firestorm, which gathers and grows until the **Ball** explodes, causing phenomenal amounts of destruction. Unless the magician and her cohorts have fled the scene, they may well be incinerated in the blast; hence, Belantine added a timing spell to the incantation. Since then, the spell has become a fixture in Horizon War assaults.

[A ridiculously vulgar, destructive Effect, the **Ball** channels Quintessence from every inanimate object (or, with Prime 5, from living beings, too) in the area and feeds the fire with it. Matter, meanwhile, compresses the explosive result into a baseball-sized lump, which Time discharges when the mage reaches safety. The explosion, when it comes, can level a small town.

[The damage, if you care to determine it, multiplies the magician's successes by five. Thus, a mage rolling five successes causes 30 Health Levels (5 + 1 for Forces magick) worth of aggravated damage to everything for roughly a half-mile around. A Forces 6 variant can destroy a city. Countermagick still absorbs successes normally, and beings with the means to do so can try to soak the damage. Primum reinforcements guard Technocratic compounds somewhat, but the Effect is still considerable.

[The caster can use extended rolls for this Effect, adding new successes each time she does so; it's not smart to roll more than twice, however — a botch or failure unleashes the Effect at once. This spell is not, it should be noted, used lightly. The Technocracy, as we can imagine, really hates it — and has developed a similar weapon in response.]

**Distill the Azoth Elixir** (••••• Life, ••• Prime, •• Matter, possibly with ••••• Spirit)

Azoth, the "Life Principle" isolated by Master Paracelsus, is one of history's greatest alchemical creations; modern Hermetic mages often create it using chemical, rather than alchemical, processes. Paracelsus is said to have carried Azoth in a secret compartment in the hilt of his sword. Sleeper scholars claim that what he actually carried was another discovery of his — laudanum — but the Order of Hermes knows the truth.

Azoth, a highly magickal liquid, can heal any wound, eradicate any disease, and even restore life to the recently dead — or so the tales say. Few mages ever attain the understanding necessary to test these tales, for the creation of Azoth is a complex process that requires nine lunar cycles. On the new moon, the Hermetic mixes her own blood with that of a magickal creature (though never the undead) in a jasper vial stoppered with pearl. Each dawn thereafter, she summons that day's guardian (as determined by the Pymandic Charts). The mage commands the guardian to incant the Nine Orisons of God's Name; during the creature's chant, the magician burns a small quantity of blood from the vial mixed with mercury or other valuable liquids. After nine months, the last drop of the mage's blood in the vial transforms into a dram of Azoth.

According to Paracelsus, Azoth can be bottled and stored for "no more than a sennight" (a week) without losing potency.

[For every success on the magick roll, the mage may create one dram (dose) of Azoth, at a cost of one Quintessence per dose. Each dose heals three Health Levels of damage (even aggravated damage). Ten doses revive a person or being who has died within the current story. However, the resurrectee is little more than a mindless husk unless its spirit can somehow be returned to the body; Azoth restores physical, not spiritual, life. Additional Spirit 4 magick might remedy this deficiency, but no modern mage has successfully brewed such Azoth. Use of Azoth is always vulgar, and draws Paradox spirits unusually quickly.]

## SUGGESTED READING

We'll say it again and again: **Mage** is a game. Period. For Storytelling purposes, this Tradition book has taken many liberties with its sources. Don't use it to attempt spiritual transformation, okay?

That said, the books below might offer a few insights into the Hermetic paradigm of concept, art and thought. Happy reading... and don't forget to bring a dictionary.

- Barrett, Francis. *The Magus*. Includes a great deal of excellent detail about natural, elemental and magnetic magic, alchemy and Qabbalistic magic, as well as biographies of famous Hermetics.

- Bell, Eric Temple. *The Magick of Numbers*. A History of mathematical magic, with Pythagoras as a hero.

- Budge, Sir Wallis. *Egyptian Magic*. Good general background.



- Butler, E. M. *The Myth of the Magus*. A biographical study of several well-known Order members.
- Copenhaver, Brian P. *Hermetica*. The Greek *Corpus Hermeticum* and the Latin *Asclepius* in translation.
- Flowers, Stephen E., ed. *Hermetic Magick: The Postmodern Magickal Papyrus of Abaris*. The best popular introduction to Hermetic magickal practices available in the Sleeping world.
- Fowden, Garth. *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind*. This explains the Greco-Egyptian synthesis at the core of Hermetic thinking.
- Gager, John G., ed. *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*. A study of European foci, their effects and their methods of manufacture.
- Godwin, Joscelyn. *Robert Fludd: Hermetic Philosopher and Surveyor of Two Worlds*. Study of a Hermetic and his beliefs.
- Halevi, Z'ev ben Shimon. *Kabbalah: Tradition of Hidden Knowledge*. Complex introduction with lots of illustrations.
- King, Francis. *Magick: The Western Tradition*. A good history of Western occultism.
- Klossowski de Rola, Stanislas. *Alchemy: The Secret Art*. Excellent introduction with illustrative plates.
- Lawlor, Robert. *Sacred Geometry: Philosophy and Practice*. Explains how geometry underlies the structure of the universe.
- Scott, Walter, ed. and trans. *Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings Which Contain Religious or Philosophic Teachings Ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus*. The core writings of the Order that have been released to Sleepers.
- Supplements for the *Ars Magica* roleplaying game, formerly published by Lion Rampant, White Wolf and Wizards of the Coast, now available from Atlas Games; Tweet, Jonathan. *The Order of Hermes: A Complete Society of Wizards in a Medieval Setting and Houses of Hermes*; both *Ars Magica* supplements detail the Order in the Mythic Age.
- Van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. Trans. by Monika B. Vizedom and Gabrielle L. Caffee. A cross-cultural study of initiation.
- Waterfield, Robin, trans. *The Theology of Arithmetic: On the Mystical, Mathematical and Cosmological Symbolism of the First Ten Numbers*. This translation of the writings of Iamblichus is the key to Hermetic number theory.
- Webb, Don. *The Seven Faces of Darkness: Practical Typhonian Magick*. A study of the "darker" side of Hermetism, the Typhonian path.

# ORDER OF HERMES™

MAGE: The Ascension™

Name:  
Player:  
Chronicle:

Nature:  
Essence:  
Demeanor:

Concept:  
Mentor:  
Cabal:

## Attributes

### Physical

Strength ●○○○○  
Dexterity ●○○○○  
Stamina ●○○○○

### Social

Charisma ●○○○○  
Manipulation ●○○○○  
Appearance ●○○○○

### Mental

Perception ●○○○○  
Intelligence ●○○○○  
Wits ●○○○○

## Abilities

### Talents

Alertness ○○○○○  
Athletics ○○○○○  
Awareness ○○○○○  
Brawl ○○○○○  
Dodge ○○○○○  
Expression ○○○○○  
Instruction ○○○○○  
Intuition ○○○○○  
Intimidation ○○○○○  
Streetwise ○○○○○  
Subterfuge ○○○○○

### Skills

Do ○○○○○  
Drive ○○○○○  
Etiquette ○○○○○  
Firearms ○○○○○  
Leadership ○○○○○  
Meditation ○○○○○  
Melee ○○○○○  
Research ○○○○○  
Stealth ○○○○○  
Survival ○○○○○  
Technology ○○○○○

### Knowledges

Computer ○○○○○  
Cosmology ○○○○○  
Culture ○○○○○  
Enigmas ○○○○○  
Investigation ○○○○○  
Law ○○○○○  
Linguistics ○○○○○  
Lore ○○○○○  
Medicine ○○○○○  
Occult ○○○○○  
Science ○○○○○

## Spheres

Correspondence ○○○○○  
Entropy ○○○○○  
Forces ●○○○○

Life ○○○○○  
Mind ○○○○○  
Matter ○○○○○

Prime ○○○○○  
Spirit ○○○○○  
Time ○○○○○

## Advantages

### Backgrounds

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○○○○○  
○○○○○  
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○○○○○

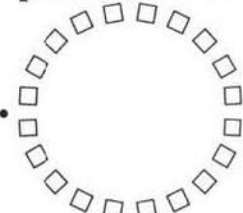
### Arete

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### Willpower

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
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### Quintessence



### Paradox

### Other Traits

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○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○

### Health

Bruised -0 ☐  
Hurt -1 ☐  
Injured -1 ☐  
Wounded -2 ☐  
Mauled -2 ☐  
Crippled -5 ☐  
Incapacitated ☐

### Experience



## MAGE: The Ascension™

**Armor:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Expanded Background

Contacts, Sleeper

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Contacts, Awakened

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Influence, Sleeper

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Allies, Awakened

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Resources

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Mentor

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Familiar

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Chantry

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Acolytes

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Node(s)

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## Possessions

Gear (Carried)

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Equipment (Owned)

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Hermetic Instruments

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Ritual Style

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# ORDER OF HERMES

MAGE: The Ascension™

## History

### Awakening

### Goals/Destiny

Seekings

Quiets

## Description

Age

Apparent Age

Date of Birth

Age of Awakening

Hair

Eyes

Race

Nationality

Height

Weight

Sex

Shadow Name

Appearance/Nature of Avatar

## Visuals

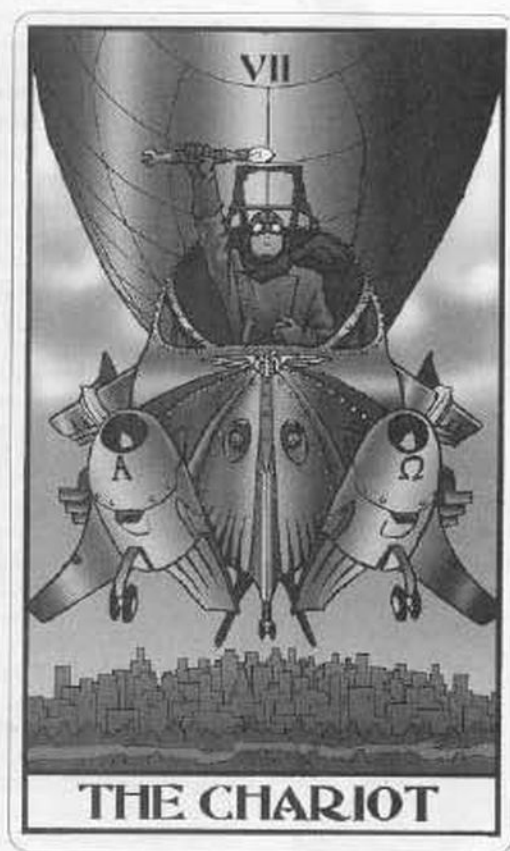
Cabal Chart

Character Sketch



# PARADIGMA

Journal of the Progressive Sciences



Editor in Chief: Doctor William Bridges



# PARADIGMA

"For the Increase and Diffusion of True Science"

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# PARADIGMA

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## CONTENTS

Into the Hollow Earth	5
Introduction to <i>Paradigma</i>	11
The Birth of True Science	13
The Old Boys Club	31
Opinions	43
Appendix I: The Halls of Science	51
Appendix II: Theory and Practice	61



# INTO THE HOLLOW EARTH

## A Doctor Eon Adventure

This excerpt from one of Doc Eon's most thrilling adventures originally appeared in both *Astonishing Science Stories* (April 1944), and *Paradigma* (Vol. 37, No. 1). The pulp accounts of Doctor Eon's travels were written by Joe "Lucky Skunk" Ross, one of Doc's Terrific Trio. The other Trio members were Frank "Bull" Barrett, a physics and mechanical engineering expert, and Simon "Sesquipedalian" Smith, a mathematician and astronomer. However, aside from his admirable grasp of electricity, Ross was a jack-of-all-trades and master of none.

The following segment is the final chapter of "Into the Hollow Earth." In previous chapters, Doc Eon and his Terrific Trio followed the Nazi Thule Society into the cavern at the North Pole and, after defeating the Nazi-controlled deros, discovered the ancient city of Agharta. Doc Eon and his crew allied with the Goro monks to halt the Nazi menace, but were captured at the end of the last chapter by General Karl Haushofer, the black magician behind Hitler's rise to power...

### Chapter XX: Final Gambit

Joe "Lucky Skunk" Ross groaned in the darkness. He groggily opened his eyes but could see nothing. Painfully, he shifted his massive bulk and sat up, nearly falling down again as the blood rushed from his head.

"Whoah... I feel like I've been shanghaied. That's some bruise I've got on my noggin. Those razzis don't kid around with a rifle butt!"

"You're telling me," a voice broke out of the darkness. Joe swung his head around, trying to see where the voice came from.

"Izzat you, Bull?" he said.

"Yeah. We're all here. You're the last up."

"Yeah? What's Doc Eon been up to?"

"Trying to figure a way outta this cage."

"Hey, where are we anyway? I can't see my nose in front of my face."

"A most appropriate testament to the lack of luminiferous ether disturbance, considering the rare size of your proboscis," another voice said.

"I heard that, Simon. Don't be thinkin' that just 'cause I can't see ya I'm gonna forgive ya."

"Quiet down, all of you," a strong, deep voice said. Immediately, Joe shut up and listened to their leader, Doctor Eon. "I've slipped free of my ropes, but I had to break them to do so. Now, I'm going to loosen all of your bonds so you can free yourselves when you need to. But the guards need to believe you're still tied up when they come back."

"Sure, Doc," Joe said. "We can play possum. How'd you get free, anyway?"

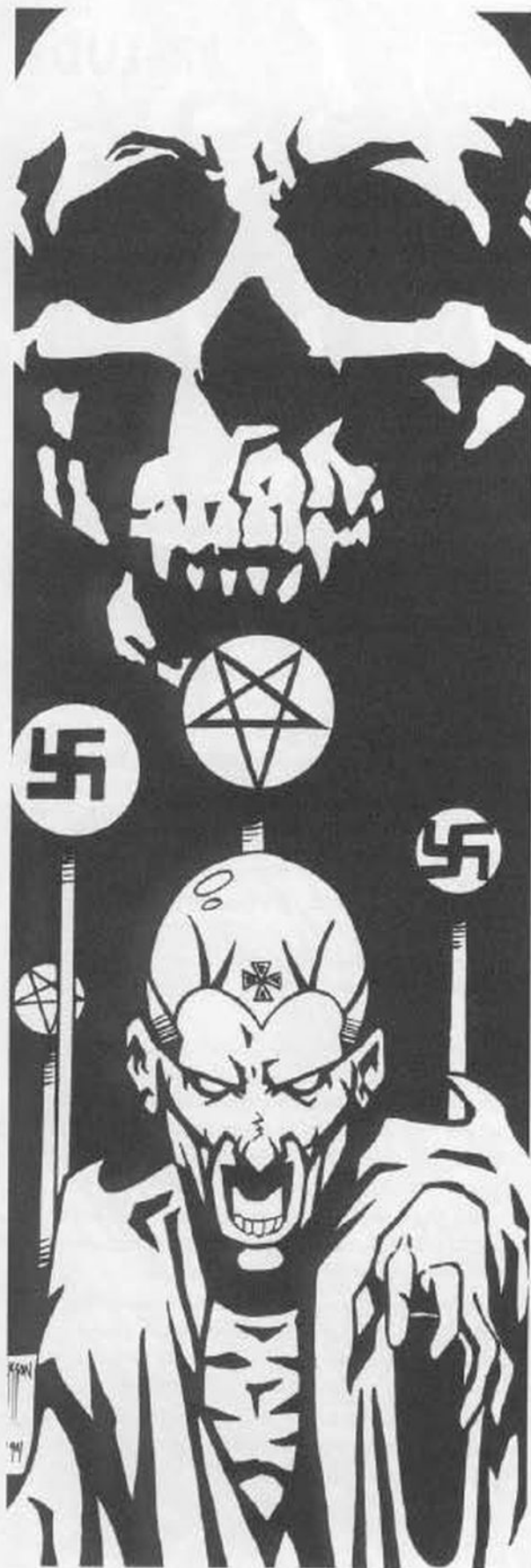
"An old trick I learned from the Eastern Brotherhood," Doc Eon said as he reached through the darkness and began to work Joe's ropes free.

"Hey, Doc!" Bull said. "There's a light coming this way. A torch, I think." As the light approached, Doctor Eon worked quickly, loosening his crew's ropes while making them appear as tight as when they were tied. In the flickering light of the approaching torch, they could all see that they were in a cavern.

The Nazis emerged from around the corner, led by Sgt. Grumman Strauss. He came to a halt a few feet away from the prisoners and eyed them suspiciously.

"Where is the Doctor?" he yelled, looking about and not seeing his prisoners' leader. If he lost this prey, General Haushofer, in his anger, would probably forgo all court-martial proceedings and shoot him outright.

"He's tryin' to get some shut-eye back there," Joe said, motioning with his head to the deep tunnel behind them. "So put out that torch, will ya?"



Strauss glared in contempt at the piggish American brute before him: "Shut your Yankee mouth before I shut it for you, you varthog!"

"Hey, that's my pal you're talking to!" Bull yelled. "You want to shut him up, you gotta shut me up first!"

Strauss pulled his SS boot back to hurl a strong kick into Bull — when he was suddenly thrown to the ground by a flashing shadow. The guards all shouted and drew their weapons, but before they could raise them, the submachine guns were snatched from their hands by the darting shadow.

"Vas ist!" they yelled. But before they could get another word out, powerful fists hammered the backs of their heads. They crumpled to the ground, unconscious.

Sgt. Strauss was leaping to his feet, reaching for his Luger, when Joe jumped at him, his loosened ropes falling to the ground. He tackled the Nazi hard, knocking the wind from him, and quickly wrapped him up in a wrestler's hold.

Doctor Eon walked over, no longer moving at Ultra-Speed. He reached behind the German's ear and gently applied pressure to his neck. Strauss immediately dropped into unconsciousness.

"I sure wish I could get the hang of that nerve touch you got, Doc Eon, but I can't ever find the nerves when I need to," Joe said.

"That's because your digits are too mammoth to accomplish the task," Simon "Sesquipedalian" Smith said as he shook off his ropes.

"Come on," Doc Eon said. "We don't have any time to waste. If Haushofer discovers the secret of the Smoky God, he could well destroy Agharta!"

Doctor Eon and his crew quickly made their way out of the cavern prison, with the Nazis' torches to guide them.

\*\*\*

A strange tableau was taking place in the Middle Cavern. Lan Ko, high priest of the Goro monks, stood with his hands tied behind him, surrounded by severe-looking Nazis. Across the cavern, the rest of the holy order gathered, watching as their leader was questioned by the Black Monk of the Third Reich, General Karl Haushofer.

"You will talk to me," Haushofer said, "or else I will be forced to make an example of you before all your priests. I do not joke."

Lan Ko responded in a patient, even tone: "Do with me what you will, evil one. I will not betray Doctor Eon by disclosing the location of his equipment."

Haushofer's hand lashed out, smashing into the priest's face. Lan Ko crumbled to the ground, somehow maintaining a composed demeanor even as his nose bled. "Fool. I know you are hiding it. I need that Solar Conversion Engine! Only with it will I be able to harness the power of your underground sun, that which you call the Smoky God."

Across the cavern, from a high ledge, Doctor Eon and his crew watched the grim proceedings.

"Jeez, I wanta pound that Haushofer within an inch of his life! Hittin' priests is awful low," Joe whispered.

"We can't act yet, not until we regain my equipment," the Doctor replied. "Come on, let's move. From Lan Ko's refusal to speak, I have to assume the gear is still in the pit near the Summit of the Inner Sun, where we stashed it after our arrival."

"Explain this to me again, Doc," Bull said. "What happens if Haushofer does get your solar engine? I mean, it's just an energy conversion device to turn the sun's rays into electric power for our ship, right?"

"As it is presently built, yes," Doc Eon replied. "But Haushofer has a Ray Projector of his own design. I believe he will be able to combine the two to create a massively powerful gun fueled by the inner sun's energies — a sort of fusion gun."

"Criminy!" Joe exclaimed. "With that kinda fire power, he could win the war! What makes you think he could combine the two, Doc? He don't seem that smart to me."

"Don't underestimate him, Joe. He's the mastermind behind Hitler's rise to power. And he has allies, the Mechanocracy."

"Those rats!! I see what you mean, Doc. If they're helpin' him out, then he just might be able to do it."

"Actually, combining the two devices shouldn't be that hard."

"Why do you say that, Doc?"

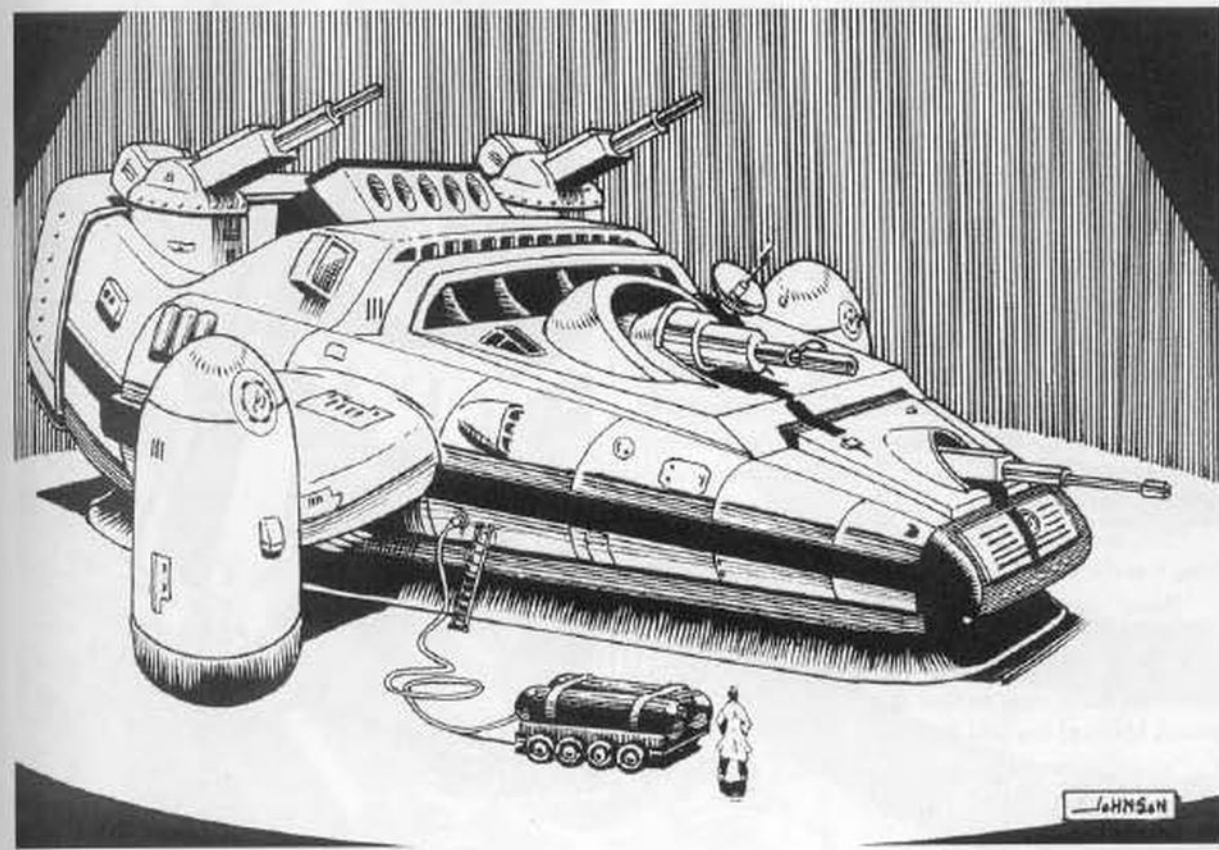
"Because I've already figured out how to do it." With that, Doctor Eon crawled forward, heading for the passage down to the inner bowl of the world. Joe, Bull and Simon looked at each other apprehensively, shrugged, and followed quietly behind their leader.

Soon, they emerged from the tight caverns into the green, sunlit pastures of the inner bowl. Suspended before them, although miles away at the center, was a flaming ball of fire, identical to the sun but many times smaller, providing light and life to the inner realm.

The Doctor led his men down the lightly forested hills and valleys toward the high summit overlooking the Great Valley. It was here, from a separate cavern complex, that he and his men had arrived in their Tunneling Tank days before. Upon reaching the small entrance, Doctor Eon carefully moved in, looking for Nazi guards. His Trio followed, ready for anything. The cave appeared empty but for the massive Tank.

"It's still here, and untouched from the looks of it," Doctor Eon said. "Let's get our weapons and take care of Haushofer and his gang."

"Not so fast, Doctor!" Haushofer's voice called out. Doctor Eon and his men froze. From behind the Tank, the Nazi General appeared, accompanied by three elite guards. In one hand he held a Luger aimed at Doctor Eon, while his other hand remained hidden behind his back. "Did you think I could not wrest the secret of this location from that amateur monk?"



"What have you done with Lan Ko?" Doctor Eon asked.

"Oh, do not worry, Doctor. He still lives, although he will be a vegetable for the rest of his life. Having such hard-kept thoughts pruned from his mind was a painful experience for him."

"How did you—?"

"Do you think the Third Reich knows only tanks and bullets? Fool! Thanks to me, we have mastered the methods of the mind also. My Mental Thrall Helmet forces subjects to divulge all, as you will soon do, Doctor."

Haushofer moved his hand from behind his back, revealing a large helmet studded with coils and wires. "Put this on!"

One of the guards took the helmet and moved toward the Doctor. Joe jumped forward, but Doc's hand darted out, halting him. "Not now, Joe. The odds are suicide."

Joe hung his head. "You can't let them do this, Doc. If he finds out half of what you know..."

"We'll get out of this somehow, Joe," Doctor Eon said.

The guard shoved the helmet on Doctor Eon's head and tied the strap tight. Bull opened and closed his fist over and over as he watched, frustrated and helpless to act. Haushofer walked over to the Doctor and chuckled.

"Vell, vell. Now let us see what you know," he said as he reached up and turned a knob on the helmet. Immediately, sparks flew and coils lit with flickering energy. Doctor Eon grimaced in pain, his muscles contracting. "Tell me, Doctor, how does your Solar Conversion Engine work..."

The Doctor's face became blank. "The principle is simple, based on the pioneering work of Czar Vargo with his Air Engine..."

"Yes, yes, tell me more, Doctor..." Haushofer said, his face lighting up with glee, totally absorbed.

"We gotta do somethin', Bull," Joe said. "They're turnin' him into a zombie."

"Shut up!" a guard yelled.

"But what should we do?" Bull replied. "These guards'll shoot us if we move an inch."

"...solar panels collect and store the sun's rays..." Doc Eon continued in a monotone.

"And? What next?" Haushofer said, listening intently.

"...large batteries then transfer the energy into Tesla coils... Listen closely, Haushofer: You will point your Luger at the nearest of your guards and shoot him."

"Yes, yes, I shall," Haushofer said, raising his gun and firing it at the closest guard, killing him instantly.

"Now!" Joe yelled, leaping forward and wrenching the Schmeiser from the hands of another guard, who was too startled to resist. Joe swung it around to point at the remaining guard, only to find the German lying on the ground, knocked out cold by Bull.

"What? What is this?!" Haushofer yelled, shaking his head as if to clear it.



In one smooth movement, Doctor Eon flung the helmet from his head and slipped the Luger from Haushofer's grip, pointing it back at the General. "Your mad attempt to create a devastating ray of destruction ends here, Haushofer."

"How?!" Haushofer screamed. "How did you overcome the effects of the helmet? And what did you do to me?"

"You forget, General, I spent a number of days with the Goro monks before you arrived here. From them, I learned the Science of Om, a method of mental control. Normally, it is a personal technique for self-meditation, but your helmet magnified the psi effects, allowing me to project the helmet's own mental control capabilities outward — toward you."

"Clever, Doctor Eon, very clever. But it's not over yet—" Haushofer yelled and then ran from the cavern.

"Shoot him, Doc!" Joe shouted.

"I want him alive!" Doctor Eon said as he took off in chase after the General. He emerged from the cave to see Haushofer running for the summit edge.

"No, Haushofer! Don't jump, you fool!" Doctor Eon cried.

"Ha! You can't dupe me! I know there's a river below to catch my fall!" Haushofer said as he leapt over the precipice and quickly disappeared.

But he did not fall down towards the river. Instead, he found himself swinging through the air in a speeding arc toward the giant, smoldering star at the center of the world.

"No! No!" he yelled as he flew into the flaming ball of gas, flaring up in a bright burst of fire before vanishing completely.

"What the —?!" Joe yelled, as he and the rest of the Trio reached the edge of the summit. "What happened?"

"It would seem that Haushofer did not understand the laws of physics governing the hollow world," Simon said. "Odd considering that he and his Mechanocrat allies helped to discover them. Haushofer thought he was falling down, not realizing that in the hollow earth, down is up, relative to the surface world. Due to the gravitic pull of the inner solar body, he was pulled toward it, and thus fell down, into the sun."

"He was destroyed by the Smoky God he sought to use for destruction," Doctor Eon said, staring at the smoldering orb where Haushofer was now cinders among cinders. "Ironical indeed."

"Well, at least that means we can quit this place and get back to the real action," Joe said.

Everyone turned and looked at him.

"You never cease to astonish me, Joe," Simon said. "We have witnessed an amazing spectacle of physics and all you care about is helping to win a war."

"Hey, that's not what I said! I meant that the next issue of Doc's exploits hits the stands in less than two weeks. I gotta get crackin' at the keys!"

Doctor Eon began to laugh, a deep hearty sound.





## INTRODUCTION

# Welcome, students...

...to this special introductory volume of *Paradigma*. It has been prepared expressly to aid you as you embark on this, the greatest journey of your lives — the grand adventure of Science.

The Editors of *Paradigma* have assembled a host of articles from past issues of our prestigious journal, spanning a period from the turn of the century to the present day. Within, you will discover many truths and many controversies. Science is, if nothing else, controversial. But, as you will learn, this is for the ultimate good. Healthy debate must thrive, lest a faulty theory find its way into the Consensus and weaken the whole of our work. You will learn, as you grow in your understanding of our world and yourselves, that we bear a great responsibility, a duty to ensure that our Science is perfect. Only through this continual striving will humankind reach Ascension.

But perfection is not the whole of Science. No, aesthetics are just as important, something our former colleagues in the Technocracy have forgotten. Science is of the human spirit; indeed, it is its greatest expression. What is Science without the elegance of the spirit, without the grand and majestic beauty of existence? Remember the first tenet of the *Kitab al Alacir*: We create our own worlds. An ugly world only reflects its creator's image. I bid you, let not your works be ugly.

Your theories will be attacked, and if they are unassailable, your character will be attacked. They will stop at nothing to halt your progress, to prevent wonder from again entering the human vocabulary. Indeed, they will call you mad. Yes, mad. But wisdom waits in the eye of the storm. Only by passing through the hail of their insults and navigating the treacherous paths they have built through Knowledge will you feel the caress of volatile energy in your bodies and minds, the spinning dynamos of invention in your Selves and the sparks of intent rising to the thunderous sky of night toward Ascension. Only then will you be truly Awake.

Read. Think. Understand. And then Create!

— Editors

**Note:** The opinions expressed herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editors. *Paradigma* is an objective journal, neither judging or passing sentence. While the Editors strive to ensure the veracity of author's claims, the responsibility for such claims rests ultimately with their authors.

The ownership of the theories expressed herein rests with the individual authors. Due to past disputes over ownership issues, the Editors of this special volume have selectively edited certain details pertaining to each theory. The full accounts may be found in the issue in which the article originally appeared (listed with each excerpt), or with the author of the article.



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# THE BIRTH OF TRUE SCIENCE

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*I sing the body electric,  
The armies of those I love engirth me and I engirth them,  
They will not let me off till I go with them, respond to them,  
And disarm them, and charge them full with the charge of the soul.*  
— Walt Whitman, "I Sing the Body Electric"

## Beginnings

### The Kitab al Alacir: A Historical Study

by Sir Lawrence Cabot  
[from Vol. 3, No. 2]

*I devise a theory. I witness the world, seeking the tenets of  
my theory. Proof after proof is delivered to me, demonstrating  
that my theory is true. Did I create the proofs, or does my theory  
only reflect the world?*

*A shepherd tells me that Scamander, the river god, is angry.  
When I ask how he knows this, he points to the rapids, crashing  
against the rocks, and says "Does he not appear angry?"*

*Is he angry? Or do we make him angry by believing it so?  
Perhaps he is neutral until we meddle. Until we will it other-  
wise...*

— Aretus, *Kitab al Alacir* (Lord Edmund translation)

All members of our Tradition are familiar with the *Kitab al Alacir*, but few are fully cognizant of the history of this most pivotal work and its immense influence, not just upon our Tradition, but upon the world. In fact, Aristotle himself studied the scroll (he translated it into Greek) and it greatly influenced his metaphysics, leading to his realization of the existence of the Fifth Essence: the Ether.

We begin with excerpts from the debate about wise Aretus, the first philosopher and father of our philosophy. Aretus is the author of the *Kitab al Alacir*, or the "Book of Ether." The most famous English translation is Lord Edmund's (1900), although more recent translations are available (Fleming, 1945; Doctor Elektrik, 1956; and Forthright, 1981). The most renowned early commentator, Sir Lawrence Cabot, influenced the translators of all existing editions with his scholarship. And so, we commence with a selection from Cabot's article in the Summer, 1909 issue of *Paradigma*...

Splendid confirmation, indeed, of the importance of the *Kitab al Alacir*. But there is a far more significant aspect of the scroll, one that revolutionizes history itself. We have long believed that Thales was the first philosopher; the first Greek to ask consequential questions about the world around him and attempt to formulate consistent answers. The *Kitab al Alacir*, however, shows us that Thales was not the first. No, there was another before him. This pioneer, Aretus, authored the *Kitab al Alacir* and thus the founding tenets of our Tradition.

Who was Aretus? Very little is known about his life. What knowledge we do possess is the result of painstaking research based on the *Kitab al Alacir*, but also including in-depth classical study. We believe that he lived in ancient Troy and was alive during the legendary siege of that city, in which he is presumed to have perished, along with much of the populace.

We can discount the various legends that chronicle his escape from Troy and subsequent travels. One such tradition has him advising Aeneas, forefather of Rome's founders. This story is based on mysterious fragments supposedly

salvaged from Carthage after its destruction. But since we suspect that Virgil fabricated this tale for the pleasure of Augustus, we must discard it. The other notable tradition locates Aretus with Brutus, thus taking him to the founding of Britain, where it is said that he aided Brutus in ejecting the giant Gogmagog from the isle. Again, while this information is upheld by fragmentary lore found amongst Druidic records, the evidence does not fully support it.

So, we are left with the most plausible possibility: that Parmenesthes, a Trojan studying under Aretus, fled to the East with the only extant scroll of Aretus' work. This scroll was written, we believe, not in Greek, which did not exist as a written language at that time, but in either Phoenician or some Eastern script. We know that Aretus was well-traveled; that he could write at all in a period of rampant illiteracy is amazing. Parmenesthes is mentioned in a number of minor Greek and Persian sources and is the origin of the early confusion over nomenclature in our Tradition, as he was mistaken for Parmenides by the Arabic translators of the *Kitab al Alacr*, thus beginning a long controversy. Indeed, the only error in the manuscript wrought by the Arabic translators is due to this misunderstanding. I will explore this further in a future issue of this journal [Vol. 5, No. 1]. I will also explain the rumours that these translators were mages of the Ahl-i-Batin.

Since we can confirm this latter story with the most certainty, we must conclude, at least for now, that it is the true one. Following Parmenesthes to what would later become Persia, Aretus' work disappears from history for a while, to be rediscovered by Alexander the Great in his push to the East. An unnamed city was sacked, and a storehouse of ancient scrolls was discovered. Amongst these were Aretus' writings. The scrolls were sent back to Alexander's teacher, Aristotle, so changing the course of Western natural philosophy.

## House Golo

That Aristotle was impressed is a fact; he forthwith revised his view of the heavens, placing around all the elements the Fifth Essence, that which we now call Ether. However, Aristotle never revealed this scroll to others, and so Aretus is nonexistent in Consensus history. Why he did this is unknown, but it is surmised that the portions of Aretus' philosophy which concern the malleability of reality, those which we have taken to heart, scared Aristotle. He was afraid of the import of what he read. But he did keep the scroll, recopying it into Greek. It is this version which made its way to the Arab world, surviving the fall of Rome and the barbarianism of the West.

It was translated into Arabic (by the Ahl-i-Batin?), and this version of the scroll, the one known as the *Kitab al Alacr*, appeared in Moorish Spain, and in the late 12th century, finally fell into the hands of the Italian merchant prince, Lorenzo Golo. Golo was an intelligent and questing man who, besides being a rich Italian noble, was a young

magus of House Verditius. Thus, he was also a member of the medieval Order of Hermes.

Golo was enthralled by what he read. It opened the door to new possibilities, to new forms of magick — to Science. He returned to Venice and began an intense period of study. He attracted others who were also interested in the ideas set forth by Aretus many centuries ago. They presented their new philosophies before their fellow magi, but were scorned by that backward lot. Incensed, they split from the Tribunal and created their own House, named after Golo.

At the same time, unknown to House Golo, another group was evolving in France, led by the Knight Templar Simon de Laurent, who was secretly a magus of the Cabal of Pure Thought (today the New World Order). While fighting in the Crusades under Richard the Lionhearted, Laurent pillaged a minor city on the coast. In an old vault under the city's mosque, Laurent discovered a treasure trove of ancient Greek works, stored ages before. There, amongst the cases, he found Aristotle's Greek translation of Aretus' work.

House Golo, building their tradition on the foundation of the Arabic scroll, had the initial, perfectly reasonable, fault of crediting the work to Parmenides. The Knights of Laurent, however, who based their tradition on the Greek scroll, rightfully attributed the writings to Aretus. In a future article, I will discuss the fallacies that arise from linking Aretus and Parmenides [Vol. 5, No. 1; see sidebar]. For now, though, we will concern ourselves with the different traditions these two men built from the two different, but similar, translations of the same work.

Even considering the confusion about Parmenides, most theorize that the Arabic scroll is a more forceful translation, staying truer to the mystic content of the original. The Greek version, perhaps due to the bias of its translator, is believed to be less reliable in the mystical passages, but more so in the natural philosophy section. Assessing this today, we can appreciate the irony in that the worldly merchant prince wound up with the mystic scroll while the holy Knight Templar found the more secular scroll.

Our great Tradition would perchance not exist today, were it not for a meeting of these two men. Golo had begun trading with the coastal cities of France, and while there received an invitation to Paris. On this visit, he was introduced to Sir Simon de Laurent, and they soon began conversing. They immediately recognized the affinity between their unique theories, and after a long night of trading philosophies, realized that they possessed the same scroll, albeit in two different translations.

They sealed a pact, then and there, to unite their two traditions, to bring the two halves of the *Kitab al Alacr* together and forge a great new guild of philosophers. And thus was our Tradition finally born in the early 13th century.



## The Natural Philosophers Guild

Of course, it is a bit hasty to make such a bold statement. Our Tradition, as we know it, was not actualized until the early 19th century. Before that time, the various guilds, orders and houses which formed a loose union around Aretus' ideas were legion. The initial affiliation of Houses Golo and Laurent was named the Natural Philosophers Guild and it eventually caused Laurent's excommunication and saw the threat of a similar fate delivered on its various members. During this period the Guild broke up into groups, each advocating its own goals. Many of these factions added tenets to their philosophies which rendered them acceptable to the Church.

These various sub-guilds were key in establishing the Renaissance, the re-flowering of reason in Europe. These early Scientists, calling themselves magi, were responsible for many valuable creations ("discoveries" in the nomenclature of our former colleagues in the Technocracy; we know better). These include: the first human-powered flying machine (still unknown to the Consensus), gunpowder (in the West), advanced steel-making and many other brilliant inventions.

The story of how our Tradition re-formed after such a fractious split belongs in another article. It is worth mentioning here, however, that these two separate traditions, Golo's and Laurent's, also worked with different forms of Science (magick). As an Order of Hermes mage, Golo was concerned mainly with the Sphere of Forces, while Laurent's own workings in Science (magick) dealt in the main with the Sphere of Matter (and also Mind). Consequently, these two Spheres have battled for the top position in our Tradition over the years, with Forces carrying the flag during the 19th century (as epitomized by the science of the Electrodyne Engineers), but with Matter winning out when the Sons left the Technocracy and joined the Council of Nine. This has proved fortuitous, of course, for we now realize that the secret of Ether lies within the Sphere of Matter.

## Over the Wine-Dark Sea of Time to Ancient Troy

by Scientist Latch  
[from Vol. 83, No. 2]

Over the years, many prestigious members of our Tradition have studied fabled Aretus and his wise scroll. But it is time to set the record straight. Much of the previous scholarship has borne the inevitable mark of the Consensus. By this, I mean that too many assumptions common to standard history have been considered gospel. But we know who writes the history books.

Did Aretus really come from Troy? Doubtful. This belief originates in the earliest conjectures of the pre-Tradition medieval guilds. But remember that in the Middle Ages, it was fashionable to assign noble Trojan lineage to famous ancestors, ennobling the modern lines through this "royal" heritage. I believe these liberties were taken with Aretus.

Given the new evidence [see the full article in the volume listed above for details], it is likely that Aretus was a follower of Heraclitus, making the early confusion with Parmenides even more ironic. Heraclitus and Parmenides are the two sides of an extreme coin: On one side, the world is ever-changing, on the other, it is eternally the same.

Therefore, it is possible that Aristotle did not translate any of the *Kitab al Alacir*, and that the Greek writings discovered by Laurent were the originals, not translations. On the other hand, it is possible that, just as Socrates exists only through Plato's words, we have only Aristotle's interpretation of Aretus' words.

Certainly, more in-depth, modern scholarship needs to be dedicated to this issue...

### The Parmenides Fraud

by Sir Lawrence Cabot  
[from Vol. 5, No. 1]

It is time to seriously refute the preposterous claim of kinship between the ideas of Parmenides and those of Aretus. Parmenides' tenets were as follows:

1. *What is, is uncreated.* Parmenides believed that there is no nothing, that there is always something. Thus, something cannot be created, for it would have to be created out of nothing.

Aretus denied this, for he claimed that every moment is an act of creation — a very modern idea! And this posited by a Trojan, no less!

2. *What is, is indestructible.* Destruction would mean that something becomes nothing, an impossibility for Parmenides.

Aretus denied this belief as well. Surely, the Pure Ones were destructible.

3. *What is, is eternal.* What is uncreated and indestructible must be eternal.

Aretus did not deny this directly, but if it were so, it follows that Oblivion is an illusion. We do not choose to believe this today.

4. *What is, is unchangeable.* The ultimate, ridiculous conclusion. Drivel such as Zeno's Paradox grew out of this, the most static reality imaginable.

Aretus maintained that things change all the time, yet they often share similarities with previous states. Thus, things change, but sometimes appear to stay the same. Without change, magick is impossible, and so too, Science.



# The Kitab al Alacir: Metaphysics and the Mind

by Sir Lawrence Cabot

[from Vol. 3, No. 3]

...The *Kitab al Alacir* can be divided into two sections: metaphysics, or natural philosophy; and mysticism, or a study of thought and its ontological nature. Rumours of a lost third section, dealing with politics, cannot be substantiated.

The metaphysical portion greatly influenced Aristotle. It considers this question: What is the world made of? Aretus concluded that everything is but a variation on a single substance, a single Essence. Writing and thinking far before the advent of atomists, it is not surprising that his world is not made up of discrete atoms or particles, as science proposes today. Whereas successive Greek philosophers reduced the world to a single elemental substance, such as Water (Thales) or Fire (Heraclitus), Aretus claimed that all "elements" are but facets of the Essence. Thus, the world was One for Aretus, and, he deduced, became Many through the action of the mind.

Aristotle took this Essence and placed it within his own natural philosophy as the Fifth Essence, which was later called Ether. It surrounds all the other elements: Earth, Air, Water and Fire. Why Aristotle denied the rest of Aretus' philosophy is unknown, but there are many presumptions.

(I will discuss the more technical matter of the rumoured Tenth Sphere of Ether later. According to study of the *Kitab al Alacir*, Aretus seems to have mastered this nonexistent Sphere. Arguments abound, however, and some claim he is actually speaking of the Spirit or Mind Sphere, but possessed not the words to write of them as such.) [See Vol. 7, No. 4]

Aretus' understanding of this Essence is developed in the second section of the book, that which we label as the mystic section. Aretus held that there are differentiations within the Essence, although everything is made up of Essence. Thus, there can be individuals, whether plant (an oak), animal (a tiger) or human (you and I).

There is some speculation, based on hints in the text and theories concerning the "lost section," that Aretus did not believe that every person is equally differentiated. Hence, it follows that there are people of little imaginative or creative capacity who follow life in a particular, highly focused form, similar to how a lion is never more than a lion: It will always act like a lion and does not ever rise above itself. So, certain people are simply Warriors, or Servants, or Kings. But there are those who, being more differentiated, can be more creative. These are Philosophers.

The hypothesis regarding the "lost section" is that it details the ideal division of labor in a state, based on the degree of differentiation in each person.

Before we judge this issue too harshly, let us put the argument in a modern form familiar to the Traditions of the Council of Nine: Everything is One, except for the differentiation of the Pure Ones, who further divide into many diverse Avatars and beings. Those with a very little differentiated, or inactive, Avatar are called Sleepers, while those with a higher degree of differentiation, or activation (or creative capacity in Aretus' version), are the Awakened. An amazingly modern formulation, eh?

To return to the mystical portion, the heart of Aretus' philosophy, as we see it today: Aretus recognized no division between mind and body, but unlike his warlike neighbors of Troy or the Achaeans overseas, he recognized that the Self is more than just the body. He recognized the power of Will to change the world about him, to cause fluctuations in the Essence and to shape the Essence as he willed it. This, of course, was viewed as magick, but Aretus is unique in that he was the first to set forth scientific principles for the workings of magick, and to claim that everyone has the potential to work it (even the lesser-differentiated ones can be brought to higher differentiation through Philosophy).

That the mind is involved in this process is no indication of a mind/body dualism, but simply encompasses the idea that the Self has a governing body called the Mind. The Mind is but a differentiation of the entire Self from the background Essence. The seed of many current Sciences of the Mind Sphere can be traced to Aretus' vision...

[The complexity of the rest of this article, with its emphasis on Mind, precludes its inclusion in an introductory volume. Please reference the entire article in the issue listed above. — Editors]

# Interlude

## A Much-Maligned Monster

By Lady Volt

[from Vol. 60, No. 3]

*But these philosophers, whose hands seem made only to dabble in dirt, and their eyes to pore over the microscope or crucible, have indeed performed miracles. They penetrate into the recesses of nature and show how she works in her hiding-places. They ascend into the heavens; they have discovered how the blood circulates, and the nature of the air we breathe. They have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake and even mock the invisible world with its own shadows.*

— Professor M. Waldman, from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

We are all familiar with the famous Doctor Frankenstein and his lumbering monster, and many of us have also heard the revisionist tale from the ranks of the Progenitor Convention, as set forth in Cameron's "Progenitors and Modern Culture." Cameron claims that the figure Mary Shelley used as her model for Frankenstein was a Son of Ether, and further claims that this Scientist stole the notes of Dr. N, a Progenitor.

Idiot! Those gene-monkeys didn't have the daring to create life from inert — dead — matter! This so-called "Dr. N" was the thief — stealing Frankenstein's notes and thus his secrets of life. The fools and their "discoveries." Nothing is ever discovered — it is created. Be honest and say, "My Creation!"

So what is the real story behind this confusing chapter of history? The doctor in question was named Waldman, a man some may remember from Mary Shelley's book as the professor who inspired Frankenstein to his manic studies. In actuality, he was a Son of Ether and heir to a large family fortune in Austria; it was in the mountains of that country that he set his laboratory and began his experiments with life. He was obsessed with the conjunction of Life and Matter, especially in their ability to energize and bestow life on dead matter.

Waldman was successful — he created life from a dead body using secrets of chemistry. The body was surgically constructed from many well-preserved corpses, mostly drowning victims from the nearby lake.

How did Mary Shelley come to know of this experiment? Of this, we are unsure. It is possible that M. Waldman knew Lord Byron, and there is some evidence to suggest that he aided Byron and his friend, the poet Shelley, in a struggle against vampires in the high moun-



tains. (Some Sleepers suggest that the Waldman character is based upon Percy Shelley's instructor at Eton, Dr. James Lind. We see no need to correct their theories otherwise.)

Some believe that Mary Shelley was influenced by the Technocracy in writing her version of the tale, as there is evidence to show that Byron's physician, Polidori, was a member (although a rather poor one) of the Progenitors. However, since the "monster" in her book is portrayed in such a humanitarian light, we doubt that they had a major influence on her. Perhaps the maligning of Waldman's own humanity is due to this influence. But this can also be explained as a consequence of Waldman's caustic and sexist personality, which Mary Shelley would not have taken well to.

Our best source for the end of the tale is Professor Elias Waldman — not the creator of the "monster," but the monster himself.

Elias, Waldman's creation, was every bit as intelligent as portrayed in Mary Shelley's tale — could you learn to read simply by hearing someone recite from a book? He did. The creature did have a falling-out with his creator, but this is the way with many acolytes of our Tradition. It is also true that the creature fled to the north. Mary Shelley's story ends there.

But for us, it is only the beginning. For there, the creature's potential Awakened. He returned years later and joined his "father's" colleagues, the Scientists of our Tradition, and provided many insightful theories before again disappearing to the frozen north. Today, many believe he has a laboratory there, where he continues his "father's" experiments into Life. It is perhaps a mystery which bears investigation.

This story is a favorite of our acolytes, for it represents, with supreme poetry, how the most low can become the most high. Is it not the dream of every young acolyte to one day wield the powers of her master? Professor Vorgel has called this social phenomenon "The Pinocchio Urge."

## The Age of Science

*A Frenchman coming to England finds matters considerably changed, in philosophy as in everything else. He left the world filled, he finds it here empty. In Paris you see the universe consisting of vortices of subtle matter; in London nothing is seen of this. With us it is the pressure of the moon which causes the tides of the sea; with the English it is the sea which gravitates towards the moon...*

— Voltaire, "Letters from London on the English" (1720s), on the subtle battle between the Cartesians and the Newtonians

### What Is Ether?

by Doctor  $\pi$

[from Vol. 2, No. 1]

*The variety of the phenomena for which the ether hypothesis offers the only explanation that modern science can accept is so great that the unproved existence of the ether is confidently accepted... It is regarded as an incomprehensible substance pervading all space and penetrating between the molecules of all ordinary matter which are embedded in it and connected with one another by its means. It has been compared to an impalpable and all-pervading jelly through which the particles of ordinary matter move freely...*

— Elroy M. Avery, PhD., *School Physics: A New Textbook for High Schools and Academies* (1895)

Known by various names (Fifth Essence, luminiferous ether, etc.), our ether has many faces. But which of its many properties does it actually bear? The answer: all of them. Indeed, the ether is a more subtle matter than most are yet willing to recognize.

To put it simply, the ether is all. Ether surrounds us and everything about us. It controls movement, whether that of light or of denser objects, such as rocks. Many recent theories regarding movement (light as particles, gravity as a force) are incorrect. While we are forced to operate with these erroneous theories if we are to work our own truths into the Consensus, we must not confuse these falsehoods with actual reality.

Ether cannot be seen. It is invisible to our plain senses. This is because it is the background by which everything else is perceived. Being everywhere, it can be seen nowhere. Can you see the air? Then even less so something as pervasive and subtle as ether.

However, we do have tools to accommodate our lack of discerning senses: our ether goggles, which allow us to sense the perturbations in the ether about us.

Remember, ether is everywhere. To touch it here is to touch it there. So effects in far space can be achieved by a careful understanding and fine manipulation of local ether. Is this not the theory of astrology — that planetary bodies possess a subtle control over our lives? This is due to their carefully balanced ether disturbance.

We can learn to manipulate and balance as carefully as nature. Then our Science can handle and mimic many of the magical effects of our fellows. Ether controls space (Correspondence) and likewise the flow of Time. You can easily extrapolate the rest...

# Formation of the Modern Tradition

[The following advertisement appeared in the London Times on November 18, 1865. Similar notices appeared in papers in New York, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and other cities worldwide. — Editors]

**ANNOUNCING THE FORMATION OF A NEW  
SOCIETY: THE ELECTRODYNE ENGINEERS  
HEREBY ADVERTISE THEIR FIRST-EVER  
MEETING ON JANUARY THE FIRST, 1866, 8:00  
P.M., AT THE SYMPOSIUM IN PARIS, FRANCE.  
ALL MEN OF SCIENCE WELCOME.**

The Electrodyne Engineers is a new Society with the duty and charter to disseminate and invent Progressive Science. By this phrase is meant an Endeavour to Devise and Study new technologies and industries for the Civilized World. We, as Men of Science, recognize our duty to Mankind: to aid in providing a better World through Science, to make our goal the elimination of war, hunger, disease and the other plagues that haunt Mankind. To accomplish these goals, it is the desire of the Electrodyne Engineers to gather together the World's greatest Scientists and Intellectuals and organize their energies for the betterment of all.

[This newspaper article appeared in the London Times shortly after the meeting, in January, 1866. — Editors]

## **Electrodyne Meeting Convenes, Falls Short of Lofty Goal**

by Jean M. Delevaunt, reporting from Paris

The first meeting of the Society of Electrodyne Engineers commenced last night in Paris at the prestigious Symposium Manor. Scientists from around the world gathered to discuss this new vision for the world. Unfortunately, the lofty aspirations of the society's founders were not to take root last night.

The meeting was called to order five minutes after eight by the imposing Lord Dunhampton, a British Earl living in France. The pompous Dunhampton began with a lengthy speech expounding upon the need for a society such as the Electrodyne Engineers, although many in attendance were still unsure of just what the society's purpose was.

Dunhampton was finally relieved by Professor Jacques Etienne, who impressed all with his forthright speech. The well-regarded Professor elucidated the reason everyone had been gathered: to form a monumental alliance of the world's scientists in an attempt to quickly advance, together, a host of sciences which individually could take years to mature. It is the hope of the Electrodyne Engineers that a group of the world's most brilliant scientists can achieve in a period of ten years what it would take individual scientists, working alone, a century to accomplish.

High ideals, indeed. The Professor and his society are to be commended for their attempt, but, as audience-member Sir Jarriet stood up and stated, their goals are foolhardy and dangerous to the concepts of Nation and Empire. He accused them of extreme naiveté and contempt for the obvious differences between countries and nations. As Sir Jarriet said, "To equate the scientists of a rebel nation such as the United States with the superior scientists of the British Crown is a foolhardy error in judgment. No, sirs, the world could not, and should not, come together for such an endeavour."

Sir Jarriet's heart-felt speech brought the evening to an early close, for he was widely applauded, and most in attendance followed him from the hall, including this reporter.

## **Those Hardy Victorians: The Electrodyne Engineers Forge Science Before the Turn of the Century**

by Professor Inherent  
[from Vol. 50, No. 4]

*I have long held an opinion, almost amounting to a conviction, in common, I believe, with many other lovers of natural knowledge, that the various forms under which the forces of matter are made manifest have one common origin; or, in other words, are so directly related and dependent, that they are convertible, as it were, into one another, and possess equivalents of power in their action.*

— Faraday

As we look back at the progenitors of our Tradition, we must not forget to give credit where credit is due. The Electrodyne Engineers have often been ignored, although they did pioneering work in the late-Victorian era. It was this society that rebelled so famously from the Technocracy and renamed themselves the Sons of Ether, championing their main Scientific hypothesis in the face of extreme censure. [Some members of this Convention were referring to themselves as "Sons of the Ether" as early as 1800, but the name did not become official until after the Engineers' defection. — Editors]

Who were these men (and women) who constantly broadened the horizons of humanity through their work? They were a group of advanced and brilliant Scientists, each one Awakened to the inner mysteries of metaphysics, who unified to forge a new world for the human spirit, a world of egalitarian Science.

They had a difficult task before them, for even then the Technocracy was closing the doors of discovery and focusing on a tight and narrow plan for humanity, renouncing the aesthetics and ingenuity of the questing spirit. Many of their pioneering theories were disproved by the Technocracy, who claimed the Electrodyne Engineers risked their "Timetable" too rashly.

Fools! Creation and discovery are natural to the Awakened spirit, and even the Sleeping incline toward adventure. To deny this basic fact is to deny Ascension. And this is precisely what the Technocracy has done.

During the period of its formation in 1865 until the turn of the century, the society focused its Scientific experiments on the Sphere of Forces. They created efficient and powerful electrical devices which only recently have been made available to Sleepers (although in very different

forms). Indeed, Czar Vargo's incredible Conversion Engine was invented during this period, and displayed to the world at the Paris Exhibition in 1900, although to little fanfare. [See below for more information. — Editors]

The Electrodyne Engineers were, of course, considered to be a Convention of the Technocracy. But they were too eager for their fellows, always too quick to jump forward on the Timetable, the valuable master plan of the Technocracy. For this reason, they were taught a lesson, but one which backfired on the Technocracy.

## Betrayal and Rebellion

### The Judas Note

[Shown here is the note passed among the Technocracy Conventions in 1904 which initiated the event leading to our Tradition's rebellion. — Editors]

Dear Mssrs. Carlisle and Roberts, Seekers of the Void:

I write to inform you that the expected moment has arrived. The rebelliousness of the so-called "Sons of Ether," the Electrodyne Engineers, must be halted. They are to be taught the ultimate lesson. As provided for in our earlier discussions, the ether is to be destroyed.

An extreme measure, I agree, but as you have already proven to our satisfaction with your previous Michelson and Morely threat, the ether is a scientific relic anyway, useless for our ultimate goals. It has been used to coddle the Electrodyne Engineers for too long. No more. Once you have convinced the Sleepers of its demise, we will begin to introduce our alternatives. The Electrodyne Engineers will be assigned the task of aiding your future work.

May I suggest an avenue for this endeavour? There is a young hopeful who has been watched by the Electrodyne Engineers for some time now, but as yet has not exhibited enough genius to be apprenticed. I think you should take the initiative and induct him into your Convention instead. His name is Albert Einstein. If you are interested, contact me and I will get the paperwork together. However, I should warn you that he may be a wild card, and his ideas could prove to be too dangerous. Nonetheless, I am authorizing his induction if for no other reason than to kill this damn luminiferous ether thing.

Signed

*Win. Watersmith, Lord Craven*

Lord Craven, New World Order, Servant to the Queen

## The Fall of the Ether

by Doctor Luminous  
[from Vol. 53, No. 2]

The vote against the ether was the final straw for the society. Pushed too far and forced to conform for too long, they rebelled. The next month, all members of the society sent the Technocracy (then still using the name "Order of Reason") a letter announcing their resignation from the Conventions, and subsequent reformation with the Council of Nine under a new name: The Sons of Ether. This name, chosen out of defiance, had long been a calling card for the more rebellious among the Engineers. Now it became their chosen title.

Lord Craven did not take the news well, judging from reports of a doctor who was summoned to his home that evening to treat him for a nervous heart condition.

War had been initiated, but the victor remains undeclared to this day...

## The Council of Nine

by Professor Red Shift  
[from Vol. 50, No. 2]

...That the Traditions of the Council of Nine were desperately in need of aid was no secret; it was fact. That our society could greatly assist them by filling the gap in their ranks was likewise an undeniable fact. So we sent forth an envoy and inquired as to how our two organizations could help each other, and we were forthwith offered membership within the Council.

To understand this seemingly hasty decision, we must examine the history of the Tradition whose long-vacant seat we filled. The Solificati (plural Solificati), a medieval Tradition of alchemists loosely allied with many of the *Kitab al Alacr*-inspired guilds of those times, was one of the earliest members of the Council of Nine. Their name, roughly translated, is "The Crowned Ones," or "Servants of Helios," or some other such obscure and regal alchemical title. Due to grave philosophical differences, dissent between the Council and the Solificati immediately followed the formation of the Council. The story of this conflict can be found elsewhere. Suffice it to say that, within a few years, the Solificati's seat was vacant, and no one arose to fill it until 1905, when the Sons of Ether rebelled against their harsh Technocratic regime.

The long vacancy in the Council was, of course, one of the main reasons for the Council's ineffectiveness during much of the Age of Reason. Without a true representative of the Matter Sphere (the most efficacious Sphere in the eyes of the Consensus), the Council was in dire straits. However, this reversed upon our joining the Nine...

## The Solificati

by Doctor Alexis Hastings  
[from Vol. 52, No. 3]

Composed of an amalgam of alchemical societies, artificers' guilds and independent Philosophers, the Solificati Tradition came together during the Grand Convocation of 1466. Fractious from the start, the "Crowned Ones" squabbled with each other and with the other Tradition representatives as well. When the First Cabal (a cabal of hand-picked Tradition emissaries) was formed, the Solificati's chosen, a hermaphrodite named Heylel Teomim (roughly "Twins of the Morning Star") distinguished itself among the others for its pride and arrogance.

When Heylel later turned *barabbi* and led the rest of the Cabal into a trap, it was captured by the Council and condemned to gilgul and death. The Betrayer, now called "Heylel Thoabath" ("Abomination," a reference to "Heylel Ben," or Lucifer), tarnished the budding Tradition's reputation; when several members defended the Betrayer's actions, the entire group was further disgraced. Although the Solificati held on for nearly a century, they eventually fragmented, leaving the eighth Council seat vacant until we filled it.

Most Solificati returned to solitary practice; others joined the Atificer Convention (later called Iteration X) or rejoined their former comrades in the Children of Knowledge, an independent Craft.

## Paris Exhibition, 1900

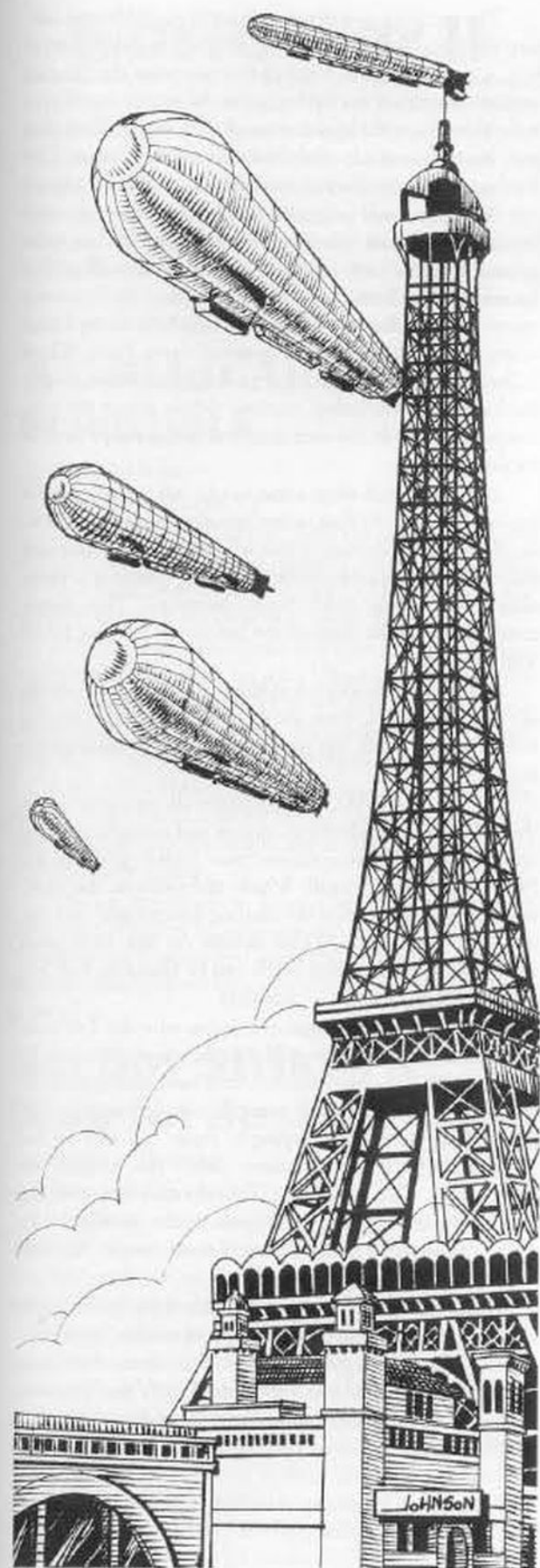
*So long as the rate of progress held good, these bombs would double in number and force every ten years... Power leaped from every atom... man could no longer hold it off. Forces grasped his wrists and flung him about as though he had hold of a live wire or a runaway automobile.*

— Henry Adams, discussing his "Law of Acceleration"  
by Doctor  $\Omega$

[from Vol. 51, No. 3]

The Paris Exhibition of 1900 was a spectacle of the age, an event which showed the world the latest advances in all disciplines of science, and thus gave the people a glimpse of the future.

As far as our Tradition is concerned, the most important exhibit was located in the Palace of Electricity. There, before the awestruck eyes of onlookers, was displayed the amazing Conversion Engine of Czar Vargo (who was, of course, simply Professor Vargo at this time). This advanced device, unequaled at the time by even Iteration X, could convert air into energy at an unbelievable rate. It was this engine which allowed Czar Vargo to create his airships a decade later (although many Professors of our Tradition are convinced that the success of these airships was due to a modified engine — that Czar Vargo actually managed to convert ether into energy).



This device was little understood by the public, however, and an envious scientific community tried to down-play its great advancements. The most popular exhibits of the show displayed weapons of war: a cannon and a host of Vickers-Maxim's machine guns.

This infuriated Czar Vargo, who had always believed that the purpose of Science was to bring peace to the world, not to enhance humankind's methods of killing. The Paris Exhibition was the final straw for Vargo. After years of arguing for peaceful science, he took his Conversion Engine and disappeared.

The jealous scientific community was glad he was gone. Now their mediocre devices could be foisted on an ignorant public. But this was not the last they were to see of Vargo. His reappearance 14 years later nearly caused the downfall of the Technocracy, as he seized the engines of the world and halted them...

## The Lord of the World

by Scientist Orson

[from Vol. 85, No. 3]

On July 24th, 1914, the foundations of the world shook and cracked. Only at the last moment was the world pulled back from the brink of a new age, and yet today no one remembers this wondrous, cataclysmic event.

I recently spoke with Arnold Johnson, 90 years old and still lucid, at the Sunny Oaks Home for the Aged. Arnold is a Sleeper; I visited him in the guise of a "historical researcher" investigating the above-mentioned event. He was surprised that anyone else remembered that day; his other friends had either forgotten it or dismissed it long ago as a newsman's hoax. Arnold, however, still believes.

We sat down to discuss this piece of forgotten world history — the day Czar Vargo seized the leadership of all the world's governments and nearly brought the Technocracy to its knees.

Few students within our Tradition do not know the story of Czar Vargo, from his early days as a brilliant master of Forces to his final-hour disappearance that fateful day in Paris. He is universally acknowledged as the most advanced and brilliant of our Tradition; an innovator of Sciences who changed our view about our responsibility to the Sleepers.

His speech at the Paris Exhibition in 1900, decrying governments' accumulation of war machinery, remains standard reading for all students. He disappeared from the public eye soon afterward, disgusted with the direction in which the world was moving. Though he remained obscure, our Doctors and Professors knew that he was working on something big, something to rival his already-famous Conversion Engine. Then, in 1909, he broke off all contact. Even his acolytes went into hiding with him. All wondered what had become of the Professor. Many worried that he had suffered Technocracy retribution, but most suspected that he had retreated into seclusion for Scientific reasons.

In 1914, he reappeared. To the Awakened, his return was phenomenal in its boldness. To the Sleepers, such as Arnold, his return was nothing less than world-shattering. That such an event has been wiped from history's slate by the New World Order's wiles says much about the power of Consensus. I will try to take you back to that day, with the help of Arnold, a young boy of 12 at the time:

The word was everywhere on the street, and newspapers rushed out update editions as fast as they could. The social buzz was electrifying. One man, along with a fleet of amazing airships, had held the key nations of the world hostage.

The first airships had appeared over major population centers that morning — New York, Washington DC, Paris, London and Rome. Paris was the nexus, for a conference of world leaders was taking place there. (This conference is not mentioned in modern history books; it, along with the events of that day, has been erased from the Consensus.) The airships were marvelous to see, sleek birds of metal and wood with majestic, sweeping curves and lines. From the flagship over Paris came the booming voice of Czar Vargo, addressing the world leaders.

The assembly gathered on the lawn outside the mansion, staring upward in awe at the masses of metal hovering in place with no obvious means of support. Remember, this was the era of the biplane; for an aircraft to hover in place — especially with no propellers — was astounding.

Vargo's actual speech is lost to us today, but Arnold remembered it as it was printed in the local papers: "Leaders of the world, I am Czar Vargo, Master Scientist. I am here to demand the surrender of your national powers into my hands. For too long have you misused your powers, making war when you should have made peace. Your arsenal of weaponry has grown too large and too dangerous. As a Scientist, I claim the right by way of superior knowledge to rule the world in your place. Where you were foolhardy, I shall be wise. Where you were weak, I shall be strong."

"I am in deadly earnest, and do not recommend that you test my patience. I await your answers. You have three hours to decide."

Of course, the world leaders called in their militaries. All were useless. Czar Vargo proved his superior technology by shooting the enemy aircraft with ray beams that caused their engines to malfunction without harming the pilots inside. More rays were aimed at the guns and bombs of the infantry, likewise rendering that weaponry useless.

In the grip of an obviously superior power, the world leaders gave in to the Czar's demands, and produced letters of surrender. These were assembled by yet another amazing gravity ray and delivered to the flagship, where Czar Vargo could be seen on the main deck.

The puzzling question remains: How did Vargo sidestep the Paradox Effect? The only answer, unsatisfactory as it is, is that somehow, Vargo's feat was what the Sleepers wanted, what they craved for: an earth-shattering event to wake them from the nightmares of their world. Well, they got it, although it didn't come from Vargo. The Technocracy's retribution was terrible, as all wars are.

As Vargo stood on the deck of his ship, waiting for the letters of surrender, the Technocracy discarded its codes against Paradox and made its last, desperate effort. Released well before their planned time, Iteration X's steam-driven robots attacked from nowhere, firing devastating beams at the ships hovering above Paris. Where bullets failed, the Technocracy succeeded; two of Vargo's flanking ships exploded, raining debris across the city. Vargo leapt inside his own ship and prepared his fleet for battle.

But Vargo had what some would call a weakness: He deplored killing. At first, when assaulted only with robots, his ships easily recovered. But when the Progenitors sent their troops — genetic mutations firing Iteration X weaponry — onto the field, Vargo panicked. This attack, combined with the damage the battle was causing, forced Vargo to retreat.

All over the world, his airships pulled upward into the sky and disappeared from view. The Technocracy tried to follow in its aircraft, but no trace of Vargo or his ships was found.

The New World Order immediately set out to diffuse the incident with false news reports and outright magical brainwashing. These measures were largely effective, but Paradox still took its toll. Whole technologies the Technocracy had spent years developing disappeared that day, never to work again. [The details on the technology involved in this amazing battle can be found in Vol. 71, No. 4 of this journal. — Editors]

Of course, Arnold does not know who the Technocracy is; he has always assumed that the robots were sent by the United States government. After his family returned to the States, Arnold became somewhat of a conspiracy buff. He told me he was still trying to figure out why we lost Vietnam, why the government didn't just unleash the robot army. The power the Technocracy has over the Consensus is staggering, but faith in the wonder of the world still survives in the hearts of most people. We must learn to use this, as Vargo did.

After the interview, Arnold thanked me for coming by and confirming his memory. In spite of senility, his memories regarding this event are more accurate than most Sleepers'. We should not ever forget Czar Vargo's valiant, if misguided, attempt to seize the reins of Ascension from a dark empire.

# World War II

[The defeat of Czar Vargo hit our Tradition hard. It seemed as if no worthy theories could follow this fall, and the silence from our Tradition for the next decade was deathly. However, true Scientists never give up hope; we soon rebounded, once again seizing the field from the usurpers. The world was on the brink of war, and we heard a desperate cry for Science. Hitler's occult hordes were on the march, and only the Scientific ingenuity of the Allies could halt the madness... — Editors]

## A Call for All Good Scientists

Professor Burn

[from Vol. 36, No. 1]

I urge all Scientists in our Tradition to get involved in this fight. It is clear that the future of the world, and thus the Consensus, is at stake. We cannot allow Hitler's war machine to engulf the lives of so many Sleepers.

For God's sake, this Hitler is a base occultist! Where would Science be under his wing? Dead and gone, gentlemen. Our reality would march to the drumbeat of a vulgar dictatorship, empowered by dangerous and forgotten magick, perhaps even Nephandi magick!

Even now, Hitler sends his lieutenants to the far corners of the world, seeking out the most vile and evil of magickal traditions, hoping to use them to seize the world from mundane armies.

This we cannot allow. Now is our chance! We must show the world that Science can win wars, that it can lift the spirit, that imagination and a little spit and gum are all that are needed to knock this Chaplinesque madman off his pedestal.

## Jet Boy Strikes A Blow for Justice

by Doctor Danvers

[from Vol. 36, No. 4]

I am proud to announce that a recent victory of our Allied forces was due to the endeavours of my protégé, Jet Boy. Equipped with an advanced jet backpack of my design, Jet Boy rooted out a secret Nazi encampment in Scotland.

Flying high over the moors, Jet Boy encountered resistance from the Nazi ground troops hiding in an old castle. He was shot from the sky but landed safely in a nearby loch. After quickly swimming ashore, he immediately set about repairing the ruptured pack. Luckily, he had a vacuum-packed pellet of Rubberon™, an expandable rubber base that hardens within minutes of its exposure to air and sticks to whatever it is applied to. In this case, Jet Boy used it to repair the jet backpack.



However, the Nazis found him before he could finish. Unlike those German monsters, Jet Boy and I deplore the taking of life. For this reason, I equipped him with a special dart gun that employs a powerful knock-out agent. Jet Boy took down his foes silently and quickly, without killing them.

After finishing repairs, he took to the air, marked the coordinates of the castle, and soon returned, guiding a fleet of bombers. He himself led the assault, flinging grenades at the walls below. This, coupled with the bombers' rain of explosives, buried the Nazis in their own fort, destroying their beachhead in Britain...

## Dangerous Opposition

by Doctor Orbital

[from Vol. 37, No. 1]

Gentlemen, I am afraid to announce that many members of our Tradition have chosen to fight on the wrong side of this war. Even after the occupation of Paris and the shutting down of our secret Chantry there, these now-renegade Sons of Ether choose to lend their geniuses to the Nazis.

Now, I understand the allure at work here. Hitler is generous with his aid if he believes an experiment or theory will prove valuable to him. However, it takes little intelligence to realize where his generosity will lead if he is the victor...

## New Sciences

[The war was not the only battleground for our Science. Indeed, university halls the world over were shaking with our contributions to the 20th century. — Editors]

### The Cat is Both Alive and Dead

by Scientist Kendrick

[from Vol. 81, No. 1]

*It seems that the human mind has first to construct forms independently before we can find them in things.*

— Albert Einstein

*The cat is both alive and dead*

*Undead Undead Undead*

— Schrödinger's Bat (a Son of Ether band), "Quantum Vampire"

The Uncertainty Principle was like a boxer's body blow to the heart of the Technocracy's warped and twisted science. No longer could they sit in the shadows and make rulings on an objective universe wherein each participant was but an inconsequential mote. No, now the universe was a swimming sea of subjective observers, observing observers who observed still more observers. Each participant in the universe affected the universe.

Oh, how Iteration X gnashed their metallic teeth. The now-poor New World Order wept on their thrones. From the ashes of defeat, the Sons of Ether struck a blow for Truth!

And it didn't end there. The next shock to their system came from Erwin Schrödinger. His theory, based on his thought-game with the cat in the box, cemented our foundation by confusing everybody even more. The Technocracy was forced to cease its attempts to debunk

Uncertainty. They forthwith embarked on a plan to control the next advances, but the fools did not understand the depths they were swimming in. We drowned them with successive theories — such as Bell's Theorem, pointing at a subatomic connectivity unperceived until then — until only a few could remain up for air.

Victory, sweet victory, thanks to the cat that is both alive and dead...

### Rescued From the Black Void — Ether!

by Doctor Baridium

[from Vol. 86, No. 4]

*I'd love to have this problem solved in my scientific lifetime, but my greatest fear is that the solution may be boring.*

— Carlos Frenk (one of the Gang of Four, investigators into the CDM, or cold Dark Matter, model), on the Dark Matter problem

Perhaps the greatest modern victory of our Tradition is the return of the ether to the Consensus. While the battle is not yet over — indeed, has barely begun — we have made incredible forays into the Void Engineer's territory, a territory they stole from us when we left the Technocracy at the turn of the century.

When they "disproved" the ether, the Void Engineers set about claiming the entire field of astronomy (and thus cosmology) as their own. But we did not give up the fight easily. Our push to reclaim our territory began with Fritz Zwicky and his "Dunkle Materie," or Dark Matter.

The Void Engineers, in their attempt to turn the outer reaches into an empty void, had left holes in their theories, and in space. But as Lao Tzu knew, the usefulness of a cup lies in its empty space. So too for our theory.

They were unable to explain the odd pull of gravity on spiral galaxies. We stepped in and used their own reliance on Newton against them. Accepting that Newton's laws of gravitation are true (we know better, but the Consensus accepts them fully), we proved that Dark Matter must exist, for it was the only explanation for the gravitic behavior of the universe. Some unseen type of matter must exist. And this matter makes up over 95% of our universe. It is all around us, unseen, all the time. It is the empty space. It is ether.

The battlefield has been set and the war begun. The Void Engineers have desperately suggested mundane particles or Brown Dwarf planets to explain this mystery, but those fools forget one thing: We own Matter. All forms of Matter belong to us...

## The Coming Things

by Doctor Baridium

[from Vol. 87, No. 1]

...Of course, not all victories are ours. The Technocracy has won its way on many issues, such as the quark. While we have since taken this little fellow further than they, our initial theory was known as the "Bootstrap model." In place of quarks, we imagined that there were no fundamental particles, only a infinite and boiling universe, producing anything, whether it be proton or neutron or some as-yet-uncreated particle. Quarks were too royal for our comfort. They stole potentiality from the universe.

We have lost some true geniuses on the way. These poor fellows, such as Nikolai Tesla, were smashed down by the hard fist of the Technocracy for daring to introduce their startling ideas to the Consensus. Their ideas were stolen and attributed to others, and their true geniuses never acknowledged. While we tried to warn these pioneers, Sons of Ether are an obstinate lot, all too often convinced that their theories are self-evident enough to gain immediate acceptance in the Consensus.

One such was poor Immanuel Velikovsky. Although he proved to our Master Scientists' satisfaction the validity and adventuresome beauty of some of his theories, the Technocracy was unmitigatingly cruel to him. Nonetheless, he managed to gain paperback-press publication of his theories, and these books can sometimes be found in used book shops today (search for *Worlds in Collision*, *Ages of Chaos* and *Earth in Upheaval*). Perhaps there is still hope that his ideas will take root. We certainly haven't abandoned them yet. Indeed, Captain Tiberius of the Etherjammer has discovered that Velikovsky's "billiard ball" theory of the solar system's origins is the most useful navigational tool in searching for the location of Planet X. Captain Tiberius greatly enjoyed the extreme consternation of his Void Engineer pursuers when they realized his navigational methods.

But the Technocracy's retribution is not always so intellectual. They have resorted to brutal, barbaric tactics such as armed assault on our Chantries, the arrest and brainwashing (and cloning!) of our Scientists, and even subjecting captured Scientists to gene-splicing or mechani-

cal implant experiments! These trespasses against propriety and person will not be tolerated any longer. No more will we turn the other cheek as any gentleman should.

This is a nasty war, but we have faith that the ultimate victory shall be ours. The fate of the Consensus depends on our efforts. We shall not — must not — fail.

### Quantum Theory and Dark Matter

The details of the Uncertainty Principle (Heisenberg's Theory) and Schrödinger's Cat are available in easily obtained books on quantum physics. Discussions of Dark Matter can be found in modern books on astronomical theory. The theories appear in the Consensus, for the most part, undiluted from their applications in our work. A true victory, indeed. No student can be expected to pass First Exams without a thorough knowledge of these theories.

The complexity of these theories makes it difficult to summarize them here; a prior knowledge of some quantum physics basics is necessary. Nonetheless, we will try.

The Uncertainty Principle basically states that the very act of observing a subatomic event changes that event. To extrapolate beyond the subatomic level, observing reality changes reality.

Schrödinger's Cat is the name of a thought experiment created by Erwin Schrödinger. It posits a cat in a box with a bit of potentially-fatal radioactive material. Some simple things with photons happen in the box, but these simple things become complicated to explain; a basic grasp of subatomic physics is required. The outcome of the whole experiment, however, is that once we open the box, the cat will be either alive or dead, depending on whether or not a photon activated the radiation. However, before we open the box and discover the cat's condition, the cat is left in a state both alive and dead. It exists in a state of quantum uncertainty. But we have yet to meet a cat in this state. Many scientists believe that we simply don't know how to look for one yet, but this experiment proves, within the "laws" of quantum physics, that the cat can be both alive and dead. Basically, the experiment helped to "prove" the subjective nature of reality.

Dark Matter remains an embattled theory, but wins more and more adherents all the time. To explain the odd behavior of spiral galaxies and the expanding universe, we must theorize that there is more mass in the universe than was previously believed. Otherwise, we must abandon Newton's Laws of Gravitation and start over. Few are willing to accept this latter option. Thus, we must accept that over 95% of the mass in the universe is unseen and undetected by any equipment but our brains — we can posit its existence, but can have no proof of it.



# The Old Boys Club

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*Beginning my studies the first pleas'd me so much,  
The mere fact of consciousness, these forms, the power of  
motion,  
The least insect or animal, the senses, eyesight, love,  
The first step I say awed and pleas'd me so much,  
I have hardly gone and hardly wish'd to go any farther,  
But stop and loiter all the time to sing it in ecstatic song.*  
— Walt Whitman, "Beginning My Studies"

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## Becoming a Son of Ether

by Professor Dulac  
[written for this volume]

I shall here relate the methods by which most of our young Scientists are initiated into our Tradition. Each of you, of course, went through the process, but every initiate has a different story.

### Realization

For most, it is the initial enlightenment realized upon a reading of the *Kitab al Alacir* which brings them into the Tradition. Usually, a perceptive Professor or Doctor notices the potential of a particular student, and manages to let a copy of the *Kitab al Alacir* fall into that gifted young person's lap. Sometimes, if the talented young initiate is studying under the Professor at a Sleeper university, the book is at first assigned as required reading, considered an onerous task by most. If the student really reads the work (rather than pretending to and handing in a made-up book report), and actually gleams some understanding of the sheer potential of Science from its depths, then the Professor proceeds to the next stage of initiation: invitation to the local Chantry. [Many outside our Tradition feel that the *Kitab al Alacir* itself has some property that "rouses" a sleeping Avatar. This is, of course, nonsense. — Editors]

If the student accepts this offer, he meets the many Scientists, Professors and Doctors of the local chapter. They spend the evening over tea or wine (or perhaps stronger drink in some cases), grilling the young hopeful on many scientific matters. These questions are designed to test the knowledge and problem-solving ability of the young applicant. The questioning eventually leads to a paradox, a point at which the student is forced to recognize that the boundaries of logic and reason are not so broad and impervious as most Sleepers imagine. This is the final test. If the student responds with wondrous curiosity, or, better yet, fabricates some theory to explain the paradox, he is then treated to hearty handshakes all around and welcomed as a member of the Sons of Ether.

Then, the education truly begins.

There are other methods of initiation, but these usually involve radical genius on the gifted young person's part, enough so that a local Son of Ether cannot help but recognize the gifted one's potential. For example, Czar Vargo was discovered by Count Roland, a Doctor in our Tradition. Vargo, an impoverished boy of only 12 at the time, had built a unique motor for his father's fishing boat, reliant on a spinning propeller and a perpetual-motion machine that was activated by pulling a cord, setting the gears in motion.

Needless to say, invention of such a device in the 19th century, and by such a young man, who had neither sophisticated materials nor an education worthy of mention, was enough to convince Roland that he had found a prodigy.



I should also mention that there is one paramount requirement in the testing and acceptance of new Scientists: the capacity for wonder. Only those who can dream new vistas and who dare to climb cliffs of adversity in pursuit of imagination may join our Tradition. Those who lack the mysterious muse of invention must remain asleep to their possibilities.

This sense of wonder accounts for the odd behavior that is prevalent in our society, a combination of propriety handed down from the Victorian age and daring culled from the boy's adventure fiction many of us read as youths. We are a curious mix of Buck Rogers panache and courtly refinement. Who could have imagined such a disparate set of values blending so well?

## Education

The young initiate soon begins tutelage under the Scientist who discovered him, an arrangement that allows him the benefit of the elder's knowledge, while the elder receives the fruit of the young student's early discoveries. The young do have many creative ideas, although little education with which to apply them.

So, the student spends a year or so (ideally; a shorter span is more common these days) learning from the elder Scientist, who assigns him many projects; some menial, others challenging.

There is, admittedly, a problem in our Tradition: many Scientists do not want to let go of their prize pupils. To this end, they will falsify the student's progress records, telling others that the student is doing poorly when she is in fact exemplary. Often, when the student does finally break away from such a possessive teacher, she bears a long resentment.

After the education phase of initiation is over, the student is introduced into the society. Usually, the student's teacher hosts a dinner for him, inviting the local Scientists as well as select experts from other regions. In cases where the student and teacher are estranged, the student must ask another to introduce her. Sometimes another Scientist, normally a rival of the teacher, will volunteer to introduce the student.

These banquets of introduction allow all the local Scientists to meet the student, who is here accorded the title "Scientist." The teacher (or sponsor) gives a speech praising the new Scientist and voicing hope that the young inductee's theories are validated.

The dinner ends with a toast, when all retire to a comfortable room to drink and tell tales. From this point on, the student is a Scientist and must hold his own in a world hostile to his (or her) groundbreaking ideas.

# Philosophies

## The Grand Theory

by Professor Dulac

[written for this volume]

As students, you will spend your initial time familiarizing yourselves with the Sciences and the great Scientists of our Tradition. You will study Aretus, Golo, da Vinci, Tesla, Czar Vargo and many others who have contributed great things to our Science and the world. But you will also begin the task of forming your own theories.

A Scientist without a theory is worthless, although there are many among us who have done wonders championing and improving upon the theories of those Professors and Doctors who came before us. However, the truly great are those who create their own theories, their own methods of moving us all one step forward on the path to Ascension.

It is very important for you to realize that, while you may achieve immense acclaim through your work, your theory is not only for your own benefit, but for all of humankind. A theory that does not improve the lives of Sleepers and Awakened alike, but works only for the greater glory of its creator, is not True Science, but base magick. This is the downfall of many of our fellows in the Council of Nine, no matter how well-meaning they are. Too much of their magick is selfish, consumed only with personal enlightenment. I am ashamed to say that even our Tradition has harbored monumental egos like these. But our most noble ideals consider humanity as a whole; witness Czar Vargo's attempt to alter the course of history for the good of all.

Be fully aware of this now, and make no mistake later: Your theory must be for the betterment of humankind.

There are, however, no other limits. Science, by its very nature, is limitless, for it deals with nature and the workings of the world; indeed, with the workings of the universe, of Reality itself. This is the difference between True Science and mere science: Our work concerns Reality itself, while Sleeper science pertains to the daily workings of the world and does not notice the anomaly that points to the greater truths beyond the mundane.

Our Tradition began with philosophy, for philosophy lights the path of Science. The physical phenomena, the clash of Forces and Matter, the dance of Life and Entropy, the mysteries of space and time — all follow principles perceived first with thought. The mind is important to your apprehension of the habits of the other Spheres.

But do not fall into the trap of the Akashic Brotherhood and believe that Mind is the progenitor and end of all existence. It is a tool, nothing more, for understanding the other Spheres. To exalt it above the others is a mistake.

However, one Sphere does stand out from all others, and that is the Sphere of Matter. This is not due to any inherent preeminence of its properties, but instead to the

flexibility of this Sphere. It lends itself, more than any of the others, to the most immediate and obvious effects of Science. It is through the Sphere of Matter that Science can be best introduced into the Consensus.

Yes, the Technocracy have also realized the importance of Matter, although they have made the horrible mistake of misunderstanding the basis of its expediency for use with Sleepers. They have tried to separate it from the Spirit Sphere, which cannot be done. All Spheres are reflections of each other; one cannot shatter such a perfect mirror. (That said, I will explain the shattering of the Pure Ones at another time.)

Matter is the Sphere you will study first. From there, as you build your own theories, you may seek out the wisdom of the other Spheres as you deem fit. Once your education is well on its way, so too will be your Grand Theory.

## An Excuse for Petty Bickering

by Scientist Latch

[from Vol. 84, No. 3]

Our own Grand Theories have served to pit us against one another, instead of banding us together in a united front, because select Scientists spend countless hours smashing down the theories of their "rivals" instead of masterfully building their own theories into sound constructs.

Just witness the indicia at the beginning of any issue of *Paradigma*, with its injunction about "ownership of theories." So jealous are we concerning our successes that we would hide them from others, desperate for the glory ourselves. God forbid that a Scientist actually borrow an idea from another theory without giving proper credit to that theory's author! Long grudges and even minor wars have begun in such a manner.

Regardless, however, of the ill effects this envy has, it also produces a benefit. The fury with which our scientists defend their theories from each other lends them strength to defend such theories from our detractors in the Technocracy as well. And perhaps the little glory we accord to our scientists for their theories is the only reward they receive, for the scorn the Consensus delivers on us can be bitter.

## Avatars

by Professor Dulac

[written for this volume]

The Avatar, that piece in each and every one of us that transcends the material world, eludes Science, at least for now. So far, no one within our Tradition has been able to deliver a satisfactory theory concerning the Avatar. So, we are forced to view it in the same light as our fellow Traditions. That is, in a mystical sense.

There is certainly nothing wrong with mysticism. But compared to Science, it is a less exact, less reliable means of understanding the world. Mysticism is the final refuge of those who can go no further in understanding the universe.

I will present my theory on the Avatar, but realize that it is only a hypothesis, not a complete theory. I believe the Avatar is that sense of wonder within all of us, that wonder which allows for ingenuity and invention. Without it, we would be as animals, for we would have never discovered fire, the wheel, tools, or anything else that has propelled us forward.

The Avatar is that mystery within us that empowers genius. It appears to us in many forms, although rarely in such vulgar forms as with our fellow Traditions. I speak of pixies and shades, who seem to haunt the mages of other Traditions.

Our Avatars tend to reveal themselves through our moments of greatest inspiration. Einstein's Avatar was his famous formula,  $E = MC^2$ . For others, it may be a philosophical construct that provides them focus and identity, such as Hegel's Thesis + Antithesis = Synthesis. And for still others, it may be their greatest invention, such as a ray pistol or an arc of electricity.

The Avatar appears to some of us as a figure from the past, such as the mentor who inspired our first interest in Science, or that idiot who mocked us when we were younger, driving us onward to eventual greatness.

Perhaps one of you will be the Scientist who finally provides an explanation for the Avatar, one which will not steal its wonder, but will provide a basis for the vaulting of all humankind to Ascension.

## Society

*Yes, I believe I shall have a cigar, gentlemen. It will help me relax my nerves after that tussle in Antarctica. What? Of course I shall relate the tale, old boy. Never can tell it too often, you know. Let's see (puff, puff)... it all began in Tierra del Fuego, where I was hunting for the lost pterodactyls, considered a delicacy by the natives of the interior. Anyway, my hunt was brought to an abrupt halt when my acolyte was shanghaied on a freighter bound for the southern ice...*

— Professor Thunder, at the weekly meeting of the Luminous Ether Gang

[Son of Ether society can be either thrilling or deadly dull, depending on your opinion of an exciting time. Without some standing in society, a Scientist cannot hope to truly test his theories against the tempering fires of expert criticism and receive input from other Scientists, resulting in a weak theory. Society can also be enjoyed as a place to rattle off one's exploits to appreciative ears. Society does have its critics, however, as evidenced in the excerpts below. — Editors]

## A Mens Club for Adventurers of Science

by Professor Bastion Steadfast  
[from Vol. 1, No. 1]

Never has Society seen the likes of our peculiar but most important Club. While we present ourselves as all other mens clubs and societies in England and the Civilized World do, we are nonetheless quite different. Our common interest is not business or big game, but Science. That is, True Science, the creation of new forms of Reality, a practice which in ancient and medieval times was called Magick. However, Science is in fact a more progressive and refined form of Magick.

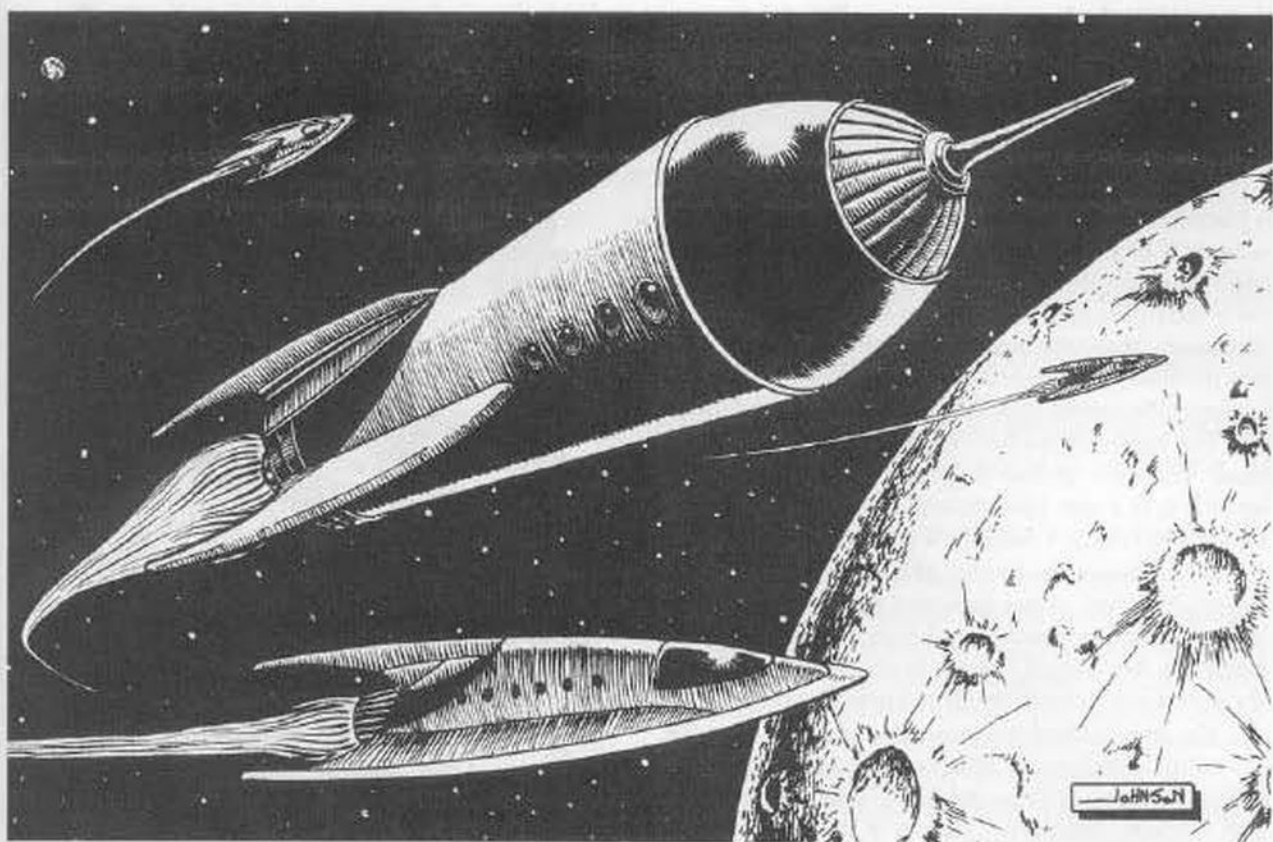
Chapters of our Club can be found in cities all over the World, with members dedicated to the exchange of potent ideas to usher our World into a new Utopian era. While the most prestigious Club is in Paris, where members are respected Scientists in all fields, the most active at this time is the Club in London. We have the most opposition to face here, for our rivals in the Order of Reason are all about us, in the corridors of the monarchical power. But this tension provides us with an energy lacking in other Clubs and keeps our work from suffering the lackadaisical pace of our other chapter's Scientists.

Our meeting house is not announced to the public as such. Surrounded by those who would bring us down, we must meet in secret. Our particular chapter's Professors frequent the Club, which gathers in the Manor of our gracious host, Earl Glamm, a prestigious and brilliant Doctor.

The Manor is always open for our members to come and discuss their theories with others. Many a faulty theory has been mended in these heated discussions, and egos often leave bruised, but all know this is for the best. God forbid that a faulty theory go forth, to be rejected by the Consensus. Our work would then be for naught.

But likewise, God forbid that an ugly theory, no matter how practical, should be championed by our Society. Science is an art and is never to be considered mere craft. Without elegance, a theory would be quickly ignored by the Consensus, left to the hinterland and lost vale of forgotten science.

While we are united, there is nonetheless dissent in our ranks. A Scientist's reputation, glory and fame rely on his Works, and so we often become jealous of other's achievements and possessive of our own. Indeed, some of our most brilliant members do not frequent the Club until they have something to show off. The healthy debate found here is not for them, although I believe their work would benefit from it. But the towers of ego amongst us are too tall, too sturdy and too defensive...



## A Stagnant Society

by Captain Oort

[from Vol. 86, No. 3]

...When will we break from these antiquated and stuffy traditions? Our excessive hearkening back to an old-style Victorian society is strangling us. We must create new forms of interaction among ourselves. These so-called clubs are a joke. Nothing of import takes place in them anymore. Yes, they were once a viable forum for the meeting of minds, but they have become mere pomp and circumstance, commanded by those Scientists in our midst who would prefer to argue over and criticize the theories of others rather than create and champion their own. A sad lot indeed are these armchair Professors. When was the last time a Doctor was witnessed in these gaudy, faux-leather smoking rooms?

I tell you, fellow Scientists, we must wake up and face the new dawn. Our youngest members, in their shining new laboratories, are prepared to seize the day, while our once-great mutter in their dingy, stone-walled dens.

I have only utter contempt for those who feel obliged to trot out their theories before the local club. I realize that these clubs are the haunts of our "objective" editors of *Paradigma*, and that appearance before this committee is a necessity for publication, but I nonetheless rebel in the hopes that others will follow. If our esteemed editors see fit to publish this piece, delivered not through a personal handshake over cigars and cognac, but by e-mail, then perhaps we can truly hope for a better tomorrow.

[Commentary from the Editors — We did indeed "see fit" to publish this diatribe, as we have always encouraged opposing opinions. To offer one here: We all know the importance of tradition, and to so viciously smash a hallowed societal institution simply because one cannot behave according to rules of common decency, as is the case with our Captain Oort, is no basis for rational discourse. Few other Traditions in the Council of Nine would allow for such leeway in discourse. Just try it at an Order of Hermes Chantry and see how far you get.]

## Politics

[Our tradition is not immune to the daily rigors of politics. While many argue that such affairs only delay valuable discoveries, political structuring and the administering of justice within the Tradition are utter necessities. — Editors]

## The Great Hall

by Earl Oberon

[from Vol. 32, No. 4]

The governing body of our Tradition convenes in the Great Hall, a resplendent mansion just outside Paris. Here, the worldly matters of organization are supervised by the Assembly of Science. However, this is no ordinary building, for it has a connection, as do most Chantries, with the greater world of possibility, the Horizon.

It is in the Horizon that the actual Great Hall exists, a majestic building built in a classical Parisian style. Here the true governing of our Science takes place. The great Doctors and Professors of our Tradition gather to discuss important matters and vote on consequential issues.

Here too, the young Scientist may catch a glimpse of a Master Scientist, those most brilliant luminaries of our society. If lucky, the student may even hear the Master orate before the assembly, or, better yet, argue a philosophical or Scientific point. Many have been changed by such discussions, their minds opened to new avenues of thought and possibility. Numerous amazing inventions have been conceived as a result of such illuminating debates.

The Assembly itself is a most prestigious body. Only those who have proved themselves wise are admitted. Indeed, it is a true Meritocracy. However, disputes are resolved by voting, a democratic process.

When disagreements arise, as they often do within our society, and they cannot be settled through mutual consent, then the first means of resolution is to take the matter before the Assembly of Science in the Great Hall. There, the matter will be heard by all and judged appropriately.

The other method, less elegant but effective, is combat. Not a dirty, animalistic, physical exchange of blows, but a duel of Science, a clash of forces and skills. These duels are fought with machines and devices, usually of the Scientist's own invention, although borrowed devices are allowed.

The two (or more, if the nature of the dispute demands it) Scientists throw deadly rays at each other's mechanistic armies, trying to overthrow, through the ingenuity of construction, the enemy's team of robots. Normally, the most advanced weaponry wins, although there are concessions for skill.

Indeed, this is what provides our Scientists an edge over our rivals of Iteration X. We are no mere armchair inventors; no, we are ready and willing to fully test our theories given form in the field of tomorrow...

## Suffrage

[This letter, printed in Vol. 66, No. 1, illustrates the resentment often felt by our female members. — Editors]

### Dear Chauvinist Pigs

from Dame Atomika

Yes, our Tradition is as sexist as a hillbilly redneck on a Saturday night. Don't try to deny it, you pompous windbags. You know who you are. Well, I'm damned tired of it! Three times I've been denied the proper recognition for my Hate Ray just because I'm a woman. No more. I'm fighting back! We'll see who is the superior sex.

Oh, and don't bother to call me a "Son" of Ether any more. I'm an Electrodyne Diva now...



# Nomenclature

[We describe our institutions using terms different from those used by our fellow Traditions. This is due to our more modern predilections. When you hear a member of another Tradition, or even a member of an enemy path, use vocabulary you are unsure of, the following guide may help. — Editors]

Tradition speak	Sons of Ether terminology
Magick	Science (capitalized); lower case when referring to Sleeper science.
Chantry	Club, Chapter, or Laboratory
Mage	Scientist, or sometimes Natural Philosopher
Adept	Professor
Master	Doctor
Oracle	Master Scientist
Sleeper	Sleeper; the mass of Sleepers is referred to as the Consensus, the wall which our Science must break through.

## The Campaign for a New Name

by Professor Ozu  
[from Vol. 82, No. 3]

...Our Tradition has too long clung to the attitudes of its founders, the Electrodyne Engineers of the late 19th century — the Victorian era. Such outdated social mores and codes do a great disservice to the women of our Tradition, many of whom have advanced Science far indeed.

There has long been a movement seeking to change our Tradition's name from "Sons" to something less sexist. However, a consensus on this new name is, as yet, lacking. Candidates so far are:

- The Order of Ether
- The Children of Ether
- The Society of Ether
- Etherians
- Team Ether
- or, alternatives forsaking our ether banner:
- The Bearers of Utopia
- The Tomorrow Society
- The Futurians
- The Paradigm, etc., etc.

I urge you all to participate in this debate. Cast your votes or nominate a new name at your local laboratory...

## Factions

by Professor Dulac  
[written for this volume]

Our Tradition is divided along many political lines. Within a laboratory there may be many Sons of Ether, but each Scientist embraces different convictions concerning the Tradition's future and goals. I will summarize here the major factions I am aware of and also list quotations, some from print, but others from personal interview, from more famous members of these factions.

## The Ethernauts

These are the Scientists obsessed with exploration and the wonders of the far reaches, the places not yet touched by the Consensus. They believe our Tradition's main goal should be the exploration of Etherspace, arguing that the knowledge and discoveries we bring back will supply us with new weapons in our war of Science with the Technocracy.

I should mention the dangers of this endeavor here. While I salute those brave souls who wish to push our gauntlet of knowledge into the unknown, that unknown is obviously dangerous. We must beware lest we lose all we have fought for in one mad gamble.

**Captain Tiberius of the starship Etherjammer:**

*Our course is clear: we must get out there before they do. The untold resources of outer space can only aid our war in inner space, the war for the hearts and minds of the Consensus. Besides, there's nothing like weaving your ship through the ether winds, racing towards adventure...*

## Utopians

This group is perhaps more organized than others, consisting of a large number within our membership dedicated to Science for the betterment of humankind. The search for a better tomorrow through Science is their true goal, and they refuse to recognize historical barriers when their Utopian ideals are challenged.

I myself feel a great affinity for this group, although I must admit that my own cynicism does not always allow me to accept their lofty goals. However, it is also true that their arguments for the improvement of life cannot easily be dismissed as naïveté.

**Doctor Elias:**

*Simply because history has so far denied the ideal does not mean that it cannot yet become real. Look around! There is wonder all about. We ourselves are a wonder. We naturally recognize good and bad. How can we deny the chance to force a change for the better, for the good?*



## Cybernauts (or "Webslingers")

There are some Scientists among us who have become enamored of the Digital Web and thus spend much of their time playing in that wild realm. These Scientists argue that the Web is the next battleground for the Consensus, and that we had better establish some beachheads there.

I do not agree. I just cannot accept that humanity as a whole will become so obsessed with a single manufactured reality, especially one so filled with a glut of trivia. No, we can do far better than this. Of course, my opinion on this is always attacked as out-dated and old-fashioned. So be it.

### Professor Pixel:

*Think what you want, I know otherwise. The Web is the place, man. It's the next thing. No one's gonna give a damn about Dark Matter or that other astronomical crap in ten years. If we don't establish the ether here in the Web, we ain't ever gonna have it.*

## Progressivists

These are the reformers in our midst. They are the devil's advocates and fierce critics who feel the need to expose all our hypocrisies. This faction attracts many women in our Tradition, and I can't blame them. Their call for reform of our "Victorian" standards has gone unheeded for too long.

However, sometimes the Progressivists want to throw out the good with the bad. They do not recognize the necessity and efficiency of the Great Hall and wish to abolish this institution for a more democratic one. I don't recommend this. We have too much pressure from outside agencies to allow for such extreme dissension in our ranks.

### Doctor Alexis Hastings:

*We can no longer deny that there's a lot of cleaning up to be done within our organization. I say we start with the whole sexism issue first, handle it, and then get on to the next big thing: the equalization of power within the Tradition.*

## The Traditionalists

While this name is a touch onerous to its bearers, it is an apt moniker. The Traditionalists are those among us who have perhaps become a bit too static in their thinking. They like things the way they are and deny the need for reform, or change of any sort, in our Tradition.

Most Traditionalists come from the upper echelons; they are mainly elders and older Scientists. And for now, the power rests in their hands. But this is changing, as younger Scientists are take their places in the Great Hall. It remains to be seen how long they can hold out.

### Doctor Gorda Urlak:

*It is preposterous what concessions the young ask for these days. In my day, we were lucky to have as fine an organization as we did. We must hold strong lest our foundations crumble in acceptance of idiotic ideas.*

## Mad Scientists

My use of this term will undoubtedly anger many. However, it is a familiar term and does convey some of the criticism I intend for this group. These are the Scientists who are obsessed with their own theories to the exclusion of other important events. Common sense is all too often left behind by these brilliant but impractical Scientists among us.

It cannot be denied that these Scientists make great sacrifices for the Tradition, but I don't wish to condone this sort of martyrdom. It only encourages them.

The Mad Scientists are allied into a sort of network that stretches across our many laboratories, through which they sometimes trade theories and seek mutual support when they are scrutinized by the Great Hall for improprieties against Sleepers. It is this latter penchant which disturbs me the most. They are too willing to use Sleepers as unwitting fodder for their experiments, regardless of the moral implications. I cannot condone this.

### Professor Vorgel:

*Ha! To say that I am misunderstood is a mis-statement. I have yet to meet the man who is equal to my intellect. If a single fellow Scientist could but understand my advanced theories, then I would perhaps recognize his opinions. But that has yet to occur, sir.*

## Pulp Heroes (or "Adventurers")

Again, I use a controversial term for a particular type of person within our Tradition. Many prefer the term "Adventurer," but I think the above is more fitting, as it better represents their childishness. It was one thing for Doctor Eon to perform the deeds he did; he was a man of his times (although many will argue that he was and is a man of many times, this is beside the point). But to dress up in some silly uniform and go about the world pretending that cliff-hanger serials or pulp magazines are some sort of sound model for reality is ludicrous.

Of course, my opinion is considered invalid by even the great Master Scientists of our Tradition. Indeed, their construction of the Gernsback Continuum is proof that this paradigm is still alive and well with us today.

That still does not excuse the open brandishing of ray pistols among Sleepers...

### Joe "Lucky Skunk" Ross:

*I ain't a mage, but I can defend these guys from the rays and beams of outrageous criticism. Spendin' all those years with ol' Doc Eon has given me some clue about the whole adventure thing. Every Son of Ether dreams of a better world, a world full of wonder, right? So, what better model than the old pulps? I speak from experience, 'cause I wrote more than a few of 'em. They're good clean fun. Not like the comics or movies of today. There's somethin' wrong with a guy who likes to read about psycho-killers as heroes, at least in my book. Naw, don't accuse us of being silly. At least we have our priorities straight, and can tell good from bad.*



# Allies

*I'll make you an Adonis...*

— Boris Karloff, *House of Frankenstein*

*Finally I felt someone watching me. Schratt was standing two yards behind me, staring. His face twisting, he battled with himself, undecided whether to run away or come to my assistance, but he finally overcame the shock of seeing me steal a man's brain.*

— Curt Siodmak, *Donovan's Brain*

# Acolytes

by Professor Dulac

[written for this volume]

What Professor has successfully activated his giant Ray Projector or collected sufficient body parts for reintegration into his golem without the aid of a loyal assistant? Our Scientists, great as they are, owe much to their assistants, those selfless people ready to risk electrocution, criminal prosecution and a lonely existence, all to aid the pursuit of Science. Without our acolytes, the sheer workload demanded by our inventions would be unmanageable.

There are many reasons that our Tradition has trouble recruiting these skilled assistants. In most cases, volunteers prefer to aid the other Traditions, seduced by the glamour of magick. Such shallow beings are not truly skilled by our standards anyway.

We are often reduced to accepting applicants who seem, at first, to have little or no background in Scientific labor, but who prove to be quite dedicated and capable once they are put to work. Nonetheless, the frequent presence of layabouts among our assistants often drives Scientists to behave perhaps a bit too harshly toward their aides. The renowned "Son of Ether Tirade" has sprouted many jokes among our acolytes, and has caused not a few to quit their positions. Indeed, some have even been seduced to the Technocracy with promises of respectful treatment.

This inexcusable behavior toward our assistants is cause for much dissent. There have been various reform movements initiated through the years to create rules of conduct for all Scientists to follow in the treatment of their acolytes.

But regardless of the few bad eggs in our bunch, there have been some shining examples of Scientist-acolyte relationships, chief among them being Doctor Eon and his Terrific Trio back in the '30s and '40s. This model has inspired many other Scientists, including Captain Tiberius, who have built close-knit teams of ready and loyal acolytes about them.

# Golems and Robots

by Professor Aryeh

[from Vol. 53, No. 3]

You cannot find an acolyte more loyal than the one you make yourself. Yes, there have been exceptions to this rule throughout history, but even wild Elias, the prodigal son, returned to his father's ways.

With the aid of Doctor Asimov's Law of Constructs, manufacturing a loyal and helpful aid is no longer the dangerous business it used to be. There are, however, some rules that should be considered:

- Build only from untraceable parts. For robots, the best are found-materials from junkyards or factories (pre-inventory); otherwise, you risk Iteration X attaining some form of control over your robots. In the case of reconstituted dead matter, as grisly as it may seem, scouring battlefields provides the least-traceable corpses. The condition they are found in, however, is often unsatisfactory. Before I go further, I want to refer the reader to Doctor Hamada's excellent and amusing book, *The Ethics of the Corpse Crafter*.

- Be sure the programming or training is carefully planned. The work of B.F. Skinner, although tainted with New World Order ethics, can be helpful here, as long as such behaviorism is remembered to be only a tool, not a philosophy.

# Other Places

by Professor Dulac

[written for this volume]

The material world of Earth is not the only playground for our Scientists. There is a realm of greater possibility beyond, past the artificial wall governed by the Technocracy. Without these havens of alternate laws, we would perhaps fall into the same myopic trap of materialism as the Technocracy. Even though we master the Sphere of Matter, we are not bound hopelessly to it; our Scientists operate in many fields of discovery, from galvanism (Forces) to parapsychology (Mind).

In these other worlds, Paradox does not hinder our imagination. Science can grow to its true proportions, unfettered by materialistic concerns. Indeed, these realms can be tailored as perfect laboratories for experimentation. Etherspace easily lends itself to Correspondence Science, as the workings of the ether wind allow even a novice in that Sphere to operate as an expert.

The following excerpts highlight some of the odd alternate worlds we are heir to:

[See Appendix II of this book for more technical details. — Editors]

## Etherspace

*"It is good to renew one's wonder," said the philosopher. "Space travel has again made children of us all."*

— Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles*

One of our greatest achievements was the discovery of Etherspace by Colonel Arno Valiant in 1888. This stalwart adventurer piloted his balloon up past the sky and discovered that the heavens are a vast celestial realm filled with ether. He theorized that the ether wind could be navigated, making it possible to visit the far planets.

But this discovery scared the Technocracy, and convinced them to vote the ether out of the Consensus, so afraid were they of its possibilities. The Void Engineers were given the task of shutting down this reality, making it into an empty void. This they have achieved — on one side of the Horizon.

But past the Horizon, in what our fellows call the Deep Umbra, Etherspace still exists, and it is indeed navigable, as Captain Tiberius of the Etherjammer starship has discovered.

Many secrets await in this uncharted realm. What wonders hide on the distant planets? What new beings to meet and learn from? Captain Tiberius is, even now, manning an expedition to the mysterious Planet X, hidden between Neptune and Pluto.

However, danger also awaits, for the Technocracy patrols here as well, in the form of Void Engineer ships ready to attack any of our Scientists who dare seek outward for new worlds. Marauders also roam here, ever seeking entry into our sphere. And the Id-fueled Nephandi hide here, every now and then trying to batter down the walls to our world.

## Victoria Station

This amazing model of modern engineering and space technology is an inhabitable base orbiting the moon. Its design is pure Victorian era, though. Since it hearkens back to the early days of our Tradition, to that excitement and world of possibilities, it has been dubbed Victoria Station in honor of the Queen. However, there are many who wish to change this, for Victoria is known to have been instrumental in cementing the power of the New World Order, although we were still allies at the time.

Some of the proposed new names include: Bradbury Outpost, in honor of Ray Bradbury; Moon City 1; and Arcadia Station, in honor of our rumored patrons on the moon.

This important base serves as the main departure point for Etherspace. The only reason the Void Engineers have not yet attacked the station is their fear of Faerie magic. While we certainly do not claim to understand the whims of these rumored Faerie allies of ours, we have so far been able to smoothly execute all our goals for the station without fear of Fey resistance.





## The Gernsback Continuum

This fascinating place is a rather recent addition to our growing number of Horizon Realms. Its creation was based upon a short story by the science fiction author William Gibson. His idea was too good to remain only fiction.

Gibson based his stories on Hugo Gernsback, who was an early editor of science fiction stories, stories of wondrous art-deco futures and sizzling ray guns, of skies filled with metal zeppelins and sleek saucers. This world, representing the best of Gernsback's vision, is the major playground for our new theories and Sciences.

Visitors to this cityscape of the future can participate in a host of entertainments and mind-expanding games, from witnessing the cataclysmic Wars of Science (duels fought between two Sons of Ether), to learning how to pilot an etherflyer.

It is in this realm, more than any except Etherspace, that the behavior of ether can be best observed. In fact, many ether goggles are manufactured here.

## The Hollow Earth

A once-astonishing land, the Hollow Earth is now but a memory to most. It still waits on the periphery of our world, but its entrance is closed and no visitors have passed through its many sub-cavern gates since the 1950s. The Void Engineers succeeded in wiping it from the Consensus.

However, for the stalwart who wishes to brave the dangerous traps surrounding it, it beckons with untold adventure and luminous discovery. It is rumored that the Goro monks still live here, deep within our earth, meditating on peace and thus guarding our world from destruction.

Also within this world is the inner sun, the Smoky God as the primitive natives of the jungle interior call it, the bringer of life and light.

Among the rumored inhabitants of this world are: the Vrili, a race of superior beings with awesome energy weapons that the Nazis formed a society to search for (the Luminous Lodge of the Vrili Society); the deros (for de-evolutionary robots), a race of degenerated and stunted men descended from the Space Gods of Atlantis who left our world long ago; and the Morcegos, bat-like people that sleep during the day in great holes in the ground.

The first Son of Ether to uncover the secrets of the Hollow Earth was Captain John Cleve Symmes. His attempts to gain government funding for an expedition in the mid-1800s created the whole Hollow Earth craze among Sleepers.

In 1908, a Sleeper named Willis George Emerson published *The Smoky God*. This book was an account of a Scandinavian sailor, Olaf Jansen, who traveled with his father into the Hollow Earth. He described a land inhabited by giants and other mythical beasts who worshipped the interior sun, called the Smoky God, from which they drew their energies. Olaf claimed that the Aurora Borealis was a reflection from the Smoky God's light shining through a gap in the pole.

All this attention convinced the Void Engineers that the Hollow Earth had to be closed off. It was too dangerous, too random.

However, some Sleepers claim that the Hollow Earth was revealed in one of Admiral Byrd's Polar Flight newsreels. In 1929, a newsreel about the 1926 and 1929 flights to the pole could supposedly be seen in American theatres. It showed footage of the Hollow Earth, revealing trees, rivers and even a Woolly Mammoth.

This newsreel has not been seen since its original release. The Void Engineers have done their job well.

However, the search for entrances to this interior world of wonder continues. Who knows what new Sciences can be wrought from the inner world's secrets?







# pinions

## Our Fellow Traditions

[The following collection typifies the opinions our Scientists hold regarding our comrades in the Council of Nine. In addition, we provide representative views of our bitter enemies in the Technocracy, our wary relations with the Marauders, our ban against dealing with the Nephandi, and the so-called supernatural residents of our world. — Editors]

### Akashic Brotherhood

by Sir James Fowley

[from Vol. 18, No. 3]

...My time spent in the dreary monastery proved to be all for naught. The answers to my questions were never forthcoming. My hosts simply smiled when I re-inquired, and motioned to their surroundings, as if this was some form of answer. I carefully examined the monastery, from its outer walls to its inner sanctums, but there was no evidence that it was anything more or less than it appeared to be: an ancient stone temple.

Baffled, I badgered my hosts until the head monk finally sighed and sat me down to tea. After an interminable silence he spoke: "If you cannot find the answers within your own silence, your mind makes too much noise. You must learn to let it calm and allow the natural utterances to be heard."

How's that for an inscrutable answer? These mystics confound me. They are too obsessed with the inner world. The action is out here! Why, it's as perfectly clear as the moon at night!

No, my friends, I am afraid the answers to our questions lie not with them, who are ignorant of Science, but with the world itself and its processes...

### Celestial Chorus

by Professor Thunder

[from Vol. 76, No. 1]

...I had a most interesting argument the other night with my friend from the Celestial Chorus, Deacon M—. Our debate began with ecclesiastical issues but quickly broadened to encompass metaphysics.

The crux of his argument was such: God, or the One, is the prime mover and motivator of the universe, and Science is but the surface workings of His (Her/Its) will. Individuals, such as mages, can manipulate reality only by means of the One within them, that part of each and every mote that is still connected with a universal, primordial unity.

I argued back that the existence of God, or the One or whatever it chooses to be called, is irrelevant. His (Her/Its) existence has no bearing whatsoever on our actions. Since He chooses not to reveal Himself, hiding even from rigorous Scientific analysis, then it must be assumed that, existent or not, He in no way affects our lives in a fashion by which we may change or control our lives with greater knowledge of Him. Since our control over ourselves and reality is a fact, with or without knowledge of the One, the One is irrelevant to our lives.

My friend disagreed, but rather than trying to convince me by further proofs of his point, he instead took to that damnable exercise, emotional guilt, looking at me as if I were some impoverished orphan who needed pity and guidance, whereby I would improve my disposition toward life. He took to shaking his head as I continued my argument, and began to "tsk." Phah!

If the Celestial Chorus cannot engage in meaningful dialogue, how are they ever to accomplish their goal of unity within the Council of Nine?

## Cult of Ecstasy

by Scientist Diablo

[from Vol. 76, No. 3]

...Oh, they are indeed a crafty sort. But I must admit that I did enjoy myself. My weekend among the Cult was perhaps the funnest time I've had since my discovery of Xenium. Nonetheless, they are seriously lacking in any sort of scientific method.

None of their statements can be taken for any value, for they are each contradicted by others among them, and it soon arises that each of them is in fact speaking of the same event from an entirely different perspective. That such wildly differing viewpoints can be held on such simple, objective issues is astonishing. Indeed, one is either forced to concede that they are, each and every one of them, somewhat mad, or that the universe is nothing but pure subjectivity.

I realize that this latter option is similar to certain quantum ideas, but I must refuse it. If there was no basis whatsoever for objectivity, then the Consensus would not exist. That said, I must state that the Cult of Ecstasy has perhaps a more dramatic effect on the perceptions of the Consensus than any other Tradition. I do not, though, recommend that we emulate their tactics...

## Dreamspeakers

by Professor Pith

[from Vol. 29, No. 1]

...There were, however, a few observations I collected before we fled in fear of losing our heads. The first is that this Dreamspeaker harbors a profound belief in his connection to nature. This allows him to perform feats amazing by even our Scientific standards. I was forced to revise some of my deeply-held opinions about these primitives and their intelligence.

The second is that he could not even begin to understand our Science. The Dreamspeakers are, I believe, psychologically incapable of this. To put it into a Jungian system, they are non-individuated egos, still living in a *participation mystique* with the world. How fascinating. If one were prepared to spend some time among them, I'm sure one could learn much about primitive human instincts and unconscious mental templates.

The third is that they are either vengeful or full of mischief. Their control over the primitive inhabitants of the spirit world is too dangerous to withstand without the proper equipment. Not realizing what to expect on the expedition, I did not bring a field dampener, and was thus put to more than a little discomfort by the shaman's spirit minions.

Nonetheless, I wore out my welcome, and was soon forced to evacuate the camp, leaving behind many priceless devices...

## Euthanatos

by Professor Argot

[from Vol. 54, No. 2]

...I advise my fellow Scientists to stay well away from the Euthanatos, unless there is no better means of pursuing an objective. Frankly, they are all deranged. Touched in the head somewhat. I mean, this fixation with death is a bit much, don't you agree?

The fellow we traveled with exhibited many moral lapses when dealing with annoying persons. He was all too ready to judge their worthiness to exist, and if they were found wanting in his mind, he was eager to deliver the "proper medication" to them, which invariably meant death for the hapless Sleepers. Dreadful business, no?

We had to constantly explain to him why this could not be done, and I believe we finally broke through to him some understanding of moral principles. Nevertheless, he spurned these principles even after he understood them.

Again, do not go near these ones if you can avoid it...

## Hollow Ones

by Scientist Darcy

[from Vol. 24, No. 4]

...The dirty vagabond called himself a Hollow One and thought this alone allowed him admittance to our meeting. We scoffed at him and sent him on his way...

## Order of Hermes

by Scientist Peebles

[from Vol. 72, No. 1]

...Our own Tradition is an outgrowth of the medieval Order of Hermes, back when that organization had within it many Houses. Lorenzo Golo was a mage of House Verditius until he broke away to form his own House, outside the Order.

Times have changed but the Order of Hermes has not. While this is admirable in some senses, it does point to a desperate denial of change. Indeed, the Order still dabbles in early sciences that have long since matured into new forms.

We tried for a long time to convince them to integrate some of our methods into their practices, but they denied the efficacy of our Sciences. Thus, we work with them still, but realize that they will soon expire as a viable Tradition...

## Verbena

by Doctor Lemniscate

[from Vol. 77, No. 2]

...I'll be damned if I agree to such an insane undertaking again, regardless of the outcome for our laboratory. I have the scars to prove my convictions, scars which refuse to heal, even with repeated use of our own Doctor Babble's Medicant Cream. I don't recommend that any of you, even in the name of diplomacy, allow the Verbena witches to tattoo you, no matter how they impress upon you the importance of it for their rites.

I had gone to their festival in good faith, bringing along our Hydroponics Multiplication Device to exchange for some of their rare herbs. In the spirit of further good will, I agreed to participate in their dance—dance?! Ha! More like a Satanic orgy if you ask me.

These witches and warlocks have perhaps been ingesting too many of their own herbs. I mean, they behave like barbarians! Never again, I swear it...

## Virtual Adepts

by Doctor Alexis Hastings

[from Vol. 81, No. 3]

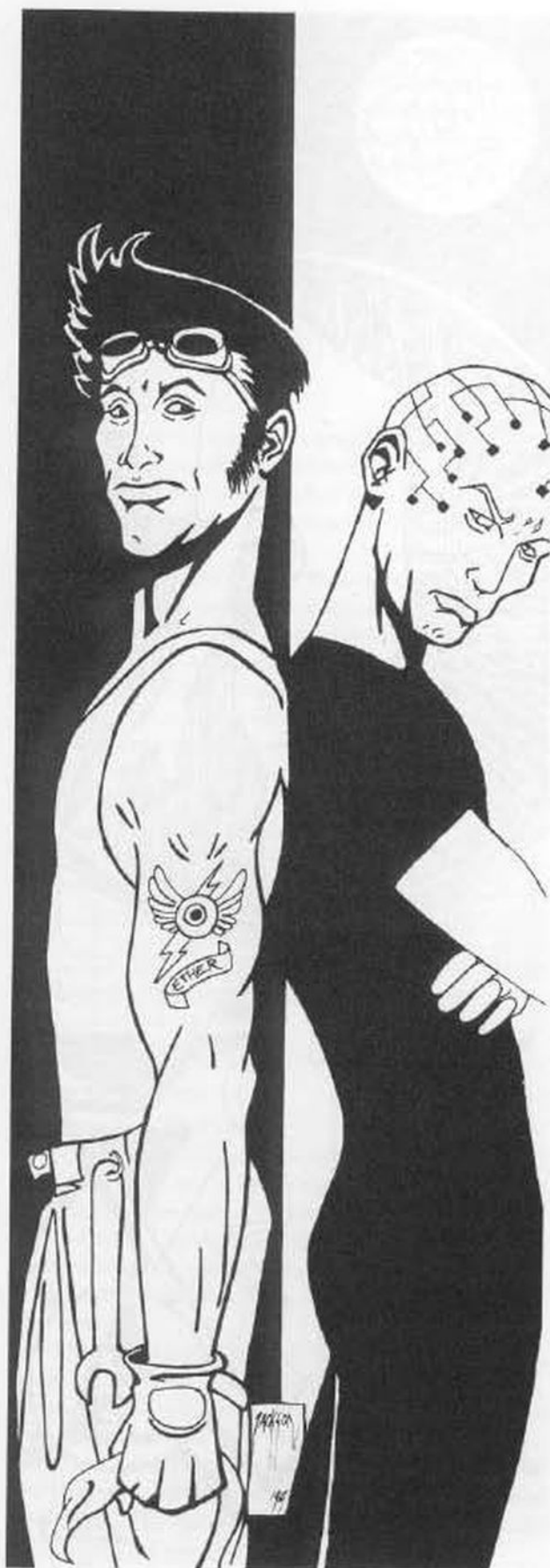
...A wonder, truly a wonder! X-Cel's new deck is a spectacular model of design and efficiency, with the maximum amount of power packed in. I was impressed.

But upon further examination, I realized how it could be improved. X-Cel and I stayed up late that night drawing diagrams, discarding them, and then re-drawing them to incorporate modifications. By morning, we had the blueprints for an even more advanced laptop computer.

Even with all my genius in logic loops and chips, I could not have designed as elegant a machine without X-Cel's insistent persistence and spontaneous insight. She didn't fully understand the models I was working with, but soon revealed an intuitive grasp of them which astounded me, for it has taken me years to cement such theories.

Indeed, I worry that X-Cel, with more training, might surpass my ideas in a few years. I stand on shaky ground. These Virtual Adepts, while undisciplined, certainly have the seed of genius in them...





# The Technocracy

## Iteration X

by Doctor Van Baas  
[from Vol. 43, No. 2]

...I do not believe our Tradition faces a more serious and capable enemy than the foot soldiers of Iteration X. However, with pluck and daring, we can overcome even their mighty, Premium-tempered legions.

They have one weakness: They misunderstand, at a very basic level, the mysteries of the organic mind. While powerful in Mental Science when they need to be, they simply cannot grasp the paradox of human thought. Our tactics must use this against them.

In other words, fellow Scientists, we must never let them outguess us, never be predictable.

We do have another ally, of course: our own understanding of Science. Our Tradition, more than any other in the Council, has the capability to understand the Scientific principles that are behind their weapons, and hence the ability to jury-rig a defense or offense against them.

For instance, I once deduced that the Hit Mark's advanced night-visioning system relied on scanning the infrared spectrum. I was then able to blind the system by heating up objects with my ray pistol, thus increasing their radiation... [This article refers to a HitMark model II, and so is outdated concerning Marks III and higher. — Editors]

## New World Order

by Doctor Headspace  
[from Vol. 76, No. 4]

...Never underestimate the Men in Black. They can read you like a book. Unless, of course, you are me. I specialize in giving false readings. So, I lured them along for a while, waiting for them to make their move. When it came, I was ready for them.

However, even I did not expect their back-up to arrive so early. I still don't understand their damnable communication system. It's as if they are all connected into some cursed mass-hive mind — each one in town knowing what the others are doing. I took Doc Eon's advice, and played it by ear. If I had followed a plan, they would have surely anticipated it and figured out my endgame before I had.

It was this random factor that saved me. That and my Hypnodisc. Not even their sunglasses could save them from my Device. Their mental shields were no match for my Science. However, I assume they have taken it into account since their defeat, and I fear the next MIB I meet will be quite prepared to resist the seductive motions of my disc...

## Progenitors

by Doctor Hand

[from Vol. 66, No. 2]

...I can reveal much concerning Progenitor lore, for I was once one of them. I thank the heavens that the Sons of Ether took me in during my desperate hour of need. Otherwise, I would have never escaped Damage Control.

There are, even now, clones of me wandering about the world. In many instances, these clones have tried to infiltrate Sons of Ether laboratories by pretending to be me. However, soon after joining my new Tradition, I was able to synthesize a viral agent effective only against my clones and distribute this agent to many labs over the world. I have asked that every laboratory administer this agent to "me" when I arrive there. If this results in death, then the victim was not I, but my clone.

Can you understand the precautions we must all take against these monsters? It is one thing to play with life and death using dead tissue, as did Doctor Waldman, but another entirely to play with the living and their very sense of identity!

I have devoted my new explorations in Science toward stymieing further Progenitor monstrosities. I will soon complete a Device that is guaranteed to detect a clone of any sort...

## Syndicate

by Doctor Almanac

[from Vol. 73, No. 1]

...The Syndicate did everything in its power to ruin my cash flow. Once they had discovered my aliases, they set about racking up huge debts in these names. I was frantic for a while, as my livelihood was quickly disappearing.

But I did not need to worry. Desperation builds genius. It is a simple matter to devise a machine that can draw cash from banks legally, even when you do not exist in their system. And when this machine fails, I have counterfeit plates ready. Making money is the easiest thing.

However, I do not advise you to engage in this practice unless you have already come under the Syndicate's notice and censure. Otherwise, you will soon find them watching you. No, I recommend operating normally in regard to your fiscal affairs for as long as possible. Operating as a simple cog in their machine is the best way to hide from them.

But once they have taken action against you, you might as well try to screw them back...

## Void Engineers

by Captain Tiberius

[from Vol. 87, No. 1]

...I've had more than my fair share of run-ins with these jockeys. Believe me when I say that you should never underestimate the Void Engineers. That doesn't mean they're not stupid; they are. But they are a cunning kind of stupid, backed up with the full technological might of their fellow Conventions.

But we've got more than that. We've got gumption.

I must say, I have a little respect for them. Of all their fellows, they are the only ones willing to go Out There. Certainly their reasons for embarking on the Grand Adventure are wrong, but they do it nonetheless. I wish we weren't enemies, but they will have it no other way.

So, my recommendation is to fire first and ask questions later. And remember, while their void shuttles are powerful, they cannot outrace our etherships, for they do not know how to harness the ether wind...

## Marauders

by Professor Larson

[from Vol. 79, No. 2]

...Yes, I agree that the Marauders are dangerous. But what we can learn from them far outweighs the risks involved. Their ability to blatantly ignore Paradox must be studied. The principles involved could perhaps aid in the creation of a Paradox Field Nullifier. Then we would not have to worry about this Consensus garbage anymore. Pure Science would be ours for the taking! What heights we could reach then!

I have recently made the acquaintance of a Mr. Glamgurd, a being of the genus *Manticora*. We have had some fascinating talks, and I have so far been able to convince him that I am a better conversation subject than dinner subject. I will continue to explore further relations with this being, and file reports whenever possible...

## Nephandi

by Master Scientist Wells

[written for this volume]

I write this message to the next generation of Scientists in utmost earnesty to warn you away from any dealings with the Nephandi. The consequences of such interactions, even brief ones, can be devastating.

Our official position concerning the Nephandi forbids contact of any kind. This is not to be violated. If even a single Scientist is corrupted by their ways, then her entire laboratory could follow suit.

Do not believe for an instant that their wiles will not be effective against you. I have seen some of the greatest minds in our Tradition fall to them, becoming *harabbi*. Such was the fate of the renowned Doctor Gordon. If Gordon approaches you in any fashion, alert a Doctor or Professor immediately. Gordon is dangerous. His once-brilliant understanding of biology has been turned to evil uses.

I understand the temptation to learn from the Nephandi. But do not be fooled here either. The great Doctor Eon suffered his only defeat in trying to deal with the *Zigg'raug'lurr*. Even that master of Time could not come close to understanding the inhuman desires of these beasts of the time stream.

I repeat: Go not near the Nephandi.



## Others

### Vampires

by Professor Doubilet  
[from Vol. 66, No. 2]

...My studies were near to their completion when they discovered my intentions. Their retribution was harsh. Their fierce desire to keep themselves and their kind cloaked in utter secrecy drives them to inhuman deeds. My pitiful assistant, Karl, is lost to us due to their savage attack on my laboratory.

Everything is gone. The blood samples, my notes, and the remaining tissue samples, including the ashes. There was a note waiting for me when I arrived at the wreckage that used to be my lab. A note that was attached to the stake in poor Karl's chest. In the most civilized terms, the note cautioned me against further exploration into the vampiric mysteries.

Strange, how such a refined letter could be delivered by such beasts.

But this has only strengthened my resolve. I am now armed with improved equipment, including a solar ray, which I believe will keep them well at bay. I go forth to continue my studies...

### Werewolves

by Professor Equator  
[from Vol. 43, No. 2]

...The savage howling of the half-men chilled me to the bone, and set my acolytes on edge as well. I assured my group that we had nothing to fear, for the pact I had made with the city werewolf would surely be honored by his country cousins. How stupid of me to attribute a civilized virtue, such as honor, to men whose hearts are predatory.

As we waited in the campsite, the howling in the surrounding woods grew nearer and nearer. As instructed by the city-dwelling wolf, I set out the staff, driving it into the ground. He said the magic of the "fetish" would stave off an attack. I prayed so.

But prayer means little in Nature's wilds. A huge slaving wolf, larger than any I had ever seen before — excepting fossil records from Europe — leapt from the woods, past the staff, and into my chest, driving me to the ground.

Its hot breath engulfed my face, and I nearly fainted. Saliva dripped from its open fangs, running down my cheek. I believed my end had finally come.

And then it grew even larger, its weight bearing down hard on me, nearly crushing me. I could hardly breathe as its body stretched out into a furred man shape. I could hear my acolytes screaming as they beat their way through the bushes.

The thing still bore the face of a wolf, and stared into my eyes.

And then it laughed.

An almost-human laugh. And I swear that intelligence gleamed behind its eyes. It stood up, and I was thankful to breathe again. It walked over to my Kirlian camera and smashed it with a swift kick. I groaned, for it had taken a year to build. The creature seemed pleased at my misfortune. It smiled at me. And then it left, running back into the woods of night.

I have never had a more terrifying and frustrating experience. Studying the lycanthrope will obviously require some different methods...

## Wraiths

by Professor Neon

[from Vol. 33, No. 2]

...The dead would certainly make an interesting study. Scientists within our Tradition have done some initial research with parapsychological phenomena, but have yet to truly pierce the veil between life and death.

Certainly, great Scientists in our Tradition have created life from the dead, but there is no evidence that the newly created "soul" embodies the personality of the previous inhabitant; in fact, it would seem otherwise.

Until a more in-depth study can be made, we must recognize that ghosts are a mystery to Science...

## Faeries

by Professor Dooley

[from Vol. 87, No. 4]

Are the faeries of medieval legend (and modern urban myth, if some reports are to be believed) the survivors of Atlantis? Is their magic actually the remnant of Atlantean super science? I believe so. The planet Arcadia (known to some in our Tradition as Planet X), hidden between Neptune and Pluto, is home to these remaining, near-immortal survivors of that ancient cataclysm. Now, it remains for me to confirm my theory. I have booked passage on the Etherjammer. If we can elude the Void Engineer's attack ships and navigate past the enigma traps left by the Fey, we shall find this Arcadia/Planet X...



HYPERTHYSICS  
CHAPTER 3-3  
This will be on last  
Friday's test... test



DMT

# Appendix I: The Halls of Science

*The human race is fumbling toward the light through outer darkness; and there is a feeling here of movement, of genuine wonder.*

— Harlan Ellison, *An Edge in My Voice* (Installment 6)



The Sons of Ether are a Tradition stuck, in many ways, in time. While some members of the group do live in the late 20th century, the structure, ideals, aesthetics and icons of the Tradition itself are rooted in Utopian Victorian sensibilities. To the Sons, tradition, grace and civility are of paramount importance; other Traditions and their Technocracy foes are boorish, with little style or honor. The Good Old Days need not be past history; the Sons of Ether see themselves as the saviors of magickal class.

Beyond their "mad scientist" stereotype, the Sons of Ether remain a fairly diverse lot. Although united by their common love for grand theories and graceful Science, many modern Sons (and Daughters) reject the stuffy confines of tradition. By and large, most Etheric Scientists still spurn the nihilistic goth/punk lifestyle in favor of a more upbeat eccentricity. This Tradition is nothing if not optimistic.

This chapter presents a variety of beginning character templates for player or Storyteller use, and a further four notables. These characters by no means reflect the diversity within this stylish Tradition. For the Sons of Ether, grandiose theory, personal honor and daring experimentation mean more than the clothing on their backs or the devices in their hands. For them, the wonder of Science is the salvation of magick.

# Mad Biologist

*Talent and imagination*

*Weird Science!*

*Not what teacher said to do*

*Makin' dreams come true*

*Living tissue, warm flesh*

— Oingo Boingo, "Weird Science"

**Quote:** *Reality is a disease, and I'm the cure!*

**Prelude:** Since childhood, you've had a fascination with natural forces. You didn't wait until high-school biology to start dissecting frogs, and you had personal theories about life and the universe by the time you were nine. Your science teachers, of course, said that those theories were all wrong. You were smart enough, they claimed; why didn't you get your head out of the clouds and cooperate for a change?

Their science had no grace to it, no imagination. You always worked hard — at least when it came to the subjects that caught your fancy — but your low grades and odd behavior kept you out of the best schools. To hell with them all! Against your parents' wishes, you enrolled in a "crackpot college" and pursued a master's degree. Your professor was an eccentric old guy who licked transistor batteries between classes; you hit it off beautifully, and he soon got you a job at a local research lab.

You were working with some mice one day when it all became clear. The world was a giant maze, and the maze was on fire. A mouse with a big enough flame-thrower, however, could burn her way through the walls! You were that mouse! Fight fire with fire! It made sense to you at the time, and your mentor was delighted. He introduced you to some of his "colleagues," who welcomed you with open arms. You've been perfecting your flame-thrower ever since.

**Concept:** You're more than a little crackers, but in a neat sort of way. Science was meant to be fun; whimsy leads to the biggest breakthroughs. You love solving the little puzzles each day brings, and know that the answer to the biggest puzzle of all lies just out of sight.

**Roleplaying Tips:** An unplanned act is a reflex; follow impulsive actions with hard research to discover the stimulus. Fire and mice are like totems to you — treat both with respect. Act strange; anyone scared off isn't worth knowing anyway. Above all, have fun! Life isn't worth getting depressed about!

**Magick:** You never really got the hang of Matter Science; Life and Forces are your specialties. Though you like playing with (or creating!) little lifeforms, open flame has a special significance for you. Fire, you realize, represents insight, determination, vision and will. Besides, it's fun to make things burn! Not that you've forgotten your responsibility as a Scientist; the Consensus must be saved from its own lack of imagination, not to mention the Technocracy. A sexually transmitted cure for AIDS is your ultimate goal.

**Equipment:** Leather jacket, mouse-skull jewelry, surgical tools and an odd assortment of pills and fluids (foci), notebook, lighter and homemade napalm.



## MAGE: The Ascension™

Name:  
Player:  
Chronicle:

Essence: DYNAMIC  
Nature: DEVIANT  
Demeanor: REBEL

Concept: MAD  
Mentor: BIOLOGIST  
Cabal:

## Attributes

### Physical

Strength 00000  
Dexterity 00000  
Stamina 00000

### Social

Charisma 00000  
Manipulation 00000  
Appearance 00000

### Mental

Perception 00000  
Intelligence 00000  
Wits 00000

## Abilities

### Talents

Alertness 00000  
Athletics 00000  
Awareness 00000  
Brawl 00000  
Dodge 00000  
Expression 00000  
Intuition 00000  
Intimidation 00000  
Streetwise 00000  
Subterfuge 00000

### Skills

Drive 00000  
Etiquette 00000  
Firearms 00000  
Leadership 00000  
Meditation 00000  
Melee 00000  
Research 00000  
Stealth 00000  
Survival 00000  
Technology 00000

### Knowledges

Computer 00000  
Cosmology 00000  
Culture 00000  
Enigmas 00000  
Investigation 00000  
Law 00000  
Linguistics 00000  
Medicine 00000  
Occult 00000  
Science BIOLOGY 00000

## Advantages

### Spheres

Correspondence 00000  
Entropy 00000  
Forces 00000

Life 00000  
Mind 00000  
Matter 00000

Prime 00000  
Spirit 00000  
Time 00000

### Other Traits

DANCING 00000  
00000  
00000  
00000  
00000  
00000

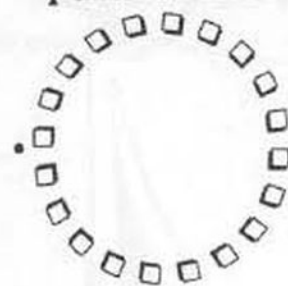
### Arete

0000000000

### Willpower

0000000000  
0000000000

### Quintessence



### Paradox

### Health

Bruised -0 ☐  
Hurt -1 ☐  
Injured -1 ☐  
Wounded -2 ☐  
Mauled -2 ☐  
Crippled -5 ☐  
Incapacitated ☐

### Backgrounds

ARCANE 00000  
AVATAR 00000  
DREAM 00000  
00000  
00000  
00000

### Experience

### Study Points

# Metaphysician

*Whoever understands the first truth  
Should understand the ultimate truth.*

*The last and first,  
Are they not the same?*

— Zen koan

**Quote:** *The science of the mind is far more potent than that of the body.*

**Prelude:** As a child you discovered an easy way to overcome the trials of the world, whether they involved insult or injury: You willed them away. Sometimes it actually worked. Dramatically.

When you realized that you were in charge, you set about figuring out just how to control this little talent of yours. You studied parapsychology and essentially created a Science of mind over matter. In an alternate universe, you believe you would now serve the

Akashic Brotherhood, but in this world, the Sons of Ether got to you first. Through their aid, you have turned your personal power of the mind into a Scientific technique potentially usable by all. It is, in fact, your goal to awaken others to the potential within them.

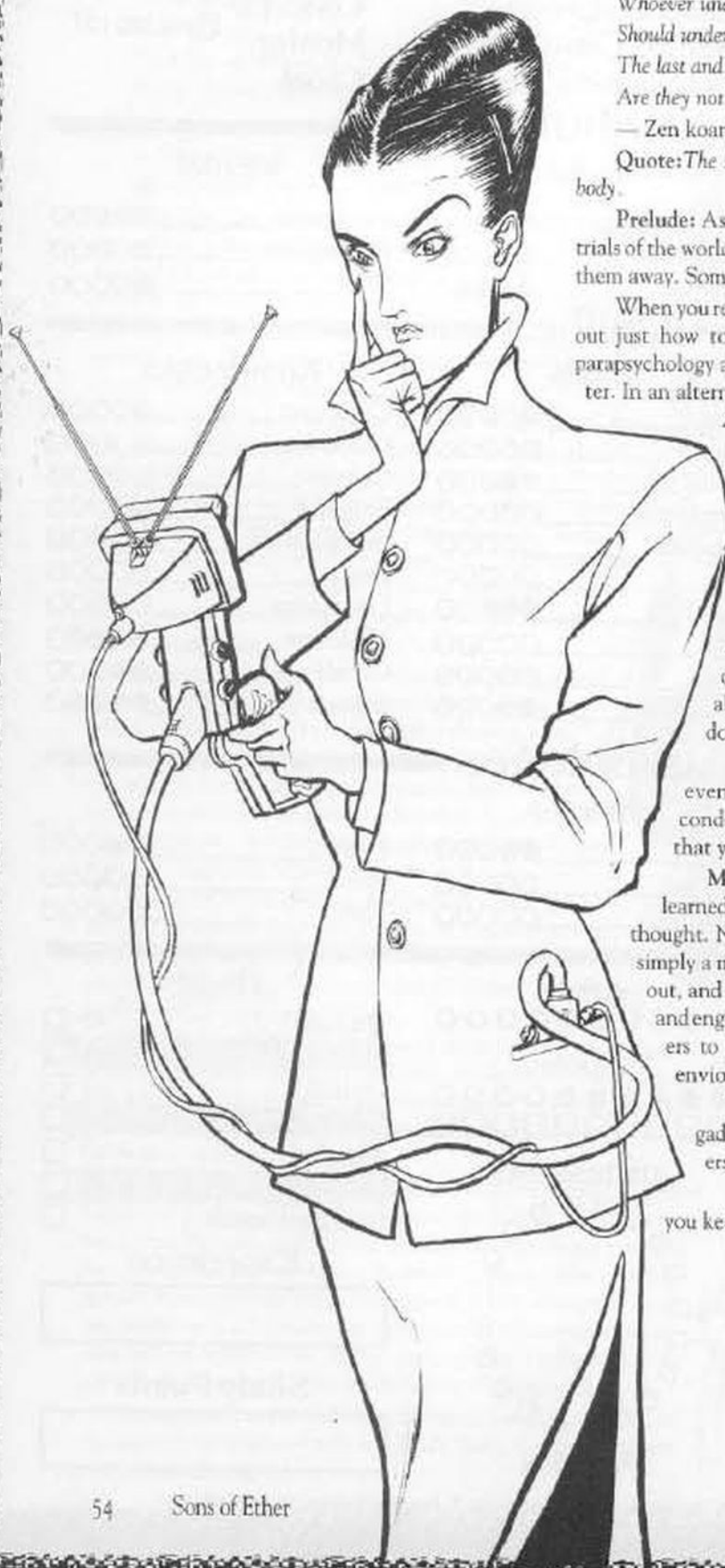
**Concept:** You are a very peaceful person, for you know you can get what you want, any time you want, using positive thinking. You put up with obstacles simply as a game to test your patience, your ability to bear through it all. Never let them get you down.

**Roleplaying Tips:** Be kind and friendly to others, even if they do often misinterpret your behavior as condescending and proselytizing. They will soon realize that your teachings are for their betterment.

**Magick:** You excel in the Mind sphere and have learned to subtly change the world about you simply through thought. No, this isn't vulgar as far as you're concerned, it's simply a matter of accessing the truth. Your theory bears you out, and you can teach it to others through your persuasive and engaging social skills, sometimes even converting Sleepers to your way of thought. Many fellow Scientists are envious of your luck with the Consensus.

To help you in this proselytizing, you carry a host of gadgets with you, from PK meters to galvanic massagers.

**Equipment:** Well-cut suit and briefcase, in which you keep your meters.



## MAGE: The Ascension™

Name:  
Player:  
Chronicle:

Essence: **PATTERN**  
Nature: **DIRECTOR**  
Demeanor: **VISIONARY**

Concept: **METAPHYSICIAN**  
Mentor:  
Cabal:

## Attributes

### Physical

Strength ☐☐☐☐☐  
Dexterity ☐☐☐☐☐  
Stamina ☐☐☐☐☐

### Social

Charisma **PERSUASIVE** ☐☐☐☐☐  
Manipulation ☐☐☐☐☐  
Appearance ☐☐☐☐☐

### Mental

Perception ☐☐☐☐☐  
Intelligence ☐☐☐☐☐  
Wits ☐☐☐☐☐

## Abilities

### Talents

Alertness ☐☐☐☐☐  
Athletics ☐☐☐☐☐  
Awareness ☐☐☐☐☐  
Brawl ☐☐☐☐☐  
Dodge ☐☐☐☐☐  
Expression ☐☐☐☐☐  
Intuition ☐☐☐☐☐  
Intimidation ☐☐☐☐☐  
Streetwise ☐☐☐☐☐  
Subterfuge ☐☐☐☐☐

### Skills

Drive ☐☐☐☐☐  
Etiquette ☐☐☐☐☐  
Firearms ☐☐☐☐☐  
Leadership ☐☐☐☐☐  
Meditation ☐☐☐☐☐  
Melee ☐☐☐☐☐  
Research ☐☐☐☐☐  
Stealth ☐☐☐☐☐  
Survival ☐☐☐☐☐  
Technology ☐☐☐☐☐

### Knowledges

Computer ☐☐☐☐☐  
Cosmology ☐☐☐☐☐  
Culture ☐☐☐☐☐  
Enigmas ☐☐☐☐☐  
Investigation ☐☐☐☐☐  
Law ☐☐☐☐☐  
Linguistics ☐☐☐☐☐  
Medicine ☐☐☐☐☐  
Occult ☐☐☐☐☐  
Science ☐☐☐☐☐

## Advantages

### Spheres

Correspondence <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Life <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Prime <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Entropy <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Mind <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Spirit <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Forces <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Matter <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Time <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

### Other Traits

☐☐☐☐☐  
☐☐☐☐☐  
☐☐☐☐☐  
☐☐☐☐☐  
☐☐☐☐☐  
☐☐☐☐☐

### Arete

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

### Willpower

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐  
☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

### Quintessence



### Paradox

### Health

Bruised -0 ☐  
Hurt -1 ☐  
Injured -1 ☐  
Wounded -2 ☐  
Mauled -2 ☐  
Crippled -5 ☐  
Incapacitated ☐

### Experience

### Study Points

### Backgrounds

**ALLIES** ☐☐☐☐☐  
**INFLUENCE** ☐☐☐☐☐  
**AVATAR** ☐☐☐☐☐  
☐☐☐☐☐  
☐☐☐☐☐  
☐☐☐☐☐

# Awakened Creation

*Can you see the real me?*

*Can you?*

*Can you?*

— The Who, "The Real Me"

**Quote:** *Yes, you can touch me. It feels just like flesh, doesn't it? The transmogrification process worked wonderfully.*

**Prelude:** You opened your eyes for the first time only a year ago. You were already fully grown, but had a lot of learning to do. At first, you could only grunt, but Doctor Cadaver soon taught you to speak and read perfectly.

Three months ago, you realized what you were: a piece of clay. Or, to be more precise, an animated, living piece of clay. You were, as the Doctor said, a golem. Created from raw earth in a vat by the Doctor, you aren't even human. But you feel human. You have all these thoughts, emotions and urges that seem human. And you have a soul that is more than human.

When the Doctor died in the fire last week, something inside you changed. You realized that, with the Doctor gone, you were free. And that realization Awakened something within you, something the Doctor had told you couldn't be Awakened. He was wrong.

**Concept:** You are a new Scientist with the Sons of Ether, who aren't really sure what to do with you. You seem perfectly human, and your flesh mocks human flesh perfectly, down to the blood and veins. You can die like a human, too, or so you believe. So, for all intents and purposes, you are human.

**Roleplaying Tips:** You are kind-hearted but have an inexplicable anger that rises to the surface occasionally. You speak incredibly well-enunciated English.

**Magick:** You decided to follow in your creator's footsteps, hoping that by studying his notes, you could better understand yourself. This has led to an excellent comprehension of Life and Matter.

**Equipment:** Ordinary clothes. You usually carry around whatever book you are currently reading as you search for insights into the human condition.







## Czar Vargo

Czar Vargo, considered the greatest Son of Ether, has been missing since 1914. Born the son of a fisherman on the Black Sea, he exhibited signs of genius early on, and was soon apprenticed to Count Roland of France. He began his career in the Tradition as an expert in Forces, quickly rising through the ranks to become a Professor. Soon afterward, he premiered his Conversion Engine.

Many Sons of Ether look back longingly to his famous revolt against the world's governments. His campaign for the good of humanity was the high-point of the Tradition's history. If Vargo had possessed the will to kill, he would have succeeded, or so many mages today believe. But others know better; if Vargo had killed, his moral cause would have been destroyed as well. Better for him to retreat from the world entirely, which he did, than to betray his ideals.

Reports have been heard over the years that great Umbral ships resembling Vargo's fleet have been sighted in the Deep Umbra, past the Horizon. Even the Void Engineers have reported seeing these ships, and claim to have been saved from Zigg'raugglurr attacks by them. Does Vargo live, or does one of his students now command the fleet?

Vargo may be gone, but his dream lives on...

## Doctor Eon, "The Man of Many Tomorrows"

Many of today's Sons of Ether grew up thrilling to the pulp adventures of Doctor Eon and his Terrific Trio. His adventures appeared in *Astonishing Science Stories* from 1935 until his supposed death in 1951. Doctor Eon was a master of many Sciences and Spheres, but specialized in Life and Time. Through a Scientific physical regimen he invented himself; he became a sterling example of physical superiority. His understanding of Time led to many exciting adventures.

Perhaps the most celebrated non-Scientists in the tradition are the acolytes who comprised Doc's Terrific Trio and accompanied him on all his missions. Joe "Lucky Skunk" Ross was the author of the pulp accounts of these exploits. He was actually a lot smarter than he made himself out to be in these yarns, which always caused his enemies to underestimate him.

Doctor Eon's final adventure was in Etherspace, where he perished in the explosion on the Void Engineer ship, *Krakou*. However, his companions believe he still lives. As Joe Ross put it in an interview years later, "Naw, he ain't dead. Not Doctor Eon. I bet he's waiting for us in the future..." If so, we wish the Doctor well. As Doctor Eon's famous sobriquet went, "Time for adventure!"

## Elias - "Frankenstein's Monster"

Poor Elias has long suffered the slings and arrows of a poor publicity campaign. He is the being Mary Shelley used as a model for Frankenstein's creation in her book, and he was later known as Frankenstein's Monster to American

58

movie-goers. But he is far from monstrous. Indeed, few humans can claim to be as virtuous as Elias.

He originally fled to the far north, away from his possessive and angry creator, the Son of Ether Doctor Waldman. Trudging across the lonely snows of the pole, he discovered friends — the wise Goro monks of Agharta. He studied their ways for a time and achieved enlightenment, the Awakening of his Avatar. He was invited to join the monks, but had overcome his anger against his "father" and wished to follow in Waldman's footsteps, as a Son of Ether.

He traveled back to the castle of his birth in Austria, only to find a charred ruin. The peasants had risen up against their "ungodly" neighbor, killing him and burning his castle. In the far north, Elias had lost track of time. Near ageless as he was, he little realized that decades had passed since he ran away. Following what clues he could, he made contact with the Sons of Ether in nearby Vienna, and was inducted into the Tradition soon after.

Presently, he has returned to the far north to continue his studies away from the bustle of mad humanity. Many have gone off in search of him, but reaching the entrance to Agharta and the Hollow Earth is much harder now.

## Alexis Hastings

Before her Awakening, Alexis was a very quiet physical chemist, except in her imagination. She was fascinated by alchemy, and knew that if she worked hard enough, she could recover the secrets of this long-lost Science. She believed that electricity was the key that would unlock the mysteries of transformation.

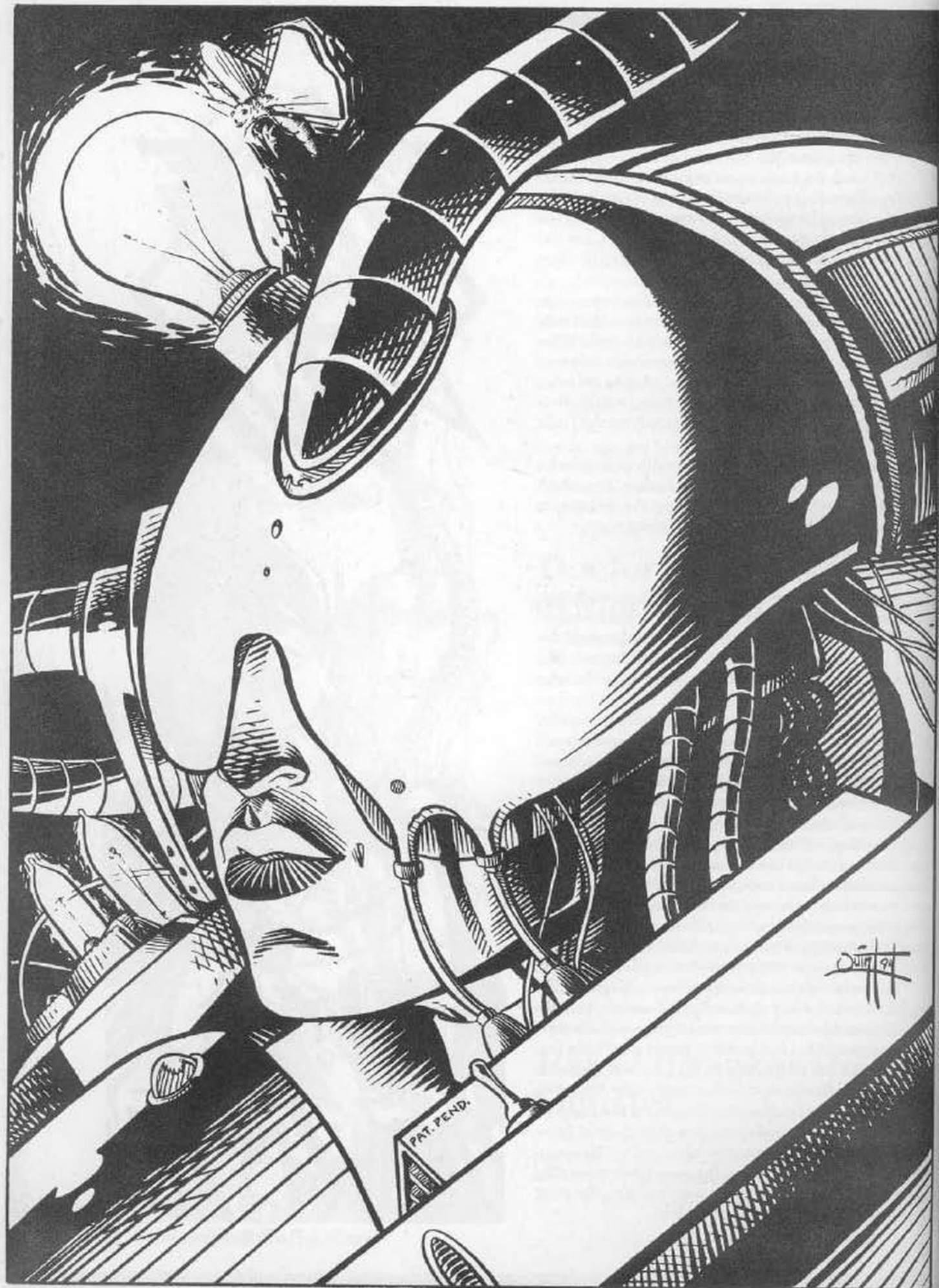
Awakening only strengthened her resolve. She studies Matter and Forces to the near exclusion of the other Spheres, though she dabbles in a bit of Correspondence to keep up with the Virtual Adepts in the Digital Web. (What a place for experimentation! Electricity everywhere, so important for existence. Paradise!)

Above all else, Alexis Hastings is a tinkerer. She loves to play with things, manipulating tools and devices to operate as she wants them to. She uses electricity whenever possible, and even sometimes when it's not, just to hear the crackle and feel the ozone. Alexis has fun with her experiments, and believes that nothing is impossible. Many of her current experiments involve changing the way common objects work. Her favorite hobby involves converting a toaster into a CD player.

Despite her mad scientist appearance and approach to magick, Alexis is a very dedicated and thorough Scientist. Though magick has captured her attention, her pure scientific skills are formidable. Until mundane people get to know her, they perceive her as she used to be: shy and somewhat conservative. Her friends and fellow mages know her better.

A frequent and enthusiastic contributor to *Paradigma*, Alexis has won the respect of many older Sons of Ether despite her "radical" views. She advocates collaboration between mages, believing that the more information they share (and the more things she can electrify), the more astounding results everyone can achieve.





PAT. PEND.

# Appendix II: Theory and Practice

*What is this? What is this! This! my dear sir, is the Barkington-Payson Semi-Automatic Level-Seeking Underwater Caisson Drill and Dynamite Spacer! You will not find, in this exhibition or in all the world, another SALSUCDADS that even compares with it.*

— Mark Helprin, *Winter's Tale*

## The Science of Magick



The Sons of Ether have rather eccentric views of Reality. These views color their conception of how the Spheres function. Although it is extremely rare to find two Sons of Ether who share the same theories or beliefs, there are some basic tenets shared by most:

### **Correspondence**—The Mindshattering Theory of No-Dimensional Reality

The existence of a "between" space or dimension has always been a concept favored by the Sons of Ether. This space, sometimes referred to as Dimension Zero, holds the key to the Son of Ether Correspondence theory. By transporting objects through this nullspace from one point in Reality to another, transmatter relocation and teleportation

are possible. This theory contradicts many of the other Traditions' beliefs about Correspondence; indeed, many Sons of Ether subscribe to the views held by the Virtual Adepts, who seem to have a firmer grasp on this Sphere.

### **Entropy**—The Doomsday Science

Everything can be broken down, disintegrated, or destroyed. Such is the fascination of Entropy. The Sons of Ether have always preferred to use their Science to create rather than destroy, but for some disgruntled Scientists, the temptation to develop a death ray or other destructive device is just too much. Such an all-consuming obsession can threaten their own lives, as well as the lives and property of those around them. Still, this Science of destruction is seen as one of the most potent weapons in the fight for a more enlightened Reality.

### Forces — All the Powers of the Universe

Few Traditions have found as many uses for the Sphere of Forces as the Sons of Ether. Ray guns, engines, spacecraft, submarines, X-ray goggles, sonic scalpels — all harness the powers of nature. From acoustic energy to zetawave radiation, energy in all its myriad forms powers their strange devices.

### Life — The Might of God

Bringing the dead to life, creating the perfect man (or woman), breathing water or surviving in the vacuum of space without a spacesuit — such feats have been conceived by the visionaries among us. The Sons of Ether see the Science of Life as an opportunity to tinker with nature's building blocks in order to forge a better future for humanity. Unfortunately, in many cases the Scientist's vision outstrips her ability. The resulting failed experiments can be truly horrible to behold. This misuse of power, however good the intent, has earned the Sons of Ether a reputation for carelessness that endures to this day.

### Matter — The Building Blocks of Reality

Matter is limitless in its permutations and infinite in its uses. The Sons of Ether have embraced this Sphere as their own. This mastery allows Etheric Scientists to create many of their wondrous devices.

### Mind — The Untapped Potential of the Human Brain

Many Sons of Ether find this Sphere useful in augmenting their lack of social skills. Numerous practitioners even deny that Mindpowers are related to the other Spheres, explaining that their abilities result from "psychic development" or some other pet

theory. Still, no one doubts the effectiveness of such Devices as the C.U.D.D. Beam Lobotomizer or the Telepathic Telephone, and the creators of these devices are feared by friend and foe alike.

### Prime — "The Juice"

There are over a thousand known theories on the nature of Prime, but all Sons of Ether agree that if you want to create something really groundbreaking, you need to have "the juice." Most disciples love to find new and interesting ways to fuel their Pattern Crafting, and those Professors who have mastered the Science of Prime are looked upon with awe by young inventors still trying to perfect their own methods of utilizing this most precious of resources.

### Spirit — The Worlds Beyond...


There are alternate dimensions out there, worlds separated from our own by the thinnest Gauntlet. Some Sons of Ether believe that these parallel universes hold the key to humanity's Ascension. These ethernauts are brave explorers of the unknown, but often fall prey to perils that more "spiritually attuned" Traditions such as the Dreamspeakers avoid with ease (and common sense).

### Time — The Key to Eternity

The Sons of Ether have always held to their highly individualistic visions of Time, even in the face of ridicule. It has long been the goal of a brave few to build a time machine and find out what secrets the past or the future might hold. Most Scientists, however, are content to test the nature of Time and use the knowledge gained to improve their inventions.



# Foci



Sons of Ether come in as many shapes and sizes as their theories. Sometimes in their quests for knowledge they need to personalize their foci in order to accomplish their goals. Because Sleepers are more inclined to believe in technology, even odd technology, many of these foci are necessary to enable the Sons to use otherwise vulgar Science (magick) coincidentally. Thus, small ray guns and jet packs may function with little disturbance to reality. Really absurd Effects (teleportation, spontaneous human combustion), however, cannot be disguised and so remain vulgar.

Technomancers pay for this flexibility by relying more on their foci than many of their Tradition brethren. Most of these foci are considered unique to individual Sons and may not work in another's hands. See "Technomagick" and "Personalizing Magick" (pp. 103-108, 114-16) in *The Book of Shadows* and "Unique Foci" (pp. 178-179) in *Mage* for more details.

Objects that allow a Son of Ether to focus her own Sphere Effects or Rotes are foci; objects that allow her to do things she would normally be unable to do are Devices (Talismans). Each Ether mage should match her chosen foci to her own favored theories.

## Correspondence

Cartographer's map and compass, slightly inaccurate globe (used by spinning and stopping on a random point), teleportation chamber (accompanied by strange noises and flashing lights), Model-T with a few enhancements.

## Entropy

Disintegration ray, sonic flaw destabilizer, blender, beaker of acid or nitroglycerin.

## Forces

Lightning rod, large wall switch (must wear goggles while pulling it), an ordinary D-cell battery, jet pack.

## Life

Operating table, microscope, hypodermic needle, beakers (lots of beakers!), lightning (it gave us life in the beginning, and it will give me life now!), supplies of microscopic organisms and/or sperm and ovum cells.

## Matter

Cement mixer, toolbox with unrecognizable tools, tube of glue, Molecular Rearranger, blueprints (must have blueprints!).

## Mind

Head-mounted radar dish, stethoscope, phrenologist's chart (go look it up), X-ray machine, electrodes (very important!), rewired old-fashioned salon hair dryer, psychiatrist's couch, lots of lengthy questions with big words.

## Prime

Jar of vitamins, beaker full of phosphorous, Geiger counter, lightning rod, slightly altered independent steam-powered generator, radar dish aligned with another planet, mysterious and strangely shaped wall socket that glows when not in use.


## Spirit

Strobe light, tuning fork, diving suit and mask, mysterious door which remains locked but from which strange noises emanate, Dimensional Transponder, beaker full of ectoplasm.

## Time

Rewired kitchen timer, grandfather clock with glowing lights, sundial, shot of adrenaline, any strange object removed from a mummy's tomb, carousel, any sort of time machine.

## Additional Formulas (Rotes) for Etheric Scientists



Because of the Etheric mages' theories, foci are usually required with these rotes.

### Find Reality Flaws (• Prime, • Entropy)

When Sons of Ether are trying to repair the Paradox damage done by their fellow inventors' fevered experiments, this formula comes in handy.

[This simple rote can determine whether or not certain aspects of reality were altered by the release of Paradoxical energies. With four or more successes, the Scientist can determine the exact amount of Paradox released and pinpoint any Paradox Flaws' location and size. Six or more successes might offer a solution as to how to correct them, hopefully without more magickal tinkering.]

### General Anesthesia (• Mind, • Life)

Sons of Ether hate to be slowed down by pain. Dr. Rotham, in his Epic and Spine-Tingling Adventures against the Marauders, found it imperative to focus his full attention on vats of bubbling hydromium oxide, and not on his stubbed toe.

[For every success scored on the magickal Effect roll, the caster of this rote can ignore the penalties of one level of wounds for the duration of the magickal Effect. This cannot become permanent, and will not negate damage taken after the rote takes effect.]

### Knock Out (\*\*\* Mind, \*\* Prime)

Although most Sons of Ether are inherently non-violent, they are constantly encountering creatures that "demand investigation." Dr. Rotham, while battling the Bat-Men of Solactor VI, concocted a non-lethal formula that immobilizes subjects for study.

[This rote uses the Prime Effect **Rubbing the Bones** combined with a level 3 Mind understanding of the human psyche to stun the target's brain for double the turns scored by the magickal Effect roll. This Effect resembles the Euthanatos Effect, but is far more potent because it focuses on the pattern of the target's neural center instead of the entire biological body.

The target can resist as normal: Willpower (difficulty 8), with each success canceling out one of the Scientist's own.]

### Bio-Luminescence (\*\*\* Forces, \*\*\* Life)

The Sons of Ether take great pride in converting their own flesh and blood into a glow-in-the-dark substance, even though it isn't a very useful skill. Originally, they imagined a safer Halloween for children of all sizes with this rote. Dreamspeakers just shake their heads and moan; they've been doing it for years.

[For each success scored on the magickal success roll the mage glows brighter. One success = 1 foot of luminescence, two successes = 5 feet, three successes = 10 feet, four

successes = 15, and so on. If the human firefly wishes, the glow can be concentrated on certain parts of the body, such as the teeth or eyes.]

### Battery Man (\*\*\*\* Life, \*\* Forces)

With this combination, the Son of Ether can convert her own body into a wet cell, storing raw electrical energy that is siphoned off a common household socket. For each success scored on the magickal Effect roll, up to ten thousand volts can be drained from an electrical source. This electricity is stored within the mage's own nervous system and can be discharged in numerous ways. The obvious one is to electrocute someone for damage equal to the number of successes times three.

Other possibilities include charging dead batteries, short-circuiting electrical equipment, lighting a lightbulb in the hand or mouth, or just plain zapping offensive material to cinders. If this electricity is not discharged within one hour, the mage herself will suffer one Health Level per success she initially rolled.

A footnote in Dr. Rotham's *Book of Formulas* mentions an as-yet-undetermined possibility of cancerous side effects. He also notes that the inventor of this rote has since passed on, due to the growth of a second head on his spinal column.

## Strange Devices



Many Sons of Ether have their own Sanctums (see *The Book of Shadows*) where they construct Devices. Such places allow them to construct Talismans without going to a Horizon Realm. They must still have the correct Sphere rankings to understand the principles they are attempting to alter. So a Scientist with rank 1 Prime could not build a Device that used Prime 4.

### •• The Hyperphoto Zoom Lens with Spirit Film Arete 3, Quintessence 15

This Device was created by Dr. Rotham for his Cult of Ecstasy friend, renowned photographer and stuntman Garrett Rhys. It consists of an enormous telephoto lens that fits any 35mm camera. By using the level 2 Correspondence Effect **Correspondence Sensing**, the lens can focus on distant locations. These locations can then be photographed.

Garrett enjoyed his new toy so much that he added his own Spirit Film to the camera, which reveals the true nature of his unwary subjects on film.

[The number of successes on the initial magickal Effect roll (difficulty 5) will determine the range of the "zoom." If the Spirit Film is employed, a second roll is required. If at least three successes are rolled, the target,

and possibly its surroundings (five or more successes needed), have been photographed as they appear in the Near Umbra. Creatures with strong Avatars will appear as just that. Pattern spiders and crystallizing structures may be seen in the background as well. If the target has an Arcane rating, the photographer must score more successes than the target's Arcane rating or the picture will be blurred beyond recognition. This Device's Effects are usually coincidental ("What a great trick!"), but the mage who shows these pictures off had better be prepared for a full-blown Technocracy hunt.]

### ••• The Infernal Mole-Blower

Arete 4, Quintessence 20

To aid his endless struggle against the mutant moles of Yuk-Yuk IV, the Son of Ether David Wayne "The Exterminator" Clarkus invented this Device for driving the venomous animals out of their lairs. The contraption consists of a large steel box with a small gas engine, a series of gears, and holes along the sides for inserting road flares. It works by forcing smoke from the flares into the burrows of animals within a radius determined by the magickal Effect roll. This, accompanied by the obnoxious whirring of the engine, usually drives off all but the most persistent pests.



When he applied the Blower's effects to larger subjects, Clark discovered that it was still effective. Whole hordes of Nephandi could be purged if the correct burning substance was poured into the engine.

[Forces 2, Matter 2 and Prime 2 are combined to create and forcefully expel an irritating, viscous smoke that not only drives creatures away, but sends them into spasms of coughing. After the Effect is rolled to determine area, duration and distance, all creatures within range must roll their Stamina versus difficulty 7. At least three successes are needed to leave the area without harm. Any less, and the subject is left coughing (increase all the victims' difficulties by 3). Complete failure leaves the affected creature blind as well. If the poor subject botches, she will be completely incapacitated by wracking coughs and sneezes for one turn per successes on the Talisman's roll.]

#### ♦♦♦♦ The R.U.N.T.I.S. Suit

Arete 4, Quintessence 20

In his quest to conquer the elusive Spirit Sphere, Dr. Brannon Rotham went into an inventing fury to create a Device that could take him to the "Other Side." A violent thunderstorm wracked the countryside as Dr. Rotham toiled over the workbench, his befuddled servants looking on.

At sunset on the second day, Dr. Rotham, his lab coat soaked through with sweat, stepped away from the table and pulled a lever to raise the new Device. Cackling with delight, the doctor called his confused and exhausted servants closer. "Look at it! It's beautiful! Beautiful!"

"What will you call it?" asked the hunchback Leland.

Staring affectionately at his creation, Rotham whispered in a dramatic and strangely echoing voice, "I shall call it...the R.U.N.T.I.S.!" His announcement was followed by a rolling clap of thunder.

"The Runtis?" asked Owen, another of Rotham's servants.

"Yes," Dr. Rotham replied. "Rotham's Umbral Navigation, Transportation and Illumination System. It will enable me to enter other dimensions in a self-contained artificial environment, protecting me from the poisonous gases and harmful radiation of the Near and Deep Umbral. The suit contains enough air, food and water to sustain me for 72 hours in any environment, and my soon-to-be-patented Ethereal Illumination Bulb should provide enough light to see for hundreds of yards in the murky void between worlds."

"But what does that do?" Lakie, the third servant, asked, pointing at one of the many strange blinking buttons on the helmet.

"There's no time to explain. There are whole new worlds awaiting exploration!" announced Rotham as he climbed into the invention. With a click and a whir the machine hummed to life. The bulb atop the helmet flashed like a strobe and Dr. Rotham was gone. The servants stood aghast and wondered if they would ever see their intrepid inventor again.



[The R.U.N.T.I.S. is a full-metal suit vaguely resembling a cross between an early diving suit and Robby the Robot from *Forbidden Planet*. Dr. Rotham, a premiere Son of Ether from the early 20th century, built it to be air-tight, with an internal food and water supply, based on his erroneous assumptions about the environment of the Umbra. Because it is so huge and bulky, the wearer gains 4 additional soak dice but has all difficulties on Dexterity-based rolls increased by 2. Because of hydraulic assistors in the arms and legs, the user's Strength is boosted to 6 regardless of his normal Strength.

The suit enables the wearer to penetrate the Gauntlet just like the level 3 Spirit power. If the wearer attempts to remove the suit while in the Umbra, he is ejected out of the Umbra into the corresponding spot in reality, as Dr. Rotham learned on his maiden voyage. Unfortunately, the suit remains in the Umbra. The R.U.N.T.I.S. is equipped with Ether Jets, which enable the wearer to fly for short distances in the Near Umbra as if she were wearing a jet pack. This Forces 4/Prime 2 Effect uses one Quintessence per turn.]

..... The Deadly Warbots of Doctor von Allmen  
Arete 5, Quintessence 20

This infamous renegade toiled for the Nazis. Thankfully, his KRAUZE II warbots never made it out of the Rhineland Chantry. Although the Doctor escaped, Doc Eon and Jetboy successfully turned Paradox to their advantage and leveled the mechanical army. The remains have served as study pieces for Sons of Ether who want to know how — and how not — to build robotic servants.

[By harnessing Prime 2, Matter 3, and Forces 3 and 4 Effects, Doctor von Allmen created robots that could fly, fire beam weaponry and sustain large amounts of damage. Sadly, they were quite stupid (no Mind Science was used to grant them intelligence) and quickly depleted their Primal Force Batteries (Quintessence). As Doctor Eon suspected, they were also highly vulgar.

[More useful robots may be constructed by employing Mind 3 or Spirit 4 to grant them a mental link to their creator or even true sentience. The robot's toughness depends on the materials involved, but most use five dice to soak and can take up to seven Damage (Health) Levels before falling apart or exploding. Although many robotic functions can be attributed to "high-tech advances," the energy-depletion problem has yet to be resolved. Each power usage drains one Quintessence from the robot's battery. Recharging facilities are good things to have.]

# Realms of Adventure



## Etherspace

Etherspace is not actually a Horizon Realm, but an area of the Deep Umbra normally traveled by the Sons of Ether. It resembles outer space in all respects except that instead of a void, space is filled with ether, a breathable substance pressure-equalized to Earth's sea level.

Ether winds "blow" through space; these are eddies and currents of agitated ether. Many winds form regular channels, but they often shift, blowing in any direction at any time. A subtle understanding of the pull of celestial bodies (planets) helps in ether navigation.

**Getting there:** Ethernauts must travel past the Barriers (the Gauntlet and the Horizon). Entering and leaving Etherspace requires a ship equipped with powerful Dimensional Attunement Generators (huge Devices employing the Spirit Effect *Outward Journeys*), to escape Earth's orbit and shift into Etherspace. Such Generators have 8 dice to roll and require a great deal of time and Quintessence to operate. Fifteen successes on an extended roll (difficulty 8) are needed to take such a large vessel beyond. Such "shifts" are always vulgar magick (though there shouldn't be much trouble with witnesses); the Generators take the brunt of shift Paradox, but can store only about 24 points (three botches) before shutting down or exploding. Botches are often fatal.

Once the Great Barrier (the Horizon) is passed, travelers need no life support to breathe in most areas. Etherspace is dangerous, however; if the ship manages to skirt the Void Engineer sentry satellites just outside the Barrier, ride the ether winds, and avoid becoming lost in the Great Void, ethernauts must still contend with Nephandi, demon hordes, and worse...

**Sphere effects:** All Correspondence Sphere ratings are raised by one.

## Victoria Station

This space-station Chantry silently orbits the moon with the aid of Faerie allies, although no one who lives on the station has yet met or had direct communication with the Fey. Broken objects, however, are found mysteriously mended the next morning, and the orbital path is always, supernaturally, steady.

All who live and work on the station are ethernauts. Many Sons of Ether simply come to visit and drink cognac while watching distant stars through the port windows. Three Professors dwell here; six acolytes make up the housekeeping and repair staff.

Victoria Station is not large, but it is comfortable, decked out in Victorian-era style, with brass and wood everywhere. The air is provided by an Oxygen Engine created by Professor Dubious. This great machine, set in the bowels of the station, constantly generates oxygen from a host of materials (mostly rocks) that are fed into it. He has never explained how it works, and personally repairs it whenever it breaks down (rarely).

**Getting there:** The most common means is by rocket or ethership, but other methods exist (teleportation machines, etc.).

**Sphere effects:** None.

## The Hollow Earth

This very old Realm used to exist in the material world, but it has been shunted from reality to an outpost on the Horizon. It is no longer connected to a Chantry, although an Akashic Brotherhood temple in Asia once had a portal to it. The Realm is said to be fading fast; many believe it will soon cease to exist altogether, along with its hidden wonders.

The Hollow Earth abounds with life — from dinosaurs and ancient mammals to legendary beasts and zoological oddities never seen on our Earth. The Hollow Earth plays host to a variety of lost tribes and civilizations, ranging from naked savages to the enlightened Golo monks. Few mages have visited this place since World War II, but many old Masters still speak of its bygone splendor.

**Getting there:** One portal still exists on Earth: the North Pole. Somewhere in the frozen reaches of the north, a cave leads deep into the earth. After miles of twisting, turning, lightless caverns, brave travelers emerge from a peak in the Hollow Earth. This peak, once known as the Summit of the Inner Sun, provides a splendid view of this tropical inner world.

**Sphere effects:** No particular bonuses, although Life Magick sometimes is easier to work here (-1 difficulty).



## The Gernsback Continuum

This Horizon Realm is connected to the Great Hall Chantry in Paris. In this wonderful Realm, many science fiction paradigms from the literature of the '20s through the '40s become real.

**Getting there:** Portals to the Realm can be found only within the Great Hall in Paris. Admittance is strictly controlled by the Chantry leaders. Any Son of Ether can go there, but she must follow the proper channels at the Great Hall. Sons of Ether in good standing obviously have an easier time negotiating the checkpoints than vocal rebels.

**Sphere effects:** Forces is raised by 2, Matter by 2, and Prime by 1.

### The War of Science (Certamen)

The Sons of Ether method of magical dueling differs from certamen in some key ways. When two Sons duel, they most often take their battle to the Gernsback Continuum (see Chapter II). Here, each pilots an armored zeppelin. These zeppelins are equipped with ray weaponry; the goal is to shoot the rival zeppelin down. Safety features built into both zeppelins prevent a crash from harming the Scientist, although some Sons of Ether prefer to operate their aircraft by remote control.

The Spheres summoned for Gernsback duels operate like normal certamen (see *The Book of Shadows*), but they appear as ray weaponry or heavy shielding instead of floating spheres. For example, the Forces Sphere often appears as a Tesla Tower, a giant electrical generator. These towers, placed on the ground below the battle, fling wild energies at their airborne targets. Prime Sphere manifestations often take the form of batteries, while Life and Spirit appear as tiny aliens or large toy soldiers. The Matter Sphere might appear as a particle accelerator, a massive machine gun, or even a robot biplane sent out to strafe the other zeppelin.

When Ether mages have to fight certamen duels with other Tradition mages, they often appear in spiffy uniforms, bearing a host of gadgets. Inside the standard certamen circle, their Spheres appear not as balls of energy, but as ray pistols (Forces, Entropy, etc.), ghost entrapment cages that release with the press of a button (Spirit), teleportation belts (Correspondence), or any host of weird science devices.

# VIRTUAL DEPTS™

Knowledge is the Only Reality



Written by: Darren McKeeman and Harry Heckel

## Credits:

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**Art:** Quinton Hoover, Scott Johnson, Joshua Gabriel Timbrook, Jeff Wright

**Front Cover Art:** Michael W. Kaluta

**Front and Back Cover Design:** Aileen E. Miles

## R.I.P. - I mean, Welcome!

Horror has a name, and her name is Jennifer... yes, Jennifer Heartshorn, late of the blood-stained Shakespearean boards and gory battlefields of the live-action scene, has signed away her soul... I mean, joined the crew as the line developer for **Wraith: The Oblivion**. Let's all give her a hand — just the right one.

Save the left hand for Kim Shropshire, who joins manic Mike Krause in the bloodpit of our sales department. With the coming of the Month of Fools, we at White Wolf are pleased to welcome these two intrepid souls into the fold of the Great White Wolf.

Long may they howl!

## Special Thanks to:

**Rich "Pumpkin King" Thomas**, for his favorite CD soundtrack.

**Aileen "Speed Demon" Miles**, for her fast, Fury-us work. Welcome to the crew!

**Michelle "Oh, Bullcrap" Prahler**, for being pure as the freshly driven...

**Chris "Proctologist" McDonnough**, for his explosive wit.

**Steve "Captain" Wieck**, for pointing out a port in the storm.

**Josh "Gothic Splash" Timbrook**, for watering the artistic desert with the ink of inspiration.

**Ben "Wow!" Monk**, for buying the \$6,000,000 hoax up to the bitter end.

**Larry "Lord of Lead" Schnell**, for playing Santa with the little people.



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Because of the mature themes involved, reader discretion is advised.



## Contents

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<b>Prelude: Information Glut</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction: FYI CYA</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Chapter 1.0: Delusions of Grandeur</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Chapter 2.0: Society of Loners</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Chapter 3.0: "Does Not Work Well with Others"</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Chapter 4.0: Initiates</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Appendix 1.0</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Appendix 2.0</b>	<b>64</b>

# Prelude: Information Glut

By Darren McKeeman



Flesh. Bone. Meat. Everything my body is, I hate.

I wake in the morning (or afternoon) and I hate that I can't see well enough to hate my reflection. No matter how much I look at everything, there just doesn't seem to be enough to go around. Of course, right now is different. Right now, I see a symbol of my hatred lying prone on the table before me, screaming for

mercy.

Things are different with a computer. You can flood your senses with as much information as you can take. Many of us in the Adepts do this to get the most out of our brains. I do it to get the most into it. The story behind this isn't pretty.

.....

Back when we were in the Technocracy, we shared the Information Glut with Iteration X. We weren't surprised when it showed up as one of the most vile tortures conceivable. What could we do? The information would have leaked out somehow. Nobody can keep secrets for long. Information is a living force that most people can't fully comprehend. It wants to be free. It wants to be known.

I underwent the torture when we defected. I stayed behind to make sure the last bit of data was downloaded and copied from the Technocracy databanks, and was one of the unlucky ones who got caught. Our own rote was used against us to try and reprogram us into perfect citizens.

.....

The perfect citizen lying on the surgical table before me is a member of the Technocracy, what's popularly referred to as a Technomancer. He has information that I want. He has information I will get.

.....

The rote we perfected works directly on the brain of the subject. Essentially, it re-tunes your brain, making it more sensitive to stimulation. All the senses are heightened. When the Technocracy was through with me, my clothes felt like razor wire and fiberglass soaked in alcohol. The food I ate for breakfast tasted like sulfur and acid. I constantly felt as if I were staring into a fusion reactor, and I could smell the disgusting stench of my captors under the cheap perfumes they used to mask their body odor. My constant retching felt as though my body was turning itself inside out. They did this to me for a full year. I nearly died.

They should have killed me.

They let me go after that hellish year, placing me in an insane asylum. They could get no more pleasure from torturing me; I had grown insensitive to their torture. A former colleague of mine fiddled with the hospital records, and got me out. Adepts never abandon each other. I spent nine months trying to recover from the torture, as I slowly discovered the repulsion I had for my body.

.....

The repulsion I have for my body is nothing compared to my repulsion for the piece of meat on the table in front of me. He will know nothing of my pain. That's one thing I will not share with them. He's asking me all the usual questions now. Like why I'm doing this. What did he ever do to me. Who am I. I won't tell him the answers. His ignorance will sweeten his torment.

.....

Nearly a year of constant torture has warped me into a vestige of what I once was. The human brain is a strange and funny organ. It can compensate and adjust for anything.

When you're a baby, you can't see things normally everything is upside down, because you're right out of the box. As you grow older a few days or months later, your brain "tricks" itself into thinking everything is right side up. The same thing basically happened to me. My brain "tricked" itself into thinking that extreme input was the only input there was. This was the way things are normally. I can't feel anything now. My nerves are deadened, and I can only feel extremes. I spent my whole first night alone slicing my arms and torso with razor blades. I was back on-line to the world, and I wanted desperately to feel something, anything. When I realized that the blades were too sharp to be painful, I found some rusty knives. By the time the other Adepts got back to our hidey hole, I was nearly dead.

.....

The slab of meat on the table isn't dead. He's not going to be dead for a long time.

.....

Adepts stick together, that's one good thing. They helped me. New devices were invented so that I could experience the real world normally. I live in the Net most of the time; there you can turn up the volume, turn up the light, and turn up the sensation without anyone else noticing. When I have to get around in the real world, I have a special rig I have to wear.

My sunglasses amplify light so that I can see. I'm nearly blind because there is not enough light in the world to feed my hungry eyes. Hearing aids crank one-hundred-eighty decibels into my shattered auditory nerves. I still can't feel or smell. Did you know that the skin is the largest organ in the human body? I constantly burn myself on stoves.

If I had another year, I could turn myself back to normal. I'd also be crazy. I've done research on sensory deprivation, and I don't think I'd be able to handle the strain of going a year or so without feeling anything. Not after that year of hellish torture.

So I live in VR.

I know exactly who did this to me. I know everything about them. I memorized every detail of their face, and every detail of their bodies. I've been following them in the Net. They could have the most sophisticated plastic surgery the Technocracy could dream up, and I'd still find them. I know their smell. This one on the table before me has that smell all over him.

Information Glut can be a good thing, in the right hands. Accelerated learning and heightened senses can help you out a lot. When it falls into the wrong hands, it can be devastating. I will never be able to understand why the Technocracy wants to do that to every person. They are doing it to you, and you don't even know it. It's subtle, but there just the same. They flood your brain with images and information that they want you to believe. You are under attack from every angle — television, teachers, advertisements, you name it. My experience taught me this. I thank Kibo sometimes for what they did to me, because now I am immune to their most powerful weapons.

I have a few Sons of Ether friends working on the rest of my rig. The parts are coming in bits, starting with the most important senses. The time will come when my polycarbon exoskeleton is finished, and I will see, hear, feel, smell, and taste the whole world fully. Then I'll be ready.

.....

He tells me everything I need to know. Where my next victim is. What his name is now. I've picked his brain clean. I've even discovered a few new parts of the Technocracy's Time Table. They had to revise it horribly when we left. Though I really don't care about that now, I remember it, in case it becomes useful later.

.....

I think that the only thing worse than what they did to me would be sensory deprivation. As I lay down to sleep, I find that I can't rest without my hearing aids. If I take them out, my mind becomes totally aware that there is no sound, nothing reaching me. I start to panic, and I can't move. Can you imagine what it is like not to *feel* anything? This is what I will do with those bastards. A few years of floating in a tank isn't good enough. I want to rewire their brains.

.....

The meat on the table in front of me can't hear himself, can't feel his vocal cords tearing from the strain of screaming. He can't see anything. He can't feel. He thinks he's dead. I know. I decide to jack into his auditory nerve, giving him a final message before I turn the lights out.

I'm doing this to you, I say. I'm going to do it to your bosses when I catch them. Your people tortured me, and now I'm paying back in full. I've been following them, in the Net. Most of my captors went on to bigger things. I like that, because they've got more to lose now. All of them are augmented in some way. I can see the information in the chips in their brains in the Net. Through the Net, I can access these chips. The chips give me access to their brains. After a little re-programming, I burn out the chip and the surrounding brain cells. They'll live. They just won't be able to feel anything.

I cut the link. Should I cut his throat? No. I'll sit hear and listen to him. His scream is a beautiful sound, full of timbre and melody. There is no sound quite as satisfying as the screaming of a Technomancer. I move quickly, rigging the IVs so that I can take care of him for a very long time. I watch his brain waves on my EEG display. He's probably going to die within a few months anyway. The daily shock and inability to sleep will kill him. Until then, I'll have my own orchestra right here in this room, until he goes hoarse. I pour some water down his throat, just so he won't strip his vocal cords too soon.

It's easy to think too much about these things when you can't feel anything. They killed my nerves. They should have killed all of me.

Q



& A



# Introduction: FYI CYA

*It's good to know that we can create our own memorable event without waiting for freakish weather to break the monotony of life.*

— Sasquatch, *Today's Delightful Surprise* (an alternative press magazine)



from:dante@crystal.net  
Subject: Frequently Asked Questions & Answers (FAQ)

Message-ID: <CGqJwF.C3I@crystal.net>

## Summary:

This posting lists frequently asked questions and answers about Virtual Adepts. It should be read by anyone who is new to the Virtual Adepts

Sender: dante@crystal.net (Crystalnet News)  
Organization: Virtual Adepts Chantry Network  
Date: Fri, 19 Nov 1993 11:00:14 GMT  
Approved: answers-request@crystal.net  
Archive-name: virtual\_adepts/faq  
Last-Modified: 1993/9/18

Version: 1.4

VIRTUAL ADEPTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Version 1.4 - 18 September, 1993

Right! This FAQ gets sent out to every Adept when it's updated, but the people who need it the most are the newbies. So if you're seeing this again, don't be alarmed. You haven't been downgraded to loser status. Yet.

For those of you who don't know me, I'm Dante. It's my dubious honor to write this little intro to the Virtual Adepts. We do this for the same reason end-users generate FAQs on their networks — so you won't look stupid for asking a question you should know. Any new questions that any Adept thinks oughta be on here should be sent to mckeeman@netcom.com. He's keeping track of the questions for me. We update this thing about once a year or so.

On to the questions...

**q: Who and what are the Virtual Adepts?**

**a:** Well, there's no easy answer to that one. Loosely, we're a group of mages who have discovered the true nature of reality. Then again, just about any group of mages will tell you that.



JEFF WRIGHT 1994

We're a group of mages who have specific ideas concerning reality. Through these ideas, we can mold reality to our every whim. Our model for reality is the world we can create with computers and electronics. We can apply this type of analogy to the real world, effecting changes that most people deem impossible.

Not all Virtual Adepts use computers. Some use pocket calculators. I've even heard of some who model reality on the programming of VCRs. (*that is weird.*) It's all the same idea, though. Information is reality's lifeblood. This message you're reading now is affecting reality in its own way. Read that last sentence about a thousand times and you'll get the idea. Change the information, and you change reality. That's the whole concept in a nutshell. Sounds simple, huh? Nothing's ever *that* simple.

The Virtual Adepts are the baddest damned thing to happen to this ball of dirt since lightning up and created amino acids. We've got the know-how, we've got the resources, and we've got the ELITENESS to bring every single mage out there to Ascension. Hell, we're going to do that for every SLEEPER too. I'd like to see one of the other groups of mages out there claim they can do that! They can't, because they aren't as bad or ELITE as we are. They don't know who they're messing with. We're simply the ELITE. Nobody else can touch us, see? Watch them try to hack our systems and get carved up by waterknives. We are too ELITE to screw with. 'Nuff said.

**q: Who are the Traditions?**

**a:** Alright, that's most new Adepts' *second* most asked question. I'm going to try and oversimplify it: the Traditions are the Good Guys.

That's not good enough for you? Great. Let's put it another way then.

The Traditions are nine different bands of mages that have formed an uneasy alliance with each other for the purpose of resisting the destructive influence of the Technocracy. We joined the Traditions in the early 1960s, after we defected from the Black Hats and Mirrorshades. The Traditions aren't bad; even we can't save everyone without their help. Of course, these guys can't save the world by themselves, either. They're not bright enough. That's where we come in. We'll show them the way; they'll execute the program. Then they'll thank us for being so good.

**q: What is the Technocracy?**

**a:** Here's the short form again: these are the Bad Guys.

OK, that's sorta cheating. We know more about the Technocracy than any other member of the Traditions. We used to be members of the Technocracy. For this reason, very few other people in the Traditions trust us. To them, we still think like Technomancers.

Well, the Technocracy is made up of about five or six "Conventions" that have about the same purpose as the Traditions. When we left, there were five Conventions — we're not sure how many there are now. We're pretty sure

that all the old Conventions are still there: the Syndicate, the New World Order, the Void Engineers, Iteration X and the Progenitors. You'll probably run into representatives of all these Conventions at one time or another, and they're all going to try their damndest to kill you. The Technocracy hates Virtual Adepts beyond any other Traditions, because we are the only Tradition that actually has *hurt* them. We are still hurting them more than any other Tradition. They're just losers. Sore 100zers, in the words of some of our younger members.

**q: What does the Technocracy want? Who are they?**

**a:** OK. Here are some things the Technos want: they want to enslave humanity. Actually, they wanna make everything "perfect" and "utopian." Same thing.

They also want to destroy the Traditions. Especially us.

Who are they? Next time you meet a government official, next time you see a civil servant, next time you meet a cold and hard scientist, you'll know. You just have to meet them to know. But the best definition is that the Technocracy is "them." Anytime you can't find an adequate word to describe it, use "them" or "they". Like the Church of the Subgenius says, "Find out who *they* are..."

**q: Who actually likes me for being an Adept?**

**a:** Hahahahah. Next question.

**q: What's the point in being an Adept if everyone hates me?**

**a:** It's not like you *chose* to be an Adept. We chose you. We knew you could handle it, because you've been dealing with it all your life. You never quite fit in when you were a kid. Other kids bullied you, and you retaliated by finding out more than they did about how the world worked. Don't look at it like these other people hate you — look at it like they're jealous of you. They've got lots of reason to be, man.

**q: What is Ascension?**

**a:** Awright. This is a real easy one. I can go on about this one all day too. Ascension is ELITENESS.

Of course, we want everyone to be elite. We even want Sleepers to be elite. We want losers and lame phucks to be elite. We're gonna do it, too. How? I'm glad you asked.

This old reality is thrashing itself down. It's about to collapse. When it does, we're gonna be ready. It's gonna be Armageddon for sure then, and we're gonna lead the promised elite to Ascension. Only it's not gonna be just one hundred forty-four thousand, dude. We're gonna get everybody, and we're gonna herd them into a new reality. A virtual reality. This will be our improved version, like version 2.0 of reality, you know? We're exploring it right now. We created it back in the fifties, and as soon as we get it ready, we're gonna start with the exodus. There are some who say that the end will come on July 5th, 1998. That's not far off the mark, let me tell you. We're coming up on the end times real quick now. You just gotta help. When we're through and everybody's riding high in Reality V.2.0, you'll





be sitting there drinking a Singapore Sling with a little umbrella in it, being fanned by harem girlz. Why? Because you're one of the sooper ELITE.

**q: How do I contact you guys?**

**a:** Don't call us. We'll call you. Actually, if you're new, you've got someone watching you all the time. This is so you won't get into too much trouble. After you've gotten beyond the stage of needing guidance, you'll be instructed on how to contact us.

**q: What am I supposed to believe here?**

**a:** Believe what you want. It doesn't matter to us. The only point is that you are reading this right now. The information you are absorbing is becoming known, and that's what the universe is all about. What you believe about this document may well prove to be false later on. If this had been written in the fifties, it would be false now. You do not have to worry about such things. The information is all that matters. It's alive, and it's mutating inside your head. Pretty soon, it'll bust out like some kind of virus and you'll have to tell someone about it. Just watch it and make sure it's not a Technocracy agent or a Sleeper.

Everything that you are reading in this FAQ, at this time, is true. It is guaranteed to be true up to a year or two from now. Something major might happen and we may have to revise some of these points. But I doubt it.

**q: What is the Net?**

**a:** Sorry. That's another FAQ. I would say that it's the best hope for Ascension around today for mages of any Tradition, but that'd be bragging.

The Net is the best hope for Ascension around today for mages of any Tradition. :)

**q: Why is the headquarters in Omaha? Isn't that where the Wild Kingdom dude used to live before he died?**

**a:** We get so much mail about this one. I'm gonna explain it to you real slow.

It started out here. We used to be part of the Technocracy. We were part of the government. We had to have a lot of throughput for our data, and most of the military and civilian phone lines met in Omaha. Center of the country and all that. Well, the Technocracy never found out that our Chantry existed virtually, otherwise they would've freaked. We haven't had the opportunity to move it yet. Don't think we don't want to. Let me shoot some of the logistics at you:

We've got a huge amount of data in the Chantry. You can find almost anything there. We happen to have about a million terabytes in one storage space alone. That's one of five hundred storage spaces.

Now here is your first lesson in being a Virtual Adept.

It doesn't matter where the damn thing is! You can get to it from any wall outlet! What do you want? You want me to tell you it's in Silicon Valley? OK! It's in Silicon Valley! There! It's the same thing! Reality is being dictated by what I tell you! Jack in over at Silicon Valley and see what I mean, you moron!

Hopefully, you'll realize that it doesn't *matter* where the headquarters is. It has no physical location. It doesn't matter.

**q: What's with your attitude?**

**a:** Attitude is everything with being a Virtual Adept. Remember that, and you'll go far. Question authority and everything else you can think of. You are the ultimate authority, because you are processing the information we're throwing at you. If you don't like my attitude, or can't match it, you shouldn't be a Virtual Adept.

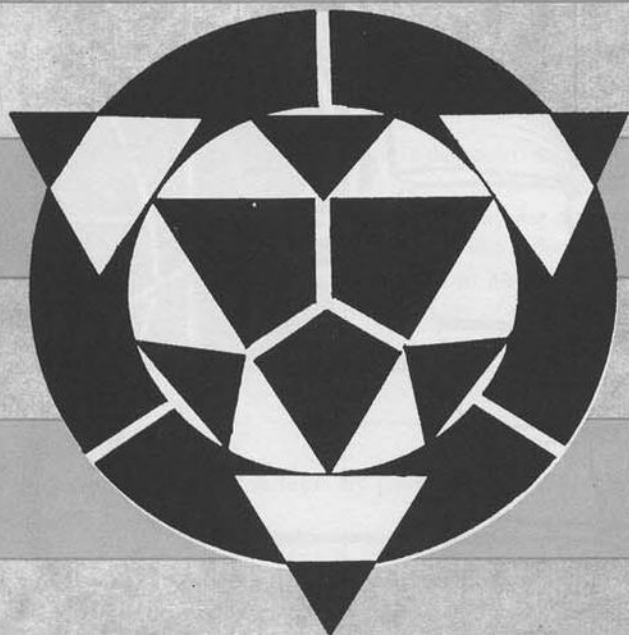
**q: Where are the parties?**

**a:** Get in touch with some of the fringe groups. They throw the best parties, about twice a year. If you're in for something a bit more mellow, there's a monthly Tribunal where you can brag about hacking the local McDonald's computer and look *real* lame. That's happening every month at the HQ. Better yet, just wait for someone to mention one. Be too cool to bring it up to someone else.

Well, that's the end of the questions. I've tried to answer them as best I can. You may find my style of writing a little bit more confusing than I do. If this is the case, sit down in a chair and recite the first word that pops into your head until it becomes a meaningless sound. Then you can read this again.

end FAQ file

\*\*\*\*\*





# Chapter 1.0: Delusions of Grandeur

*Sarcastic, mod. — Syn. scornful, mocking, ironical, satirical, taunting, severe, derisive, bitter, saucy, hostile, sneering, arrogant, cynical, corrosive, contemptuous, biting, harsh, grim*

*Sardonic, mod. — see sarcastic*

— Webster's New World Thesaurus



*If I were a member of one of the other Traditions, I wouldn't trust the 'depts either. Our beliefs are alien to all those who wallow in the mire of conservatism and tradition. We are subverting a whole generation of Sleepers to our ways and system; who wouldn't be wary of that kind of power?*

— Electric Death, Virtual Adept master

April 15, 1990

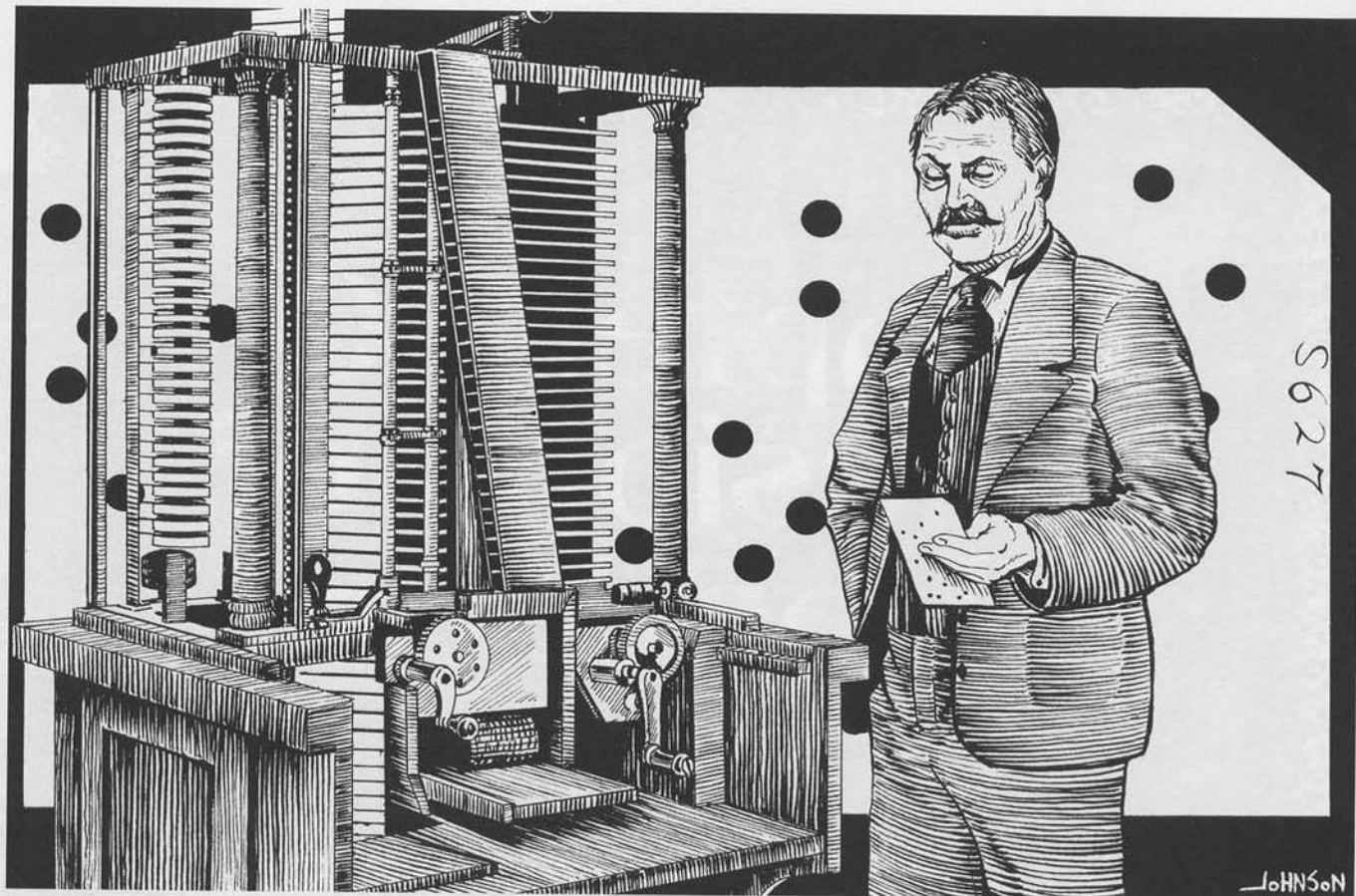
Memo on Virtual Adepts by Lars Mjøltnir, Order of Hermes

Until recently, the Virtual Adepts have not proven themselves to be trustworthy allies. Many among our Traditions still regard them askance. The following papers show cause for our concern.

In this digital age of computers and technology, the Virtual Adepts have sought to understand reality in terms that can be interpreted easily by machines. To this end, they have formulated the theory that all of reality is made

up of information, and that magick results when one manipulates that information. They use the virtual reality Net to prove their point, to demonstrate that consensual reality is not important, that only the information received by a person's senses is important. Some Masters may recall the fuss some years ago when the Virtual Adepts presented their "10th Sphere of Paradigm" argument to the Council some years ago. The particulars of this proposal (documented in the Council minutes, volume MXVI, pages 114-128) detail the Adepts' concept of information as an essential component of reality. The Council rejected this idea, but we are certain to hear more about it.

I have gathered correspondences from the roots of this Tradition until the present. I believe these documents tell the story much better than anything I could write. As far as I can tell, these letters and memos are genuine. The source of each, when available, is listed above the entry. This capsule history, I believe, shows that the Adepts are experts at manipulation and are not to be trusted.



## The Foundations

January 15, 1850

From: The Honorable Sir Anthony Wainwright

RE: The Difference Engineers

I have completed my observations of the Difference Engineers, as per your request. This odd little clique has virtually no importance at the moment, save that they appear to be an offshoot of the Sons of Ether. Charles Babbage's mechanical computational machine fell short of practical applications, but these ingenious tinkerers have improved on the design and given it a steam-based powerplant. In their hands, it is now a capable calculator.

Their mastery over certain natural forces approaches what we would carefully call "magick." Their analogies to telegraph transmissions have given them an insight into the Correspondence effect that rivals that of the Seekers of the Void. They also seem to be of the opinion that a major technology is about to be unleashed upon the world that will be in every home, and greatly enhance our control capabilities. More about this later.

They also claim to have discovered a new sphere of influence. I scoffed at the idea, but I also listened to my subject. He said that the Difference Engineers have discovered the basis of the "Information Sphere." They had happened upon it while exploring the possibility of using the Difference Engine as a means of information storage and retrieval. After listening carefully, I am of the opinion that my interviewee was out of his mind. This seems to be a common trait.

One final note: The Difference Engineers have told me that they are 98% certain that a new technology will emerge within thirty years that will be installed in every home. This description sounds like some offshoot of the telegraph. If it is true, then we cannot afford to miss such an opportunity. I advise our honorable Guild partners to start work immediately on a way to promote this new technology. We must also make certain that people do not understand how it works. With one of these "telephonograph" devices in every home, there is a good chance that we may be able to monitor every word spoken in every household. We can stamp out subversion at its root, thus bringing ourselves further along our time table.

From: James "Gearhead" Peritone  
To: The Convention Council  
Date: July 20, 1880  
RE: The Telephone

The Difference Engineers have been cloistered in many meetings since the invention of the telephone a few years ago. We have used the new device extensively, and we believe that it has a power and longevity not normally associated with technology. This device could redefine the way people look at technology, changing the world for the better.

Alexander Graham Bell is the man responsible for this device. Though one of the unenlightened Masses, Bell possesses an uncanny insight into strange phenomena, much like an un-Awakened Son of Ether. He began dabbling with the transmissions of sound with a device he made from an actual human cadaver's ear. He's most inventive!

The telephone has brought about some profound paradigm shifts in our organization here. We have actually taken to conversing mostly by telephone in what we call "conference connections," and we have abandoned our old concept of information stored within steam-driven contraptions. We have realized that information can only be quickly and accurately represented by electricity and electrical pulses. To this end, we have devised a system for representing information electrically. We are working with the Sons of Ether to build a prototype of this machine. We expect to have it finished by the turn of the century. Until then, we will continue to work with our engines, but we have already realized that they are obsolete.

We now have a request to submit to the Conventions. We have spent many hours pondering a question; many of us claim to have had a vision of a new Realm that has opened through this new device. We are asking

your permission to begin experimentation with this Realm, if it exists. We believe that it exists "virtually," outside of normal consensual reality. Our best description at the moment of this new Realm is that it is the place where telephone conversations take place. We are also asking permission to change the name of our organization, due to our massive changes in philosophy. We would now like to be referred to as the Virtual Adepts.

10 June 1890

Dear Sirs:

In response to your demands that we achieve the following results by the specified times, I will address each concern separately. We have calculated the probability of each and come to these conclusions.

- 1) Flying machines by the turn of the century: Possible — 90%
- 2) Tracking devices by 1920: Maybe — 60%
- 3) Reliable radios by 1920: Yes — 100%
- 4) Self-powered high-explosive bombs by 1950: Yes — 100%
- 5) Ways to hypnotize large groups of people by 1960: Maybe — 75%
- 6) Complete control over human population by 1980-1984: Definitely — 100%

Humbly yours, Eli Godwin, Virtual Adept



May 15th, 1899

From: James "Wirehead" Peritone

To: The Conventions

RE: Progress Report

When I last reported to you, I stated that we were undertaking a new project. This project has now borne fruit, and we have unveiled it to our fellows. It is what we call the electrical computer.

Through the use of the telephone and a special rote, we have duplicated our initial model and transferred it to all of our members across the continent. Although we know that it is against regulations to use such vulgar magick, we felt it was necessary to accomplish such a feat. Our old Difference Engines were breaking down due to friction and grit in the cogs. We desperately need to upgrade our equipment.

This electrical computer is not a thing we would want the normal populace to have at this point. We estimate that society will be ready for such a machine between fifty and sixty years from now. Meanwhile, we will continue to improve upon our design until it can be used for Technocracy purposes. It is good enough for our purposes, but extremely unfriendly to use at this point. The primary means of input is a series of thin baloa wood cards that we have punched our programs out on. Output operates by means of a specially enabled telegraph. It only outputs numbers at this point, but we are working on a system to represent letters not unlike the telegraph method.

## Trouble

August 20, 1910

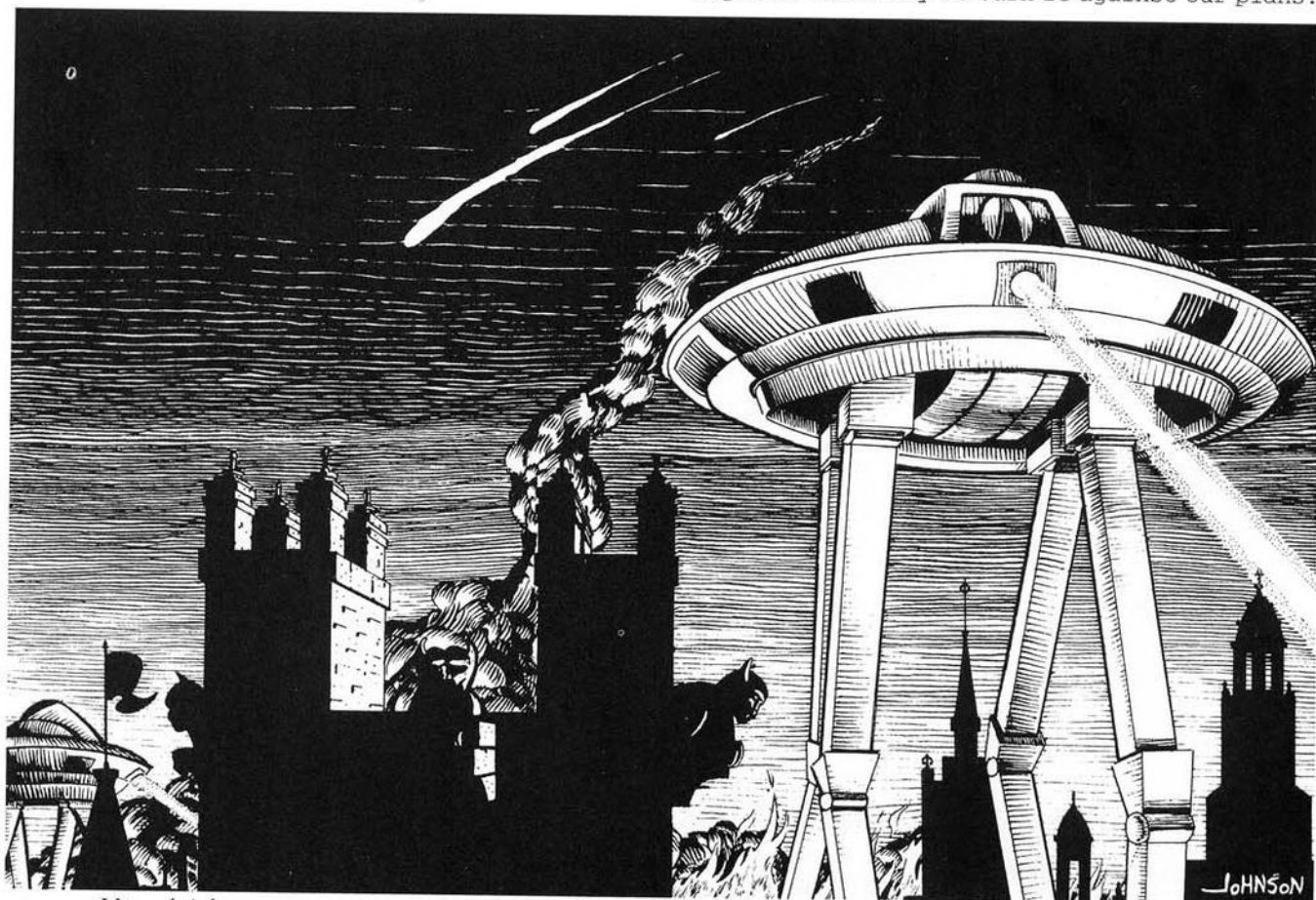
From: Iteration X

To: The Conventions

RE: Report on Science Fiction Literature

We have evidence that the Virtual Adepts are involved in "science fiction," among other forms of fiction, and have passed dangerous information on to the Masses. The stories of H.G. Wells have been especially revolutionary, and many believe that he shows a great deal of Adept influence. The Adepts wish to "engineer" society into new directions through ideas and warnings in popular fiction. Several times, we have had to rein in the Virtual Adepts with stern warnings because their stories were causing too much fancy in the minds of Sleepers. The Adepts have begun to view our Convention as a group of paranoids clinging tenuously to our power. They must be taught a lesson for the common good.

I believe that the Virtual Adepts are becoming more trouble than they are worth. We should continue to keep a tight rein on them. While their "science fiction" is a good way to prepare the Masses for what we have in store for them, it would take only a change in the writing style of the story to turn it against our plans.



These "science fiction" writers have come up with a number of good ideas, we must admit. One writer known as Verne had a useful one - a manned expedition to the moon. I believe that we should pursue this concept to demystify the stellar regions to the populace. The popular notion that the moon is made of green cheese is simply just too fanciful to be allowed.

March 20, 1915

From: James "Wirehead" Peritone

To: New World Order

RE: Zimmerman Telegram

Speaking in my official capacity, I must denounce your accusation that the Virtual Adepts engineered the Zimmerman Telegram. It is not our intention to destabilize the activities of any of the other Conventions. This document has obviously undermined your organization's careful maneuvering to weaken the European community.

Our new statistical experts state that the resulting War currently underway will have some very dire repercussions for Europe over the next thirty to sixty years. My suggestion to you is to stop seeking to lay the blame for your actions elsewhere. We are not inclined to do anything detrimental to our mutual goals.

March 20, 1915

From: James "Wirehead" Peritone

To: Members of the Virtual Adepts

RE: The Zimmerman Telegram

Our confederates in the other Conventions are not amused. I must warn you to act very cautiously. We have always been viewed as something of a loose cannon among the Conventions, and this telegram business has aroused even more suspicion than usual. Any hope that Europe will be unified through this War is asinine to say the least. However, now that it has begun, we should begin to make the most of it. And to whoever wrote that damned Telegram, I say this: next time, consider the explanations I must make to the other Conventions, agreed?

## Social Engineering? The Second World War

From: Gregory Heinz, Chaotician

To: The Conventions

RE: The Stock Market Crash

We have been studying the effects of the Stock Market crash and we have come to a few conclusions.

1) The Stock Market system is flawed. It essentially works on feedback; any negative feedback, such as a dip in the prices of commodities, triggers a wild fluctuation.

2) This disaster may further disrupt the international economy. Germany may take a hard hit, as it is climbing out of its struggle to pay restitution for the Great War. Hopefully, their new leaders will be able to help them weather this depression.

3) This would be an ideal time to establish a government that could advise and control all world governments for the common good.

Please note that we are very rarely wrong in our predictions. Our track record has been superb, and the majority of the decisions based upon our data have been sound.

November 24, 1924

From: Gregory Heinz, Chaotician

To: James "Wirehead" Peritone

CC: The Conventions

RE: The Temperance Movement

I must report to you on the effects of the Temperance Movement in North America. A group of religious fanatics has managed to get a bill passed prohibiting alcohol sales in the U.S. This has many effects we may take advantage of:

1) There is 100% certainty that there is still demand for alcohol.

2) The Syndicate has the channels in place to distribute it through the Mafia.

3) There is a 75% chance that the upswing in criminal activity due to alcohol running (bootlegging) will pressure the government into action - a 100% chance if we pressure it.

4) There is a 60% chance that the people will accept this action as necessary and give up some constitutional rights for "the cause."

5) There is a 50% chance that the government agency in charge (the FBI) will achieve hero status among many impressionable young people.

6) This will lead to ambivalence when we start using this agency to monitor the activities of the people, with a 75% certainty overall.

I urge you to seize this opportunity now. A prime staging ground could be in Chicago, where illicit whiskey comes across the border from Canada by the hundreds of gallons. There is, however, one element in Chicago that will be hard to crack; there is something else going on there that throws an unknown variable into the equation. We hope it does not affect the solution to the formula too drastically. What this variable is, we do not know. We suggest some forays into Chicago to find the answer.



January 4, 1940

From: New World Order

To: The Conventions

RE: The War in Europe

Many of you have been following the War in Europe. Adolph Hitler seems to have found a feasible solution to his country's problems, economically speaking.

We here at the New World Order see this as an opportunity to unite the European governments under one flag, the swastika of Germany. Ultimately, such unification will lead to a single world government, as recommended by the Virtual Adepts in earlier communications.

We will call a symposium to discuss matters of import within a year.

October 15, 1941

From: Roger "NemaTrode" Thackery

To: The Conventions

RE: The War and Hitler

First, I would like to announce the death of James "Wirehead" Peritone. He was killed in a London flat that was bombed this past summer. I will be taking over as the liaison to the Conventions. As this is my first release, I do not relish telling you what I must.

The Virtual Adepts would like to take this opportunity to denounce the actions of Adolph Hitler and Germany. Many men of science have been persecuted and killed through the Nazi's technological ignorance. They also seem infected with a Nationalism that destroys any chance they have of progress. To them, all men are not equal. The "master race" and "Übermensch" concepts are anathema to the professed goals of the Technocracy. Someone did not do the necessary research.

Second, reports and information we are receiving indicate that massive destruction of human life is underway in Poland and Germany. The objects of this genocide are Jews, whom the Nazis regard as inferior. We in the Virtual Adepts see this as a moral outrage of the highest proportions. We also condemn Iteration X's use of the situation to conduct experiments.

We Adepts are not without power, and we will make ourselves heard in the next few months if we must.

\* \* \*

December 1, 1941

From: Roger "NemaTrode" Thackery

To: Virtual Adepts

RE: Japan

Our plot to get the U.S. involved in the war seems to be imminent. We have taken steps to ensure that all U.S. espionage data is either false or rejected by the government. The Japanese fleet is preparing at this moment to attack Hawaii. Since

Japan has treaties with Hitler, Germany will most assuredly declare war on the U.S. after the attack.

The U.S. must enter the war. That bastard Hitler must be stopped — at any cost. Please note that this information is extremely sensitive. If any of the other Conventions found out about our little plan, it would become difficult for any of us to lead normal lives.

January 20, 1944

From: Central Control

To: The Conventions

RE: World War II

We would like to announce a major shift in our position regarding Germany and the war now known as World War II. Thanks to information provided by the Virtual Adepts, we now have proof that the Germans have

undertaken a massive search for magickal and mystical relics. Such relics are supposedly the birthright of the "Aryan Nation." This is unacceptable to us. The occult influences Hitler will bring with him during the unification of the European continent can only erode our position. Therefore, we are withdrawing our support for Hitler and placing it firmly behind the Allies.

Following our withdrawal, Hitler's defeat cannot be any more than a year or two away. He is beginning to stretch the resources of his war machine, and the combined efforts of the Conventions should halt him in his tracks.

You have your orders. This is by Technocracy mandate. Personal opinions mean nothing. We will tolerate no subversion in this matter. All Conventions will work for the defeat of Hitler.

— Central Control

## The Adepts Rebel

February 17, 1945

From: Alan Turing

To: Roger Thackeray

RE: The Enigma Codes

Roger,

We broke the Enigma codes a while back. I am expecting to have to explain how I did it once the war is over. To this effect, I've asked the Sons of Ether to construct a crude version of our electrical computer. This will be presented to the British government as "the Machine that cracked Enigma."

Of course, it will be dissected. Many will copy and improve on the design. I am expecting this. But Roger, I have a vision that goes far beyond this war. I have seen visions of the Virtual Realm in my dreams, the Realm where all points become one. We can achieve it in less than ten years if we work with the Sleepers.

I am also contemplating the possibility of intelligent machines. These machines would be of such a nature that a person would be unable to distinguish its output from that produced by a human being. I am still working on this concept.

The other Conventions will not like my vision. That is why we must keep this a secret for as long as possible. I know that the other Adepts will want to go forward with this project as quickly as I. I can only hope it doesn't destroy us in the process.

September 19, 1947

From: Jared Thorne, Iteration X

To: Central Control

RE: Alan Turing

I infiltrated a Virtual Adept conclave this day. It is not hard to do such a thing. They do not meet face to face, but rather through telephone systems and their computers. With the proper passwords, one can very easily eavesdrop, and even join in without fear of detection.

I am convinced that the Adept named Turing is dangerous. He is speaking of intelligent machines and a new idea he calls "virtual reality." While this idea on the whole is not bad, he is speaking of doing this within five years. These things are not planned on the Time Table for at least fifty to sixty years. A plan like Turing's could seriously destroy our Time Table beyond any hope of repair.

Many of the Virtual Adepts are behind Turing. They love him. He is now their virtual leader, their most "elite," as they say. Furthermore, they have been in touch with the Sons of Ether. These

images long ago joined the Traditions and are forbidden to be contacted. I do not know what the Virtual Adepts are up to, but it seems quite subversive.

\* \* \*

December 12, 1950

From: The Syndicate

To: Alan Turing

RE: VR Work

It has come to our attention that you have been working on a project that you call "Virtual Reality." It is our opinion that this work is dangerous, and we order you to cease and desist at once. Failure to comply will bring heavy retribution upon you. We have private information that could irreparably damage your position in the British Government, and we will release it to them if you do not immediately comply.

Of this information, I can say that we have compromising photographs of you and another man. We have several sets of these photographs. Once you have ceased work, we will mail you all of our copies. Until then, be warned.



March 10, 1954

From: Central Control, NWO

To: Men in Black

You are hereby notified that Alan Turing has been determined to be a threat to the Technocracy. You are also hereby notified to terminate him with extreme prejudice. It seems that no amount of cajoling on our part will stop him from building his virtual reality machine. When you terminate Turing, if you find any electronic device in his possession you are to destroy it and bring the remains to us.

Any of his compatriots present at the time of your raid will also be subject to the terms of this memo. There are to be no witnesses.

June 20, 1955

From: The New World Order

To: The Conventions

**RE: Grave happenings.**

Things are not looking good.

We have been hurt tremendously by the treachery of the Virtual Adepts. It seems that they have taken every piece of information about us and by us, injected it into their "virtual reality", and promptly disappeared. Our contacts have not been able to find any trace of any Virtual Adept anywhere. Aside from a few stragglers now in our custody, the Adepts have disappeared.

At this time, we declare the Virtual Adepts enemies of the Technocracy. Any contact with them is forbidden and punishable by death. Any Adept captured is to be terminated with extreme prejudice. There will be no exceptions.

The Time Table has been shattered. We have no choice but to revise it. Many items on the Time Table will be pushed back for years. All of this is due to their cowardice and insane treachery. Their acts of treason will not go unpunished.

Many of the Adepts we have caught are being pumped for information. They are not talking. For this reason, any future Adepts caught will be killed. We are not interested in the means of execution, but we prefer that it be done slowly and painfully, as an example to others.

# The Virtual Adepts join the Traditions

September 23rd, 1959

From: Julian Spence, Son of Ether

To: The Council of Traditions

RE: The Virtual Adepts

We of the Sons of Ether have been in contact with the former Technocracy Convention known as the Virtual Adepts. The Adepts have proven themselves to be useful to us, providing us with information that we had no idea existed. We believe that the Virtual Adepts would be a worthwhile addition to the Traditions, and that the relationship would be mutually beneficial. The Adepts must stop their years of running from their former Associates. And, as we know, our Council has been one seat short since the Ahl-i-Batin left some years back. We need a ninth Tradition for the Council; the Virtual Adepts need sanctuary. I believe that we have a common cause.

We have been asked to make an informative proposal to the Council of Traditions, in exchange for the Adepts' admission into the Traditions. Said proposal includes the Time Table of the Technocracy, projects in planning, and detailed reports on the Iteration X Machine Realm, Autochthonia. These have been provided to me by Roger Thackery of the Virtual Adepts. We anxiously await your answer.

July 10th, 1961

From: The Council of Nine

To: The Virtual Adepts

RE: The Traditions

We of the Traditions hereby extend to you an offer of amnesty and friendship in our organization. We have allocated resources to the inclusion of your group into our Council of Traditions. The following terms will be met:

- 1) Your group will be on a probationary period of five (5) years.
- 2) You will turn over to us as much information as possible on Technocracy plans.
- 3) You will occupy the ninth seat on the Council of Nine, adopting as your Sphere the element of Correspondence (with which, I am told, you are intimately familiar).
- 4) You will provide us with regular reports on activities your group is conducting until the probationary period expires.

July 11th, 1961

From: Roger Thackery

To: The Council of Traditions

RE: Invitation

We accept.

\* \* \*

February 10, 1979

From: Roger Thackery

To: The Traditions

RE: The Hyper Intelligence Tech Mark IV

We have been following reports of mages attacked by machine-like humanoids in the past few months,

and we have discovered the following. An up-and-coming Adept named Dante has brought me information he captured from Technocracy databanks in a daring raid. This particularly involves the Hyper Intelligence Tech Mark IV, or HIT Mark.

Dante showed me the construction plans he liberated from the central Iteration X computer. I expect them to change their plans as soon as they find out we have them, but the plans should provide us with some advantage regardless. The design specs for this machine involve vat-grown flesh placed over an armature made of an alloy of adamantite and buckminsterfullerite. As you may know, this combination has an extremely high resistance to normal magick. We are analyzing this new threat to the Traditions in hopes of finding a weakness.

January 14, 1984

From: Erik Trent, Cult of Ecstasy

To: Roger Thackery, Virtual Adept

RE: New Year's Party

Okay, guys, the "Big Brother is watching you" virus was funny. The hallucinogenic spring water was amusing. The reprogrammed HIT Marks dancing the soft-shoe were impressive. I'll grant you, and re-routing the Progenitor Quintessence-drain into the hospital life-support systems was a stroke of genius. But scrambling the NORAD channels and flashing brain-burning subliminals from every terminal in Advanced Technologies Incorporated was not only reckless and cruel, it was stupid! Black Hats and Skin Jobs have been combing the streets since New Year's. We've lost two good mates in my cabal alone, and a lot of Sleepers have been hurt as well. You may have kicked the Pogrom up another notch. Congratulations, assholes! You guys are a menace!

Ever since you joined the Council, you Netheads have played both ends against the middle and split whenever the shit got thick. Well, don't call us for help again, bozos. We should never have let you in! I hope the HIT Marks blow you all to hell!

— Best Regards, Erik Trent

January 20th, 1984

From: Bank of Maryland Collections Dept.

To: Erik Trent

— Final Warning —

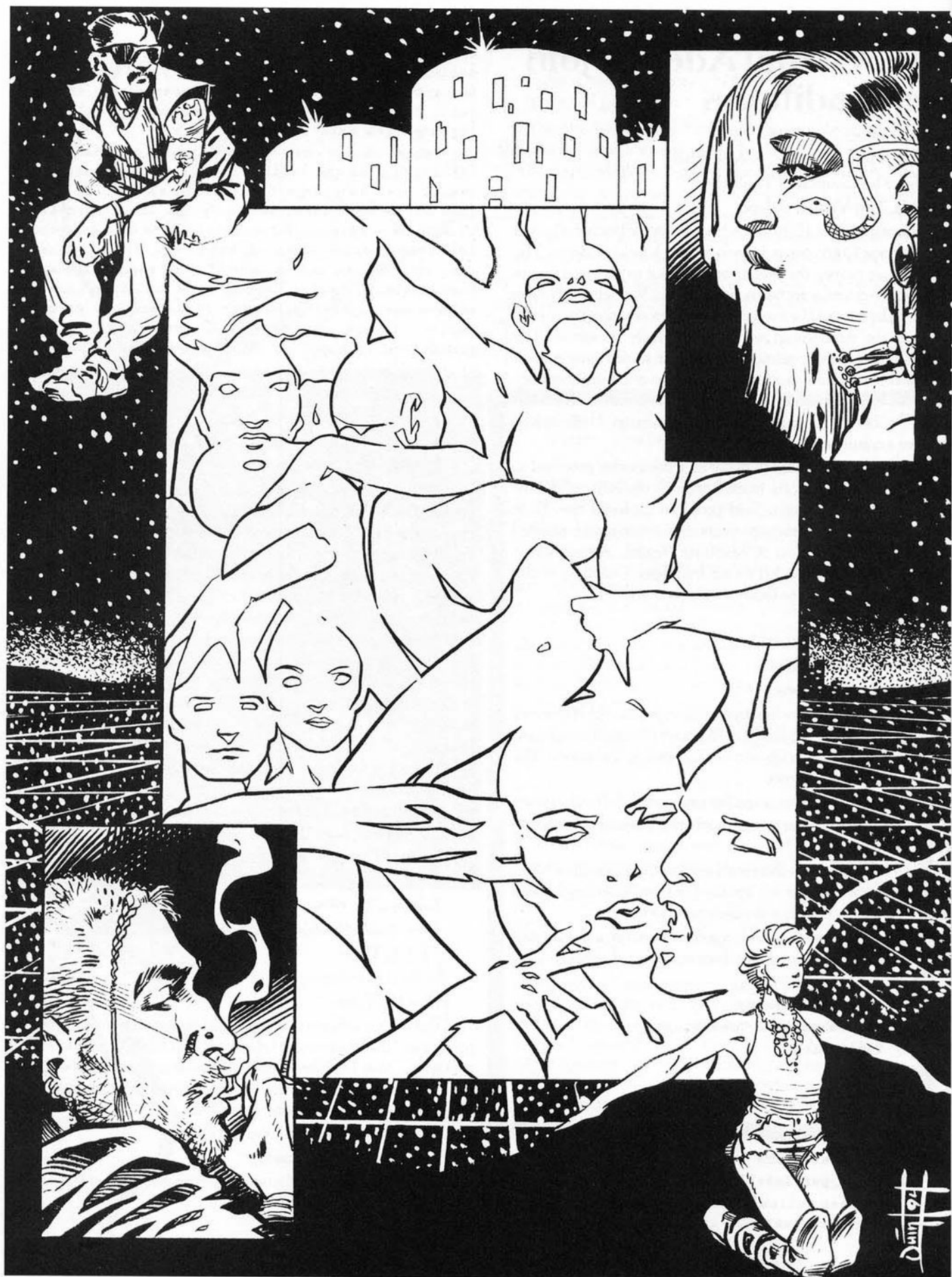
Dear Mr. Trent;

Our records indicate that your credit account is over six months overdue and that the past-due balance exceeds \$2,000. Our efforts to contact you have been unsuccessful. If you do not contact us within the next 48 hours, we will be forced to bring legal action against you. Please contact us at the number below.

24-hour service line: 1-800-292-1819

Thank you for your patronage.

Lydia McKathaway, Collections Representative, Bank of Maryland



# Chapter 2.0: Society of Loners

*Anarchy, n. 1. [Disorder] — Syn. turmoil, chaos, mob rule; see disorder*

*2. [Absence of government] — Syn. political nihilism, disregard for law, lawlessness, avowed hostility to government.*

— Webster's New World Thesaurus



*Never let 'em see you sweat!*

— Television advertisement

**From:** Sharri Powell, Amhurst Coven

**To:** Brian Hastings

Blessed be!

I'm passing you a few of my notes gathered on my little "field trip" with the Virtual Adepts.

As of now, they still consider me one of their own; I couldn't get some of the info that I've recovered otherwise. I don't even want to think of what would happen to me if they found me out. I'm trusting you, Brian! Do not, under any circumstances, let this letter out of your sight and don't transfer it onto any form of computer or word processor. I know that the Adepts are supposed to be our allies, but I don't think they consider anyone but the Frankensteins to be their friends.

I think that we, of all Traditions, can understand their attitude. The Black Hats have a heavy grudge against the Netheads, so the Adepts have a right to the chips on their shoulders. They really aren't bad guys once you get to know them. All the same, I realize that we've got to keep our own backs covered. Hence, this letter. If nothing else, this data might give us an edge later if we need it.

All of this is stuff I managed to pick up over the last six months. I'm keeping my cover for now and might have more to report in a month or so. The Adepts put up a big front, but they actually play things pretty close to the chest. I think they'd shit if they knew how much I've discovered, but then again, they're the ones who're always saying that information wants to be free! Anyway, here's what I've got:



*If you're so special  
Why aren't you dead?*

— The Breeders, “i just wanna get along”

The Virtual Adepts have their own distinct and strange social structure. Don't let the “computer geek” facade fool you — they do have a fellowship. It just operates by unique rules.

## Status & Meetings

Rank in the Adepts is gauged by how competent a person is. The higher an Adept is in ability, the more prestige she has.

Ability isn't always an easy thing to judge. Reality tampering and Net-hacking are dangerous practices; a good brag can confer almost as much status as the deed itself. Adepts are masters of braggery — so much so that many do it unconsciously. Pride is second nature to the Adepts. If an Adept explains a procedure to destroy the databanks of the Progenitors, few would be suicidal enough to test the theory. However, if the idea sounds plausible enough, and if the Adept can show proof of the raid by producing an operator's manual or some such, then that particular Adept wins some grudging respect and status. He would still have that respect if others later found out that he had actually collected his “proof” from the trashcans outside the building in the physical world.

A good many Virtual Adepts avoid physical contact with anyone. They figure that they can get anything they want done from the comfort and privacy of their lairs. When most Adepts are seen in public, it's usually a clever ruse. Many detest personal contact so much that they program sophisticated holograms that act as proxies. These holograms often project a holographic simulacrum through Correspondence, and only function in close proximity to some kind of technology. The simulacrams aren't particularly vulgar magick, as long as some Sleeper doesn't shake hands with one.

Other than ability, there is no real power structure to any Virtual Adept faction. It's largely a popularity contest. A powerful Virtual Adept may call a meeting and expect at least half of the Adepts in the world to attend, while a small-time operator might “invite” the same number through lies and innuendo. Most of the Adepts gather twice a year in reality at a central location to meet and “put a face” to those people they talk to over the wires. These meetings usually begin with impassioned ranting about rights and theories, then turn gradually into debaucheries that would arouse a Cultist of Ecstasy. Few outside the Tradition attend without an invitation; I was the only non-Adept that I could recognize. These parties, I think, blow off some of the steam that comes from being a persecuted minority.

24 Virtual Adepts

Among the Traditions, the Virtual Adepts are second only to the Cult of Ecstasy in the use of perception-altering chemicals. They use plenty of stimulants and toy around with drugs reputed to make a person smarter. These “smart drugs” are usually just vitamin supplements, but a few are experimental medicines developed for treating Alzheimer's Disease or narcolepsy. This abuse, I think, can be attributed to the Tradition's respect for superhuman ability. Ability is practically synonymous with intelligence to the Adepts. Most of the mages who dabble in this area end up burning themselves out very quickly, and to that end most drug users are looked upon with disdain by their “straight” counterparts. A good many of the Adepts who choose not to experiment with drugs fear correctly that smart drugs are products of the Progenitors, created to rot the Adepts from within. More and more Adepts are beginning to see drug use as a curse rather than a blessing.

The Virtual Adepts meet twice a year at the Crystal Palace, the Tradition's main Chantry, to discuss combat strategies. These meetings have no real structure, and consist mostly of ranting and trophy-waving by Adepts who've struck a blow against the Technocracy. These meetings focus the Tradition members toward their common goals — the raising of consciousness and the downing of the Technocracy. Because the meetings occur in virtual reality, not realspace, most of the Adepts in the World can attend. Meeting times are often posted with stolen access codes in the virtual conclave called the Spy's Demise. Some Adepts even confer in the Demise itself, but that's a risky proposition. The place is heavily watched.

## Handles, Icons, Lames and Elites

Most Adepts do not use their real names. Instead, they come up with short, easy-to-remember “handles” to identify themselves. This helps preserve their anonymity and allows them to disassociate themselves from their mundane lives. Like the icons they create in virtual reality, these handles let the Adepts live out fantasy lives.

Netheads use handles when conferring in chat mode — “talking” online like Sleepers do. Most Adepts can also project their consciousnesses or even their physical bodies into the Net, creating “icons” of themselves. These icons can adopt the form of anything the creator desires, within reason, although identification codes make outright deception difficult. Net projection takes some degree of time, skill and risk, so hacker mages simply chat online unless there's some reason to do otherwise.

This anonymity forms a cornerstone in the Adepts' anarchistic social structure. Because a mage in virtual reality can shuffle identities with ease, Adepts can speak their minds without fear of alienation. Many of the Adepts

I've met are pretty shy people in person, but they let fly with all kinds of outrageousness when they're in the Net.

Since Virtual Adepts tend to base social structure on ability, they have coined a term for extraordinarily gifted people — "elite." Adepts at the bottom of the totem pole or who have otherwise screwed up are called "losers," "rodents," "posers" or, worst of all, "lame."

These distinctions are simultaneously tongue-in-cheek and serious. To an Adept, eliteness is an epitome, the be-all and end-all of everything. "Eliteness" defies words, but most Adepts will rant for hours on the subject when asked about it. Certain factions of the Virtual Adepts, reacting to these fervent ravings, ridicule eliteness; they still cherish it, but realize that pride alone will not make them elite — they'll achieve immortality and eliteness without forcing anyone else to acknowledge it.

The flip side of eliteness is being lame. All kinds of things can make one lame — misuse of magick, stupid or excessive flaming, bragging beyond your proven ability, lying online (and getting caught), breaking your word to another Adept, pulling off petty pranks as if they were a big deal. An Adept marked by lameness can only redeem himself with some spectacular stunt. This mockery pushes Adepts to try harder — not a bad thing when everyone's against you. At the same time, much of the posturing struck me as a pretentious waste of time and effort. It seems to work for them, though. I guess that's what matters.

For the record, an Adept who sells out to the Technocracy isn't lame; he's dead.

## Protocols

### The Hacker's Code of Ethics

The Virtual Adepts remember their Sleeper roots and the hacker subculture that so many sprang from, and live by a loose code that dictates a certain moral conduct more than anything else. Most Adepts follow this code — those who do not are regarded as "lames." These codes have been distilled over the years by many different Adept groups, but can be traced back to the turn of the century and the invention of the telephone.

The social structure of the Virtual Adepts is held together by these loose codes, a common passion for technomagick and a pervasive us-against-the-world siege mentality. Being a solitary group, Virtual Adepts share few customs. They do, however, have a few quirks worth mentioning.

Virtual Adepts tend to look for the quickest way to do anything; their handwriting reflects this — it's usually unintelligible. Most Adepts prefer to type and avoid handwriting altogether. When typing, they often spell words with sound-alike letters and numbers, as opposed to the common spellings. This, I'm told, reduces the time spent tying and makes transmissions harder to crack. Many agencies scan computer document for certain "key words"; if those words are "misspelled", the scan misses them. Many

## The Mighty Hacker Commandments

1 — Information should be free. If J. Random Hacker finds out a piece of information that is not previously known, he disseminates it amongst his colleagues.

2 — Data is not to be destroyed. Learn from what you see, but do not destroy it. Leave it for others to see.

3 — Never let them know you're there. All hackers take great pains to cover their tracks in any system. This usually means learning as much about the system in question as possible. This is one of the many exceptions to rule number two — you may have to destroy data to cover up the electronic paper trail you've created.

4 — Never stop learning. There's always something new to learn. Technology moves so fast that there's no way you can stop learning and stay on top of everything.

5 — Spread the word. Open the eyes of everyone around you, or at least try. The Technocracy has the guns, but we can still have the numbers.

hacker mages change their handles often for the same reason.

The Adepts have many strange holidays that don't coincide with other acknowledged holidays. They celebrate the end of World War II, the invention of the telephone and the birth-and-death days of their idol Alan Turing (the latter is called "Net Day," for some obscure reason), but their biggest parties occur on dates gleaned from science fiction books. As we all know, most of the Adepts went nuts during 1984, tossing around the "Big Brother is Watching You" thing like a volleyball, even going so far as inserting references of it into TV commercials. Most Virtual Adepts host individual holiday parties, usually in Netspace; many invite friends from other Traditions just to freak them out.

## The Net

*You will look into a computer screen and see reality.... And your computer's screen is transformed, into a clear surface with brilliant, multi-colored life unfolding just beyond it. People will stop looking at their computer screens and start gazing into them.*

— David Gelernter, *Mirror Worlds*

Most Virtual Adepts interact solely in the Virtual Reality Net, an odd Realm that's neither here nor there, but everywhere at once. The Net, which some also call the Digital Web, or simply the Web, is the real home to most Adepts, since Netheads so rarely meet face to face.

This Net is immense; the Virtual Adepts aren't the only ones wandering around there. Mages from other Traditions (and Technocracy mages, too) hang out in the Net as well, though the Adepts are the undisputed masters of this domain. The Net includes sensual feedback for all sensations—touch, hearing, sight, smell—and I can attest that these sensations are almost as vivid as the real thing. There are even optional settings for taste. Most Adepts jokingly set their icons to taste like cooked chicken. Don't ask me how I found this out.

## Disputes

Fights are rare. When they do occur, they rarely inflict permanent damage. They usually involve heated arguments in virtual reality, but are often so intense that when viewed from a distance they look as though the contestants are hurling bolts of fire at each other. This may have evolved from early chat programs, in which the constant arguments were called "flames"; passionately arguing a

ludicrous point for a stupid cause is often called "flaming" someone. The Adept who devised this contest had a sense of humor.

Another form of combat the Virtual Adepts practice is not so pleasant. It usually involves virus programs and can take a number of days or weeks to decide the outcome. This form of combat is called "core wars," and it derives from an ancient hacker ritual. A supercomputer is set up with two virus programs. Each program is designed to wrest as much time as possible from the central processing unit of the computer while trying to erase the other program from the computer's RAM. Virtual Adepts who accidentally step into a computer that a core war is being run on barely escape with their life patterns intact. Survivors describe the experience as "terrifying," and tell of vast armies of hallucinatory skeletons or spaceships combats. Some fun!

## Flame Wars and Core Wars

Flame wars often erupt spontaneously, usually beginning with a string of insults and digressing from there. These insults (or particularly good points scored in an argument) take on the appearance of bolts of fire. The better the insult or rebuttal, the bigger and brighter the flame. This flame is purely symbolic and does no damage. Other Adepts, drawn by the display, often watch the debate and pick the winner. If the flamers are equally lame, the observers may simply flame both of them en masse. This will not usually damage the offenders, but often brands their icons with a glow that lasts for days, singling them out as lame.

Flame wars should be roleplayed when possible, with the other players judging the winner. A straight system for flame wars could entail resisted rolls of Manipulation or Wits + either Expression or some other Ability related to the argument at hand (Wits + Technology, for example, if the flame war centers around a technical dispute). Using magick during a flame war is not only bad form, but may be considered an attack to be met with real force.

Core wars are more serious, requiring a formal challenge and acceptance. Each Adept invests all of his immediately available Quintessence into creating a virtual supercomputer ("refueling" is not allowed), then "ties" his Avatar into the computer's works. Each Adept then creates a virus using Intelligence + Computer, difficulty 8. The more successes the Adept scores, the more powerful the virus is. The contestants then charge their viruses with the Net's free Quintessence (Prime 3) and set them loose inside the computer. Charging the virus is not essential, but does help the virus survive the coming battle.

The war is run as separate extended actions, one for each combatant. The battling Adepts roll Avatar + Computer (yes, this is an unusual kind of roll). The first contestant to score 25 successes against difficulty 9 wins. Each point of success in virus-creation adds one success to the extended roll, and each five points of Quintessence channeled into the virus during creation adds one more success. These rolls are made three times per game day. Core wars can take a while.

Because the mages tie their Avatars into the computer, they may take real damage from a core war. Each botch causes one Health Level's worth of non-aggravated damage. Double botches cost a point from the Adept's Avatar; this damage heals like regular damage, but cannot be soaked or healed with magick. The loser of a core war likewise loses a temporary point of Avatar and takes a level of damage—these fights are serious business.



## soc.philosophies

*No, I don't know that atheists should be considered as citizens, nor should they be considered as patriots.*

— Republican Presidential Nominee (1988) George Bush

The Virtual Adepts are one of the most fragmented of the Traditions. All Adepts, however, believe that reality is composed entirely of information, that all places are

really one and the same and only the information we perceive makes them seem different. Among the various Adept legions (see below), this belief takes radically different forms. The Cyberpunk belief that information wants to be free contrasts sharply against the Chaoticians' theory that information should be reduced to chaos.

### Information

Information is the model upon which the Virtual Adepts reshape reality. They are masters of engineering information to their own ends, and claim that they taught the N.W.O. everything the Convention knows. Ironically enough, the Technocracy used some of what they learned from the Virtual Adepts to literally write the Adept Alan Turing out of history. I'm sure that you remember the uproar the Adepts caused about six years ago when they

proposed that "Tenth Sphere of Paradigm" concept, that idea that information itself is a natural and metaphysical element of reality, to the Council of Nine. They had some good arguments, I'm told, but it'll be a cold day in hell before they get the concept past the Order of Hermes!

The real problem with this kind of magick is that Paradox (or Entropy, I'm not sure which) accumulates in any collection of data over time, allowing suppressed information to escape. Each faction views this effect differently. While the Cyberpunks maintain that the information wants to escape and has a will of its own, the Chaoticians argue that Entropy takes hold of the magick that maintains data in recognizable form and allows that information to leak out.

The power of this philosophy should not be underestimated. Few Sleepers (or Awakened, for that matter) question the information force-fed to them daily by both the Technocracy and the mass media in general. When testing a new Disciple, many Virtual Adepts like to quote Kurt Vonnegut, telling the recruit that they are the only sentient being with free will in the universe — that everyone else is being manipulated by a higher power to see exactly what they will do with that free will. By observing how the subject reacts to this statement, the mentor can get an insight into the prospective mage's head.



## Computers

Most Adepts tend to be very frugal, with the exception of one possession: their computer. They usually spend extravagant amounts of time, effort and money in order to maintain and perfect their machine. Each Adept's computer is unique, often unusable by anybody but the Adept who programmed it. If an Adept is truly elite, as they say, he can use any computer in existence.

Adepts tend to be very animistic about their computers. They will talk to them, give them names, and even swear or hit them if they don't perform correctly. This leads to some amusing misconceptions from the other Traditions, especially the Dreamspeakers, some of whom supposedly use computers with spirits bound inside them. Very few Adepts really believe that their computers have actual souls—they prefer to think of a computer as a life-form without a soul or an Avatar, a life-form that the Adept herself completes. Some hacker mages add so much programming and knowledge that the computer and the mage become almost indistinguishable from each other; the relationship becomes symbiotic, with each "partner" needing the other to feel safe and secure. It sounds weird, but just consider these magical computers as the familiars of the mages who use them.

## Avatars

As we all know, our Avatars guide the paths we take. The Virtual Adepts usually pick and choose the Sleepers they Awaken and tend to follow certain profiles.

Dynamic essence predominates among the hacker mages. These visionaries strive to "upgrade" reality, either by "reprogramming" this one or establishing another. The Digital Web demonstrates the Tradition's success with the latter approach. Although Questing Virtual Adepts are less common, they do exist. The Questing Virtual Adept usually has the vision to change the world, but aspires to goals that even Masters cannot attain.

There are few Pattern mages within the Tradition, and I have yet to hear of one who sounds like a Primordial type. My guess is that these Technomancers have filtered too much of the Primal Essence out of their systems, though the Dynamic forces within them keep them from becoming static like their Technocratic cousins.

Phraseology note: Yes, the Virtual Adepts and their friends the Franken... I mean, the Sons of Ether, can be properly called Technomancers, although they detest the phrase. Their magick flows from their Avatars through their technology. Their attitude sets them apart from the Technocracy, but their methodology remains the same.

## Awakening & Initiation

Virtual Adepts don't usually Awaken by accident. Most Awakenings are brought about when a cabal or powerful Virtual Adept discovers some Sleeper with great potential. The Sleeper is followed for a number of years;

when the time is right, her "mentor" begins to feed her information pertaining to magick and the philosophy of the Virtual Adepts. If the subject responds favorably, more information is fed to her. If not, then contact is broken off. One Adept told me that her Avatar itself spoke to her via a chat line (talk about hearing voices!), and I've heard of others who Awaken spontaneously while patched into virtual reality. In any case, the Tradition does at least try to check out new members at the door.

Once the prospective Adept is in the right frame of mind, the "mentor" visits her and demonstrates the power that lies within her. By this point, the newly Awakened Adept merely learns how to focus her power through the computer or some other foci.

The mentor then will spend as long as he decides with the pupil, training her in the correct use of the Correspondence Sphere and five simple rites. These rites vary, but all Adepts consider five to be a special number, the minimum number of rites a Virtual Adept must know.

The training period of a Virtual Adept lasts approximately two months; at the end of this time, the mentor presents the new Adept to others attending the monthly

Chantry meeting. At this time, the Adept will either choose or be given a handle and limited access to the Main Chantry.

## Sleepers

Most Virtual Adepts share a studied ambivalence towards Sleepers, or "end-users" as they call them. Adepts they generally avoid associating with end-users, but remain dedicated to helping them nonetheless.

One need only look to the Tradition's founders to understand this attitude. Babbage and Bell both wanted their inventions to change the world, but couldn't comprehend why other people didn't understand how such contraptions worked. Adepts are often so intelligent that other people can't hold conversations with them without getting lost. For this reason, the Adepts are generally loners. The flip side to this is that they're smart enough to realize (somewhat vainly) that Sleepers can't possibly take care of themselves. For this reason, the Adepts are dedicated as a whole to bring Enlightenment and Ascension to as many end-users as possible (see "Hacker Ethic #5"). Although Adepts know they work for the common good, they often end up detesting those they are pledged to protect.

## soc.legions



*You reap what you sow  
Put your face to the ground  
Here come the marching men  
Your colors wrapped around*  
— Sisters of Mercy, "Colours"

Even loners form cliques; some Virtual Adepts call theirs "legions," with tongues planted rather firmly in cheek. Many of these Virtual Adepts' legions subdivide even further into

cliques of two to five Adepts. These groups usually take on imposing names. These names aren't really relevant to anything, and judging the power of a group by its name is dangerous. Many mages have disappeared after accidentally insulting a group with a silly-sounding name.

The legion subcultures aren't universal by any means, but provide as clear a picture of these cybernetic anarchists as we're ever likely to get.

## Cyberpunks

*Dark angels in the attic  
Sixth sense stockpiled in the cellar  
And the ladder is broken  
Memories sleep in dust  
This shelter is doubtful...*  
— Voivod, "Into My Hypercube"

In the early 1980's, a new type of science fiction caught on among Sleepers and mages alike. Dubbed "cyberpunk"

by a writer from Austin, Texas, this nihilistic genre showed a bleak vision of a future sprawl dominated by greedy mega-corporations. Films like *Blade Runner*, *Brazil* and *Tron* spread some of these cyberpunk ideas into popular culture, albeit in a watered-down form. Most Sleepers regard cyberpunk as paranoid fantasy. The Virtual Adepts, who claim at least partial credit for the genre, regard it as a wake-up call.

After the Adepts defected, the Technocracy lashed out at anything they thought might be a Virtual Adept stronghold. When personal computers became easily accessible tools in clever hands, the Black Hats figured that they had found their former comrades. Under the guise of "national security," governments rounded up hackers and computer jockeys, many of whom had less than nothing to do with the Adepts, by the score. Popular opinion, too, was turned against hackers — movies depicted them as anti-heroes, not really meaning any harm but causing trouble just the same.

Egged on by the New World Order, government agencies sidestepped their own laws to crack down on computer hackers, while scientists in the employ of you-know-who ridiculed the cyberpunk genre. The genre caught on anyway, and many fans embrace technology while watching out for "Big Brother". A new generation is using the Technocracy's tools against them, and the Cyberpunks stand at their forefront.

The Cyberpunks are typically free-for-all mercenaries, burning out on drugs and choline enhancers while coding rote all night. Most would prefer to live inside the computer for the rest of their lives, disdainfully cursing the 'meat' of their physical bodies. They don't normally associate in groups, but are fearsome to behold when they do. Very few computer systems can resist the combined assault of several Virtual Adepts Cyberpunks.

Their philosophy of magick is as crude as their methods. A typical Cyberpunk will use Force, Matter and Correspondence magick in as vulgar a fashion as possible, not because he enjoys it but because he lacks the imagination to do anything else. For technical wizards, Cyberpunks are damned crude.

Paradox seems not to matter much to the Cyberpunks. To them, their own existence is a huge paradox. They purposefully try to accumulate dangerous amounts of Paradox, then expend it in horrifying ways that change them forever. Hence, many Cyberpunks look rather ragged; their icons often have pieces of non-functional machinery projecting from them. Cyberpunks with severe Paradox flaws may actually have this happen to their real bodies! While it's hard to conceal, many seem to enjoy this look.

For all their posturing, this legion relies heavily upon rote and programs. While most other legions disdain wholesale use of rote, the Cyberpunks view them as just another shortcut to get things done. They collect rote religiously, just to have them "just in case." While some legions view rote-use as a holdover from their days in the Technocracy, when creativity was stifled and doing things by the accepted norm was the rule and not the exception, the Cyberpunks view it as not having to re-invent the wheel.

## Cypherpunks

*Do you feel the power  
Baptized in electronic water  
Prodigal sons and beautiful daughters  
With smiling bows and rosy cheeks  
And the righteous bath,  
Death to the freaks  
— Oingo Boingo, "New Generation"*

The Cypherpunks emerged in the late eighties as a reaction to the aforementioned hacker crackdowns. They believe in protecting themselves and their data as much as possible, and have developed encryption codes and security systems for their Chantries beyond anything seen by the NSA. They have written protection rote, similar to these codes, that can stop bullets, scramble voices, and encrypt their very thoughts.

Cypherpunks aren't nearly as crude as the Cyberpunks, but still aren't as refined as they'd like to be. They're actually an offshoot of the Cyberpunks, retaining the reckless abandon of their colleagues. They tend to be far

more subtle than the others, though, and concentrate more on information-gathering and protection than on mayhem. While Cypherpunks still enjoy vulgar magick, they use it with more finesse. They've got an annoying tendency to spend Paradox as fast as they accumulate it, creating a problem for those around them. Unlike their more destructive kin, the Cypherpunks prefer Mind and Matter magick to raw Force.

In ordinary conversation, the Cypherpunks I've met are much more outgoing than your average Adept. They will usually slag your opinions and take up a contrary position just to spite you. This is the Cypherpunks' usual style — they claim they're trying to make you consider all the possibilities, rather than simply accept everything at face value. Usually, they only succeed in pissing people off.

## Chaoticians

*When prison stocks are iron and have no  
place for the head, the prisoner is doubly  
in trouble...*

*If you try to hold up the gate and door of a  
falling house,  
You will also be in trouble.*

— Zen Koan

The Chaoticians are an altogether different breed of Virtual Adept. While the Cypher-and-Cyberpunks have very similar artistic philosophies, the Chaoticians are cold and calculating scientists. They believe that the information that makes up reality is too complex to manipulate directly, and therefore must be analyzed and controlled by probabilities. These Adepts study Entropy heavily.

The Chaoticians get their name from the theories that so many of them hold dear. Chaos theory is very important to the Chaoticians — they view the coming Ascension as the embodiment of chaos theory. When any system becomes too complex, the theory goes, it will ultimately break down. This is what the Chaoticians believe is happening to reality — they feel that this world is rapidly coming apart at the seams. This legion includes many of the Adepts seeking to reformat reality ASAP.

Chaoticians are master mathematicians, fiddling with numbers to make them say whatever they want. Most Adepts will agree that a Chaotician can demonstrate that pi equals four and that the magic bullet theory is true. Through bizarre mathematical warpings, Chaoticians can cause virtually any event to happen. They don't need full-blown computers as foci; they use fancy scientific calculators instead.

These Adepts aren't as plentiful as the "regular" variety, but they make up for their scarcity with subtlety. Chaoticians rarely venture into the Net. Most Chaoticians are skilled at coincidental magick, a marked contrast with the "punk" legions, who consider creative Paradox to be some sort of contest. The Chaoticians I've spoken to prefer

the random power surge to the all-out attack, and regard other legions as boorish and crass.

## Reality Hackers

*I'd like to turn the whole world on*

*Just for a moment*

*Just for a moment...*

— Danielle Dax, "Tomorrow Never Knows"

The Reality Hackers are the newest, smallest and most unique faction among the Virtual Adepts. Unlike many of their brethren, the Reality Hackers have little or no interest in exploring virtual visions of reality through the Digital Web. They do not find BBS chatter or computer hacking appealing. Instead, this legion uses magick and high-tech computers to hack an entirely different kind of information system: the universe.

The Reality Hackers believe the universe to be the most intricate and powerful network ever created, simply made up of a series of complex codes — codes that were made to be broken. Ergo, the universe, and all life with it, is ripe for hacking. This faction preaches that for one to Ascend, one must look without, not within.

Naturally, this philosophy has been the topic of many a heated discussion within the Tradition; some feel that this faction refuses not only the power and tools they've been granted, but everything that the Virtual Adepts stand for and hope to one day achieve. Still other Adepts praise the Reality Hackers for their ingenuity. The debate is sure to continue for a very long time.

### Life Hacking

The Reality Hackers perceive the Earth as a giant network linked to millions of other networks comprising the intergalactic network of the cosmos. Each city of the Earth is viewed as a network wherein may be found millions of systems, or people, to be cracked and manipulated. Some powerful Reality Hackers reputedly use a secret rote to hack into people if they have a bit of genetic material from the subject in question. This frightening ability allows them to tune their foci to the genetic "code" of the individual and reprogram his brain using the Mind Sphere. I've heard that Reality Hackers can reprogram a body to produce hallucinogenic compounds or deadly toxins spontaneously, as a result of reformatting the way the body works. I've even heard speculation that these mages may, by using this rote, effectively time travel into the past by using old genetic material and "taking control" of a person long dead. Although this seems nothing more than a dark whisper, it's chillingly plausible. These guys bear serious watching!

Fortunately, it's said that the Reality Hackers have found some minds difficult, even impossible, to open. There is a theory that this has something to do with the psychic potential in some individuals. I think it may have something to do with Awakening, as I've never heard



## Life and Dream Hacking

These arcane powers attributed to the Reality Hackers may be beyond the reach of many Virtual Adept characters. The **Life Hacking** rote is a closely guarded secret; the consequences would be horrifying if the rote fell into the wrong hands. Discovering it (or creating some variant of it) should be a heavy undertaking, requiring at least three dots in Correspondence and Prime and four in Mind and Life.

Dream hacking is considerably easier, requiring two or three dots in Correspondence and three in Mind. Both procedures are pretty invasive, and other mages (particularly Dreamspeakers, Akashic Brothers and Verberna) are likely to take offense at Adepts using such magicks.

rumors of other mages or Garou being mind-hacked this way. Reality Hackers have, however, had tremendous success in quietly breaching the minds of certain Technomancer Acolytes, allowing the Hackers access to new campaigns against the Virtual Adepts.

One problem that Reality Hackers have encountered has a certain poetic ring to it: viruses. Not computer viruses, but viral illnesses and general sicknesses of the human body itself — the common cold, the flu, and a number of painful, sometimes fatal, diseases like Hodgkin's Disease, AIDS and cancer. If a Reality Hacker infiltrates a Sleeper before running a virus detector program, and the Sleeper in question is infected with a virus or illness, the Reality Hacker may, in turn, contract the disease while her computer equipment suffers a similar computer virus.

Some Reality Hackers theorize that the Progenitors may know more about their faction than the Adepts expected, and are actively infecting Sleepers to bring an end to the faction. It sounds like karma to me, but what do I know?

## Dream Hacking

While the Virtual Adepts look to the Digital Web to create worlds of virtual reality, some Reality Hackers look to another medium to explore the nature of existence — the dreams of Sleepers. The Reality Hackers claim that the virtual creations of the Web pale in comparison to the worlds that members of this faction have walked, touched, smelled, and tasted in the dreams of Sleepers.

The Reality Hackers believe that mortal dreams are a key to learning the secrets of the Tapestry and a door to countless Realms yet undiscovered. Some place messages in Sleepers' dreams for other Reality Hackers to find when normal channels are too risky to use. One Hacker I know claims to meet with his buddies inside someone else's dreams. I won't pretend that the Reality Hackers don't make me nervous. There aren't many of them, and the things they claim to do would take enormous skill and power to pull off. It could be that all these stories are just that (see my note on bragging and status); they do, however, raise some disturbing possibilities. I've made the Reality Hackers a priority on my "need to know" list. Fortunately, this is easier with the Hackers than it is with their comrades. Though many Virtual Adepts refrain from meeting face to face, the Reality Hackers usually prefer to.

This so-called "legion" may have some truth to what they espouse as reality, but their methodology appalls me. Can you imagine what could happen if the Technocracy were to discover this life hacking rote? The idea of mages holding court in my dreams scares the hell out of me, and pisses me off for the Sleepers involved if it's true. As I said, this legion needs to be closely watched!

# soc.chantries.crystal.palace



I did what I could to infiltrate the Adepts' main Chantry, but none of my contacts ever goes there. I've got a promise from a "geezer," a pre-Net Adept, that he'll take me there soon, but any info I can get will have to wait for a later report.

The main Chantry, called the Crystal Palace, is represented by a tall structure in the Net, but doesn't exist in realspace at all.

This Chantry gets its Quintessence from a massive tap through phone lines in Omaha, Nebraska. It's pretty old as virtual reality constructs go, and entropy is said to be on the increase there. (This raises ominous possibilities for other VR constructs, which Netrunners call "Formatted Web" or "stacked files.") Many Adepts feel that the Crystal Palace

should be tied to where the real action is — Silicon Valley — but old-timers resist the urge to move.

The Crystal Palace, so I'm told, takes the form of glittering spires of data in the Net. Most of the Adepts who frequent this Chantry are of the Old Guard, hacker-mages who remember when the Adepts were a Technocracy Convention, Kennedy was shot and vacuum tubes were high-tech. Many of the younger Adepts shun the main Chantry, preferring to hang out in seedy bulletin board systems (BBSs), trading pirated user setups, rites and access keys.

It is rumored that the Kernel of the Net lies somewhere in the Crystal Palace, but most Adepts scoff at the idea. They all agree that the Kernel is everywhere and everything in the Net.

## The Rote Database

A huge database of rotes has been created in program form: stored in the Crystal Palace, it appears as a huge warehouse. Grouped and cross-indexed by Sphere, these rotes represent the sum of knowledge of the Virtual Adepts. Only a Virtual Adept may access this database; anyone else will have her icon disrupted. In extreme cases, she may be killed by neural feedback if she attempts further intrusion. Even Adepts must pay to copy rotes, either by performing some favor for the Chantry or by adding some new rote to the library.

Virtually any coincidental effect an Adept may wish to create is available here. It takes an average of two to thirty minutes (roll Computer + Research, difficulty 6; each success shaves five minutes off of the access time, to a minimum of two minutes) to find the proper rote in the database, depending upon how specific the Adept is in describing it.

This rote can then be stored on any personal computer, effectively teaching the rote to the Adept (or at least to his computer). Each rote takes an average of one minute to download. Note that each rote is usable only once unless the Adept makes multiple copies of it. Copies cannot be erased from the Adept database in the Chantry. Each rote takes up approximately 512 kilobytes of storage space on a computer. This means that about two hundred rotes can be stored on a standard 120 megabyte hard drive. Many rotes pirated from the Technocracy, as well as from other Traditions, are also stored here.

## soc.tactics



Combat with Virtual Adepts seems peculiar to mages used to a straight-out fight. Other Traditions view Adepts as cowards because they seldom confront an enemy on any terms other than their own. Nothing could be further from the truth; a Virtual Adept is deadly in combat. The hacker mages are survivors, and have developed formidable tactics.

Social Engineering is a favorite trick; in its broadest sense, "social engineering" is a kind of sociological sleight-of-hand, getting a group of people to act without actually telling them to (see my note about the "cyberpunk" phenomena, above). In personal combat, Adepts use Social Engineering to baffle and outmaneuver their opponents.

The Adepts prefer, when confronted with an enemy face to face, to use their Social Engineering to distract the enemy. This is known among the Adepts as the "Look, there goes Elvis" trick. In the meantime, the Adept weaves a rote to digitize the opponent and inject him into the Net, causes some physical disturbance with Forces or Matter, or simply scats. Fights with Virtual Adepts take place quickly or not at all.

Most Virtual Adepts working in mixed cabals are most comfortable coordinating attacks from a home base. They have the technology to keep a constant and vigorous communication going among a party of mages, and the presence of mind to direct the others in a firefight. Others may walk among their comrades as an icon, using Correspondence magick to "be there" and cutting out when the going gets tough. Still others enjoy getting into tense situations and actually go into the field. An Adept may also work as an ace in the hole; a powerful Adept can quickly transport supplies, aid and other backup to mages in need.

### Summation

As you can probably guess, I respect these hot-wired bastards. Their insights are a bit screwed, but they've got some solid ideas just the same. If I sat staring at a computer screen all day and night while HIT Marks chased my tail, I'd develop some weird ideas, too. While I haven't forgotten my mission, I've made friends among the Netheads and I advise cautious cooperation between our Traditions for the moment. All the same, don't turn your back on them, and for the gods' sake don't put anything on computer files that you don't want them to see.

Merry meet!

— With all regards, trust and love,  
Sharri

### Social Engineering

A Virtual Adept proficient in Social Engineering can use a subtle form of social engineering to convince an opponent that the Adept is someone she is not. In more extreme cases, she may use it to vanish into a crowd or to mask herself from detection, fooling pursuers into thinking she is not really there.

To use Social Engineering, an Adept must have at least two dots in Mind, and the Ability of Subterfuge. The difficulty of the roll is usually 8, but may be decreased if the Adept is especially clever or if the subject is elsewhere, like on the telephone or over the computer lines.



# Chapter 3.0: “Does Not Work Well With Others”

*Anarchist, n. — Syn. insurgent, rebel, revolutionary; see agitator.*

— Webster's New World Thesaurus



*Defenceless under the night,  
Our world in stupor lies;  
Yet dotted everywhere,  
Ironical points of light  
Flash out wherever the Just  
Exchange their messages:*

— W.H. Auden, September 1, 1939

E-mail message from Isaac73

Subject - Re: Other Trads

Darkheart,

I've thought about the last set of e-mail you sent me, regarding the other Traditions. You're really frightening, you know that? I mean, from the stuff you sent, it seems like we're all alone. The Technocracy hates us more than all the others combined. The rest of the Traditions are waiting to punt us off the Council. I mean, I know we're the best, the very best, but without any allies, aren't we doomed? I'm sure you know, like everyone else, all the software in the world

doesn't make up for human contact. Even the Sleepers know that. I'm awfully fuzzy on this stuff. Could we get together to chat about the rest? I'd like it if you could bring someone, maybe Daneel, just so I can have another view.

Isaac

Log #375A

Private Room: Tradspace@Spy's Demise

Isaac73: When does the log start recording stuff?

Darkheart: It's on now, kid.

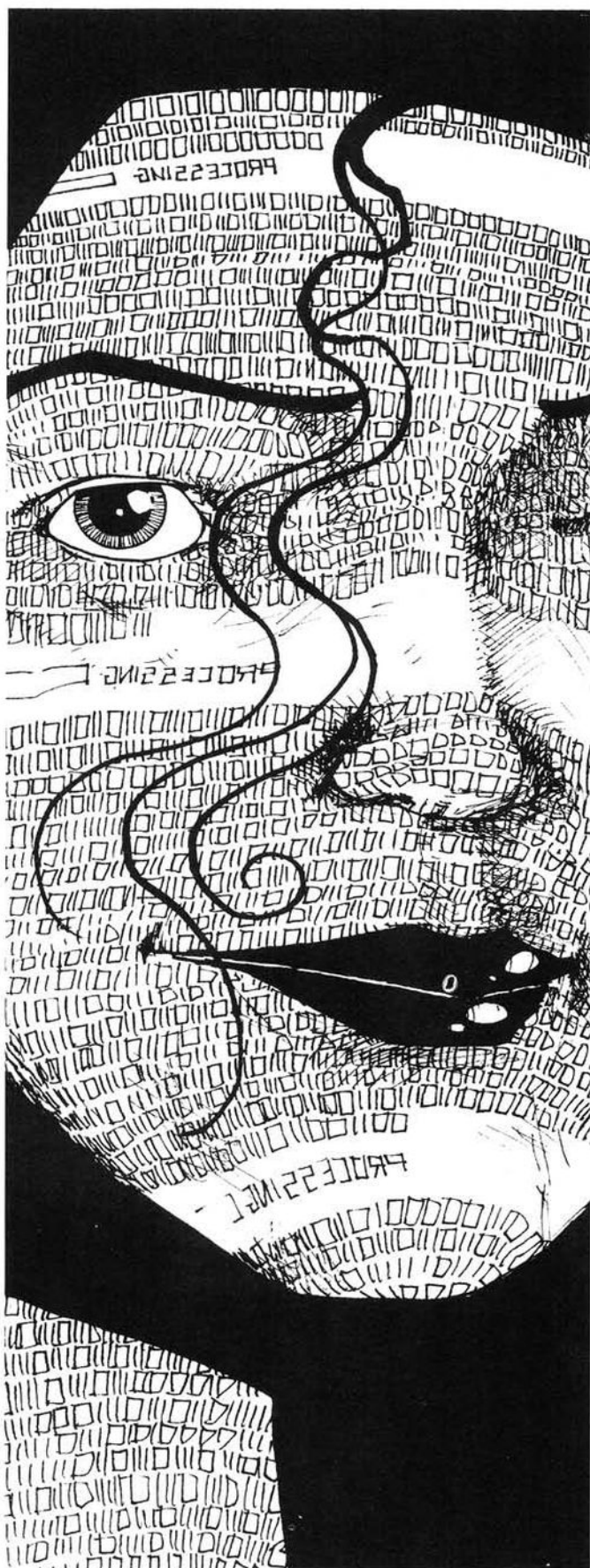
Daneel: Isaac, anytime you want to start the questions, go ahead.

Isaac73: Thanks, Daneel. So, do you just want to do them all in alphabetical order?

Darkheart: Watch out, kid, you think too much like the Technocracy.

Daneel: Stop calling all the Apprentices "kid," Dark.

Isaac73: So, first on my list is the...



## Akashic Brotherhood

**Darkheart:** I'll field this one. I've known too many of the A-K brothers. Basically, kid...

**Daneel:** Dark, delete the "kid" stuff!

**Darkheart:** Fine, Daneel. Anyway like I told you before... Isaac... the A-Ks are trapped somewhere in ancient Oriental thought. Sure, they know really cool fighting techniques and they've got all that mind over body stuff down cold, but when it comes down to it, that stuff doesn't cut it in the modern world. You can't stop the Technocracy with a flying kick or with deep meditation.

**Daneel:** The other problem they have is the amount of training their members have to go through.

**Darkheart:** Yeah, unless you want to spend your life devoted to training, the A-Ks are out. As one of them told me, "Either you study the Do or you don't study. There is no in between." They're constantly working to achieve the same goals over and over. Millennia have passed, but the A-Ks remain the same.

**Daneel:** Their biggest problem, Isaac, is that they don't change with the times. The Brotherhood's name even recalls the past. They aren't into science, and they disassociate themselves from the world to master their Avatars.

**Isaac73:** Okay, I see what you don't like about them, but how does our Tradition relate to the A-Ks? What can I expect if I meet one?

**Darkheart:** Expect to be ignored, if you're lucky. If not, he'll just decide you're part of the Technocracy. Wham! You'll never even see the attack coming.

**Daneel:** ::sighs:: If you can befriend a member of the Akashic Brotherhood, you'll have a loyal ally for life. We do share some common ground with them. They alter themselves and their perceptions to master the world. We just take things faster. We alter the world to fit our perceptions.

**Isaac73:** You mean, by creating Virtual Realms in the Net?

**Darkheart:** ::laughs:: Yes, I'm sure she does, not that you'll ever see any Virgin Web in your lifetime.

**Daneel:** A few members of the Brotherhood actually enjoy using the Net. Virtual reality helps them meditate and concentrate on Do... Anyway, whatever you do, don't anger them.

**Darkheart:** And if you decide to mess with one, make sure you're well-hidden, like on the other side of a state...

**Daneel:** Remember, although they don't adapt quickly enough to combat the Technocracy in this modern age, they do have talent. They just need us to guide them.

**Darkheart:** I prefer raw manipulation myself.

**Isaac73:** Okay, that's enough on them. Let's go on...

## Celestial Chorus

**Daneel:** The Celestial Chorus is next, in alphabetical order. Although if you want my preferences, its a toss-up between the Chorus and the Verbena for greatest trash Tradition in the Council of Nine...

**Darkheart:** The Verbena get my vote.

**Isaac73:** Could we discuss the Celestial Chorus? Please?

**Darkheart:** Watch your tone, kid.

**Daneel:** The Celestial Chorus live in the past. Somewhere, in their minds and places of worship, they've created a vision of God, the Supreme Being, some sort of Prime Mover. Think of the Church during the Dark Ages. They see the Divine in everything.

**Darkheart:** Sometimes I think the best thing about the Technocracy is that they dethroned the Chorus. Here is one Tradition that still can't get it together. They failed to bring Ascension to the masses in the Mythic Age, and they certainly can't get their act together now. Most of them want to deny science, not embrace it.

**Isaac73:** Is there something wrong with believing in a higher power?

**Darkheart:** Why should we? We are the power. So are you... Initiate.

**Daneel:** There's nothing wrong with believing in a divine force if you want, Isaac. Just don't let it limit your vision. The Celestial Chorus lets itself stagnate. They're every bit as afraid of change as the Technocracy. They don't want any of us to have information. Everything works on faith. Don't dare question the powers that be. If they had their way, you would not only not be online, but you wouldn't be able to read either. Trust in God, not yourself. That's their message.

**Darkheart:** Personally, I don't believe in any divine entity. Religions are excuses for the weak. If you don't have any willpower or personality, find a religion. Many institutions aren't going to make it through the Electronic Age. The Chorus is first on the list to go. It's dead, so's God. Let's move on.

**Isaac73:** Hang on a minute. What happens if I meet some of them? I noticed a few were even out in the Demise...

**Daneel:** Some members of the Chorus recognize the power of the media and computer systems to spread their gospels. They use technology to broadcast their backwards-looking messages. If you learn only one lesson from the Chorus, make it one of personal responsibility. No divine force will make the world a better place. We create our own heavens and hells. You can see them better in the Net, but they're still around in realspace.

**Darkheart:** Look, put up with the CCs if you want, Isaac. Humor them. Chances are they won't bother you. If you take one into the Web, she's likely to think it's some kind of miracle. You're more likely to convert her to computers than she is to make any of us accept her dogma.

**Isaac73:** ::sighs::

**Darkheart:** I can see you're a bit idealistic, kid. Oh well, you just need some experience to get rid of that innocence. And the best group to do that would be the..

## Cult of Ecstasy

**Darkheart:** If you want a good time, meet a member of the Cult of X. They're unbelievable.

**Daneel:** Mmmmm... I agree. If you want a party... or just a good time... meet a few Cultists. But if you're trying to do anything serious, forget them.

**Darkheart:** What do you mean? They're serious about what they do. And they do it well.

**Daneel:** Lot of good that's going to do you, when Iteration X has a HIT Mark or three at your door, ramming large guns into your meat and opening up.

**Isaac73:** What do Cult members do?

**Darkheart:** You can't be serious about that question. They're called the Cult of Ecstasy for a reason... ::smiles::

**Isaac73:** I know they're purveyors of pleasure. And Dark, I'm certainly experienced enough to want to find an attractive C of X member and introduce her to cybersex. She might enjoy interfacing with sensory input flowing directly to her pleasure centers. I wanted to know... what else they do? Do they have any value as far as Ascension?

**Darkheart:** First of all, kid, I doubt you'd introduce her to anything...

**Daneel:** Watch out, Dark! Isaac's going to make a good Adept yet. He's already starting to challenge your authority.

**Darkheart:** Can I finish, Daneel?

**Daneel:** Go ahead.

**Darkheart:** Thanks. Ok, Isaac, you want to know what else they can do? Well, pleasure is persuasive. Sleepers flock to them. Also, many of the C of Xers are at least Disciples of Time. But, mostly, they're good for parties, that's all.

**Daneel:** Ultimately, they waste away their existences, Isaac. They aren't creating anything that lasts. The Cult of Ecstasy appeals to many Sleepers, but people need more than a series of pleasurable experiences to give their lives meaning.

**Darkheart:** Spoken like a good computer geek too repressed for the party crowd, Daneel. A lot of Adepts get touchy when sexual issues are brought up, don't they, Isaac? Proving yourself online is one thing, hot animal intimacy is quite another.

**Daneel:** I have a feeling that your meat isn't nearly as well-proportioned as your icon, Dark. And I've taken my flesh into one of their pleasuredomes, for your information, and I wasn't impressed. There weren't too many hot animals there who could carry on a lucid conversation with me, especially considering the drugs and all the music.

**Isaac73:** Fine, I get the picture, and I'll learn to relate to them. It sounds like I'll have fun in the process. Now, one group I'm totally lost on is the..

## Dreamspeakers

**Isaac73:** What are they about? I mean, shamanism? What does that have to do with the modern world? I mean, that's farther gone than the Celestial Chorus.

**Darkheart:** Basically, I wouldn't worry about them or pay them any real attention. They don't have any organization. They all seem afflicted with constant depression, bemoaning the death of the world. And they dance around circles, painting their bodies, beating drums, and doing their best work asleep.

**Daneel:** Dark, don't you think that the Dreamspeakers best embody what the Technocracy lacks? Isaac, if you could combine the Technocracy with the Dreamspeakers...

**Darkheart:** You'd have a bunch of stagnant crazies using science to summon spirits to tell them the world's dying, and dragging us down with them. But hey, at least, they'd be amusing to watch.

**Daneel:** No! You'd have dedicated scientists who would care about the human and natural aspects of the world.

**Darkheart:** Are you a New Ager or something, Daneel? Is that why you don't like the Celestial Chorus?

**Isaac73:** Dark, please, I'm trying to learn.

**Darkheart:** Kid, you can always review the log later. That's why we're making one.

**Daneel:** I think you're afraid of expressing your inner self, Dark, which is why you do the typical Virtual Adept show of smug arrogance whenever you can't relate to something.

**Darkheart:** Ohhh, that's deep. Be glad I like you, Daneel.

**Isaac73:** Excuse me, the Dreamspeakers?

**Daneel:** Where was I? Speaking of logs, let me scroll back... oh yes, aspects of the world. One of the reasons that I like the Dreamspeakers is they understand other forms of reality.

**Isaac73:** Like the Digital Web?

**Darkheart:** I wouldn't go that far...

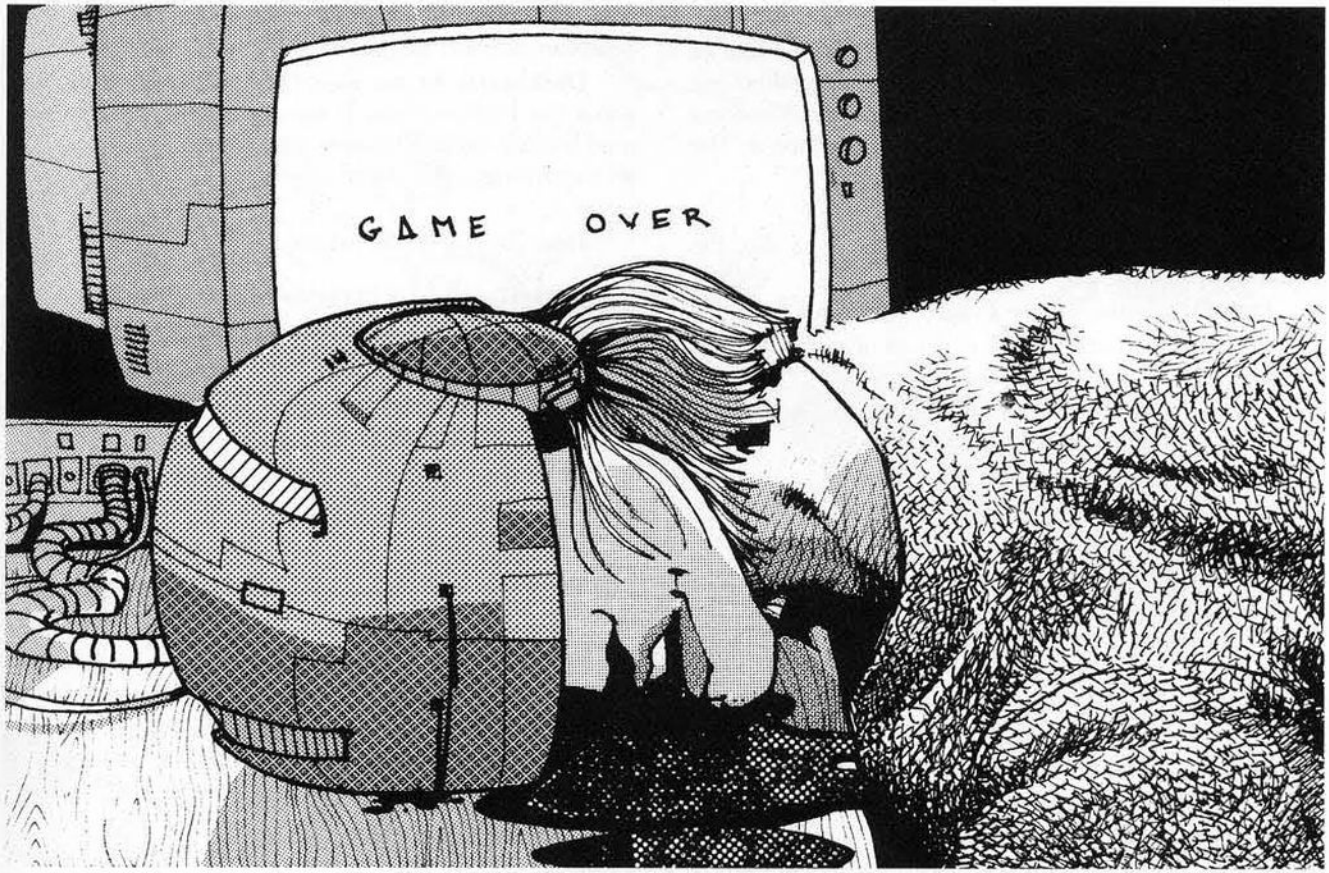
**Daneel:** More like the rest of the Umbra than the Digital Web, but yes. The Dreamspeakers gain data about the fabric of the Tapestry from their spirit allies.

**Darkheart:** Yeah, and if they were at all organized in the slightest, like if they had Chantries, maybe someone could find and use that data...

**Daneel:** They have Chantries, Darkheart, despite what some of them say. There's one called the Second World of the Dine out on the Horizon.

**Isaac73:** Wait a minute, how can a Tradition not have an organization?





**Darkheart:** ::smiles:: Do you think we have a real organization, kid?

**Daneel:** They have initiation ceremonies, and they recognize other members. As I understand it, and I'm far from an expert on Dreamspeakers, they emphasize the uniqueness of each human being, as well as the responsibility that we all have for the planet. We are individuals within a spiritual whole.

**Isaac73:** So, what happens if I meet a Dreamspeaker?

**Daneel:** It's hard to say. Like us, they're individuals. You can't judge one by the rest of the Tradition.

**Darkheart:** You can say that about any mage, Daneel. I've never met a mage, outside the Technocracy, who fit perfectly into a stereotype.

**Daneel:** What I meant was that they have more loners and less communication than any of the other Traditions.

**Darkheart:** They say that they use dreams to speak to one another. That's why they call them the Dreamspeakers. Almost makes sense, doesn't it?

**Isaac73:** Ok, my common ground with the Dreamspeakers is my individuality and an understanding of altered states, plus a mutual commitment to humanity.

**Darkheart:** Next, my favorite twisted nightmarish types, the...

## Euthanatos

**Darkheart:** My advice, Isaac, is to leave them alone. Avoid any group with an obsessive fascination with death.

**Daneel:** I agree. Isaac, a Euthanatos might just decide to kill you outright as an experiment, or because our Tradition was part of the Technocracy. I don't pretend to understand the Euthanatos, and I don't want to. If they want to experience the Net, fine. We'll show them our path to Ascension. Otherwise, give them a wide berth.

**Darkheart:** If you meet one, treat him like a Nephandus, except don't attack. Got it?

**Isaac73:** Actually, I met a Euthanatos already. Seemed like a nice person. Sure, we talked about death and dying, but he didn't act like Jack Kervorkian or anything.

**Darkheart:** Fine, go ahead and have your own experiences. I just wouldn't trust a Euthanatos. You only have one chance with them. If you misjudge one, you won't ever have to worry about how to deal with the other Traditions or anyone else.

**Daneel:** An Adept should know appearances can be deceptive.

**Isaac73:** Drop it, guys, you're sounding like the Conventions. Stuck in one mode of thought.

**Darkheart:** Watch it, Apprentice, or I'll send you on a psychedelic trip through virtual wonderland that'll make a bad LSD trip seem like a night of drinking.

**Daneel:** Give him some slack, Dark. He'll learn better.

**Darkheart:** Look, kid, the 'Thanatos don't like us because they know we have the secret to putting them out of business. Eventually, we'll just be able to download our brains online and live forever. Kibo's already done it. The flesh is the past, electronics are forever.

**Isaac73:** Are you serious, man?

**Darkheart:** Deadly, kid. I'm not going to die. I'm better than that.

**Daneel:** ::smiles:: I have to agree with Dark.

**Isaac73:** I'm not ready for that sort of stuff. I like my body.

**Daneel:** There's more to life than a heartbeat, Isaac. You'll see after a few trips into the Net.

**Isaac73:** Well, what about the...

## Hollow Ones

**Isaac73:** Aren't they just like the Euthanatos?

**Daneel:** No. ::laughs:: Do you want to know about the Hollow Ones or all the Orphans?

**Darkheart:** Let's just talk about the Hollow Ones and forget about the rest of the Orphans.

**Isaac73:** I'd like to know as much as possible.

**Darkheart:** We'll be conferencing forever if we try to talk about all the Orphans.

**Daneel:** Dark's right. I'll download some files on the others for you later, Isaac. As long as Dark doesn't mind...?

**Darkheart:** Fine with me, Daneel.

**Daneel:** Good.

**Isaac73:** Thanks, Daneel.

**Darkheart:** The Hollow Ones aren't into death. They think we're all doomed, kid. They're just having a good time on this decaying rock before everything goes. They know how to party, just like the Culties. Unlike the Ecstatic, the Hollow Ones can occasionally do other things. At least they recognize the existence of technology. That puts them ahead of all the backward looking Trads.

**Daneel:** Potentially, the Hollow Ones could be the first group of mages to embrace our brave new electronic world. It's infinitely better than dark reality.

**Isaac73:** So what are they like?

**Darkheart:** Kid, I told you, they like to party, wear black, and celebrate the death of society as we know it.

**Daneel:** Not that the Sleepers have much of a society anymore... at least, not one with any real values.

**Isaac73:** Is everyone in our Tradition so down on reality?

**Darkheart:** Pretty much. Reality doesn't stack up against virtual realms. With computers, we improve upon reality.

**Daneel:** I'm not down on reality, just society. The Technocracy killed our sense of community. Another thing that makes us cool is that by connecting everyone

online, we create a stronger, larger community with better communication. Life gets better.

**Darkheart:** At any rate, Daneel made a good point about the Hollow Ones. If we show them a yellow brick road leading out of Kansas to the Emerald City, they'll be all too willing to skip down it. Nobody'll want to leave our Oz.

**Isaac73:** Cool. Okay then, what about the...

## Order of Hermes

**Daneel:** The scientists who failed. That's what the Order is.

**Darkheart:** Yeah, they were close to discovering a science so they could impose their own system of metaphysics on the world.

**Isaac73:** What happened?

**Daneel:** They were overcome by hubris, too much pride... they kept their discoveries to themselves, the elite few. The Order couldn't bear the thought of magick being accessible to everyone.

**Darkheart:** The Ords were on top for a while. In the Mythic Age, they had the power. The Hermetics had as many different groups as the Traditions and the Conventions combined. They had the potential, but not the momentum. The Sleepers rejoiced when the Technocracy swept them away.

**Isaac73:** Now, the magick of the Order works like that of fantasy wizards, right? The Merlin sort of stuff?

**Daneel:** Not really. Find a good online file on medieval magic. Its a little different from the stuff you read in fantasy novels.

**Darkheart:** They almost had a system. If they had let everyone else join their party instead of sneering at the un-Awakened masses, then... we wouldn't have a Technocracy. We'd have an Order. Hell, if they hadn't been so involved with infighting to recognize the Technocracy as a threat, we wouldn't be here. Never get into politics, kid.

**Daneel:** As it is now, the Order has to get with the future and stop living in the dead past. They're stagnant.

**Darkheart:** Yeah, they've got to wake up and stop trying to solve the world's problems using magicks that died out centuries ago. Old failures don't make new solutions. Another dead Tradition.

**Isaac73:** The more I hear, the more I wonder what would the other Traditions would do without us? It seems like most of them are lost in the past.

**Darkheart:** Very good, kid. Now you see why the Technocracy's winning.

**Daneel:** The other Traditions need us. Without our knowledge of technology, the Technocracy would have blasted the Council of Nine into ruin a long time ago. Some factions of the Order of Hermes realize this on some level some of the time. But, even they just don't understand what we're doing.



**Isaac73:** So, the Order of Hermes supports us?

**Darkheart:** No. No one supports us, we're on our own.

**Daneel:** Ignore Dark a minute. They support us in theory. They know science can't be ignored. However, they want to infuse science with mysticism. If they could just let go of the past and shed their politics, then... ::shakes head::

**Darkheart:** My final words on them. Another dead Tradition.

**Daneel:** You shouldn't have too many problems with members of the Order.

**Isaac73:** Good. I've always admired ancient mysticism, at least the fantasy kind. It makes for good computer games.

**Darkheart:** ::smiles:: That's the attitude, kid.

**Isaac73:** So, who's next on the agenda?

**Darkheart:** The real crazies, the...

## Sons of Ether

**Daneel:** Here's a group you can feel safe approaching. Of all the Traditions, they're the ones closest to us.

**Isaac73:** Why?

**Darkheart:** They're a Technomancer Tradition, just like we are. Except while the Adepts planned to break from the Greyfaces, the Technocracy punted the Sons...

**Daneel:** The Children of Ether don't view science like we view science. And they definitely don't work like the Technocracy. They specialize in massive speculation, creativity. The Children don't see...

**Isaac73:** Hang on, Daneel. Why are you calling them the Children?

**Daneel:** Oh, well, that is one of the throwback problems of the Etherites. They refuse to change their name, even though they have a number of women in their Tradition. The female Sons I have spoken with like to call themselves Children of Ether. So I do as well in support of them.

**Darkheart:** Just call them, Sons, Isaac. You won't offend any of the old anal farts in the Trad, and the ladies will correct you.

**Daneel:** That won't help them change.

**Darkheart:** It's not my problem. I have to worry about HIT Marks, and MIBs online, not whether the Sons are called the Sons, Daughters, Children, Worshipers, Disciples, Descendants, Etherites, Etherians, etc. I could go on, but I've wasted too much time here already.

**Isaac73:** I think I'll just use Sons until I know better.

**Daneel:** You should never compromise the truth.

**Isaac73:** By the way, Dark, I am learning some stuff. I do appreciate this.

**Darkheart:** It's not a problem. I offered, remember?

**Daneel:** Where were we?

**Isaac73:** What is Ether?

**Darkheart:** Ether is this stuff that is supposed to exist in space, between the planets. Essentially, the Technos held a symposium and the Void guys decided that it shouldn't exist. A debate followed, and the other Conventions declared that there was no Ether. The Sons revolted and left, although I think it was the Conventions' way of saying, "Get in line."

**Daneel:** Anyway, the cool thing about the Children is that they don't let Technocracy theories stand in the way of their experiments. Creativity and intuition guide them.

**Darkheart:** Even I have to admit that it's amazing what some of those nutbags come up with. Rayguns, tunnelling machines, alchemy, even robotic A.I.s that work entirely differently from anything the Technocracy's created.

**Isaac73:** They sound cool. Why do you keep referring to them as nuts, Dark?

**Darkheart:** Some of them just go a little too far outside the bounds of normal thought for me.

**Daneel:** A few of them get consumed by their theories. Everything in the world works differently from what we accept as science.

**Darkheart:** But they make great conversationalists. If you want to have fun with one, watch a few bad sci-fi movies with a couple of robots. Then find a Son of Ether and talk seriously about the movie with him.

**Daneel:** The Children of Ether are good allies in the Ascension War. We can trust them better than any other group.

**Darkheart:** Isaac, listen to me, don't trust anybody.

**Isaac73:** All right, well, we're at the end. Who are the...

## Verbena

**Daneel:** They are a bunch of sick witch-types who believe that you have to spill blood everywhere to use magick.

**Darkheart:** Stay away from these loons, kid. They are twisted ritualists better off forgotten. We don't like them, they don't like us. They can't understand science at all.

**Daneel:** And they just don't understand that ancient dark rituals are what opened the door for the Technocracy.

**Darkheart:** They're enough to make you think that maybe there was a reason behind the Salem Witch Trials.

**Isaac73:** Wait a minute... those trials were a bunch of paranoids and some misunderstandings...

**Darkheart:** Actually, they probably had more to do with vampires than Verbena, but you can categorize both in the same group. Dangerous.

**Daneel:** The only good thing about the Verbena is that they fight the Technocracy. That is the only good thing. If

they ran the world, the Sleepers would scream for the Technocracy to come back.

**Darkheart:** If you ask me, there's another good thing.

**Daneel:** Oh?

**Darkheart:** They're going to die out, because they don't change. The Verbena can't ride the wave of the future, so it's going to wipe them out.

**Daneel:** I'm glad you think so. They've managed to survive this long. The Order tried to exterminate them in the Mythic Age. They survived attacks by the Celestial Chorus. They survived the coming of the Technocracy. And, in case you haven't noticed, they're gaining support among the Sleepers as a reaction to Big Brother.

**Isaac73:** Are they involved with the New Age movement?

**Darkheart:** Yes, but I still think they're going to shrivel up and blow away.

**Daneel:** The biggest problem I have with them is that they can't accept the fact that truth in the modern world can be found through technology. They want to think that the Computer Age doesn't exist, because they can't cope with reality.

**Isaac73:** What?

**Darkheart:** Daneel has a personal problem with the Verbs, obviously. The Verbs don't think science has any meaning. They think civilization should go back to the Stone Age or at least pre-Roman Europe, if Ascension is to be found.

**Isaac73:** They are a bit out of it.

**Darkheart:** Yeah, but they might sacrifice your blood to try to get back there.

**Daneel:** Our Traditions pull the Council of Nine in different directions. It's a struggle we have to win; otherwise, the Technocracy will.

**Darkheart:** If the Council went the wrong way full steam, we'd find something else to do. After all, we are the very best. ::smiles:: The cutting edge... and soon, the entire world will be ours with just a touch of a button and a quick electronic impulse. We've got the best of both worlds; the vision of the Council and the weapons of the Technocracy. Remember that, kid.

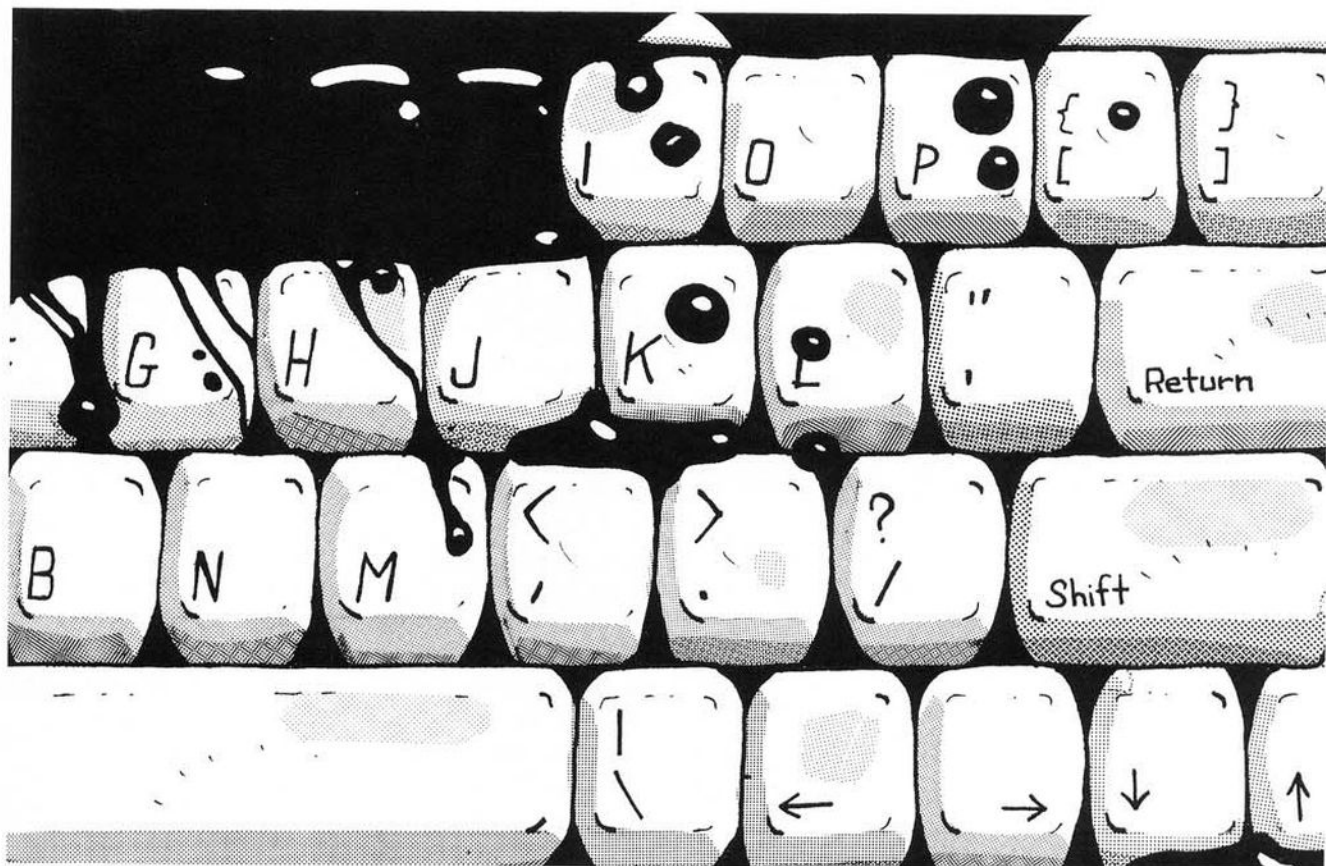
**Daneel:** Remember that, no matter what, even if you have to deal with Verbena, we need all the allies we can get. Okay, Isaac?

**Isaac73:** I suspect I'll access my own truth after a while. Thanks, both of you. Daneel, I really enjoyed meeting you.

**Daneel:** I don't think we're done yet, Isaac.

**Darkheart:** Yes, we are. There aren't anymore Traditions.

**Daneel:** Well, far be it from me to tell you how to be a teacher, but Isaac needs to know that there are other things in the world to watch out for.



**Isaac73:** I'll take any data I can get.

**Darkheart:** See, I trained him well.

**Daneel:** Isaac, have you heard of vampires and werewolves?

**Isaac73:** Well, if mages can exist, I'm sure vampires and werewolves do...

**Daneel:** Smart. Let's start with vampires.

## Vampires

**Darkheart:** Do you recall everything I said about the Euthanatos?

**Isaac73:** Yes.

**Darkheart:** Well, vampires are worse. Be thankful that the undead don't stalk the Net.

**Daneel:** But... Dark, some say they have influence, even here. ::laughs::

**Isaac73:** So, what are vampires like?

**Darkheart:** Did you ever see Dracula?

**Isaac73:** No, but I played a CD-ROM game about Drac.

**Darkheart:** There you go. Imagine a twisted sicko like Drac, who has lots of powers and no Paradox.

**Isaac73:** Should I carry around a stake and a cross?

**Daneel:** ::laughs:: The stake's not a bad idea. I'd lose the cross, unless you want to leave us for the Celestial Chorus. Remember to wear a garlic necklace.

**Darkheart:** The important thing, Isaac, is that they're out there. They exist. Vampires are real. What they're up to, what their limits are, no one knows.

**Isaac73:** Why haven't the Sleepers discovered them?

**Darkheart:** Don't you read *Deviant* magazine or any tabloids? There's stuff on vampires in them all the time.

**Daneel:** The undead hide themselves. They work in mysterious, irrational ways.

**Darkheart:** I think they hack into networks and erase any incriminating data. Besides, Sleepers live their lives in constant denial. We're talking about average people who can't deal with computers... they don't have the imagination to accept vampires. The Technocracy wouldn't want anyone believing in vamps anyway.

**Isaac73:** Why don't vampires suffer from Paradox?

**Daneel:** I don't know.

**Darkheart:** No one knows.

**Isaac73:** They do have to drink blood, right?

**Darkheart:** As far as I know.

**Daneel:** The key to dealing with vampires: don't! Check the crime files and missing persons reports in your city, when you get a chance. Use a mapmaker package and mark the disappearances. That'll help show you what areas to avoid.

**Darkheart:** Just don't take stupid chances, kid. Travel during the day, spend nights online.

## Werewolves

**Isaac73:** Ok, what about werewolves?

**Darkheart:** Werewolves are another matter.

**Daneel:** Believe it or not, they are more of a problem than vampires.

**Darkheart:** If you ever see a werewolf, use magick. Do something sick and vulgar, but clear out or fry the big shaggy walking carpet.

**Daneel:** Imagine something nine feet tall, 800+ pounds of muscle, with big claws and teeth, that moves faster than your eyes can track. That's a werewolf.

**Darkheart:** Yeah, most wolves call themselves Glass Walkers. They're not exactly what you'd expect... They aren't stupid. And, just like vampires, not a single whiff of Paradox.

**Daneel:** You know about the Umbra, right, Isaac?

**Isaac73:** Right...

**Daneel:** Werewolves can travel through the Umbra... which means they can enter the Digital Web.

**Darkheart:** Don't get scared though, kid. From what I understand, most werewolves freak out in virtual reality. Their little wolf brains can't take it.

**Isaac73:** Why?

**Darkheart:** I don't know, but I suspect the hyper-sensory nature of the Net overwhelms them. Ask one sometime if you see him online.

**Daneel:** Simple instructions for animal handling: It's okay to encounter a 'wolf in the Net. You've got the advantage. It's not okay to encounter a 'wolf in realspace. She has the advantage in a big way.

**Isaac73:** I'll try to avoid werewolves anywhere.

**Darkheart:** Smart, kid.

## Ghosts

**Isaac73:** What else is real that I don't know about? Ghosts? Fairies?

**Darkheart:** Don't tell me you believe in ghosts and fairies, kid. Grow up.

**Isaac73:** If there are vampires, werewolves, and wizards in the world, why not fairies and ghosts? Or dragons while we're at it?

**Daneel:** Isaac, some Traditions, like the Euthanatos, believe in ghosts. However, all the evidence I've seen leads me to believe there is only one type of ghost — a downloaded mind.

## Fairies

**Isaac73:** Are there fairies? I heard something about...

**Darkheart:** ...Only if you believe in Marion Zimmer Bradley, which I don't.

**Daneel:** Don't worry, Isaac. Fairies only exist in fiction. Despite what the Verbena and the other throwbacks might claim.

**Darkheart:** Although if you spend enough time sitting in the moonlight with mushrooms, you might see all sorts of things...

## The Technocracy

**Daneel:** Isaac, what do you know about the Technocracy?

**Darkheart:** I've given him the basics.

**Isaac73:** I know that the old greyfaces roam the Digital Web. I know about science as magick; I know how the Technocracy dehumanizes people with its creations, unlike our noble cadre. We help individuals advance realize their potential.

**Darkheart:** Watch the sarcasm, kid. Too few of us are noble.

**Daneel:** Seriously, do you know what to do if you encounter the Technocracy?

**Darkheart:** I'll give you a hint, kid. Run.

**Isaac73:** Well, don't they have to use machinery and devices to access their magick?

**Daneel:** Yes.

**Isaac73:** Ok, I'd use my Elite here with Forces to start scrambling their systems. I'm sure a few high-powered transmissions could melt quite a few delicate internal components. And if they use any computer systems, it'll make shutting them down just that much easier.

**Darkheart:** Great idea, kid. And if you can shut down a HIT Mark before it can fire its particle accelerator down your throat, then you ought to e-mail Kibo and tell him he's out of a job.

**Isaac73:** Captain Feedback did it.

**Daneel:** ::laughs::

**Darkheart:** Don't listen to too many online myths. The Technocracy starts half of them.

**Daneel:** Here's my Technocracy drill. First, seize the initiative. If you see them before they see you, get out. If you can't get out, do something dramatic. Create power surges, set off alarms, blow out the speakers on your board, charge them screaming something stupid into your headset like "Secondary Target Group Identified." Do anything to confuse or trick them. Acolytes or program backups make this part much less risky to you. You want time to analyze the situation. Then, once you've bought that...

**Darkheart:** Yeah, and your Acolyte's bought it too...

**Daneel:** ... time, call in backup.

**Isaac73:** What kind of backup?

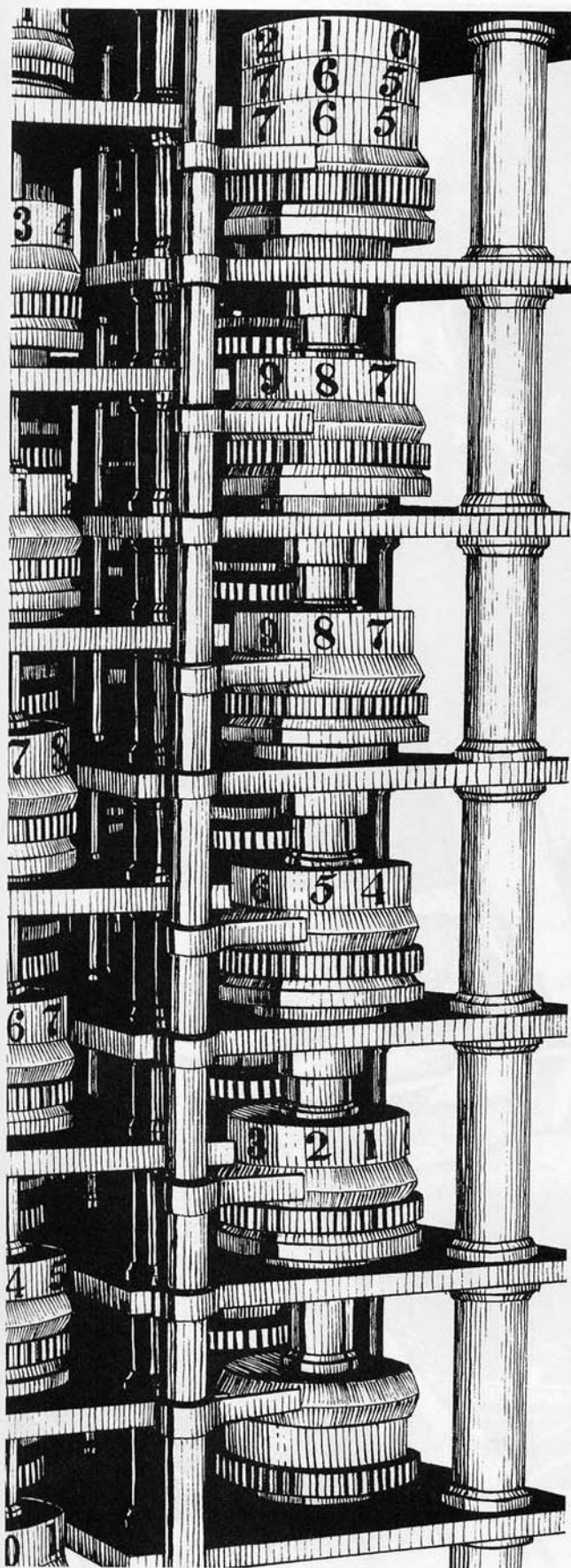
**Daneel:** ::smiling:: I have a key that signals the FBI Special Affairs Bureau, NSA, CNN, and the local Fire Department. If you have a camcorder that you can do a feed to a local cable channel, you know, one of the public access ones, that can help. Greyfaces are notoriously camera shy. They also don't like Sleepers, and most of them look more unusual than you do.

**Darkheart:** What?? The FBI, the NSA, CNN, and the Fire Department? Isn't that like asking for Paradox?

**Isaac73:** That sounds awfully crazy. Why don't you just unleash with something big?

**Darkheart:** Good thinking, kid.

**Daneel:** Because, gentlemen, if something happens and my BIG magickal effect goes "poof" instead of "BOOM!", I still have options. The Technocracy's got to get things covered up quick unless they want CNN exposing everything. At best, the leadership will fry their mother boards at the next Symposium. Besides,



this way, if they kill me, I get the satisfaction of causing them problems anyway. The Fire Department's got paramedics, just in case things get really bad. Contacting other Adepts works well too.

Isaac73: Oh...

Daneel: And if I'm worried about being outnumbered, augmenting the danger of Paradox helps cut the odds.

Isaac73: Then...

Daneel: Then I cut loose with something vulgar to get out or try to destroy them. Getting away from danger is always priority one. Remember, Sleepers are your friends.

Isaac73: Ok, so you do unleash eventually.

Daneel: Well, it's us or them. Dark, what do you do?

Darkheart: ::smiles slowly:: Do you really want to know?

Isaac73: I would, Dark.

Darkheart: Ok, I let them know they passed their test.

Isaac73: What?

Daneel: You are crazy.

Darkheart: It's like this, and I don't recommend you try this at home: if they catch me dead to rights, which has happened, I compliment them. I use a little voice scrambler, pure mundane tech, to give my voice that crisp Technocracy tone. Then, I stare at them and state: "Your detection and response time to the threat was 5.6 minutes. Within the acceptable parameters. I am Number 5 of the New World Order. Check your Construct records for verification of my authority."

Isaac73: What then? Don't they crysp you?

Darkheart: No. While I'm doing that, I'm tapping my Alpha and working on intercepting their transmissions and responding with a proper verification code. Then, they usually let me walk.

Daneel: That's just a stupid and near-lethal way to buy time. Use my method.

Darkheart: I agree, it is stupid. But I'm good enough to pull it off. That's the bottom line.

Daneel: Isaac, if you want to take on the Technocracy, use your Correspondence to keep plenty of distance between you and them. Distance buys you time. They use computers. We control computers. Information is power. Use better data to destroy their operations. That's the bottom line.

Darkheart: Develop your own style. Whatever works best for you. Treat any advice Daneel and I gave you tonight like an ad for a hot new computer game that hasn't come out. Vaporware. It could be great, but be really careful about staking your life on it. Rely on yourself...

Daneel: And your cabal.

Darkheart: Whatever.

Isaac73: Well, I appreciate all this data. Did it all log properly?

Daneel: ::smiles:: Of course.

Isaac73: Great, you two told me a lot. ::chuckles::

Darkheart: What's so funny, kid?

Isaac73: I don't know whether I learned more about the other Traditions or being an Adept.

Daneel: ::laughs::



# Chapter 4.0: Initiates

*Visionary, Mod. 1. [Impractical] — Syn. ideal, ideological, romantic, utopian, quixotic, in the clouds (D); see also impractical.*

— Webster's New World Thesaurus



*Trailblazer, n. 1. a person who blazes a trail for others to follow through unsettled country or wilderness; pathfinder. 2. a pioneer in any field of endeavor.*

— The Random House College Dictionary

The Virtual Adepts are far more than spell-casting computer geeks. The more ro-

mantic among the Tradition consider themselves Hackers at the Gates of Reality. The more pragmatic just see themselves as a reality check for the world at large. This chapter presents a few beginning Adepts for players or Storytellers to use as characters or inspiration (or for a good laugh).

# The Couch Potato

*I don't think television will ever be perfected until the viewer can press a button and cause whoever is on the screen's head to explode.*

— Michael O'Donoghue

**Quote:** See this, man? My new, wide-screen fifty-six-inch home entertainment system with two VCRs and a satellite dish. I get over 500 channels now, and I don't even have to move. I can see what good new shows are coming up for the fall season. In fact, I can even get some shows that aren't even in production yet! And that's not all I can do! Watch this...

**Prelude:** You weren't an outsider. You were just lazy, always looking for new ways to do things easily. You never wanted to do actual work, but had to in order to keep upgrading your entertainment system and computer. People complained that you were nothing but a couch potato.

Despite being a fairly gross individual, you had friends of a sort. One of them invited you to a party one night. He had the greatest system you'd ever seen, and he hooked you into some mega-bucks VR rig and sent you on the trip of your life. "Like it?" he asked when you returned. Staggered by the things you'd seen, you could only nod. "It's real," he said, "not a simulation." You knew then that you'd do anything to take that kind of joyride again.

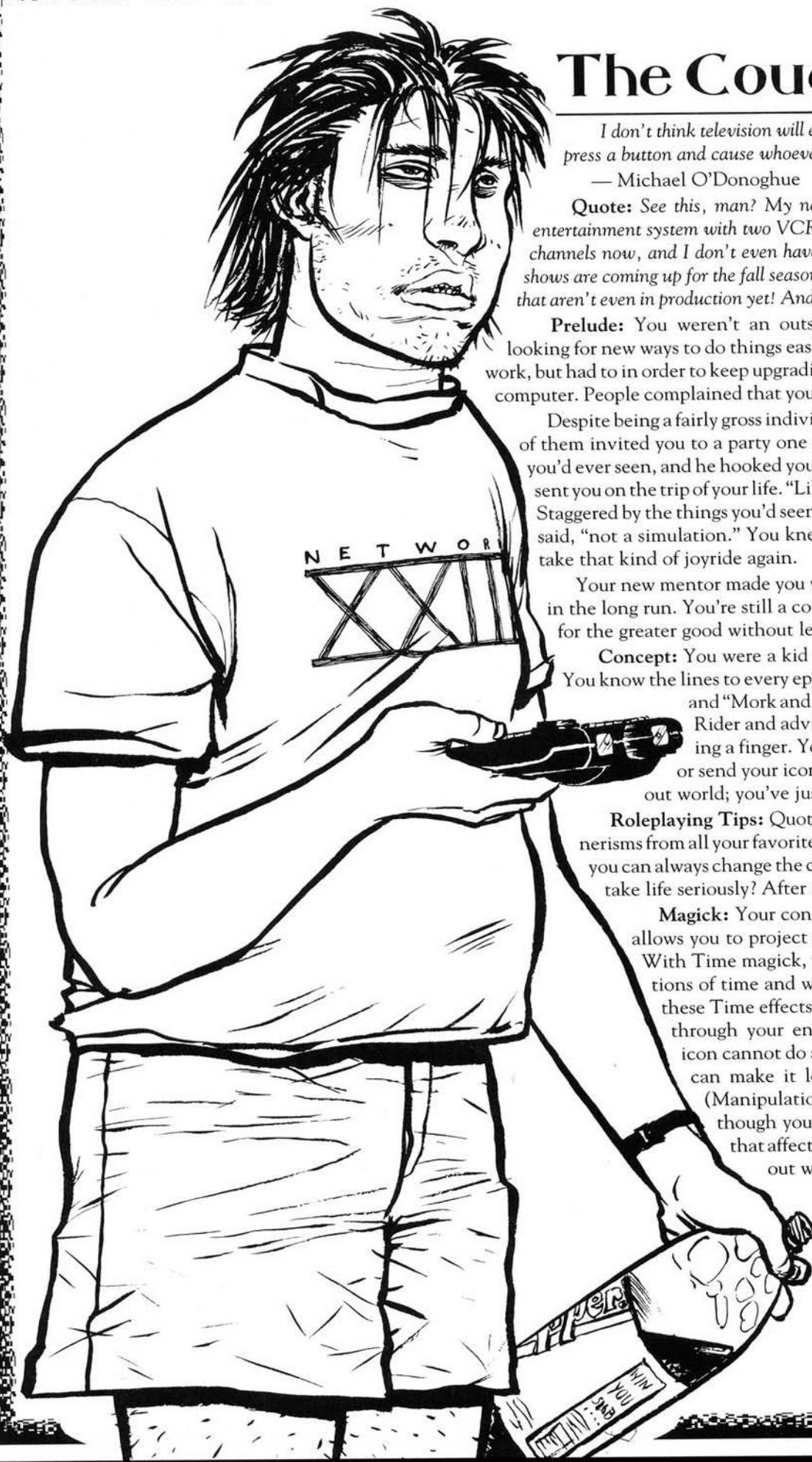
Your new mentor made you work, which sucked, but it paid off in the long run. You're still a couch potato, but now you can work for the greater good without leaving your room. Life is happy.

**Concept:** You were a kid who watched TV. Too much TV. You know the lines to every episode of "Happy Days," "Star Trek" and "Mork and Mindy". You command the Knight Rider and advise "Charlie's Angels" without lifting a finger. You can take on any guise you desire or send your icon anywhere you want to go. Watch out world; you've just moved into Sweeps Week!

**Roleplaying Tips:** Quote television shows and affect mannerisms from all your favorite characters. Be daring and brave — you can always change the channel if things get too nasty. Why take life seriously? After all, it's only a TV show — isn't it?

**Magick:** Your control of Correspondence and Forces allows you to project an icon anywhere you want to be. With Time magick, you can slow or speed your perceptions of time and witness events in the past or future; these Time effects are coincidental if they're focused through your entertainment center. Though your icon cannot do anything beyond your abilities, you can make it look like anything you want it to (Manipulation + Subterfuge to fool people). Although your body remains at home, anything that affects your icon affects you as well — pull out when things get thick!

**Equipment:** Remote Control, bathrobe, potato chips, entertainment center, really comfy couch.





# MAGE: The Ascension™

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Essence: Pattern Concept: Couch Potato  
Player: \_\_\_\_\_ Nature: Loner Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chronicle: \_\_\_\_\_ Demeanor: Conniver Cabal: \_\_\_\_\_

## Attributes

### Physical

Strength \_\_\_\_\_ ●●○○○  
Dexterity \_\_\_\_\_ ●●○○○  
Stamina \_\_\_\_\_ ●●○○○

### Social

Charisma \_\_\_\_\_ ●●●○○  
Manipulation *Fast Talker* ●●●○○  
Appearance \_\_\_\_\_ ●○○○○

### Mental

Perception \_\_\_\_\_ ●●●○○  
Intelligence \_\_\_\_\_ ●●●○○  
Wits \_\_\_\_\_ ●●●○○

## Abilities

### Talents

Alertness \_\_\_\_\_ ●●●○○  
Athletics \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Awareness \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Brawl \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Dodge \_\_\_\_\_ ●●●○○  
Expression \_\_\_\_\_ ●●○○○  
Intuition \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Intimidation \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Streetwise \_\_\_\_\_ ●○○○○  
Subterfuge \_\_\_\_\_ ●●●○○

### Skills

Drive \_\_\_\_\_ ●○○○○  
Etiquette \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Firearms \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Leadership \_\_\_\_\_ ●●○○○  
Meditation \_\_\_\_\_ ●●○○○  
Melee \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Research \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Stealth \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Survival \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Technology *Leisure Tech* ●●●○○

### Knowledges

Computer \_\_\_\_\_ ●○○○○  
Cosmology \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Culture *TV* ●●●○○  
Enigmas \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Investigation \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Law \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Linguistics \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Medicine \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Occult \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Science \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○

## Advantages

### Spheres

Correspondence \_\_\_\_\_ ●●●○○ Life \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○ Prime \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Entropy \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○ Mind \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○ Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
Forces \_\_\_\_\_ ●●○○○ Matter \_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○ Time \_\_\_\_\_ ●●○○○

### Other Traits

\_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
\_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
\_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
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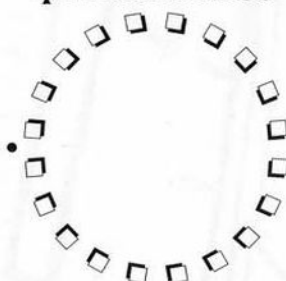
### Arete

● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

### Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○  
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

### Quintessence



### Paradox

### Health

Bruised -0 ☐  
Hurt -1 ☐  
Injured -1 ☐  
Wounded -2 ☐  
Mauled -2 ☐  
Crippled -5 ☐  
Incapacitated ☐

### Backgrounds

Arcane \_\_\_\_\_ ●○○○○  
Avatar \_\_\_\_\_ ●○○○○  
Mentor \_\_\_\_\_ ●●●○○  
Talisman \_\_\_\_\_ ●●○○○  
\_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○  
\_\_\_\_\_ ○○○○○

### Experience

### Study Points

# The Musician

*Some people do art for immortality. You have to give that up if you're going to work in high-tech media. Everything is written on the wind.*

— Stewart Brand

**Quote:** Whaddya mean, I don't make real music? I'm a one-man band. Through digital keyboards and interfaces, I can make music — anything I can imagine. Through that music, I can change the world. Life was meant to have a soundtrack. If you just listen, you can control what happens in the big picture.

**Prelude:** You were a struggling musician spending your spare time with an Amiga in the basement. Experimenting with MIDI interface, you went really crazy. Such odd things happened when you screwed around with your gear! You chalked them up to late nights and too little food.

One night, you jammed with this really intense guy who played like Beethoven on Ecstasy. You never saw him again, but he calls you on the BBS every now and then. He patched you into another BBS and introduced you to his friends — his very odd friends. Like you, these guys knew the power of using ivories instead of qwertys. Their ideas of power, however, were a little different...

There's a name for your type of music. Magick.

**Concept:** You're an artist using pure digitized sound to shape reality at your command. While you prefer to work alone, you maintain contact with other artist friends to trade techniques. Sometimes you even collaborate. Unlike some of your buddies on the Net, you like to go club-hopping and even play the occasional gig.

**Roleplaying Tips:** Learn a lot about both MIDI and music and drop phrases from both worlds. Talk over everybody's head about this stuff — you don't care whether they understand or not. Violently object when people insult your music.

**Magick:** You channel your art through musical instruments rather than a keyboard. Most of your effects shift the Forces around you in fairly straightforward fashion, and you use them to create personal special effects — electrical discharges, light-and-sound wave alterations, that sort of thing. Your understanding of Correspondence is sketchy at best. You can get away with some pretty spectacular stunts in clubs, but without your rig you're in trouble.

**Equipment:** Commodore Amiga, Yamaha DX-7 keyboards, drum machine, MIDI guitar, sampling machine, recording deck, tapes of old movies (to sample quotes from).





# VIRTUAL DEPTS

MAGE: The Ascension™



Name:  
Player:  
Chronicle:

Essence: Pattern  
Nature: Visionary  
Demeanor: Rebel

Concept: Musician  
Mentor:  
Cabal:

## Attributes

### Physical

Strength ●○○○○  
Dexterity ●●●○○  
Stamina ●●○○○

### Social

Charisma ●●●○○  
Manipulation Dynamic Performer ●●●○○  
Appearance ●●●○○

### Mental

Perception ●●○○○  
Intelligence ●●●○○  
Wits ●●○○○

## Abilities

### Talents

Alertness ●●●○○  
Athletics ○○○○○  
Awareness ●●○○○  
Brawl ●●○○○  
Dodge ○○○○○  
Expression ●●●○○  
Intuition ○○○○○  
Intimidation ○○○○○  
Streetwise ●●●○○  
Subterfuge ○○○○○

### Skills

Drive ●○○○○  
Etiquette ○○○○○  
Firearms ○○○○○  
Leadership ●●○○○  
Meditation ○○○○○  
Melee ○○○○○  
Research ○○○○○  
Stealth ○○○○○  
Survival ○○○○○  
Technology Musical Equip. ●●●○○

### Knowledges

Computer ●●●○○  
Cosmology ○○○○○  
Culture Music ●●●○○  
Enigmas ○○○○○  
Investigation ○○○○○  
Law ○○○○○  
Linguistics ○○○○○  
Medicine ○○○○○  
Occult ○○○○○  
Science ●●○○○

## Advantages

### Spheres

Correspondence ●○○○○  
Entropy ○○○○○  
Forces ●●●○○

Life ○○○○○  
Mind ○○○○○  
Matter ○○○○○

Prime ●●○○○  
Spirit ○○○○○  
Time ○○○○○

### Other Traits

○○○○○  
○○○○○  
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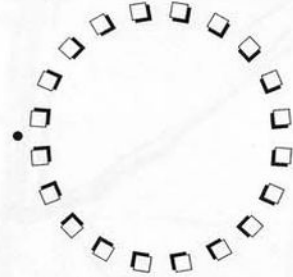
### Arete

● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

### Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

### Quintessence



### Paradox

### Health

Bruised -0 ☐  
Hurt -1 ☐  
Injured -1 ☐  
Wounded -2 ☐  
Mauled -2 ☐  
Crippled -5 ☐  
Incapacitated ☐

### Experience

### Study Points

### Backgrounds

Allies ●●●○○  
Avatar ●●●○○  
Influence ●○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○

# Revisionist Writer

*Little man with a big eraser, changing history*

*Procedures that he's programmed to, in all he*

*Hears and sees*

— Megadeth, "Hook in Mouth"

**Quote:** I've got the real power, man. Whatever I write, the people will believe. What the people believe becomes reality. I'm an old pro at this — I used to do it for the government all the time. Can you recall the past? The present? The future? I can control what you remember. I'm the one who writes it all down. I am the Kitty Kelley of the Traditions.

**Prelude:** You were just another government zombie leading a totally pointless life. People derided you for being a civil servant. "You don't need brains to work for the government." Yeah, right. You had an uncanny knack for shaping opinions, though. People took what you wrote pretty seriously. Too seriously. One day, the Men in Black paid you a call.

Your Awakening was pretty traumatic. The idea of deliberately molding another's thoughts went against your grain. The Bureau of Internal Security didn't agree. Your Avatar didn't, either. You still battle the bitch on occasion, now that you know what she is. You have the upper hand, for now.

When the Reality Hackers busted you free from the Bureau, you threw in with the Adepts. They, in turn, taught you how to harness your talents for the greater good. And for occasional revenge...

**Concept:** You were a bureaucrat. Now you're an artist. You play with the written word and the ever changing flow of history past, present and future. Your Avatar can be domineering, and you have frequent conflicts with her. She tempts you with the power you both wield over other people's thoughts and memories. Sometimes you still give in to her.

**Roleplaying Tips:** You've done your time in the bureaucratic slave pits — no one is going to tell you what to do again! Your clothes, hair and vocabulary are calculatedly outrageous. Flamboyantly defy the mouse you once were. Your Avatar has a Technocratic bent and struggles to control you, but your Virtual Adept buddies have taught you the value of free will.

**Magick:** Your command of Mind and Correspondence allows you to alter memories or emotions. By focusing your magick through writing, you can use a variety of coincidental effects. Your targets may believe that the power of your prose has led them to new conclusions. You need not be present to change another's mind — you can shift your senses and power anywhere hard copy of your writing exists.

**Equipment:** Portable word-processor with micro-printer, flashy clothes, white-out, pad and pencil.





# VIRTUAL DEPTS

MAGE: The Ascension™



Name:  
Player:  
Chronicle:

Essence: Pattern  
Nature: Deviant  
Demeanor: Rebel

Concept: Revisionist Writer  
Mentor:  
Cabal:

## Attributes

### Physical

Strength ●●○○○  
Dexterity ●●○○○  
Stamina ●●○○○

### Social

Charisma ●●○○○  
Manipulation ●●○○○  
Appearance ●●○○○

### Mental

Perception ●●○○○  
Intelligence ●●○○○  
Wits *Perceptive* ●●○○○

## Abilities

### Talents

Alertness ●○○○○  
Athletics ●○○○○  
Awareness ●○○○○  
Brawl ○○○○○  
Dodge ○○○○○  
Expression ●●○○○  
Intuition ●●○○○  
Intimidation ○○○○○  
Streetwise ○○○○○  
Subterfuge ●●○○○

### Skills

Drive ●○○○○  
Etiquette ○○○○○  
Firearms ●●○○○  
Leadership ●●○○○  
Meditation ●●○○○  
Melee ○○○○○  
Research ●●○○○  
Stealth ○○○○○  
Survival ○○○○○  
Technology ○○○○○

### Knowledges

Computer ●●○○○  
Cosmology ○○○○○  
Culture ●●○○○  
Enigmas ○○○○○  
Investigation ●●○○○  
Law ●○○○○  
Linguistics ○○○○○  
Medicine ○○○○○  
Occult ○○○○○  
Science ○○○○○

## Advantages

### Spheres

Correspondence ●●○○○  
Entropy ○○○○○  
Forces ○○○○○

Life ○○○○○  
Mind ●●○○○  
Matter ○○○○○

Prime ●●○○○  
Spirit ○○○○○  
Time ○○○○○

### Other Traits

○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○

### Arete

● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

### Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

### Quintessence



### Paradox

### Health

Bruised -0 ☐  
Hurt -1 ☐  
Injured -1 ☐  
Wounded -2 ☐  
Mauled -2 ☐  
Crippled -5 ☐  
Incapacitated ☐

### Backgrounds

Avatar ●●○○○  
Influence ●●○○○  
Library ●●○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○

### Experience

### Study Points

# The Cyberpunk

so that kid from the bad home  
came over to my house again  
decapitated all my dolls  
and if you bore me  
you lose your soul to me  
— Belly, "Gepetto"

**Quote:** Billy Idol can hump a passing planetoid. He's just a wanna-be. So are you. You suck! You should be glad I'm even letting you this close to me. Information wants to be free, and you and everyone else on this pitiful orb are gonna have to deal with the fact that information is pissed about being caged up so damn long.

**Prelude:** It all started when you were online to that CIA computer. Someone broke into chat mode and you freaked. You cut the power, you yanked the phone cord outta the wall. When you looked back at the screen, they were still there, typing glib little messages. "Join us," they said. With little smiley faces at the end, like this :).

You hooked up with your high-tech street gang and found more fun than you'd ever had. Night raids into IBM's dumpsters for spare computer parts, and into AT&T's dumpsters for passwords and calling card numbers. On-line adventures beyond your wildest dreams. Then they decided to show you the real power, the ultimate hack — hacking the universe. You learned that you can say anything you wanted, because you have the absolute right and the power to.

**Concept:** You were a nasty little smart mouthed brat. Now you're a nasty little foul-mouthed brat. You know a lot — you're very elite. You've had your run in with the cops and the Men in Black. Nothing scares you now. Well, nothing except for Demonseed Elite.

**Roleplaying Tips:** You're smart, a lot smarter than your companions. Remind them all of this constantly. Go on about your right to free speech a lot. If somebody tells you a secret, tell everyone else you can immediately. There's no use in delaying the inevitable.

**Magick:** Subtle? Screw subtle! Your magick is flashy and vulgar, just like you. You know a little about a lot, but not enough about any one thing, so you depend more on your own

abilities than on your magick. One of these days, you'll learn the secrets of power. Then you'll kick ass!

**Equipment:** Portable computer, acoustic coupler, Marshmallow HEX, text philes, black leather jacket and Jolt Cola.





Name:  
Player:  
Chronicle:

Essence:  
Nature: Bravo  
Demeanor: Avant-garde

Concept: Cyberpunk  
Mentor:  
Cabal:

## Attributes

### Physical

Strength ●●●●○  
Dexterity Quick Reflexes ●●●●○  
Stamina ●●●●○

### Social

Charisma ●○○○○  
Manipulation Scary ●●●●○  
Appearance ●○○○○

### Mental

Perception ●●●●○  
Intelligence ●●●●○  
Wits ●●○○○

## Abilities

### Talents

Alertness ●●○○○  
Athletics ●○○○○  
Awareness ○○○○○  
Brawl ●●●○○  
Dodge ●●●○○  
Expression ○○○○○  
Intuition ○○○○○  
Intimidation ●●●○○  
Streetwise ●●●○○  
Subterfuge ○○○○○

### Skills

Drive ○○○○○  
Etiquette ○○○○○  
Firearms ●●○○○  
Leadership ○○○○○  
Meditation ○○○○○  
Melee ●○○○○  
Research ○○○○○  
Stealth ○○○○○  
Survival ○○○○○  
Technology ●●○○○

### Knowledges

Computer Hacking ●●●●○  
Cosmology ○○○○○  
Culture ○○○○○  
Enigmas ●●●○○  
Investigation ●●●○○  
Law ●○○○○  
Linguistics ○○○○○  
Medicine ○○○○○  
Occult ○○○○○  
Science ○○○○○

## Advantages

### Spheres

Correspondence ●○○○○	Life ○○○○○	Prime ●○○○○
Entropy ○○○○○	Mind ○○○○○	Spirit ○○○○○
Forces ●●○○○	Matter ●●○○○	Time ○○○○○

### Other Traits

○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○

### Arete

● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

### Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○  
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

### Quintessence



### Paradox

### Health

Bruised	-0	□
Hurt	-1	□
Injured	-1	□
Wounded	-2	□
Mauled	-2	□
Crippled	-5	□
Incapacitated		□

### Experience

### Study Points

### Backgrounds

Allies ●●●○○  
Avatar ●●○○○  
Dream ●●○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○

# Chaotician

*There are those who think that  
Life is nothing left to chance  
A host of holy horrors  
To direct our aimless dance  
— Rush, "Freewill"*

**Quote:** *Everything affects everything else. Be sensitive to initial conditions. Read the patterns in seeming randomness. Then tamper with the system.*

**Prelude:** No one ever understood you. As you grew up, everyone was afraid of you, intimidated by your intelligence. You wanted freedom from your caged life at home, so you skipped grades and were accepted into college before you had a driver's license.

At the university, you had the resources to search for the Big Concept, the one that would let you understand everything. However, as you studied, you found more questions than answers. Existence seemed unsolvable, and therefore uncontrollable.

You didn't want to accept that some things were beyond you. Your intellectual quest couldn't end in failure — it was all you had. During a tear-filled night in an empty parking lot, you wrestled with your inner self. Finally, at dawn, you came to a conclusion. You decided to accept the fact that there were variables in the universal equation. But you could account for the x-factors.

You envisioned patterns in everything. You punched random numbers into your laptop and recognized systems. As a game at first, you charted your peers' behaviors on your laptop. After a few simple experiments, you could predict many of their actions and reactions. There were answers within certain parameters. Finally you decided to leave the university. You had a concept; now you had to affect the system.

As you used the school's online account to e-mail good-byes to fellow scholars, you got a flashing transmission with the message, "Welcome to the club" from Adept I. You learned about magick, the Virtual Adepts and the Ascension War. You traded in your old laptop for a trinary deck and never looked back.

**Concept:** You are an extraordinary physicist and mathematician, with an intuitive grasp of the sciences rather than straight book understanding. You manipulate systems from a distance instead of engaging your enemies directly. Your computer contains systems for everything you need.

**Roleplaying Tips:** You want others to understand reality's systems, so that they can shape their own paths. You believe Ascension is possible, and every action could potentially cause it. This knowledge drives you with an intensity that impresses your fellow mages. You enjoy the intellectual challenge of fighting the Technocracy, and you try to convert Greyfaces, realizing how close you once were to their thinking. You find a special satisfaction in foiling the Technocracy by manipulating the flaws in their paradigm of reality. You carry a gun, because it's an effective way to stimulate almost anything.

**Magick:** Your Correspondence understanding is rudimentary, but your knowledge of Matter and Entropy makes up for it. Use your grasp of patterns to change them or break them down.

**Equipment:** Laptop computer, pistol, leather jacket, hand-held radio scanner.





# MAGE: The Ascension™

Name:  
Player:  
Chronicle:

Essence: Dynamic  
Nature: Architect  
Demeanor: Fanatic

Concept: Chaotician  
Mentor:  
Cabal:

## Attributes

### Physical

### Social

### Mental

Strength ●○○○○  
Dexterity ●●○○○  
Stamina ●●○○○

Charisma ●●○○○  
Manipulation ●●○○○  
Appearance *Impressive* ●●●○○

Perception ●●●○○  
Intelligence *Patterns* ●●●○○  
Wits ●●○○○

## Abilities

### Talents

### Skills

### Knowledges

Alertness ●○○○○  
Athletics ○○○○○  
Awareness ○○○○○  
Brawl ○○○○○  
Dodge ●●○○○  
Expression ○○○○○  
Intuition ●●○○○  
Intimidation ○○○○○  
Streetwise ○○○○○  
Subterfuge ○○○○○

Drive ○○○○○  
Etiquette ○○○○○  
Firearms ○○○○○  
Leadership ○○○○○  
Meditation ●●○○○  
Melee ○○○○○  
Research ●●○○○  
Stealth ●●○○○  
Survival ○○○○○  
Technology ●○○○○

Computer ●●●○○  
Cosmology ○○○○○  
Culture ○○○○○  
Enigmas ●●●○○  
Investigation ●●○○○  
Law ○○○○○  
Linguistics ○○○○○  
Medicine ○○○○○  
Occult ○○○○○  
Science *Intuitive Mathematics* ●●●○○

## Advantages

### Spheres

Correspondence ●○○○○  
Entropy ●●●○○  
Forces ○○○○○

Life ○○○○○  
Mind ○○○○○  
Matter ●●○○○

Prime ●○○○○  
Spirit ○○○○○  
Time ○○○○○

### Other Traits

○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○

### Arete

● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

### Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○  
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

### Quintessence



### Paradox

### Health

Bruised -0 ☐  
Hurt -1 ☐  
Injured -1 ☐  
Wounded -2 ☐  
Mauled -2 ☐  
Crippled -5 ☐  
Incapacitated ☐

### Backgrounds

Avatar ●●●○○  
Dream ●●○○○  
Mentor ●●○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○

### Experience

### Study Points

# The Mad Simulator

... the Digital Revolution is whipping through our lives like a Bengali typhoon — while the mainstream media is still groping for the snooze button.

— Wired Magazine

**Quote:** It takes Nature thousands of years to improve reality. I can duplicate reality, and make it better in seconds. Show me a God who has that kind of power.

**Prelude:** When you were young, you dreamed about being a filmmaker. You wanted to make a movie with a positive utopian vision, and you started designing computer graphics in your late teens. Virtual reality replaced your dreams of film. Instead of showing the world utopia, you would give it to them. You wanted to take the real world with you on your odyssey.

A pioneering VR company hired you. The job paid well, and replicating the world became your life. For entertainment, you explored a dozen electronic services, and soon piled up e-mail messages, asking sinister questions about things you didn't recall mentioning online.

When the software was ready, you demonstrated the VR suit and environment. The president of the company attended, and all eyes fixed on you. Then the unexpected happened, something that you hadn't programmed. A glowing electronic portal shimmered in front of your eyes. You moved toward it and left your body,

shifting into the Digital Web. An explosion of pain and wonder enveloped you. There was another world out there!

In realspace, your body crumpled. You saw a silicon woman standing over you like an angel before they ripped away the goggles and took you back. You spent the morning in an emergency room, and the afternoon cleaning out your desk. They said the experiment was a failure. You knew better.

Spending your life savings, you built a simulator in your apartment. You found another portal, a conduit, and the silicon woman. After she told you about the Digital Web and sold you on the Virtual Adepts, she disappeared.

Wandering the electronic landscape of the Net, you discovered that many of your online friends were Adepts, and they welcomed you into their community. Now, you intend to bring Ascension by taking everything, copying it, and making it better.

**Concept:** The private sector considers you a failure pioneer. If only they knew. You want to duplicate everything online: buildings, landscapes, even people. You want everyone to participate in your vision of Ascension.

**Roleplaying Tips:** Everything relates back to constructing a new world. You fight the Technocracy and collect Tass for your future virtual realm. Since your firing, you have no respect for corporations. You feel uncomfortable with sexual relations in realspace, but are uninhibited online. Most of your down-time is spent scouring the Net for virgin territory or questing for the mysterious silicon lady.

**Magick:** Through Mind and Correspondence, you probe and explore rather than alter or destroy. Your magick is strong in the Net, but weak in realspace. Use your powers indirectly, with as little violence as possible.

**Equipment:** Camera, computer, virtual reality suit, a massive software collection, a dozen passwords to online services.





## MAGE: The Ascension™

Name:  
Player:  
Chronicle:

Essence: Dynamic  
Nature: Visionary  
Demeanor: Loner

Concept: Mad Simulator  
Mentor:  
Cabal:

### Attributes

#### Physical

Strength ●●○○○  
Dexterity ●●○○○  
Stamina ●●○○○

#### Social

Charisma ●●○○○  
Manipulation ●●○○○  
Appearance ●●○○○

#### Mental

Perception Patterns ●●●○○  
Intelligence ●●●○○  
Wits ●●●○○

### Abilities

#### Talents

Alertness ●○○○○  
Athletics ○○○○○  
Awareness ●●○○○  
Brawl ○○○○○  
Dodge ○○○○○  
Expression ●○○○○  
Intuition ○○○○○  
Intimidation ○○○○○  
Streetwise ○○○○○  
Subterfuge ●○○○○

#### Skills

Drive ●○○○○  
Etiquette ○○○○○  
Firearms ●●●○○  
Leadership ○○○○○  
Meditation ●●○○○  
Melee ○○○○○  
Research ●●○○○  
Stealth ○○○○○  
Survival ○○○○○  
Technology V.R. ●●●○○

#### Knowledges

Computer ●●●○○  
Cosmology ●●○○○  
Culture ○○○○○  
Enigmas ●●○○○  
Investigation ●●●○○  
Law ○○○○○  
Linguistics ○○○○○  
Medicine ○○○○○  
Occult ○○○○○  
Science ●●●○○

### Advantages

#### Spheres

Correspondence ●●○○○  
Entropy ○○○○○  
Forces ○○○○○

Life ○○○○○  
Mind ●●○○○  
Matter ○○○○○

Prime ●●○○○  
Spirit ○○○○○  
Time ○○○○○

#### Other Traits

○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○

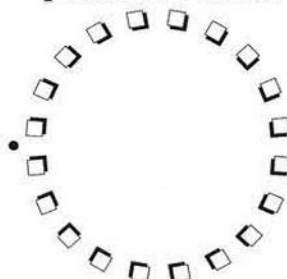
#### Arete

● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

#### Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○  
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

#### Quintessence



#### Paradox

#### Health

Bruised -0 ☐  
Hurt -1 ☐  
Injured -1 ☐  
Wounded -2 ☐  
Mauled -2 ☐  
Crippled -5 ☐  
Incapacitated ☐

#### Backgrounds

Avatar ●○○○○  
Destiny ●●●○○  
Library ●●●○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○  
○○○○○

#### Experience

#### Study Points



# Appendix I.O: Neat Stuff

*The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government.*

—Thomas Jefferson

## Magick



This section contains some hard and software for Virtual Adepts. More information, rites, Talismans and samples of Adept slang can be found in the virtual reality sourcebook, Digital Web.

### Rites

**Encrypt Thoughts (1 Mind, 1 Life, 2 Prime)**

This rote was created by the Cypherpunks to protect their brains from prying mages. Cypherpunks value the sanctity of their information above all else, and take great pains to ensure that they are not being spied upon. The mage prepares the program and sets a public “key” for the encryption he is placing on his thoughts. From that point

on, no person may read his mind without thinking of the “key” or password the mage has set. In this way, the mage may allow friends to read his thoughts, but not enemies. The Cypherpunks will not usually give out their “keys” to people who are not using this rote already.

[Each success subtracts two successes from any outside party's attempts to read the Adept's mind, above and beyond countermagick. The Prime magick disrupts mind-reading attempts.]

**Degrade Order (2 Entropy, 2 Correspondence, 3 Time)**

This rote was developed by the Chaoticians to research the effects of Chaos on complex systems, such as the human body. It works by applying pressure from two directions—adding more Entropy into the system to be degraded,

and accelerating Time to watch the effects. For example, if this rote were used on a flower, it would appear to wither and die in about thirty seconds. This compresses a relative life span of a system into about thirty seconds to a minute.

[Correspondence is used in this rote to keep the field effect away from the mage. Difficulty modifiers are based upon the size, complexity and distance to the target. A flower would be difficulty 5, while a person would have a 9 or 10 difficulty.]

#### **Information Glut (Correspondence 2, Mind 3, Time 2)**

This rote allows a Virtual Adept to enhance any one sense of his body. This lets him “turn up the volume” and hear things he normally couldn’t hear, or increase his ability to comprehend sensory input he receives. While the Virtual Adepts use the rote to accelerate their computer comprehension, the Technocracy uses it as a highly specialized instrument of torture, as it affects the mind rather than the body. There are many other uses for this rote, from night vision to tracking people by scent.

[Each success gives the subject a temporary + 1 to his Perception Ability for a scene. “Hardwiring” with Life 4 can make the effect permanent (see Prelude).]

#### **Holographic Projector (Correspondence 2, Forces 3, Mind 3, Prime 2)**

Through this rote, the Adept can project a hologram (or icon) of herself wherever she desires. Since holograms are nothing but patterns of light, the persons perceiving this hologram must be fooled into thinking there is actually a person there. Through use of the Mind discipline, the Adept also projects smell and sensory data to the hologram’s “audience.” This rote rarely fools mages, supernatural beings or detection devices, but four or more successes might con them for a turn or two.

[The Prime in this rote fuels the created Forces which form the hologram. The hologram is an illusion, and cannot affect or touch other parties in any way, but cannot be harmed, either. A variant on this rote, using Correspondence 3 and Forces 2, allows the mage to project an icon using her Avatar and ambient Force energies (Forces 3 and Prime 2 are still needed to create these energies from nothing). This icon appears in any roughly human-sized shape the Adept desires, but the mage, tied as she is to the icon, will take any damage the icon sustains. This icon may affect reality, but the mage’s real body remains helpless at her keyboard.]

## **Computers**

*I enjoy working with human beings and have a stimulating relationship with them.*

— Hal, Arthur C. Clarke, 2010: Odyssey 2

Computers are more than just foci or Talismans for Virtual Adepts — many become Familiars in the most literal sense (see **Book of Shadows: The Mage Players Guide** for the new Familiar Background). Even “regular”

## **Icons**

Icon creation requires a roll of Intelligence + Computer, difficulty of 8, with four or more successes required, often performed as an extended action. In the Net, icon creation is a coincidental effect once the mage’s consciousness is inside; the **Holographic Projector** rote is necessary to produce an icon in realspace. A mage can change his icon’s appearance by rolling Manipulation + Computer, difficulty 6. Assumed shapes do not change traits, although Appearance and Intimidation may be raised by a number of dots equal to the number of successes on the Manipulation + Computer (maximum of 5 in either one).

Within the Digital Web, an icon can be identified by a pattern code somewhere on its person. Realspace icons have no such codes, but may be detected as fakes with a roll of Perception + either Awareness, Alertness or Subterfuge, depending on the circumstances. Masquerading as someone else requires periodic rolls of Manipulation + Subterfuge, with difficulties likewise depending upon the circumstances.

computers are prized by Adepts. Being Technomancers, the Virtual Adepts require some kind of technological focus for their magicks, even into the higher levels of Arete (5 or even more). The **Mage** book **Digital Web** contains more details on mundane and magical computers.

## **The Systems**

Standard computer equipment is often inadequate for magick. Such devices are too limited to process magickal effects and too fragile to withstand the strain of reality-warping. These limitations add to the time necessary to work magick, restrict the Spheres used to the first and second ratings only (the chips cannot comprehend the logistics of high-level magicks) and shorten the life of the computer itself. Fortunately, the Adepts take care of their own. Mentors often help their protégés “upgrade” their systems.

There are usually several things a Virtual Adept will do to upgrade a computer before he uses it. The computer usually undergoes a rigorous testing (called burn-in), attuning it to the specific Adept using it. The computer is then magickally enhanced, turning it into a Trinary computer, a unique focus (**Mage**, pg. 178-179). Computers storing Quintessence and capable of their own independent magickal effects are considered Talismans.

## Gadgets

When many people think of foci for a Virtual Adept, they think of a standard laptop computer or a keyboard/CPU/CRT arrangement. This couldn't be further from the truth. While the center of this arrangement is usually going to be some kind of computer module, there will always be a number of alternative input and output devices for Virtual Adepts to utilize. The following options are much more portable than the traditional keyboard rig.

### PowerGlove:

One of the most obvious replacements for the traditional keyboard is a PowerGlove, a special glove fitted with sensors that relay the motion of a hand back to the computer. Mages using Correspondence 2 can work their computers from a distance with these devices.

### Heads-Up Display:

This display consists of a video monitor built into the side of a pair of mirrorshade glasses. This allows the mage to watch video output in addition to whatever is in front of her; she doesn't have to take her eyes off the enemy to see if her rote is running on the computer. This, combined with a PowerGlove, is the choice of many combat mages today.

### Musical Instruments:

Musical instruments are also alternative forms of input for the Virtual Adept (though many Adepts are notoriously tone deaf). Musical instruments that patch into computers through MIDI ports are pretty expensive but mages rarely worry about funds. Through the musical instrument, the character can "intone" rotes that have magickal properties and might even form some kind of song...

### Voice Recognition and Output:

The field of voice recognition has come a long way, even if it hasn't progressed to the level depicted in *2001: A Space Odyssey*. A portable computer with a voice recogni-

## Trinary Computers

Most computers count using a binary system; that is to say, they use ones and zeros to represent information. A trinary computer uses three states (on, off and negative on) to represent information. In this way, Virtual Adepts get considerably more processing power and have machines that are very nearly intelligent. While most computers are able to handle only "yes" or "no" as concepts, the computers of the Virtual Adepts can also accept "maybe" due to their trinary nature. This allows the computer to use "fuzzy logic" as a problem solving tool. Fuzzy logic is what human beings use when they think about concepts like "warm," "cool," "damp" or "smelly." These concepts aren't tough to a human being, but they pose problems for a computer. Fuzzy logic allows a computer to grasp these concepts.

tion circuit and voice output makes a powerful weapon. These devices leave a mage's hands free and can be set to recognize only the owner's voice. The drawbacks of such a system include confusion of signals (from other sounds, or a mimicking mage) and distortion (which could have deadly results).

### Message Pads:

There are "personal digital assistants" out today that can recognize handwriting and be used to store commands. This sort of thing would be perfect for a Virtual Adept. With a built-in fax or a modem, it would even allow limited access to the Net.

# Appendix 2.0: The Elite



## Dante

*The loss of liberty to a generous mind is worse than death.*

— Andrew Hamilton

*I wish I had a dime for every time I hear "virtual reality" nowadays. I remember when VR wasn't on the lips of every nitwit with a PC. In the age of "interactivity," Sleepers seem to want to control their entertainment, but instead of using technology to enlighten the world, most of them think of new ways to destroy one another. Mortal Kombat isn't reprehensible, it's typical.*

*The realization that one needn't be subject to someone else's desires is hitting the mainstream. As soon as Sleepers realize that life is just one huge program and that they can change it, all hell's gonna break loose.*

*Living with the idea that you can destroy a city block with a thought isn't easy. Humanity isn't ready for this type of power. So we've got to fight the Mirrorshades. I'll be damned if I live in Hell V3.0.*

Cabrini Green, Chicago. Most people who live here end up trapped between welfare shackles and a neighborhood that marines couldn't survive. Most mothers would sooner abort a child than have one, but Andrea Collingsworth had higher aspirations. She prayed to God that He would watch over her child. Someone was listening, but he wasn't God.

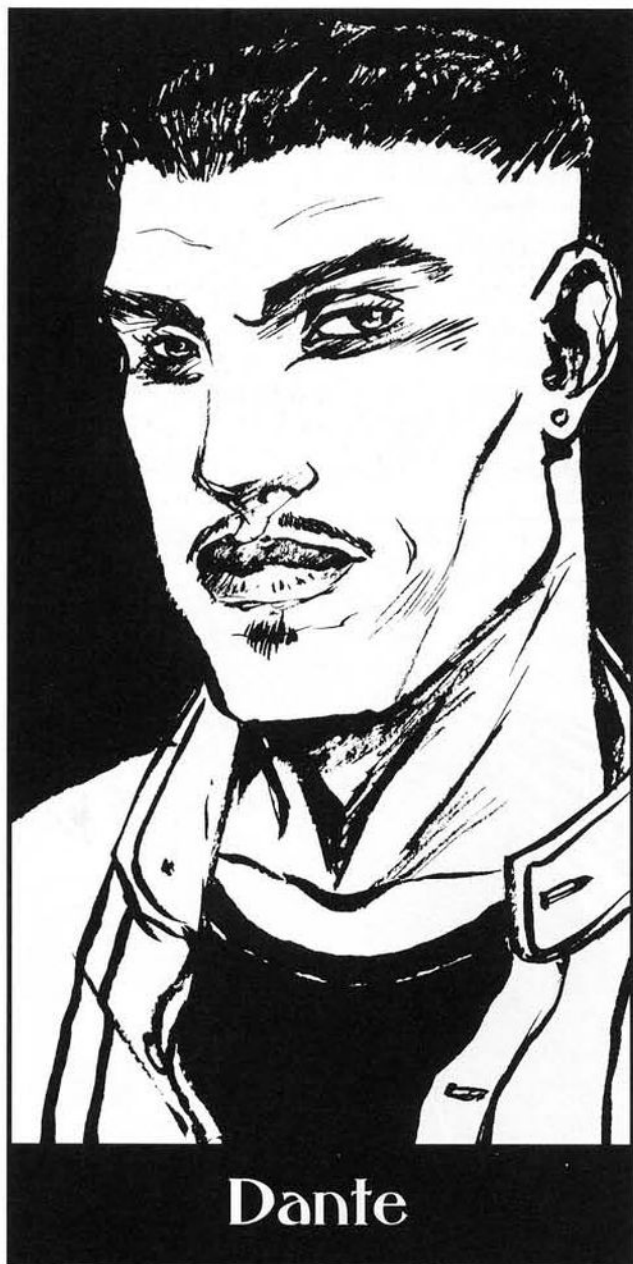
Dr. Bens told Andrea that her child was in danger, that he would be born mentally deficient and could never live a normal life. She could, however, help other mothers by participating in a secret experiment to treat such disabilities. Andrea was paid fifty thousand dollars to participate. She didn't argue.

Dr. Bens had never seen an unborn child whose Avatar had already Awakened. The Progenitor planned to discover how such a miracle was possible. For eight months, Andrea underwent a battery of tests. She didn't survive the birth of Desmond Collingsworth. Dead mothers tell no tales.

Dante grew up in a middle-class family he thought was his own, under constant surveillance by the Progenitors. It was no surprise that he finished high school at the age of eight, or that he graduated at the top of his class at Harvard, or that he completed medical school in five years. It was a surprise when the Virtual Adepts ran off with him.

They called themselves the Lab Rats — each one Progenitor born and bred. The Lab Rats taught Dante the ways of magick and the truth behind his birth. He left the group soon afterward; simple revenge wasn't his style. Now he strikes at the Technocracy on a deeper level, stealing their ammunition — children. Rescuing those earmarked for the Technocracy has become Dante's calling. Most he gives over into the care of Tradition allies. Some few he teaches himself.

Perhaps the most well-known Tradition Master, Dante always has at least two students. Studying under Dante is considered extremely elite.



**Dante**

## Demonseed Elite

*You plant a Demon Seed  
You reach a Flower of Fire,  
See those burning crosses,  
See the flames, higher and higher...*  
— U2, "Bullet the Blue Sky"

So here I am... 3 am, kitchen. Sitting at counter, pouring some cereal, making a mess with the milk. Never let it be said that I skimp on nutrition, including the full day's supply of Vitamin K I get with my Alpha Bits. Just ask any other elite types and they'll tell you too... Vitamin K is the way to start out a totally elite day.

I've gotta keep my k-ness up 'cause I don't want any shit coming down on me from DemonSeed Elite. If you still don't

know the deal with DemonSeed Elite, then listen up. People don't like to talk about him/it much, 'cause it's such a heavy subject... like a giant cow hanging over your head, ready to drop at any slip up you make. Or in this case, a monster truck.

Rumor is, back in the late 1970s-early '80s, DSE was a user who achieved Maximum K-rad Eliteness, at which point his soul merged with the global telecom network. DemonSeed Elite was no longer just a person, but an entity residing in the cables and satellite links of the network. He is AT&T, he is Internet, he is SouthWestern Bell, your phone, the spy satellites which orbit above our heads. He knows when you've been sleeping and he knows when you're awake. And he takes any sign of lameness on his networks as a personal insult. To speak his real name is to die. Lamers and r0dents all face his wrath. No one has seen him dealing out his vengeance, or been alive afterwards to tell about it, but it will come. Believe that.



**Demonseed Elite**

All we can do is make assumptions from the wretched remains. A thirteen-year-old with his intestines ripped out; fiberoptic cables twisted tightly around the pulp of what was once his frontal lobe. The young geek's forehead was branded "k-lame," the words still sizzling in his freshly seared flesh when he was found bleeding to death on the floor of his bedroom. His monitor still glowed with the ominous "CUL8R!" left over from signing off the friend he had been chatting with over the modem. His pal suffered a similar fate.

DemonSeed Elite, in a physical manifestation, is said to prefer travelling in a giant orange monster truck with tires 30 feet high and 30 feet wide. The accuracy of these monster truck descriptions may leave something to be desired since the witnesses were pissing their pants at the time of observance... though the monster truck theory is consistent with some reports of death. On several occasions, groups of r0dents were found squashed flat in the middle of a parking lot or open field. The only clue to the cause of their sudden flatness was giant tread marks all over their bodies. It's as if a large truck fell from the sky and crushed them into a 2-D state, then disappeared!

Now you can believe this, take heed, and watch out for yourself, or not. Hey, it's your life. But as for me, I'm gonna get on with eating my Alpha Bits. I'm no fool. No siree.

## Cathrine Blass/X-Cel

*Is this going to involve raw human ecstasy?*

— Zippy the Pinhead

TO: MISSION TEAM 46701

FROM: AMALGAM PRIME #42

SUBJECT: CATHERINE BLASS, AKA X-CEL

It has come to our attention that the controversial entertainer known as Catherine Blass (see N.W.O. file #46539 M-6) is, in fact, the Virtual Adept terrorist known as X-Cel. Blass (hereafter referred to as "the subject") is to be pursued and detained for interrogation and re-education as soon as possible.

The subject first achieved some fame among counterculture elements of the Masses some five years ago when her performance-art show "Rage on a Meathook" was banned in Washington D.C. for obscenity, sexual solicitation and slander. Operatives observing the show noted the subject's inventive use of technology at that time; in one portion the subject's body was wired for sound, then flogged by an audience volunteer. Another segment had the subject demonstrating a four-octave singing range by shattering glasses on a video monitor. Several spectacular effects (see file noted above for details), attributed at the time as technological gimmicks, are now clearly the work of coincidental magick.

The Adept called X-Cel (name derived from a Mayan moon goddess; see N.W.O. file #45698 A-12) has achieved some notoriety among users of the Net (General file #X1590 /6) for her merciful acts and information-brokering tactics. Void Engineer amalgam #52 reported being rescued by a virii storm by X-Cel, who then healed one Engineer's mental injuries using what was assumed to be Mind/Life treatments. Iteration X Operative #23 reports that X-Cel has compro-

mised his cover on three separate occasions. At neither time did X-Cel demonstrate the hostility or violence associated with the Traditions.

Subject Blass is a European/Hispanic female, 31 years old, 5'6" tall, weighing 134 lbs. See enclosed visuals and file #46539 M-6 for details. Psychological profile indicates aggressive tendencies, sexual deviance and antisocial attitudes. Subject X-Cel appears as a radiant nun in traditional Mexican garb and speaks with a softly accented voice. As the enclosed visuals show, she bears little resemblance to subject Blass.

Blass/X-Cel is to be considered dangerous but useful. Psychological profile indicates either multiple-personality disorder or an unhealthy degree of imagination. Approach with care; Report to Regional Headquarters C when successful.

TOO LATE, CABEZOS DE MIERDA! I'M ALREADY GONE! —  
X-CEL





## MAGE: The Ascension™

Name:  
Player:  
Chronicle:

Essence:  
Nature:  
Demeanor:

Concept:  
Mentor:  
Cabal:

### Attributes

#### Physical

Strength ☐ 00000  
Dexterity ☐ 00000  
Stamina ☐ 00000

#### Social

Charisma ☐ 00000  
Manipulation ☐ 00000  
Appearance ☐ 00000

#### Mental

Perception ☐ 00000  
Intelligence ☐ 00000  
Wits ☐ 00000

### Abilities

#### Talents

Alertness ☐ 00000  
Athletics ☐ 00000  
Awareness ☐ 00000  
Brawl ☐ 00000  
Dodge ☐ 00000  
Expression ☐ 00000  
Intuition ☐ 00000  
Intimidation ☐ 00000  
Streetwise ☐ 00000  
Subterfuge ☐ 00000

#### Skills

Drive ☐ 00000  
Etiquette ☐ 00000  
Firearms ☐ 00000  
Leadership ☐ 00000  
Meditation ☐ 00000  
Melee ☐ 00000  
Research ☐ 00000  
Stealth ☐ 00000  
Survival ☐ 00000  
Technology ☐ 00000

#### Knowledges

Computer ☐ 00000  
Cosmology ☐ 00000  
Culture ☐ 00000  
Enigmas ☐ 00000  
Investigation ☐ 00000  
Law ☐ 00000  
Linguistics ☐ 00000  
Medicine ☐ 00000  
Occult ☐ 00000  
Science ☐ 00000

### Advantages

#### Spheres

Correspondence <input type="radio"/> 00000	Life <input type="radio"/> 00000	Prime <input type="radio"/> 00000
Entropy <input type="radio"/> 00000	Mind <input type="radio"/> 00000	Spirit <input type="radio"/> 00000
Forces <input type="radio"/> 00000	Matter <input type="radio"/> 00000	Time <input type="radio"/> 00000

#### Other Traits

☐ 00000  
☐ 00000  
☐ 00000  
☐ 00000  
☐ 00000  
☐ 00000

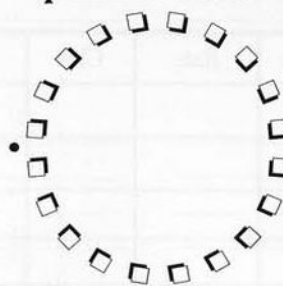
#### Arete

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

#### Willpower

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

#### Quintessence



#### Paradox

#### Health

Bruised	-0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hurt	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wounded	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mauled	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crippled	-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incapacitated		<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Experience

#### Study Points

#### Backgrounds

☐ 00000  
☐ 00000  
☐ 00000  
☐ 00000  
☐ 00000  
☐ 00000



## Merits & Flaws

## Talismans

Name	Level	Arete	Quintessence	Appearance

# Combat

Weapon	Difficulty	Damage	Range	Rate	Clip	Conceal

## Brawling Table

Maneuver	Accuracy	Damage
Punch	6	Strength
Grapple	6	Strength
Kick	7	Strength + 1
Body slam	7	Special; see Options

**Armor:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Expanded Background

Contacts, Sleeper

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Influence, Sleeper

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Resources

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Familiar

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Acolytes

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Contacts, Awakened

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Allies, Awakened

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Mentor

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Chantry

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Node(s)

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## Possessions

Gear (Carried)

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Foci

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Equipment (Owned)

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Computer Gear

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# VIRTUAL DEPTS

MAGE: The Ascension™



## History

Awakening

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## Goals / Destiny

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Seekings

Quiets

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## Description

Age

Apparent Age

Date of Birth

Age of Awakening

Hair

Eyes

Race

Nationality

Height

Weight

Sex

Appearance / Nature of Avatar

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## Visuals

Cabal Chart

Character Sketch



# BLOOD PIT

## Hero of the Pit

Wins: 58  
 Losses: 27  
 Kills: 6  
 Team: Blanco Lobo  
 Height: 4'0"  
 Weight: 159  
 Weapons: two warhammers  
 Preferred Fighting Style: Wall of Steel  
 Most Hated Opponent: Dampier (killed by Gangrene)  
 Fondest Blood Pit Memory: Back-to-back kills of two warriors of the Colonial Marines. Nord lost badly to R. Frost so challenged and killed a teammate of Frost's the next time. Frost then issued a Blood Challenge and Nord responded by killing Frost too.  
 Quote: "Your bones shatter like ice!"



## Nord

Commentary: Though known not to be a very smart warrior, Nord succeeded based on his outstanding physical prowess. Despite the lack of intelligence, Nord is known to have mastered the warhammer. Many feel that Nord retired at the height of his abilities, and he had just achieved the pinnacle of dwarven strength through his arduous training program, but Nord felt it was time for younger warriors to take over the Pit. He had suggested that he might return, but that is doubtful following his traumatic retirement fight against Gangrene of Virulence. It was the first time in Blood Pit history that two retiring warriors faced one another and the fight resulted in the death of Gangrene, the opponent Nord respected most.

Blood Pit is the Play-by-Electronic-Mail game of gladiatorial combat. Each turn you manage five warriors who enter into individual or team fights against the warriors of other managers. You choose strategies for your warriors and direct their training program so they'll get better and avoid permanent injuries.

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# Wraith: The?

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1901

You've been warned

Don't run home to Mama

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WHITE WOLF



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# MAGE



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