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PROGENITOR

BY JOSHUA COLE

A Progenitor is an imponderably alien entity from unformed antiquity. It is a creature that cannot, or perhaps should not, remain in a fully-formed universe. A Progenitor is older than the world, older than the universe - perhaps older than time itself.

The most familiar, yet in some ways the most disturbing, appear to be the template or ideal for an entire order of material life. Others are imponderably alien, the prototypes of failed realities and unrealized sentences.

Regardless of type, a Progenitor is incredibly dangerous. Its powers are both immense and difficult for mundane energies to combat, and its nature and intentions are almost always destructive.

Some scientists theorize that Progenitors' destructive nature stems from a sort of cosmic competition, that the existing reality is the get of a single Progenitor and all others would stop at nothing to annihilate and replace it.

If a given Progenitor were not the only one of its own kind, it might be capable of communication, but the very nature of all other existing life forms is antithetical to it, and it never speaks or expresses itself in any way.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

Within this document, you will find a sample Progenitor - a protean titan from darkest antiquity, at once unimaginably alien and unthinkably human -, the Progenitor template, and tips for using Progenitors in fantasy and modern campaigns.

SAMPLE PROGENITOR

The entity before you resembles a humanoid statue of unknown make, but it is as if some alien mind attempted to fashion the image of a man and failed to understand or reproduce what it experienced. The creature's face is expressionless as a porcelain mask, and its entire form conveys a sense of cosmic wrongness.

This example uses a human as the base creature.

PROGENITOR GIGANT CR28

Progenitor Human

Colossal Outsider (Augmented Humanoid, Progenitor)

Init -1 **Senses** Blindsight 240 ft.; Listen +37, Spot +37

AC 41 (-1 Dex, +20 Natural, +20 Deflection, -8 Size), touch 21, flat-footed 41.

hp 435 (30 HD); **DR** 20/Epic

Immune Death, energy drain, fear, mind-affecting.

Resist Acid, cold, electricity, fire and sonic 30; **SR** 30

Fort +33, **Ref** +18, **Will** +23

Spd 90 ft. (18 squares)

Melee 2 slams +43 (2d8+20/19-20 force)

Space 30 ft; **Reach** 30 ft.

Base Atk +30; **Grp** +66

Atk Options Dire charge, part the veil, primordial energy strike.

Abilities Str 50, Dex 8, Con 30, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 10.

SQ Alien mind, beyond good and evil, primordial energy field, DR 20/Epic, Progenitor traits, regeneration 10/Force, SR 30.

Feats Acrobatic, Cleave, Dire Charge, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Epic Fortitude, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam).

Skills Climb +53, Intimidate +33, Jump +55, Knowledge (arcana) +33, Knowledge (the planes) +33, Listen +37, Spellcraft +33, Spot +37, Swim +53, Tumble +1.

Dire Charge (Ex): If a Gigant Progenitor charges a foe during the first round of combat (or the surprise round, if it is allowed to act in it), the Progenitor can make a full attack against the opponent charged.

Part the Veil (Su): A Progenitor can attack and use spells and abilities freely through its primordial energy field.

Primordial Energy Strike (Su): A Progenitor's attacks deal Force damage.

Alien Mind (Ex): A Progenitor's thought processes are completely imponderable for an ordinary creature. Any attempt to telepathically contact or read the mind of a Progenitor automatically fails, and the telepath must make a Will save (DC 25) or be *confused*, as the spell, for 1 hour. The DC is Charisma-based.

In addition, a Progenitor is treated as being under the effects of a permanent *mind blank* spell.

Beyond Good and Evil (Ex): A Progenitor is of an entirely different order of existence from all other life; whatever morals apply to it or may do so in the future, they are utterly alien to the comprehension of mortal observers. A Progenitor never has an alignment.

Primordial Energy Field (Su): A Progenitor constantly projects a field of force surrounding itself. This field is identical to a *wall of force* spell cast by a 20th level Sorcerer, except that it covers an area equal to the Progenitor's reach and moves with the creature. If the field is destroyed, the Progenitor can reestablish it as a free action on its turn.

If a Progenitor's primordial energy field comes into contact with the area of a *wall of force* or similar effect (including the primordial energy field of another Progenitor), both effects are suppressed until the creature moves out of the area, the other effect ends, or the Progenitor is killed.

COMBAT

A giant Progenitor lurches forward on titanic legs, seemingly ungainly, yet its immense stride allows it to move with unnatural quickness. It attacks all living creatures it encounters. Yet, it is not berserk; if faced with an attacker capable of harming it from outside its range, it will maneuver into a better position and try to ambush its foe.

CREATING A PROGENITOR

"Progenitor" is an inherited template that can be applied to any creature. The Progenitor has the same abilities as the base creature, except as noted here.

Size and Type: If the base creature's size is less than Colossal, it becomes Colossal; adjust its physical ability scores accordingly. Its type changes to Outsider. Recalculate its hit points, saves, attack bonus and skill points accordingly. The base creature loses any existing subtypes, gains the Progenitor subtype, and gains its previous type as an Augmented subtype.

Hit Dice: If the base creature has less than 30 racial hit dice, its hit dice increase to 30. If it has 30 or more racial hit dice, its hit dice are unchanged.

Armor Class: A Progenitor has a +20 natural armor bonus and a +20 deflection bonus.

Attack: A Progenitor gains two slam attacks. It retains the natural weapons of the base creature. If the base creature had no natural weapons, the Progenitor's slams become primary natural attacks.

Damage: A Progenitor's slam attack deals 2d8+Str points of force damage.

Special Attacks: If the base creature possesses any special attacks that deal elemental or energy damage, that damage is converted to force damage. In addition, it gains the following special attacks:

Part the Veil (Su): A Progenitor can attack and use spells and abilities freely through its primordial energy field.

Primordial Energy Strike (Su): A Progenitor's attacks deal Force damage.

Special Qualities: The Progenitor retains all the special qualities of the base creature. In addition, it gains the following special qualities:

Alien Mind (Ex): A Progenitor's thought processes are completely imponderable for an ordinary creature. Any attempt to telepathically contact or read the mind of a Progenitor automatically fails, and the telepath must make a Will save (DC 10 + ½ the Progenitor's hit dice + the Progenitor's Cha modifier) or be *confused*, as the spell, for 1 hour.

In addition, a Progenitor is treated as being under the effects of a permanent *mind blank* spell.

Beyond Good and Evil (Ex): A Progenitor is of an entirely different order of existence from all other life; whatever morals apply to it or may do so in the future, they are utterly alien to the comprehension of mortal observers. A Progenitor never has an alignment.

Blindsight (Ex): A Progenitor has Blindsight out to 240 ft.

Primordial Energy Field (Su): A Progenitor constantly projects a field of force surrounding itself. This field is identical to a *wall of force* spell cast by a 20th level Sorcerer, except that it covers an area equal to the Progenitor's reach and moves with the creature. If the field is destroyed, the Progenitor can reestablish it as a free action on its turn.

If a Progenitor's primordial energy field comes into contact with the area of a *wall of force* or similar

effect (including the primordial energy field of another Progenitor), both effects are suppressed until the creature moves out of the area, the other effect's ends, or the Progenitor is killed.

Damage Reduction 20/Epic (Ex): A Progenitor's body is made of tough, elastic protomatter, granting it DR 20/Epic.

Progenitor Traits (Ex): A Progenitor is immune to death effects, energy damage, energy drain, mind-affecting effects and fear effects.

Regeneration 10/Force (Ex): A Progenitor takes normal damage from force effects.

Spell Resistance (Su): A Progenitor has spell resistance equal to 15 + ½ its Outsider hit dice (generally 30).

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +8, Dex +2, Con +4, Wis +8. These adjustments are in addition to those from any size change.

Feats: The Progenitor generally gains additional feats from its hit dice. It favors the Power Attack tree.

Skills: The Progenitor gains 8 + Int skill points per Outsider hit dice. It generally has the same skills as the base creature, plus Climb, Jump, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (the planes), Listen and Spot.

Organization: Solitary.

Challenge Rating: If the base creature's CR is 13 or less, the Progenitor's CR is 28.

If the base creature's CR 14, the Progenitor's CR is equal to the base creature's +15.

For every 2 CRs of the base creature over 14, the CR increase from the Progenitor template is 1 less, to a minimum of +5 if the base creature's CR is 34 or higher.

Treasure: Standard.

Alignment: The Progenitor has no alignment (see the Beyond Good and Evil special quality, above).

Advancement: 31-90 HD (Colossal).

Level Adjustment: -.

PROGENITORS IN D20 FANTASY

In a fantasy world, Progenitors can represent anything from raw cosmic forces to alien planes of existence encroaching upon the Prime Material to the accursed offspring of the gods.

Because of their immense power, Progenitors are usually only suitable foes for Epic (21st level or higher) adventurers, as reflected by their Challenge Rating. In the context of a truly epic campaign of godly power-plays, infernal plots against the entire material plane, and the machinations cosmic dragons, a Progenitor is one of the few 'monstrous' creatures capable of keeping pace with the PCs. Though not mindless or even unintelligent, the Progenitor is so incomprehensible and unrelenting it may as well be - yet, particularly with a powerful base creature, it remains a threat to powerful characters and their world(s); this makes a Progenitor an ideal 'random encounter' for high-epic characters.

Alternately, the awakening of, or an invasion by, a group of Progenitors could easily become the seed of an entire epic campaign. By using increasingly powerful base creatures, you can scale up Progenitors and make each one a unique encounter.

In the wild and crazy world of fantasy adventuring, Progenitors need not even be the gravest threat - in fact, compared to some of the more bizarre entities facing epic characters, they may actually be comparatively benign. In a cosmic battle between realities, characters with exceptional magical or diplomatic abilities might be able to persuade their reality's Progenitors to rouse themselves and do battle with invaders from another world.

PROGENITORS IN D20 MODERN

Modern d20 characters rarely, if ever, attain the epic power levels of their fantasy counterparts. No matter how skilled or strong, a modern warrior cannot simply smash through a Progenitor's primordial energy field, nor does a modern occultist stand any serious chance of dispelling it for even a few seconds.

Modern characters facing off with Progenitors must likely rely on hardware - on human ingenuity and secrets gleaned from studying the Progenitors themselves - to overcome the seemingly supernatural abilities of these awesome entities.

On the flip side, with the right equipment, even low-level modern PCs can confront a Progenitor.

WEAPONS OF PROGENITOR DESTRUCTION

Even a Progenitor may be at least slowed down by a direct hit from the most powerful weapons of the modern world.

In a Modern campaign, any effect that deals 100 points of damage or more in a single strike will temporarily overload a Progenitor's primordial energy field. The creature suffers any damage in excess of 100 (although its DR 20/Epic still applies against physical damage) and is Stunned for a number of minutes equal to the damage dealt. Thus, a rail gun shell that does 150 points of damage would stun a Progenitor for 30 minutes (150 - 100 points for the primordial energy field and 20 points of damage reduction).

However, unless the defenders of the modern world can deal Force damage, a Progenitor can eventually regenerate everything done to it - even a direct hit from a nuclear weapon only delays its assault.

PROGENITORS AND MECHA

The most likely way for modern characters to deal with a Progenitor is using hitherto unknown superscience - perhaps even derived from studying the Progenitor itself. The iconic example of a weapon built to combat a Progenitor is a mecha suit that equals it in size, strength and seemingly supernatural powers.

In a campaign centered around invading Progenitors, the PCs might begin as rookie mecha pilots - perhaps the first ever - who must master their unfamiliar and sometimes unnerving hardware to prevent the Progenitors from destroying humanity.

Mecha built to fight Progenitors require the ability to deal Force damage and the ability to penetrate a Progenitor's primordial energy field - both abilities possessed by the Progenitors themselves. Thus, such a mecha should probably have at least limited forms of the Primordial Energy Field special quality and the Primordial Energy Strike special attack.

D20 FUTURE

Mecha created using the *d20 Future* rules need special rules and equipment to go toe-to-toe with a Progenitor. The following equipment and weapons address this dire need. Primordial Energy equipment has no listed Progress Level (PL); it transcends human science entirely, and can only be developed by a civilization that has encountered and studied Progenitors or beings of equivalent power.

At the GM's option, societies of Progress Level 9 and above may be able to synthesize Primordial Energy equipment.

PRIMORDIAL ENERGY SYSTEMS

A mecha equipped with these systems draws upon the same inexplicable energies as a Progenitor. Its unarmed melee attacks are treated as doing Force damage; they can harm ethereal and incorporeal creatures and bypass damage reduction and hardness (including mecha armor).

If the mecha has a deflection field, that force field is treated as a Primordial Energy Field for purposes of bypassing the field of a Progenitor.

Equipment Slots: 8 (colossal), 6 (gargantuan) or 4 (huge or smaller).

Activation: None or free action.

Range: Touch.

Target: You.

Duration: Persistent.

Saving Throw: None.

Purchase DC: 35.

Restriction: Military (+3)

PRIMORDIAL ENERGY BEAM

This weapon projects a beam of primordial energy at its target, dealing 8d10 points of Force damage. A Primordial Energy Beam can harm ethereal and incorporeal creatures and bypasses damage reduction and hardness (including mecha armor).

A mecha without Primordial Energy Systems cannot be equipped with a Primordial Energy Beam.

Equipment Slots: 1.

Activation: Attack action.

Range Increment: 100 ft.

Target: Single target within 1,000 ft.

Duration: Instantaneous.

Saving Throw: None.

Purchase DC: 25.

Restriction: Military (+3)

ENERGISTIC BLADE

An Energistic Blade is a simple bladed weapon, usually in the shape of a dagger or short sword, onto which the mecha projects its Primordial Energy Field. An Energistic Blade deals Force damage according to the mecha's size: Large 2d8, Huge 4d8, Gargantuan 6d8, and Colossal 8d8. The mecha's Strength bonus applies. An Energistic Blade can harm ethereal and incorporeal creatures and bypasses damage reduction and hardness (including mecha armor).

A mecha without Primordial Energy Systems cannot be equipped with an Energistic Blade.

Equipment Slots: 1 (must be hand or arm).

Activation: Attack action.

Range: Touch.

Target: Single target within reach.

Duration: Instantaneous.

Saving Throw: None.

Purchase DC: 25.

Restriction: Military (+3)

D20 MECHA

In *d20 Mecha*, the Primordial Energy Field special quality would normally cost about 1250 mecha points - it's based on *wall of force*, a 5th level spell, and is usable at will. This costs more than most entire mecha - and still doesn't represent the full functionality of the special quality! Primordial Energy Strike and Part The Veil are even more difficult to model. The GM should consider the following alternate Exotic Ability:

PRIMORDIAL ENERGY SYSTEMS

The mecha draws upon the same inexplicable energies as a Progenitor. Its unarmed melee attacks are treated as doing Force damage; they can harm ethereal and incorporeal creatures and bypass damage reduction and hardness (including mecha armor). If the mecha has a force field, that force field is treated as a Primordial Energy Field for purposes of bypassing the field of a Progenitor.

Mecha Point Cost: 100 Mecha Points.

The GM may also wish to offer a similar Weapon Quality:

PRIMORDIAL ENERGY WEAPON

The weapon deals Force damage: it can harm ethereal and incorporeal creatures and bypass damage reduction and hardness (including mecha armor). A Primordial Energy Weapon ignores the Primordial Energy Field of a Progenitor.

Primordial Energy Weapon counts as 5 qualities.

The GM may choose to apply other limitations to these systems. For example, a mecha with Primordial Energy Systems or Weapons might be required to purchase a Force Field of a certain strength (usually 100 hp or more). A mecha with Primordial Energy Systems might also be required to have Full AI - possibly AI less than responsive to its pilot, possibly without the knowledge of either the player or the character!

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